What is Ahikura Whānau-Centred Fire Education?

Ahikura Whānau-Centred Fire Education is here to teach our taiohi (young people) and their whānau (family) how to be safe around fire. Our programme is free, confidential and voluntary (except for referrals from the Police or Court).

The programme is delivered by our Ahikura practitioners who will work one-on-one with taiohi (aged 5 to 17) and their whānau in their homes, but if that's not possible, we will find another suitable venue. The approach and content we use for taiohi is adapted depending on their age, cultural background, past and learning abilities. We usually do two sessions with taiohi and whānau, but sometimes it may take longer.

We work with taiohi who are curious about fire through to those who have undertaken risky fire behaviour. If you aren't sure whether Ahikura is the right fit, get in touch with us. We're always happy to kōrero (talk) and answer your questions about the programme. Once we receive your referral, we aim to respond within 72 hours.

Referrals to Ahikura can be made from a wide range of sources including:

- Parents and caregivers
- Schools
- Police
- Youth Justice courts
- Oranga Tamariki
- Community services
- Health providers
- and other social service agencies.

Need help or want to talk? We can help

Please phone **0800 734 2667** or scan for more information

E-mail **ahikura@fireandemergency.nz**

Use the referral form here:

fireandemergency.nz/ahikura

FIRE EMERGENCY NEW ZEALAND

Fire lighting behaviour by our taiohi, young people

A community challenge

AHIKURA

WHĀNAU-CENTRED FIRE EDUCATION

Fire lighting in the community is a social problem

Fire and Emergency New Zealand attends over two thousand suspicious fires every year.

The financial cost of this is millions of dollars a year, as well as the impact and losses to victims, families, communities, businesses and employees is devastating.

Every year we see an estimated 6,545 deliberately lit fires and half of which are lit by young people under 20 years of age.

Taiohi light fires for a variety of reasons. Some act out of curiosity and experiment with using matches and lighters. Others light fires to deal with a crisis, as a cry for help, or they may be responding to peer pressure.

Schools are frequently the target of arson attacks by taiohi. While in some cases there may be no deliberate or malicious intent, there is a lack of understanding of the speed in which fire develops and spreads, and the likely consequences of their behaviour. We use a variety of resources and methods which is then adapted depending on their age, cultural background, past behaviour and learning abilities. We usually do two sessions with taiohi and whānau, but sometimes it may take longer.

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> **90% of taiohi who complete Ahikura stop fire lighting**

Why do children and teenagers start fires?

To solve the problem and support our taiohi, we must understand the real cause.

Curiosity

- Taiohi may start to experiment with fire from about three to six years of age.
- This can be linked to an attraction to the colour, light or energy released by a flame.

Attention seeking

- This is usually observed in taiohi from about six to 12 years of age. This could be to do with a change in the whānau situation, for example a new baby, parent separation or learning difficulties.

Peer pressure

- This can be due to difficulties with relating to their peers and low self-esteem.
- Peer pressure can affect taiohi from about 10 to 14 years of age.

Anger or revenge

- This can be a motive for taiohi from eight to 14 years of age.
- Family and social difficulties may be the cause.

Malicious mischief

- This can be seen in taiohi aged nine to 16 years of age.
- Family and social difficulties may be the cause.

What can you do?

To solve the problem and support our taiohi, we must understand the real cause.

- Matches
- Lighters (including novelty and BBQ lighters)
- Fire-starters
- Candles
- Fireworks

Always keep them in a secure place so taiohi can’t access them, and they should only use them with adult supervision.

Our taiohi understand that if they find any of these items, they should immediately give them to a responsible adult. Praise them for being fire-safe every time they do this.