

Safety, Health and Wellbeing			
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All policies on Waituhi are the current version. Please check date of this hard copy before proceeding.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Ara’s commitment to providing a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for all learners, colleagues, visitors, and partners.

It establishes the principles and expectations that guide how we identify, manage, and continuously improve safety, health, and wellbeing across our organisation and outlines the responsibilities of all people at Ara in proactively contributing to a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where everyone can thrive.

1.2 Scope and Application

This policy applies to all Ara colleagues and learners.

For the purposes of this policy, and for the avoidance of any doubt, the term “colleagues” is defined in the definitions section below and includes volunteers, contractors, external partners or third-party providers who may interact with Ara

1.3 Formal Delegations

Ara’s Chief Executive and Council retain primary responsibility as the PCBU under the Health and Safety at Work Act for ensuring the effective implementation of this Policy.

1.4 Leadership and Responsibilities

At Ara, creating a safe, healthy and inclusive work and learning environment is a shared responsibility. Every member of our community- learners, colleagues and leaders- has a role to play. This means taking care of your own health and safety, looking out for others, following lawful and reasonable instructions, and actively contributing to a respectful and supportive community where everyone feels safe to participate and succeed.

Ara’s Council and Executive Leadership Team (Te Kāhui Manukura) provide leadership and oversight for safety, health and wellbeing and are accountable for ensuring appropriate capability, systems, and resources are in place.

Leaders and managers are responsible for creating safe and supportive environments, managing risks within their area of responsibility, and responding appropriately to issues and concerns.

1.5 Definitions

- a **Colleagues:** Any person working at, for, with, or on behalf of Ara. This includes but is not limited to staff employed directly by Ara, irrespective of whether they are paid or voluntary, or whether they are working on a full time, part time, casual or temporary basis, as well as any persons contracted or invited to provide services to Ara.
- b **Hazard:** Any source, situation, or act with the potential to cause harm, including injury, illness, or damage to property and equipment.

- c **Health:** A state or dynamic balance of physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
- d **Near miss:** An unplanned, unpredicted event that does not result in injury, illness, or damage- but had the potential to do so.
- e **Safety:** A state of being free or protected from harm or danger.
- f **Wellbeing:** The holistic state of an individual’s cultural, spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, and social health in relation to their work or learning environment.

<p>Related Ara Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety, Health and Wellbeing Procedures • Health and Safety Coordinator and Representatives Functions Documents • Safety, Health and Wellbeing Leadership Group ToR • Ara Safety, Health and Wellbeing Operational Plan 	<p>Related Ara Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPP117 Raising Problems or Complaints • CPP208 Resolving Colleague Performance or Conduct Issues • CPP211 Code of Professional Practice • CPP222 Addressing Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination • CPP109 Privacy and Personal Information • CPP501a Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities under the HSWA
<p>Related Legislation or Other Documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021 • Privacy Act 2020 • Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 	<p>Good Practice Guidelines</p>
<p>References</p>	
<p>Notes</p>	

2 Principles

- 2.1 Ara has a duty of care to protect the safety, health and wellbeing of all people it serves. We provide a safe, healthy and supportive environment for everyone who learns, works, visits, or engages with us.
- 2.2 Safety, health, and wellbeing are fundamental to learner success, colleague capability, and public trust, and are integral to how Ara fulfils its role as a vocational education provider in Aotearoa New Zealand.
- 2.3 Ara meets its obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act, and the Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice.
- 2.4 Ara upholds the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in its approach to safety, health, and wellbeing by working in partnership with Māori, enabling participation in decisions that affect wellbeing, and proactively protecting people from harm and inequity.
- 2.5 Beyond compliance, Ara strives to create environments where people feel safe to learn, work, speak up, and belong.

3 Our Approach to Safety, Health and Wellbeing

- 3.1 Ara adopts a proactive, integrated and preventative approach to safety, health and wellbeing. We recognise that harm can arise not only from physical hazards, but also from the way work and learning are designed, resourced and experienced.
- 3.2 Risks to health and safety are eliminated where reasonably practicable. Where elimination is not possible, risks are minimised so far as is reasonably practicable.
- 3.3 This approach includes designing safe, inclusive and accessible environments; identifying and managing physical, health and psychosocial risks; supporting positive mental health and wellbeing; responding early to concerns; and learning from experience. Safety, health and wellbeing are embedded in planning, decision-making and organisational change.
- 3.4 Ara values the knowledge and experience of those closest to the work and learning environment. Meaningful engagement and participation are essential, and concerns are listened to respectfully. Health and Safety Representatives, learner voice mechanisms, and pastoral care supports are integral to this approach.
- 3.5 Learning environments are designed to support learner safety, wellbeing and success in line with the Pastoral Care Code. This includes safe and respectful physical and online environments, clear pathways to support services, and appropriate responses to learners experiencing distress, harm, or disadvantage. Learner wellbeing is a shared responsibility across teaching, support services, and leadership.
- 3.6 Prompt reporting of incidents, injuries, hazards and near misses is expected. Reporting is viewed as a positive act that supports learning and improvement. Learners, colleagues, and visitors are supported to speak up without fear of blame, and to contribute to improving safety and wellbeing.
- 3.7 Incidents are investigated to understand contributing factors, address underlying causes and reduce the likelihood of recurrence. Learnings are shared where appropriate to strengthen organisational capability.
- 3.8 Emergency procedures are maintained to support the safety of people in the event of an emergency. These procedures are communicated, practiced and reviewed to ensure they remain effective and well understood.
- 3.9 Ara continuously improves its safety, health and wellbeing performance by monitoring outcomes, seeking feedback, reviewing systems and adapting its approach as the organisation, sector, and community evolve.
- 3.10 This policy provides the foundation for setting safety, health and wellbeing objectives and monitoring performance across Ara. It is reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant, effective and aligned with good practice and legislative requirements.