

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery

Charter 2016 - 2018

INTRODUCTION

Our Special Character

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery is a special character state school with a fundamental tenet that the student is central in directing their own learning so that the enthusiasm and love of learning is retained. We believe that learning can happen anytime and any place, thanks to the rich involvement of whānau and community. We have five guiding principles and five core values that define our special character.

Guiding principles

We provide a mana-enhancing learning environment where

- Students are central in directing their learning
- Learners are encouraged to be creative, innovative and take risks
- Diverse and flexible individual learning pathways are supported
- Learning is a partnership
- Everyone is a learner and everyone is a teacher

Core values

Whanaungatanga

By accepting the rights and responsibilities of being part of Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery we develop relationships and a sense of belonging that strengthens each member of our learning community. The relationships we form through shared experiences and working together give us a solid foundation to nurture, guide and support our students.

Respect

We commit to honouring the individual while celebrating our diversity. We respect ourselves and each other as we aspire to build an empowering learning community.

Kaha

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery encourages/supports energetic and powerful learning. Our students are courageous as they push the boundaries of their own learning by taking risks and developing their own path.

Trust

Building your own learning path requires that Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery students live up to their commitments and responsibilities. They are trusted to make decisions and follow them through with integrity, and to behave in ways that positively promote Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery to the world.

Aroha

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery actively strives to celebrate the uniqueness of individuals, while unifying the community. We share our successes and work through our difficulties with compassion, caring and tolerance.

Our Way of Doing Things

Te Ao Māori

We acknowledge Te Tiriti o Waitangi as:

- The founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand and that it is relevant, central to, and symbolic of, our national heritage, identity, and future.
- A document that protects Māori learners' rights to attain true tangata whanautanga (citizenship) through growing a range of vital skills and knowledge, as well as valuing te reo Māori as a taonga.

We strive to provide a high quality education that is accessible, equitable and responsive to the diverse aspirations of our learners. In order to achieve that we endeavour to:

- Grow our knowledge and our understanding of Te Ao Māori in order to develop and maintain a school culture where tikanga Māori and te reo Māori is woven through in all we do.
- Support all our learners to participate competently and confidently in both the Māori world and the non-Maori world and are able to move comfortably from one world to the other.
- Engage and consult with our Māori whānau and the wider community to develop and strengthen our understanding of a kaupapa Māori world view.
- Ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to provide instruction in tikanga Māori and te reo Māori.
- The school will develop capacity within staff in order to develop leadership skills that promote learning opportunities for our students within te Ao Maori. Mentoring students and also working with whanau to develop strong and relevant learning opportunities and outcomes.

School Organisation and Structure

Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery was established on 27 January 2014 under section 156(a) of the Education Act as a state school with special character designation, as a result of the merger of Discovery 1 and Unlimited Paenga Tawhiti.

The school is currently located on two sites. 105 Year 1-6 students are located at our Discovery campus in Halswell, while 345 Year 7-13 students are located at our Unlimited campus at the University of Canterbury. The school will eventually move onto a purpose built single site in the CBD. A vital part of the school's special character is its connection to the central city. With both campuses currently located outside of the central city, there is a desire to develop opportunities to use the central city whenever possible.

Student Engagement

- Students, learning advisors and whānau collaboratively plan and design students' learning around their strengths, passions, interests and needs.

- Regular individual education meetings (IEMs) between students, whānau and learning advisors, provide collaborative opportunities to reflect on past learning and plan for future learning, to evaluate and report on learning progress, identify support from whānau and discuss ways to extend learning.
- Students co-construct goals that support learning new knowledge and skills, stretch their thinking, encourage creativity and innovation and pursue personal passions, interests and needs.
- Students are consulted on the structures and frameworks of how learning is organised within the school. And student voice is evident in key decisions around learning.

Parent and Whānau Engagement

At Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery we strive to grow a learning community where students are central to directing their own learning, collaboratively supported by staff, whānau and community experts. Whānau involvement is critical to our holistic, personalised approach to learning and can take many forms such as support with:

- Learning experiences across curriculum and interest areas.
- Project based learning.
- Inquiries; helping to locate resources, experts and mentors.
- Organising trips and transport and accompanying children on trips.
- Being present to comfort, engage in conversations, questions and discussion.
- Organising community events, promotion, and fundraising.
- Becoming a school trustee.
- Off site learning and learning at home opportunities.

The wider local community also supports us also by helping with fundraising, supplying resources, providing learning environments, helping with experts and mentors and in various other ways.

Community Engagement

Our school is founded on the belief that students learn best when they and their whānau have a voice in their own education. In order to ensure that student and whānau voice are evident in all decisions, and we create an empowering and inclusive learning community, we endeavour to engage and consult with our community.

In our consultation during 2015 we identified 9 trends for our focus in 2016.

1. Ensure student's voice is visible and evident in key decisions and learning.
2. Create learning opportunities to collaborate across the community as well as outside our community through forums, social events and speakers
3. Develop clarity around the understanding and application of our special character and values.
4. Expand our learning opportunities beyond the constraints of lessons and classrooms.
5. Ensure we communicate effectively with our students and whānau.

6. Empower all our students to engage and direct their own learning.
7. Support our students to follow their passions, interests and fascinations.
8. Ensure our teaching and learning practices consistently meet the guiding principles of our special character.
9. Grow into a strong, supportive and robust learning community.

