

Aotearoa Infinite Academy

Safe and Inclusive Learning Environment Policy



Purpose & Scope

Aotearoa Infinite Academy is committed to providing a physically and emotionally safe place for all students and staff in every environment where teaching and learning happen — including our virtual classrooms and digital platforms. Our goal is to create an inclusive online school culture where students feel connected, respected, and supported to achieve their best while being protected from harm.

This policy sits alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy, Attendance and Engagement Policy, Online Safety Policy, Student Learning, Wellbeing and Behaviour (Discipline and Safety) Policy, and Complaints Procedure. Together, these ensure Aotearoa Infinite Academy meets its obligations under the Education and Training Act 2020.

This policy applies to all members of the Infinite community — students, staff, contractors, volunteers, whānau/caregivers, and visitors — whenever they are participating in Infinite learning or activities. It covers all learning spaces, including (but not limited to):

- online classrooms and live sessions
- Infinite platforms and communications
- school-related events, trips, and extracurricular activities (online or in person)
- any behaviour that affects the safety, wellbeing, or inclusion of members of the Infinite community, even if it occurs off-platform or outside scheduled learning time.

This policy is intended to integrate and sit above Infinite's other safety and wellbeing policies. Where a matter is addressed in more detail elsewhere, that policy should be followed.

Policy Statement: A Commitment from Infinite to Everyone

Infinite is committed to maintaining a learning environment that is physically and emotionally safe, inclusive, and free from bullying, harassment, racism, discrimination, or other harmful behaviour. Every student has the right to learn, belong, and achieve in ways that respect their identity, culture, ability, gender, sexuality, religion, and family or whānau context.

Infinite takes a prevention-first approach. We aim to build positive relationships, clear expectations, and active support systems so that safety and inclusion are part of everyday learning — not only something addressed after harm occurs.

How Infinite Creates a Safe and Inclusive Environment

Infinite promotes safety and inclusion through:

- **clear standards for behaviour and participation**, including expectations for respectful communication and digital citizenship across all Infinite spaces
- **curriculum and pastoral learning** that supports identity, belonging, wellbeing, and positive peer relationships
- **staff modelling and proactive teaching** of inclusive values and safe online participation
- **restorative and educative responses** to harm, alongside proportionate disciplinary steps where needed
- **student voice and partnership with whānau**, recognising that safe culture is built with, not just for, the community
- **active risk management**, including monitoring of Infinite platforms for safeguarding purposes in line with privacy obligations.

Related Policies

This policy brings together Infinite's key safety documents. Each is summarised below so that the overall framework is clear.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

This policy sets out Infinite's obligations to prevent, identify, and respond to child protection concerns, including neglect, abuse, grooming, or exploitation. It explains reporting pathways, roles of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), staff responsibilities, and thresholds for escalation to external agencies.

Why does this matter for a safe and inclusive environment? Safeguarding protects students' fundamental right to be physically and emotionally safe, and ensures Infinite can act quickly and appropriately when a learner may be at risk. This security is the foundation for belonging and achievement: students are only able to learn, connect, and thrive in an inclusive online school when harm is actively prevented and responded to in a clear, trusted way.

Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

This policy defines bullying (including cyberbullying), explains how Infinite prevents bullying through culture and education, and details how incidents are reported, investigated, and responded to. It emphasises restorative practice, accountability, and ongoing support for both those harmed and those who cause harm.

Why does this matter for a safe and inclusive environment? Bullying and harassment undermine wellbeing, identity, and belonging. By preventing and responding to these behaviours, Infinite protects every student's right to participate in learning without fear or exclusion, and supports a culture where respectful relationships and inclusive achievement are the norm.

Online Safety Policy

This policy sets expectations and systems for safe digital learning, including platform use, privacy, monitoring, and responding to online incidents. It also addresses generative AI risks and outlines how Infinite manages threats to safety occurring online or off-platform.

Why does this matter for a safe and inclusive environment? In a fully online school, the digital space is the school environment. Online safety protections therefore directly uphold students' physical and emotional safety, preserve respectful participation, and ensure everyone can learn and belong without exposure to digital harm.

Attendance and Engagement Policy

This policy defines how Infinite records and monitors attendance in an online setting, responds early and supportively to absence or disengagement, and meets its legal duties around student attendance and accurate reporting. It is guided by principles of access and inclusion, early support, consistency and fairness, partnership with whānau, and learning-centred engagement.

Why does this matter for a safe and inclusive environment? Regular attendance and meaningful engagement help students stay connected, supported, and progressing. By noticing absence early and responding with care and partnership, Infinite reduces the risks of isolation, disengagement, and harm, and strengthens every learner's opportunity to belong and achieve.

Complaints Procedure

This procedure provides a fair, accessible pathway for raising concerns or complaints about safety, wellbeing, inclusion, or conduct. It includes informal and formal steps, response timeframes, and escalation options.

