



Aroha Discovery School

NURTURING THE LOVE OF LEARNING

Ako Coordinator Job Description

Aroha Discovery School is a small, intimate full primary school that we are currently developing in Nelson, New Zealand. We currently have 12 full time students ranging from ages 5 – 9 years old that are ready to start at the opening of our school during 2020. We expect to grow as we establish ourselves and become more widely known. We also intend to continue our expansion up to, and including teenagers within the next few years.

The position of Ako Coordinator is akin to a principal but with the primary difference being that you are one part of a democratic community i.e. we do not operate based on a traditional hierarchy. We chose the name Ako Coordinator for this role as it best describes the teaching/learning relationship, where the educator is also learning from the student in a collaborative environment.

You will be the space holder for our school so it is very important to us that you have a deep understanding of our guiding principles (<https://arohadiscovery.school.nz/special-character>) and that you are able to live these values. We are looking for someone who is really able to get down on the same level as the kids. It is preferable that you have a background in Forest/Bush schooling as we have a big focus on outdoor learning but for the right fit training can also be provided for this. We have many mentors for you to draw inspiration and guidance from and we will be focusing on supporting you and your continued development in this important role.

It is important that our teachers work as a collaborative team. We focus on forming strong relationships with students and the Aroha Discovery community, and strongly value outdoor learning, following the children's lead, learning through play and making decisions together. Our focus is to identify children's strengths and interests, and offer opportunities to build on these, as well as providing opportunities for children to try new things and take risks. As children learn, play and develop, your role is to offer guidance and support as needed, that is targeted to the individual.

Key elements of your role include:

- **Health and safety:** to ensure children are in a safe space, by identifying hazards, boundaries, and supporting safe behaviours (while also enabling risky play).
- **Social skills:** to help children develop and follow their values, mediate conflicts, build confidence in groups, and make decisions together.
- **Emotional skills:** to help children learn about and experience their emotions - develop awareness and vocabulary, and effective ways to express themselves.
- **Physical health:** to offer opportunities to move in a variety of ways, and to develop gross and fine motor skills.

- **Intellectual skills:** to support children as they learn new skills and knowledge that is meaningful to them. Bring your own passions in, for example art and craft or music, movement workshops that you'd like to do with the children.
- **Relationships:** to build positive relationships with the children and their whanau, and share with colleagues your ideas, successes, challenges, when needing support etc. To foster links with the Nature Focus play-group, local iwi and other community groups/real world mentors.
- **Integration with the wider community:** helping the children organise field trips to places and people of interest. Part of our philosophy is that the city is part of our school and we have a focus on building those real-world connections.
- **Support:** to help the children and teachers with cleaning up, and supervision.
- **Professionalism:** ensure that you understand and can follow the Aroha Discovery approach and philosophy (<https://arohadiscovery.school.nz/about>), and ask questions if there's something you'd like clarity on. In this way, we can act out our values and be the best models for our children.

We are looking for someone who is keen to work in an environment with a completely different understanding, attitude and approach to education, who has initiated their own inquiry into education, parenting, or well-being. We would love someone who understands that we are all learning and growing alongside our Tamariki.

The Ako Coordinator will report and be accountable to Arohanui Learning Communities board of trustees (as the employer) through the board chairperson. The Ako Coordinator has the dual role of being a board member in his/her own right and working closely with our School Business Manager to meet ministry requirements, health and safety regulations, and ensure the ongoing smooth operation of the school.

Other key aspects of your role:

- You will be working alongside an assistant and with other volunteers/mentors who will be helping out in the school from time-to-time. Part of your role is to facilitate how these extra people can best support the students on their learning path.
- Ensure that both adults and children uphold the value of respect for each other in their day-to-day activities, and ensure that the children's right to freedom (but not licence) over what they choose to do is upheld.
- Ensure that tracking of children's activities (work) is maintained through learning stories, and (through consultation with the students) opportunities for learning and development are provided.
- Ensuring that the school is adequately staffed and any issues concerning this are brought to the attention of the School Business Manager.
- Works collaboratively with the School Business Manager and other staff to provide opportunities for personal and professional development at weekly meetings.
- Assist the board to achieve it's Good Employer obligations

Governance *

Within the role of Ako Coordinator you will fulfil a position as a consultant you will work closely with the School Business Manager to report to the board and:

- Provide advice to the Board to help ensure it meets all of its statutory and other obligations.
- Provide evidence of learning tracking through student learning stories at a minimum of twice yearly.
- Regularly report on the progress of annual and charter goals (as relevant).
- Assist the Board with Policy development and the ongoing review of its policies and plans.
- Aid the School Business Manager to develop/review and present for consultation, the annual school development plan, updated Charter, school budget, Ministry of Education annual reports.

- Provide professional advice to the board and act on board decisions.
- Support the Board in its aim of establishing good working relationships between the school and the community.
- Supply information to the Board and highlight issues on all matters relevant to the Board's responsibilities.

The Ako Coordinator will liaise with the School Business Manager, chairperson and other board members at all times over matters of mutual interest or concern.

Have an understanding of legislation that impacts our children and school:

- Implement changes to ensure full compliance, including, communication, understanding and adherence.
- Provide the Board with an insight into up and coming legislative changes.
- Seek external feedback when necessary to ensure full compliance.

Supervision of Property and Resources

With full support from the Board and in collaboration with the School Business Manager the Ako Coordinator is responsible for ensuring the school environment and school property are well maintained, safe and secure. The Coordinator will:

- Ensure the buildings and environments we use are kept safe and clean.
- Provide advice to the School Business Manager on the upkeep of the school's equipment and resources.
- Provide advice to the School Business Manager on the maintenance, development and enhancement of school property and facilities.

Learning spaces/schools, we have been inspired by:

- Summerhill School <http://www.summerhillschool.co.uk/>
- Tamariki School <http://www.tamariki.school.nz/>
- Sudbury Valley School - <https://sudburyvalley.org/article/kingdom-childhood-growing-sudbury-valley-school>
- Albany Free School: <http://www.albanyfreeschool.org/>
- Play Centres <http://www.playcentre.org.nz/>
- Longworth Forest School, Napier <https://longworthforest.wordpress.com/>

Here is a list of videos, books and articles that have inspired us:

<https://arohadiscovery.school.nz/resources>

If you are a New Zealand registered teacher and this sounds like you we would love to hear from you!

Please send your CV along with a cover letter to: admin@arohadiscovery.school.nz

Applications close Tuesday 31st December 2019