

Kia ora [Parent's name],

[School name] is participating in Schools' Pride Week Aotearoa as part of our commitment to embrace and celebrate diversity in all its forms. As a school, we are legally and ethically obligated to provide safe and inclusive spaces that are free from discrimination which affirm and celebrate diversity for all students. The New Zealand Curriculum upholds human rights and is underpinned by values of diversity, equity and respect. Diversity includes different cultures, ethnicity, beliefs and values, learning needs, sexes, sexualities, gender identities and expressions. The Human Rights Commission states that all students have the right to be accepted for who they are and have access to positive environments for learning. Just as we accept your right to hold these beliefs, we accept and celebrate rainbow identities at this school. The Ministry of Education and the Education and Training Act 2020 describes a positive learning environment as one where all students feel accepted, supported, and are safe. Pride week is an important part of how we support our rainbow students as the visibility of our support helps to create a positive environment for members of the rainbow community at this school.

Considering the large amount of prejudice faced by the rainbow community and the negative impact this marginalisation has on their wellbeing, we believe it is vital to protect their wellbeing by supporting our rainbow community at [School name], and we are doing this by holding space for them to come together and celebrate this important cultural event in the same way we support events like NZ Sign Language Week and Matariki. It is important to note that the events being held in celebration of this week are all optional and occur during break times, so your child need not participate if they do not wish to. Despite a great deal of misinformation that suggests otherwise, there is nothing sexual or inappropriate about learning about the existence of different family structures, relationships, body variations and gender expression.

Students aged 6-16 years old are legally required to attend school every day - a school affirming their support for rainbow communities is not a valid reason for keeping your child home from school. Schools' Pride Week does not disrupt our usual curriculum or academic programme, but keeping your child home will. If you choose to keep them home for this reason, it will be considered an unjustified absence. Most schools have a 90% attendance policy, and students who don't achieve this often can't attend things like school balls and sports outings etc.

Thank you for taking the time to write to us.

Mauri ora,

[Staff name].