

Building water safety skills and knowledge

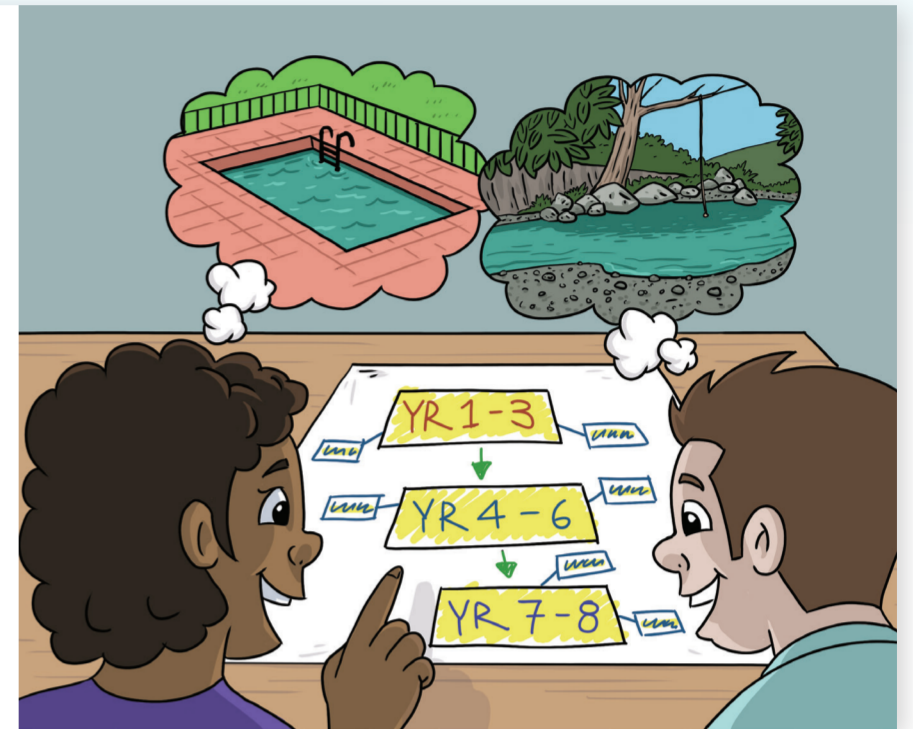
In Aotearoa New Zealand, water is important for identity, wellbeing, enjoyment, nourishment, and mahinga kai. Schools play an important role in supporting ākonga to develop positive relationships with water, including the skills and knowledge they need to be safe in, on, and around it.

Designing a purposeful programme

Ākonga need access to planned, progressive learning experiences throughout their time at school. The end goal is for them to enjoy and respect water and to make safe decisions around it.

Key questions for planning include:

- What are the challenges and opportunities of significant bodies of water in our rohe?
- How do whānau and other members of our school community interact with water?
- What water safety skills and knowledge will we focus on at each year level?
- What will we do in the classroom and at different sites (pools and natural environments)?
- How can we draw on local expertise? (e.g., What can we learn from the name of a body of water or stories about it?)