Why does this matter for a safe and inclusive environment? Safety and inclusion depend on people being able to speak up without fear or confusion. A clear complaints pathway builds trust, ensures concerns are heard and addressed fairly, and helps Infinite continuously improve the everyday learning environment for students and staff.

Student Learning, Wellbeing and Behaviour (Discipline and Safety) Policy

This policy explains Infinite's learning-behaviour expectations, the supports that build them, and the fair processes used when behaviour affects learning or safety. It applies across all Infinite contexts, especially virtual classrooms, and follows a "Learning First" approach that teaches and restores before disciplining.

Why does this matter for a safe and inclusive environment? It keeps online learning safe and respectful by setting clear boundaries, providing early support, and ensuring any consequences are fair, consistent, and focused on restoring everyone's right to learn and belong.

Educational Delivery & Assessment Policies

Infinite has dedicated policies within its Educational Delivery & Assessment suite that set out how we identify, support, and assess learners with diverse needs in an online environment. These include specific policies for students with special educational needs and disabilities, gifted and talented learners, and students learning English as an additional language, as well as frameworks for Individual Education Plans (IEPs), tiered learning support and intervention, and assistive technology.

Why does this matter for a safe and inclusive environment? Equity and belonging are only real when learners can access teaching and assessment in ways that match their strengths and needs. These policies explain how Infinite removes barriers, personalises support, and ensures fair assessment so every student can participate safely, feel included, and achieve their best.

Together these policies form Infinite's integrated framework for a safe, inclusive learning environment.

Learner Diversity, Special Education Needs, and Inclusive Support

Infinite is committed to inclusive education that recognises and responds to the diverse learning needs of all students. This includes students with special educational needs (including disability-related needs), gifted and talented learners, and students learning English as an additional language. These learners have the same rights to enrol, participate, and achieve at Infinite as all other students, and are entitled to freedom from discrimination on the grounds of disability or other protected characteristics.

In practice, Infinite ensures that policies and procedures relating to learners with additional or differentiated needs are:

- (a) objective, valuing diversity and embedded within teaching and learning — supports are integrated into curriculum and pastoral practice rather than treated as add-ons;
- (b) regularly reviewed and developed to enhance effectiveness and to reflect changing learner needs;
- (c) well communicated to staff and whānau/caregivers, with shared understanding of roles and supports;

- (d) consistently applied across Infinite environments, including virtual classrooms and digital platforms; and
- (e) compliant with relevant legislation, including the right of learners with special educational needs to receive education on the same basis as others (Education and Training Act 2020, section 34) and to be free from discrimination (New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990, section 21(h)).

Infinite removes barriers to learning through a continuum of supports that aligns with its Educational Delivery & Assessment Policies. This includes:

- Universal supports for all learners, guided by Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, accessible digital platforms, flexible pacing, and inclusive curriculum design.
- Targeted and intensive supports where needed, through Infinite's tiered Learning Support and Intervention framework.
- Individualised planning via collaborative, student-centred Individual Education Plans (IEPs) developed with the student, whānau, teachers, and relevant specialists.
- Assistive technology to support access, independence, and progress in the online environment, including training for students, whānau, and staff.
- Specialised pathways and enrichment for gifted and talented learners, including enrichment opportunities, acceleration where appropriate, mentoring, and social-emotional support.
- English language learning support for students who are developing academic English, including scaffolding in mainstream classes, specialist instruction, multilingual/translated supports where available, and culturally responsive engagement with families.

The SENCO (and other designated learning support staff) coordinates support planning and works with teachers, students, whānau, and external professionals to ensure early identification, appropriate accommodations, and ongoing review. Where learners face wellbeing or safety risks linked to learning barriers, Infinite responds through support planning and proportionate safeguards rather than exclusionary default responses.

Infinite recognises that inclusion is not only academic; it also requires social belonging, peer connection, and culturally safe participation. Infinite therefore supports social inclusion, relationship building, and transition planning, including preparation for post-school pathways.

Note: Detailed procedures for identification, assessment, IEP development, gifted education, English language learning support, learning interventions, and assistive technology are set out in Infinite's Special Educational Needs suite within the Educational Delivery & Assessment Policies. This policy confirms their place within Infinite's safe and inclusive learning environment framework.

Reporting and Responding to Concerns

Any member of the Infinite community who experiences or witnesses behaviour that threatens safety or inclusion should report it early. Reporting pathways are set out in the relevant related policies, but in summary:

- **Students** may report to their teacher, Dean, counsellor, or directly to the DSL.
- **Whānau/caregivers** may report to the DSL, Principal, or via the Complaints Procedure.
- **Staff** must report safety concerns to the DSL as soon as practicable.

Infinite will respond in ways that prioritise immediate safety, preserve dignity, and restore safe participation. Where conduct overlaps multiple policies (e.g., cyberbullying with safeguarding concerns), Infinite will coordinate responses so the student is not required to navigate systems alone.

Version Control

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