

Developing Waka Ama Club & School Connections

Meaningful and strong partnerships between schools, clubs, and regions are important for supporting the growth of waka ama and ensuring rangatahi have quality waka ama experiences. By working together, more rangatahi can have the opportunity to engage in waka ama, be supported in their development, and create clear pathways for participation from school to club.

The following provides some basic practical guidance for waka ama clubs and regions to engage with schools and support school-based waka ama opportunities, school to club transitions for paddlers, and ongoing rangatahi engagement in waka ama. The guidance stated can be adapted to suit the needs, capacity, capabilities, and resources of both clubs and schools to build meaningful and sustainable connections.

Build Relationships

- Visit local schools and introduce your club and offerings.
- Develop working relationships with relevant school staff for waka ama.
- Keep communication regular, friendly, and focused on shared goals.
- Understand each school's values, goals, priorities, and capacity.

Work Together

- Collaborate to identify opportunities for rangatahi to engage in waka ama.
- Support schools to participate in their local Secondary School Regional event.
- Support schools to participate in the Secondary School National event.
- Support school communities to enter into WAANZ sanctioned events where relevant.
- Partner with teachers to support school waka ama programmes.
- Work together to grow participation in waka ama across the community.

Share Resources

- Provide coaches or paddlers if possible to support school practices.
- Help schools access waka, paddles, and safety equipment.
- Manage shared resources to maximise rangatahi engagement.

Promote Positive Experiences

- Uphold WAANZ and club values when engaging with schools.
- Uphold WAANZ coaching principles when delivering waka ama in schools.
- Integrate the culture of waka ama through all waka ama experiences with rangatahi.

Promote Opportunities

- Create a flyer/poster promoting your waka ama club to give to schools.
- Promote and invite schools/students/whānau to club trainings and have a go days.
- Offer "Have a Go" waka ama sessions for students.

Create Clear Pathways

- Create a clear pathway from school paddling to club membership.
- Share your club membership registration form with schools.
- Support students to continue paddling after they leave school.
- Share key information for rangatahi including sign up process, fees, and training days.

Review and Improve

- Seek feedback from schools to support improved engagement.
- Share good practice with other clubs to strengthen school-club connections nationally.

Supporting Engagement in Secondary School Rangatahi Events

Secondary School rangatahi events, including secondary school regionals, provide rangatahi with the opportunity to engage in waka ama and experience an event in a supportive, enjoyable, and competitive environment ahead of the National Secondary School event. Clubs can play an important role in supporting and enabling school engagement in these events by providing knowledge, expertise, and resources whilst supporting schools to develop their own sustainable waka ama engagement opportunities.

In addition to the previous section, the following provides some basic practical guidance for clubs to support schools to engage in secondary school rangatahi events. The guidance stated can be adapted to suit the needs, capacity, capabilities, and resources of both clubs and schools.

Early Engagement

- Engage with schools early ahead of events to ensure a good lead in time.
- Communicate the relevant rangatahi event offerings in the region.
- Meet with relevant school staff to create a plan for rangatahi engagement in the events.
- Maintain regular communication throughout the year ahead of rangatahi events.

Assist with Programme Development

- Support schools to establish a relevant programme to lead into a rangatahi event.
 - A 6-week programme is recommended, including a couple of 'have a go' sessions and weekly training sessions.
 - Start with a small cohort of rangatahi to keep the programme manageable.
- Record and track programme development to share with others.

Share Coaching Expertise

- Provide club coaches and experienced paddlers to support sessions.
- Share relevant knowledge and expertise with school staff to build their coaching capability.
- Promote engagement in our WAANZ Puna Ako online courses to develop coaching capability.
- Promote coaching approaches that are safe, inclusive, and aligned to WAANZ.

Share Equipment and Resources

- Assist schools with access to waka, paddles, life jackets, and other relevant equipment.
- Encourage schools to develop long-term plans for their own equipment where appropriate.
- Work together to develop fair and transparent arrangements for equipment use.

Prepare for Competition

- Explain event formats, race procedures, and safety requirements.
- Explain and share the WAANZ race rules.
- Support schools with understanding entry processes, timelines, and event expectations.
- Provide opportunities for rangatahi to practice race formats prior to competition.
- Attend secondary school or club events to support schools new to waka ama events.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Clearly identify the relevant roles and responsibilities of the club and school. Schools are responsible for entries, fees, permissions, transport, and rangatahi supervision. The club's role is to support with coaching, equipment, and programme development.
- Any associated costs of engagement or equipment use should be discussed and agreed upon.