

Kakaruia Room Philosophy

In the Kakaruia Room, we draw inspiration from the *kakaruia* (black robin), a bird known for its resilience, adaptability, and unique history. As tamariki navigate an important period of growth and exploration, we take pride in fostering an environment that mirrors the qualities of the *kakaruia*—nurturing strength, curiosity, and a strong sense of identity. Our room philosophy is rooted in the values of **whanaungatanga**, **manaakitanga**, **aroha**, **whakamana**, and **kotahitanga**, all of which guide our teaching practices and the relationships we build with tamariki and their whānau.

The *kakaruia* holds a special place in the natural and cultural history of Aotearoa, and we also acknowledge the significance of Ngāti Whātua o Ōrākei as mana whenua. Ngāti Whātua's deep connection to the land, their stewardship of the whenua, and their history with the *kakaruia* bird provide a rich cultural foundation for the learning experiences in our room. We honour this connection by weaving stories and lessons that reflect the importance of kaitiakitanga (guardianship) and whakapapa (ancestry), helping children understand their role in preserving our natural world and respecting the mana of the whenua and its people.

We embrace the value of **whanaungatanga** by fostering close, supportive relationships between children, teachers, and whānau. We view learning as a shared experience, where children feel connected to one another and are encouraged to collaborate, play, and grow together. The cooperative nature of the *kakaruia* teaches us the importance of working as a team, and we instill this in tamariki through activities that encourage communication, turn-taking, and shared problem-solving.

We believe that every child's learning journey should be marked by compassion, care, and respect. **Manaakitanga** is central to our approach, as we model and encourage kindness and empathy in all interactions. We teach children to care for one another and for their environment, just as the *kakaruia* was protected and nurtured in times of need. Our environment reflects this value, providing spaces where children feel safe, supported, and valued.

Aroha is present in the loving and nurturing atmosphere we create in the Kakaruia Room. We recognise that children at this age are learning to navigate their emotions, and we provide a caring environment where they feel free to express themselves. Through patience, listening, and emotional support, we help children build confidence in their own abilities while ensuring they feel loved and respected.

The *kakaruia* teaches us resilience, and in the Kakaruia Room, we are guided by **whakamana** as we empower tamariki to take on new challenges and explore their world. We recognize the importance of fostering independence and self-confidence, and we provide opportunities for children to make choices, take risks, and develop problem-solving skills. Through intentional guidance, we help children feel capable and motivated in their learning, reinforcing their sense of self-worth.

In the spirit of **kotahitanga**, we celebrate the unity and collective strength of our learning community. We understand that every child brings their own unique gifts, and together, we create a diverse and inclusive environment where all voices are heard and respected. The *kakaruia*, once thought to be lost, reminds us of the power of unity and collective action in overcoming challenges. In our room, we emphasize teamwork, cooperation, and the importance of working together toward shared goals.

As we honour the story of the *kakaruia* and the rich history of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, we foster in our tamariki a deep respect for their heritage, the environment, and the community. Through stories, activities, and cultural practices, we nurture a sense of pride in where we come from and the responsibility we share as kaitiaki of the land and its creatures.