Relationship Agreement

Between Sport New Zealand and Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children

September 2026

1. Purpose

This Relationship Agreement replaces the agreement signed by the parties in 2019.

The Agreement is the foundation for a practical, collaborative relationship between Sport New Zealand (Sport NZ) and Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children (Oranga Tamariki) to support increased participation in play, active recreation and sport for children and young people across the Oranga Tamariki system.[1]

This will be achieved through existing structures, roles and partnerships, without creating additional layers of process or expectation for frontline services.

Nothing in the Agreement shall make either party liable for the actions of the other or constitute any legal relationship between the parties.

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2. Parties

Sport New Zealand

Sport NZ contributes to the wellbeing of everybody in Aotearoa New Zealand by leading an enriching and inspiring play, active recreation and sport sector, with a particular focus on supporting participation for children and young people and communities with low activity levels.

Oranga Tamariki—Ministry for Children

Oranga Tamariki supports children and young people whose wellbeing is at risk, including those in care and youth justice. This includes meeting Care Standard 34, which requires support for children and young people to participate in sport, recreation, play and community life.[2]

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3. How we will work together

Our collaboration will be guided by the following principles:

- we will focus on practical actions that can be delivered through existing frontline roles, caregivers, and community providers
- we will prioritise local, flexible solutions that respond to the needs of children and young people, caregivers, whānau or families
- we will use evidence and shared learning where it adds value, without creating additional reporting or compliance burden
- information sharing will be proportionate, lawful and primarily de-identified
- we will coordinate where helpful, and avoid duplicating effort or creating parallel processes

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[1] Refers to the core populations of interest to Oranga Tamariki as defined in Section 5 of Children's Act 2014.

[2] Regulation 34 of the Oranga Tamariki (National Care Standards and Related Matters) Regulations 2018.

- we acknowledge the complex and intersectional needs, identities, and experiences of children and young people, including disabled, rainbow, Māori and Pacific, migrant and refugee, and will seek to address inequities where appropriate
- we acknowledge the importance of culturally grounded approaches, particularly for tamariki and rangatahi Māori, working with iwi and community organisations
- no single agency is responsible for complex outcomes; this agreement supports collective effort, not transfer of accountability.

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4. Shared outcomes

This agreement focuses on enabling:

- stronger cross sector relationships, with Oranga Tamariki and Sport NZ jointly leading system change while regional partners implement tailored local solutions
- consistent opportunities nationwide, ensuring funding and structured planning for play, active recreation and sport, are inclusive across the Oranga Tamariki system
- trauma informed, culturally grounded practice across the play, active recreation and sport sector, supported by training and guidelines for providers
- youth voice embedded in programme design, operational policy development, funding and participation decisions, through advisory panels and co-design structures
- improved wellbeing, community connection, and education engagement among participants; where relevant, reductions in reoffending.

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5. What this means for the frontline

For Oranga Tamariki frontline staff and caregivers, this relationship means:

- access to clearer information, tools or pathways (where developed) to help connect children and young people to local opportunities
- reliance on community providers and existing networks, rather than direct delivery by frontline staff
- engagement that is optional, purposeful and issue-based, not standing meetings or additional reporting
- recognition that participation may not always be possible due to safety, placement stability or higher-priority needs.

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6. Engagement and governance

- Strategic engagement between agencies will occur as needed, rather than on a fixed schedule.
- Chief Executive engagement will be by exception, focused on resolving issues or enabling alignment where required.

- Day-to-day collaboration will occur at operational and regional levels, linked to specific initiatives or opportunities.
- Each organisation will nominate a delegated representative to act as the lead for the relationship between the two agencies. These representatives will meet no fewer than twice annually to review progress and discuss matters relating to the purpose and commitments outlined in this agreement.
- Where joint initiatives are undertaken, the respective roles, responsibilities and expected outcomes will be clearly documented at the outset. Progress will be monitored through existing governance, reporting or project arrangements wherever possible. Clear lines of accountability will be established which will, as a minimum, identify one member of the Senior Management or Leadership team from each agency as the accountable lead.

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7. Term and review

This agreement takes effect on signing and continues unless withdrawn by either agency with three months' written notice.

The agreement may be reviewed or updated at the discretion of the agencies, based on experience and changing priorities.

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8. Dispute resolution

Any issues will be addressed at the lowest appropriate operational level, escalating only where necessary.

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9. Communication

The agencies will consult each other before any public communications are released where the other party has a clear interest.

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10. Schedules

New schedules to this Relationship Agreement may be developed with approval from the Agency Representatives (see section 6).

The schedules to this Relationship Agreement include:

- Schedule One: Sport New Zealand – Oranga Tamariki Action Plan to improve participation in play, active recreation and sport across the Oranga Tamariki system.

Execution

Signed by Raelene Castle, Chief Executive

I have authority to sign for Sport New Zealand

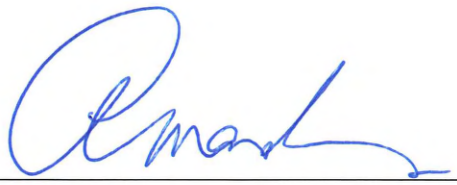


Signature

Date: 23/11/26

Signed by Amanda Malu, Chief Executive

I have authority to sign for Oranga Tamariki



Signature

Date: 23/11/26

Schedule One: Sport New Zealand – Oranga Tamariki Action Plan to improve participation in play, active recreation and sport across the Oranga Tamariki system

Purpose: To ensure all children and young people in the Oranga Tamariki system have equitable access to play, active recreation and sport, supporting their wellbeing, engagement and long-term positive outcomes.