Understanding different environments

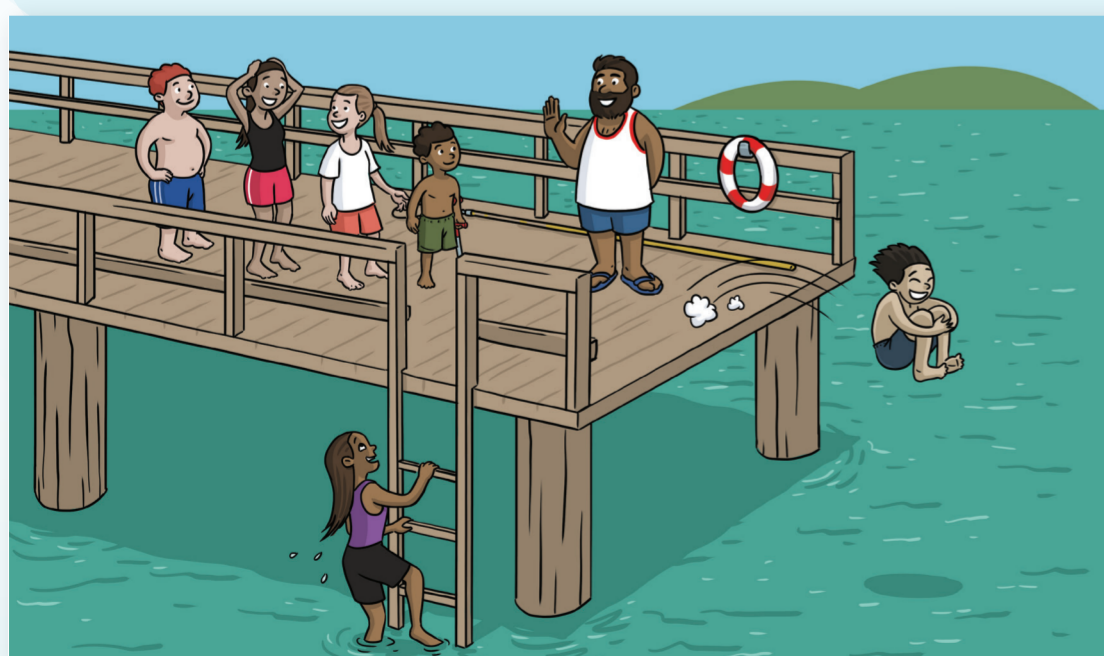
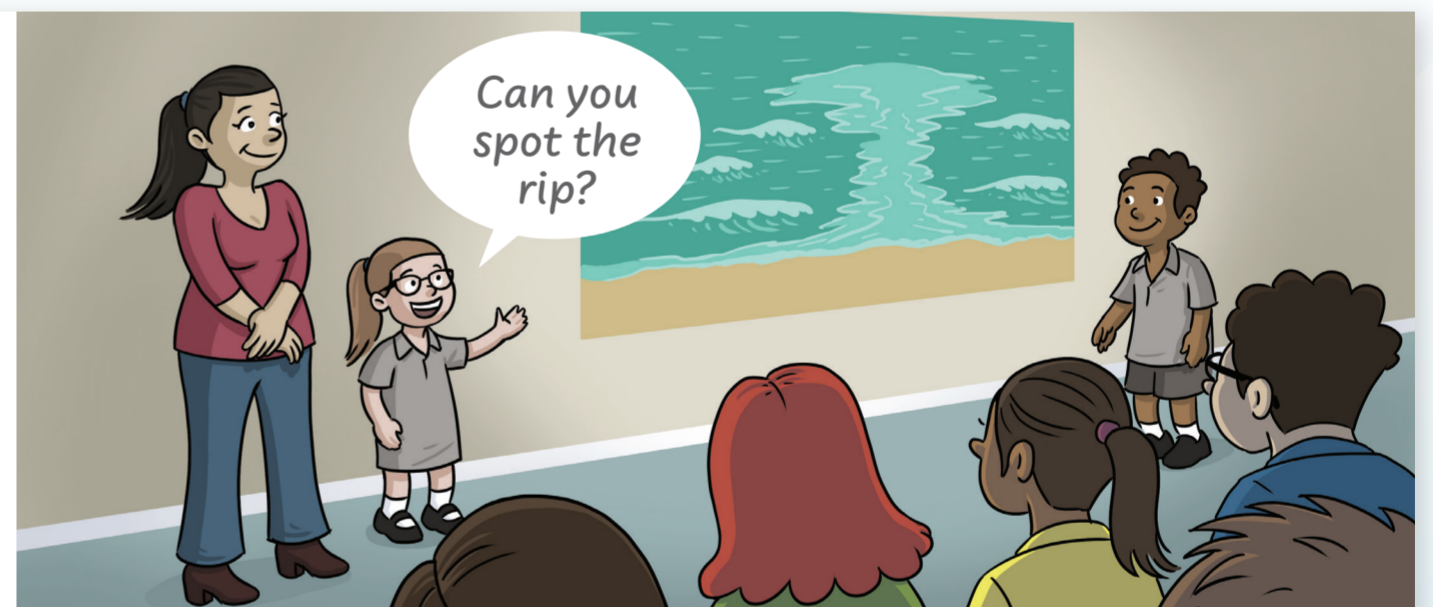
Provide opportunities to explore a range of water environments where ākonga learn to ask such questions as:

- What do we notice about this environment?
 - Are there any water safety signs? What do they tell us?
 - How does water move in this environment?
 - What might be going on that we can't see from the surface?
 - What is the weather doing?
- Who would we ask for help? What safety equipment do we have?

Promoting safe practices

When ākonga have strong water safety competencies, whānau and other community members benefit too. Think about how your school can promote water safety – for example, through:

- updates on ākonga learning
- workshops with whānau
- consultation hui or fono
- ākonga presenting on water safety.



Keeping ourselves safe

Ensure that all ākonga know how to follow the Water Safety Code:

- **Be prepared:** Know how to swim, bring safety equipment, and check weather and water conditions
- **Watch out for yourself and others:** Swim with others, and know when and how to ask for help
- **Check for risks:** Check for safety signs and currents or rips, and know how to enter and exit water safely
- **Know your limits:** Know your physical limits, and learn how to rescue people safely.

Further support

The following organisations provide a range of valuable resources and support:

- [Water Safety New Zealand](#) – resources including a *Water Skills for Life* programme
- [Kia Maanu Kia Ora](#) – kaupapa Māori and mainstream water safety resources
- [Drowning Prevention Auckland](#) – teaching resources for good water safety practices
- [Education Outdoors New Zealand](#) – support for school EOTC safety management systems.