

RIGHTS: NOW!

SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO HAVE A SAY ON MATTERS THAT AFFECT THEM

A resource for students in years 7–10



COVID-19: It matters, so have your say!

COVID-19 has impacted us all in different ways, and this resource is designed to help you to think about how it has impacted you, and what you would like to see happen differently in our future post COVID-19 world. This resource will help you to understand some of your rights and support you to exercise them too.

The Children's Convention

As a young person, you have the same basic human rights as adults, but you also have additional rights as a child or young person.

Some of your rights are set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which is sometimes called the 'Children's Convention'. The Children's Convention outlines the universal basic rights of all people under 18 years old.

For more information, you could check out this [link](#) to start reading about some of your rights.

The Children's Convention in Aotearoa

When the New Zealand Government signed up to the Children's Convention, it agreed to promote, protect, respect and fulfil your rights.

The Government also has to uphold these rights in the context of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi) as it is one of the founding documents of Aotearoa New Zealand. To read about Te Tiriti o Waitangi, you could start by looking here on the [TKI website](#) at this cool [comic book](#).

New Zealand's history, including the adoption of British laws, the Treaty of Waitangi, te ao Māori (Māori worldview), and the impact of colonisation, all make up the context in which we all live here today.

Your rights and COVID-19

During COVID-19 all of us have had to follow rules set by the Government, which have sometimes meant that we aren't allowed to do things that we normally can do (like see friends when we were in Level 3 and 4 of Lockdown).

One right that we think is really important during this time is your right to have a say and share your opinion on matters that affect you.

This resource is designed to help you learn about your rights, but also to reflect on your experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For additional information about COVID-19 and your wellbeing, check out this resource: [Wellbeing support for young people: Coping with Covid-19](#)

To support you to have a say during this time, you may want to try out some of the activities on this resource, focussing on COVID-19 and thinking about your right to have a say in matters that affect you.

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Activities

ACTIVITY ONE: 'Building back better'(BBB): What were your experiences of education as we moved through the levels of COVID-19 response?

Building Back Better (BBB) is an approach to post-disaster recovery that reduces vulnerability to future disasters and builds community resilience to address physical, social, environmental, and economic vulnerabilities and shocks. Recovery within a BBB framework gives impacted communities the chance to reduce risk not only from the immediate hazard but from threatening hazards and conditions as well¹.

Using the BBB concept and referring to the article of [Yes, Schools Can 'Build Back Better' From COVID-19, and Here's How](#) (Source: Education Post), explore ways in which you think education was better and/or worse during this time (think about during Lockdown Levels 3 and 4 especially).

Reflect: Were there already problems with our education system that home learning highlighted? What improvements would you make to education and learning? What are the opportunities for embracing or developing your ideas within current learning environments?

Connect: With other young people in your community, New Zealand and/or the world. Talk to them about their experiences and ideas for improvement.

Act: Write a letter or produce a video for your friends, your school, your community or even the Ministry of Education (or other chosen audience) reflecting these ideas and hopes.

See Image 1 as an example from 'TKI assessment tools resources' which will help you to think about how to frame up your argument, and also how your teacher might be assessing you.

Deeper features	Possum Debate
Ideas Develops ideas with some detail.	I am against possums because they eat our trees, and at the same time are killing our native birds. If they eat all our trees, the birds will have nowhere to live! When a possum does not feel like leaves or branches, they will go straight for our native birds eggs! Down with possums! If they eat our trees, it's not just the birds that will suffer! people will lose their jobs, less furniture will be made and less firewood will be sold. Plant growers will be broke! GET RID OF POSSUMS! They eat trees, wreck gardens, destruct huts, they will do just about anything! Send 'em back to Australia!
Structure Sequences ideas logically (position taken, evidence, emphatic ending).	
Sentences Uses a variety of beginnings and structures.	
Vocabulary Attempts words that make the argument more powerful.	
Language features Uses some persuasive language features, especially emotive words and phrases, imperatives and emphatic devices such as capitals and exclamation marks.	

Image 1: An example from 'TKI assessment tools resources'

¹ [Build Back Better in Post-Disaster Recovery \(GFDRR\)](#)

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ACTIVITY TWO: Future Smart Planning

Some of us have had feelings of uncertainty lately, not quite knowing what the future will look like next week, or in a year! Being prepared for change can help us cope.

Below we provide steps that you can take to '**Build Back Better**'. Focus on your strengths, supports, and heroes, and the things you want to do to help yourself and others. You could write, draw, or record your plan, or mix it up! Do it alone or with friends and whānau.

STEP 1: Who am I? When we worry about new or big things, we can forget about the things we are good at, including how we have coped with big stuff in the past. Now is a good time to remind yourself of the things that you are good at and enjoy and the people that support you.

STEP 2: Everyday heroes: A lot of people worked hard to keep us safe during COVID-19. Is there someone you admire or who was helpful during the lockdown? What makes them special? Is there a way you could tell them? Or could you help others the way they did?

STEP 3: Different but the same: What things have changed in your life lately, and what has stayed the same? Of the things that have changed, and you have liked, how could you keep them going after we move alert levels?

STEP 4: What have I learnt? Even if we feel a bit scared about a change or difficult situation, most of the time we cope. Afterwards, we feel stronger and know more about ourselves. Think about how you coped when school stopped quickly, and you had to stay in your bubble? What did you do to cope? What was helpful to you?

STEP 5: Acting up for good: When we are dealing with something new or difficult, it can help to take action. What are some of the things you can do that might help you get used to or deal with the situations as they unfold? For example, it might be finding out about what will happen or talking to a teacher or friend. Choose at least one idea and try it out.

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ACTIVITY THREE: Places to go, things to do

By regularly washing your hands or practising physical distancing when it is necessary, you are already helping others. But you may also be thinking, *'I want and need to do more!'* Being able to act on something that matters and helps others also helps people feel positive about a situation. So, what is your role going to be during the COVID-19 recovery and its aftermath? There are always things that we can do to show kindness and gratitude.

Below are some links to help get ideas flowing!

1. [Student Volunteer Army – Primary School Kits](#) (Source: Student Volunteer Army)
2. [Volunteering New Zealand](#) (Source: Volunteering New Zealand)
3. [Spreading acts of compassion](#) (Source: Caremongering New Zealand)
4. [Community kindness: how to help others during COVID-19](#) (Source: Wellington New Zealand).

Check out these links and decide on what you might want to do. But remember, you don't have to do big things all the time. Small acts of kindness make big impacts.