No.	Area	Description of action	Expected outcomes	Timeframe
Priority Area 1: Strengthening collaboration to enable a coordinated and consistent response across agencies and regions				
1	Refresh Relationship Agreement	Update and agree a refreshed Relationship Agreement between Sport NZ and Oranga Tamariki that clarifies the purpose of the relationship, the ways of working between the organisations, and how progress against this joint Action Blueprint will be governed, monitored and managed.	• Clear shared purpose, roles and accountability between Sport NZ and Oranga Tamariki. • Established governance, monitoring and managing arrangements for joint work. • Improved alignment of national and regional priorities.	November 2026
2	Embed youth voices in programming decisions	Establish mechanisms to enable care and youth justice-experienced children and young people to participate in work to understand and address barriers to participation in play, active recreation and sport.	• More responsive and relevant initiatives for care and youth justice-experienced children and young people. • Increased trust and engagement.	Ongoing through to June 2028
3	Enable connections between Sport NZ, Regional Sport Trusts (RSTs), and Oranga Tamariki	Establish regular national connections between Sport NZ and Oranga Tamariki (Tamariki & Whānau Services and Youth Justice) to strengthen relationships and ensure ongoing alignment. Support regional and local connections between RSTs, Oranga Tamariki Regional Commissioners, and Regional Youth Justice Managers to facilitate information sharing and coordinated local delivery.	• Stronger and sustained national, regional and local relationships. • Improved coordination of locally led planning and delivery. • Increased awareness and uptake of existing physical activity opportunities.	Ongoing through to June 2028
Priority Area 2: Building workforce capability to deliver high-quality, consistent, and responsive practice across care, youth justice, and sport and recreation				

4	Map providers of shared interest	Complete a joint stocktake of current and potential providers using physical activity to improve outcomes for children and young people of interest to Oranga Tamariki. This stocktake will be shared between Oranga Tamariki, Sport NZ and RSTs.	• Clear understanding of available providers and gaps in provision. • Improved visibility of opportunities for Oranga Tamariki staff and RSTs. • Better targeting of investment and referrals.	August 2026 (complete)
5	Review workforce quality and capability	Review workforce capability across the sport and recreation sector with a focus on trauma-informed, culturally responsive and inclusive practice. Explore opportunities to increase awareness of the value of play, active recreation and sport across the care and youth justice workforce.	• Improved understanding of workforce strengths and capability gaps. • Clear priorities for workforce development.	December 2026
6	Enable workforce connection, shared practice, and learning	Develop and consider initiatives to improve workforce awareness and capability based on identified needs (including training, guidance, and communities of practice). This will support shared understanding, aligned expectations, and consistent quality of delivery across sectors.	• Stronger cross-sector networks and communities of practice. • Improved quality and consistency of delivery. • Increased workforce confidence and capability.	May 2027
Priority Area 3: Improving equitable access and participation by identifying and addressing operational barriers				
7	Build an evidence-based picture of need	Establish a shared, evidence-based understanding of the operational barriers and enablers affecting access and participation in play, active recreation and sport across the care spectrum, drawing on the following sources (at a minimum): • Sport NZ *Unlocking Opportunities* report (2025). • Aroturuki Tamariki *More than a Game* report (2026). • Joint Sport NZ-Oranga Tamariki/Ministry of Culture and Heritage workshops to build shared understanding of system factors influencing access to play, active recreation and sport. • Input from key stakeholders, including iwi, care-experienced children and young people, caregivers and community providers. Insights from this work will be shared to support future policy work led by Oranga Tamariki and the Ministry for Culture and Heritage.	• Shared, evidence-based understanding of access issues across the system. • Better-informed decision-making and programme design. • Alignment across agencies on priority issues.	December 2026

8	Develop targeted initiatives to reduce barriers and enhance enablers	Work collaboratively to develop initiatives that respond to evidence-based barriers and enablers identified in Action 7, to support children's and young people's consistent access to quality play, active recreation and sport across the Oranga Tamariki system. Actions will include a mix of short, medium and long-term initiatives for Ministerial consideration.	• Set of actions developed to address identified barriers and enablers. • Mix of short, medium and long-term initiatives for ministerial consideration. • Improved consistency of access to quality physical activity opportunities.	May 2027
Priority Area 4: Using sport and physical activity to support prevention and positive pathways for young people in, or at risk of entering, the youth justice system				
9	Inform distribution of Sport NZ Community Impact Investment	Collaborate on assessing proposals seeking Community Impact Investment funding, including Oranga Tamariki providing feedback on organisations suitable for investment. Oranga Tamariki will also be invited to review proposals targeting children and young people in Youth Justice Residences.	• Investments are better aligned to priority communities and needs. • Increased reach and effectiveness of funded initiatives. • Scaling successful programmes.	Ongoing through to March 2027
10	Collaborate on potential systems investment opportunities	Work in partnership to design and deliver initiatives that demonstrate and promote the role of physical activity and sport in positive youth development and crime prevention, including pilot programmes, cross-sector events, and shared learning activities (e.g. Bluelight Youth Justice Conference 2027).	• Increased cross-sector understanding of physical activity as a prevention tool. • Development of system-level initiatives supporting shared outcomes. • Stronger collaboration across sport and recreation, care and youth justice sectors.	Ongoing through to June 2028