

Whatu Pōkeka

Suitable for



Outcome:

A whole-school or classroom exercise with students which looks at how students know they belong and how they feel valued.

Background:

Having a sense of belonging is a key protective factor for young people. Bullying can undermine this.

In this exercise students can explore belonging and in the process make a protective blanket. A whatu pōkeka is a baby blanket lined with feathers to provide warmth, comfort, security and refuge from the elements.



Materials:



☐ Paper feathers*



☐ Felt pens



☐ large sheet of paper or cloth

Method:

Talk about how important it is to feel safe and included at school. Explain the concept of whatu pōkeka.

Then ask students to finish the following sentences:

- “I feel valued at school when...”
- “I know I belong at my school because...”

Each student writes their answers on their feather, then the feathers are attached to a large sheet of paper or cloth to be displayed as a cloak.

By making a whatu pōkeka, students communicate and discuss how their school can be everyone's school.

Involve parents and whānau—either by getting them to contribute their own feather or by inviting them into school to see their children's work.

*You can order orange or blue feathers from **Down the Back of the Chair** or get students to make their own using the template provided.

Thanks to Pauline Muir for sharing image of Witherlea School's whatu pōkeka.

