**Strategic Discussion: Whakawhanaungatanga: Teachers engage in partnerships with parents and whānau to promote learning success**

**Summary Statement:** Whānau’s goals and aspirations for their tamariki help to shape learning successes for children. Knowledge of the child’s whānau, culture, values and beliefs enable kaiako to support tamariki in a holistic and respectful way. Eliciting this knowledge requires a trusting relationship to be built with parents and caregivers and sustained over time. We are often the first point of contact that parent’s have with education and how they experience this has a large influence over latter interactions. Covid has introduced additional barriers to the forming of relationships – whānau are experiencing a greater sense of isolation, financial and other concerns. In addition, the interruptions to normal routines caused by Covid lockdowns and restrictions have caused significant disruption to the learning journeys of tamariki. The importance of Kaiako/ whānau relationships have become even more evident as a result of Covid. The scope of the teaching role has moved over time from providing education to providing a range of support to families in need, and to identify and support families in crisis. Children who do not have access to the basic necessities of life (food, shelter, warmth, good health etc) struggle to learn and succeed.

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| **Area** | **Ensure:** | **Further Initiatives to be explored** |
| Board | * Understand that learning success might look different in each community, for some it could be that regular attendance and looking forward to being at kindergarten is a key achievement
* Understand that relationship building is strongly linked to retention of employees and low staff turnover – consistency of staffing is required to build enduring relationships
* Acknowledge the needs and challenges of each community are different
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| Managers, leaders | * Support kindergartens to develop and sustain relationships that meet the needs of their particular community
* Observe the learning that is happening in kindergartens, providing timely support and feedback on teaching practices
* Ensure employees have access to support which helps to develop and maintain strategies to build self care and resilience
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| Kaiako | * Employ a variety of methods for obtaining from whānau an understanding of their visions for their tamariki and what learning success might look like for their child
* Reflect on the aspirations of parents/caregivers for their tamariki and how those aspirations are being fulfilled
* Get to know the whānau over time, build trusting relationships
* Manage a wide variety of complex situations including families affected by separation, poverty, violence and abuse
* Engage in Kahui Ako initiatives, understanding the needs of children as they move through the education system
* Great communication and transparency is essential
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