Kaupapa

"To be a school of global standing"

The direction in which we head is determined by the voice we gather from our community of students, staff and whanau.

We aspire to be a school:

- that lives out its special character authentically
- that is recognised globally for its forward thinking and cutting edge pedagogy
- that other schools aspire to
- where teaching professionals actively seek employment and our director is highly sought after
- that is in hot demand by students from a wide geographical area
- that educates other educators locally and globally

STRATEGIC SECTION

Strategic Goals

From our Consultation with Community we set Four Strategic Goals as a Focus for 2015:

1. To grow a community of learners
2. To recognise and facilitate individual student success
3. To transition back into the CBD
4. To develop strong partnerships with key organisations locally and globally

Strategic Goal 1	To grow a community of learners
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage and support energetic and powerful learning that push boundaries and take risks, understanding that the best learning comes from failure (kaha).• Commit to strengthening relationships through a variety of community events and social gatherings (whanaungatanga) to support and foster a continued understanding of our special character.• Capture and respond effectively to student voice• Develop a model of research from an external provider to encourage and analyse student directed learning at our school.• Build Alumni networks of graduates to support / mentor current students as well as staying connected with each other and the school post graduation.• Continue to review how effectively the BOT and SM team consulted and engaged with the students and wider community regarding growing a community of learners during 2015 in order to continue to strengthen and develop in 2016.• Continue to provide appropriate PLD for staff and the wider community in order to support and promote a community of learners.• Continue to explore and develop ways to work with other educational providers to grow our learning community beyond the physical confines of our campuses.• Build capacity and understanding within staff with the aim to develop leadership practices that will strengthen the learning opportunities for our Māori students; and also implement Te Ao Māori ways of being and doing (kawa) within our community.

2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to review communities as designed in 2014 and 2015. • Appropriate PLD will continue to be provided around Modern learning environments & Modern learning education. (MLP & MLE) • Report regularly to community on what learning looks like in and beyond our new facilities. • Review the success of community events and social gatherings (whanaungatanga) and make any necessary changes to ensure these events reflect the needs of our parents, students and learning advisors.
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear self review processes have been implemented to ensure that communities of learners reflect the current needs of all members of the Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery. • SLT reports regularly to the Board of Trustees and the wider community on this goal as part of its regular reporting commitment. This reporting will focus on successes, challenges and next steps for communities as parents, students and learning advisors.

Strategic Goal 2	To recognise and facilitate individual student success
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with Māori and Pasifika families to understand the context and needs of these students and their whanau; with regard to promoting personal (academic or other personal) success and make these understandings visible in learning and teaching structures. • Empower students to clearly understand themselves as learners, knowing how and where they learn best through support from LAs, fellow students and whanau. • Continue building strength around celebrating the success of all students and explore more diverse ways to recognize this. • Continue to resource, develop and trial project based learning opportunities to support student directed learning, both in and outside classes/homebase • Strength support around opportunities outside the homebase that allow students to engage in their passions first hand, including programs such as Gateway and STAR. • Continue to consult with students and the wider community, to continue to develop and review shared understandings of what achievement looks like at the various stages of a student's pathway, and how to promote individual student success, which includes setting and achieving personalised learning goals. • Review strategies to promote student success and processes for individual learning plans, and revisions made to practice where necessary. • Provide appropriate PLD for staff to continue to develop their understanding of how to recognise and facilitate individual student success.

2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress during 2014 and 2015 in the promotion of student success will be reviewed and documented. • Appropriate PLD will continue to be provided. • Develop clear self review processes for facilitating student success. • Promote our successes in recognising and facilitating student success at a community, cluster and national level (LMS, IEMs etc)
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to review, promote and document individual student successes. • Continue to provide PLD opportunities for the entire community about recognising and facilitating student success.

Strategic Goal 3	To transition back into the CBD
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult and engage students, whānau, staff,iwi and the wider community in their needs and aspirations for the new school. • Develop a marketing and branding strategy to effectively build our identity as a significant CBD learning facility, and that builds strong interest in Ao Tawhiti Unlimited Discovery going forward. • Develop and implement a transition plan for 2016 and beyond, to ensure minimal disruption for students.
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition to the new building • Regularly review (termly) with all students, learning advisors, and parents how the transition to our new facilities is going. • Provide regular opportunities for all members of our community to use our new facilities. • Ensure communities are building connections with local organisations through curriculum and event planning.
2018	Continue to review, promote and document our transition to the CBD and beyond.

Strategic Goal 4	To develop strong partnerships with key organisations locally and globally
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to build and strengthen connections to businesses, schools and organisations in the CBD in order to help facilitate our return to the city. Developing innovative and reciprocal relationships being the focus. • Continue to support initiatives such as Gateway, STAR and other innovative pathways • Build strong connections with early childhood centres and other potential entry point opportunities. • Engage with local iwi and marae, with a view to building reciprocal and long term relationships

2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide opportunities for students, parents and learning advisors to promote our school locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.• Build a connections with research organisations to examine how beneficial partnerships are for our students, parents and learning advisors.• Continue to review, promote and document the partnerships we have formed locally and globally.
2018	Continue to provide PLD opportunities for the entire community about recognising and facilitating student success.