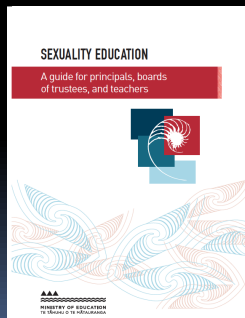


# Beyond comprehensive sexuality education: Curriculum policy in New Zealand



Associate Professor Katie Fitzpatrick  
University of Auckland  
[k.fitzpatrick@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:k.fitzpatrick@auckland.ac.nz)

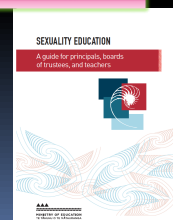
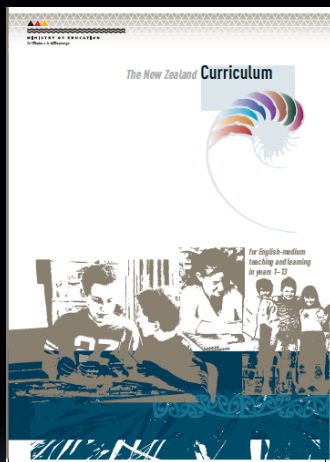
“Policy is the battle ground where matters of equality are fought. Policy can institutionalize prejudice or it can protect us against it.” Lana Wachowshi

“policy creates context”  
“context also precedes policy”  
(Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012, p. 19).

## SEXUALITY EDUCATION

A guide for principals, boards of trustees, and teachers

- Overview of document
- 4 key policy 'moments'
  - comprehensive sexuality ed.
  - indigenous knowledges
  - heteronormativity
  - pleasure





## Heretical culture

The school is required to perpetuate and transmit the capital of consecrated cultural signs, that is, the culture handed down to it by the intellectual creators of the past...it is obliged to establish and define systematically **the sphere of orthodox culture and the sphere of heretical culture.**

(Bourdieu, 1971/1966, p. 178)

## Heretical culture

Schools circumscribe, limit and govern gender sexualities (Youdell, 2005; Allen, 2007; Gard & Pluim, 2014)

Allocate marginal time to learning about sexuality (Fitzpatrick & Tinning, 2014)

Ongoing debates: CSE, abstinence, abstinence-plus, rights based....etc

(Fine & McClelland, 2006; Rasmussen, 2012; Berglas et al, 2014; Rohrbach et al., 2015; Kirby, 2008).

Sexuality and sexuality education as risk(y) and danger(ous)

(Allen, 2007b; Fine, 2003; Fine & McClelland, 2006, Janssen, 2009)

Heteronormativity (Quinlivan, 2006; Morris-Roberts; Atkinson & Depalma; Allen, 2005).

Pleasure (Fine, 1988; Allen, Rasmussen & Quinlivan, 2014)

Colonial histories: banishment of indigenous and non-western knowledges (Smith, 2012; Aspin & Hutchings, Kamitsuka, 2010, Rasmussen, 2017)

## SEXUALITY EDUCATION

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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
TE TĀHUMU O TE MĀTAURANGA

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## Defining sexuality education

### What sexuality education is

Sexual... up. It en... identity... educati...  
 All young people need access to information and opportunities to think about, question, and discuss issues related to relationships, gender, sexual identities, sexual orientation, sexual behaviour, sexual and reproductive health, and societal messages. (Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 4)  
 In sexu... them to... studen... gender and sexuality.

### 3. Sexuality education in *The New Zealand Curriculum*

- knowledge, understandings, and skills relating to sexual health and development: physical, emotional, mental, social and spiritual
- knowledge, understandings, and skills to enhance their sexual and reproductive health, for example, knowledge about the process of conception, contraception, and the skills to make decisions that maintain and enhance their sexual health and experiences
- understandings and skills to enhance relationships, for example in relation to friendships, intimate relationships, love, families, and parenting
- critical thinking, reflection, and social-action skills related to issues of equity, gender, body image, sexualisation, risk, and safety.
- personal and interpersonal skills and related attitudes, including:
  - personal rights and responsibilities, including consent
  - the skills needed to examine people's attitudes, values, beliefs, rights, and responsibilities
  - attitudes of respect for themselves and other people
  - attitudes of care and concern for themselves and other people
  - ethical values
  - effective communication skills, problem-solving, and decision-making skills.

### 3. Sexuality education in *The New Zealand Curriculum*

Junior secondary  
(years 9–10)

At these levels, students will learn about intimate relationships and explore positive sexual health. They will learn to manage their own sexual health and how to access health care. Long-term and short-term effects of sexual decisions will be examined. Programmes will include content covering conception, contraception, sexually transmissible infections, and other aspects of sexual decision-making. Programmes will affirm sexual diversity and gender identity. Students will learn about the physical and emotional effects of sexual identity, sexual attraction, and sexual maturation. Students will critique dominant cultural messages about sexual behaviour (including those in mass and online media) and identify skills for positive and supportive intimate relationships. Human rights, consent, and the importance of choice and agency in relationships will be discussed. Online and social media environments will be explored and students will plan strategies for positive and supportive engagement. Strategies for seeking help and support will be planned.

