



01 PERSON CENTRED PRACTICE POLICY

1. Purpose

At Seed Waikato, we believe every young person has the right to lead, to contribute, and to thrive. This policy supports our commitment to **person-centred practice** in all areas of our mahi — not as a service provider, but as an organisation that walks alongside rangatahi as they lead social innovation and create positive change in their communities.

This approach is grounded in *te ao Māori*, guided by *Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, and woven through with our core values:

Whakarongo (listen), **Manaakitanga** (care), **Tikatanga** (act with integrity), **Mahitahi** (work together), and **Akoranga** (learn and grow).

2. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the Seed Waikato whānau — including volunteers, board members, contractors, and kaimahi — to guide how we uphold person-centred practice in relationships, projects, decision-making, and design processes.

3. Definitions

- **Person-Centred:** A way of being and doing that starts with what matters most to the person, recognising their mana, voice, and aspirations as central.
- **Person-Centred Practice:** A commitment to co-creating with, not for, people — ensuring ideas, solutions, and innovations reflect their realities, identities, and hopes.

4. Guiding Principles

We honour person-centred practice by:

- **Whakarongo** – Listening with empathy and intention, especially to voices often unheard.
- **Mahi Tahi** – Collaborating with young people as equal partners, never assuming or deciding for them.
- **Tikanga** – Designing processes that are ethical, inclusive, and values-aligned.
- **Manaakitanga** – Holding space with care and respect for each person’s story, culture, and autonomy.
- **Akoranga** – Seeing feedback, mistakes, and iteration as part of our collective growth.

Our mahi is not transactional — it is *relational*. We do not lead change for communities. We create space so that **communities can lead change for themselves**.

5. Practice Guidelines

Person-centred design is the foundation of how we support youth-led innovation. Rather than building solutions in isolation, we centre real-world experience and deep connection with community. Our approach is not static — it evolves through reflection, learning, and testing.

We use a **design-thinking process** inspired by human-centred and kaupapa Māori approaches, framed through these iterative stages:

1. **Whakarongo** – Deep listening, observation, and insight-gathering
2. **Whakatau** – Framing the opportunity collectively
3. **Mahitahi** – Co-designing through idea generation and reflection
4. **Whakamātau** – Prototyping and testing together
5. **Whakatutuki** – Implementing with integrity
6. **Arotake** – Reflecting, refining, and learning

This approach ensures our mahi:

- Avoids assumptions
- Responds to real and current needs
- Centres the voices of those most impacted
- Builds lasting capability, not dependency

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