*The Education Review Office has identified that schools with effective programmes spend at least 12–15 hours per year on sexuality education (ERO, 2007b).*

## 4. Sexuality education in the wider school



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# CSE versus Abstinence

## What sexuality education is

Sexuality education in New Zealand takes a positive view of sexual development as a natural part of growing up. It encompasses learning about physical development, including sexual and reproductive knowledge, gender identity, relationships, friendships, whānau and social issues. It sits within the broader area of relationship education, which also includes social and emotional learning (SEL), and violence prevention education.

In sexuality education young people learn about themselves and develop knowledge and skills that will help them to interact in positive, respectful, and supportive ways with others. Through learning about sexuality students also come to understand about the social and cultural influences that shape the way society views gender and sexuality.

## Indigenous knowledges: Hauora

### Hauora and sexuality

The health and physical education learning area incorporates Mason Durie's (1994) Te Whare Tapa Whā concept of hauora. This concept reflects a Māori view of well-being:

Each of these four dimensions of hauora influences and supports the others.

**Te taha hinengaro**  
Mental and emotional  
well-being

**Te taha whānau**  
Social well-being

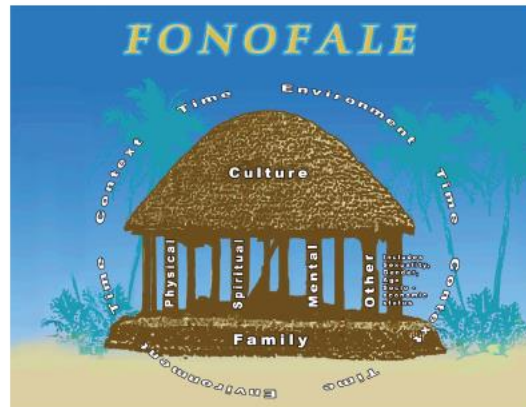
**Te taha tinana**  
Physical well-being

**Te taha wairua**  
Spiritual well-being

Mason Durie (1994) Te Whare Tapa Whā concept of hauora



## Indigenous knowledges: Fonofale



The Fonofale model incorporates the metaphor of a Samoan house where the foundation, floor posts, and roof are encapsulated in a circle to promote the philosophy of holism and continuity. This model is a dynamic model because all aspects depicted have an interactive relationship with each other.

For a full list of models see the 2013 literature review (Veukiso-Ulugia, A. referenced in section 8) on the key components of appropriate models and approaches to deliver sexual and reproductive health promotion to Pasifika peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand.

## Heteronormativity

### Equity and sexual and gender diversity

Sexuality education in New Zealand schools supports and acknowledges diversity among students. Schools

“question gender stereotypes, and assumptions about sexuality...[and] take opportunities to acknowledge the sexual diversity of New Zealand communities and recognize the rights of those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and other sexual and gender identities.” (Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 11).

## Heteronormativity

### Being inclusive and valuing diversity

School uniforms can reinforce gender norms, so schools may consider offering gender-neutral clothing choices when uniforms come up for review. Schools may also consider reviewing options around toilet facilities to ensure students have choices of safe spaces. Toilets can be unsafe environments for students who do not conform to gender norms.

Events to which partners are invited, like school balls, can be an opportunity to strengthen the wider school's contribution to valuing diversity if same-sex as well as other-sex partners can attend. Additionally, schools may wish to adopt a harm-minimisation approach prior to such events by providing students with information about how they can keep themselves safe before, during, and after the event.

## Heteronormativity

Sports procedures and policies should be inclusive and ensure that all students can participate regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Where coaches are involved in school sport, they need to understand the school policies around the safety and support of all students (for example, ensuring homophobic, sexist and other discriminatory language is not tolerated in sporting practices and engagements) and up-skilled if necessary. All school extra-curricular activities should be inclusive of all students and encourage diverse participation.

Schools that have on-site marae can use the facilities to support teaching sexuality education, using Māori origin narratives, whakapapa, waiata, karakia, te kawa me te tikanga o te marae, and so on. Kapa haka is an excellent medium for teaching sexuality and relationship education. Waka ama is another excellent medium for teaching sexuality and relationships, in particular traditional narratives about the importance of collectivity as compared to individualism, the roles of men and women, and the importance of relationships between people and the environment.

## Pleasure

“a protective discourse around young people’s sexuality forms part of many New Zealand schools’ ‘official’ culture.... such discourse “also carries an assumption that sexual activity is an inherently ‘risky business’ rather than a potentially positive and pleasurable experience” (Allen, 2007a p. 224, 225)

For policy makers, including discourses of pleasure might enable their health-promotion aims because: “through the relative silencing of alternative ways of giving and receiving pleasure through the emphasis on the avoidance of negative outcomes, the reproductive and hence heterosexual priority of sexual activity is reinforced” (Ingham, 2005, p. 382).

- Policy is always political, compromise/ing
- Issues of implementation/translation to practice
- Nevertheless it does potentially carve out space or permission for:
  - ★ the heretical cultures of schooling to be challenged
  - ★ issues of equity to remain on the agenda
- A sexuality education that goes beyond CSE is one that has a focus on the study of sexualities and health.

Katie Fitzpatrick  
University of Auckland. [k.fitzpatrick@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:k.fitzpatrick@auckland.ac.nz)