

ROTOTUNA HIGH SCHOOLS KAAKAHU/CLOAK



SYMBOLS

We have designed our Kaakahu/CLOAK symbols to capture the symbolic significance of the elements and mana that go into the creation of a kaakahu (cloak) and link this to the essence of our Kaakahu/CLOAK. A fine kaakahu might take a skilled weaver several years to complete, so they were treasured garments.		
	<div>Perseverance</div> <div>Adventurous</div> <div>Mindset</div>	<p>Muka is the inner fibre extracted from the long, sword-like leaves of the harakeke (New Zealand flax) and is used to weave traditional kākahu. Careful observation of protocols and rituals protect the mauri (life force) of the plants and material harvested for weaving, and the mauri of the weaver themselves.</p> <p>Muka is extracted and processed by scraping the outer flesh from the leaves with a mussel shell, then rolling, soaking, and beating the fibre. The fibre must be rubbed by hand several times to soften the threads for weaving. Each strand of muka takes time and effort to extract and prepare and on its own simply represents potential. However woven together, it is a powerful symbol of strength and connection.</p> <p>The Muka represents ‘Challenge Our Mindset’, understanding that it is the unseen elements of mindset, adventure and perseverance that is the inner fibre that creates our base and helps us grow.</p>
	<div>Critical Thinking</div> <div>Creative Thinking</div> <div>Connected Thinking</div>	<p>Aho Whenua connects and binds the elements of the Kaakahu. Weavers divide the muka strands into two groups of thread – aho (horizontal threads, or the weft) and whenu (vertical threads, or the warp). They weave these together by twining, or twisting to form the cloak. The weaving technique is ‘whatu’. Very simple but very time consuming. Every stitch is handmade.</p> <p>Māori believe this weaving process connects the physical and spiritual realms – te ira tangata (the realm of people) with te ira atua (the realm of the gods). The language of weaving reflects this belief. ‘Aho’ refers to connections. ‘Whenu’ may represent the womb or whenua (land).</p> <p>Together, Aho Whenua represents ‘Learning Power’, like the whenu and the aho of the cloak, linking between critical, creative and connected thinking deepens our learning and sustains us.</p>
	<div>Meta Learning</div> <div>Engagement</div> <div>Managing Self</div>	<p>Hukahuka are decorative tags or tassels that adorn the kaakahu. They are made by the miro (twist thread) process of dying the muka (flax fibre) and rolling the two bundles into a single cord which is then woven into the CLOAK.</p> <p>Korowai (tasselled cloaks) developed from pake (rain capes). Pake were covered with flat leaf strips that had a practical purpose – to channel rain off the cloak and keep the wearer dry. Innovative weavers transformed these practical strips into elegant tassels. Korowai take their name from korokoro (loose) and wai (water, or flowing).</p> <p>The hukahuka cascade down the kaakahu, rippling, swaying and clattering in rhythm with the wearer’s every movement.</p> <p>For this reason, Hukahuka represents ‘Ourselves as Learners’, as it is the wearer’s everyday actions that determine his or her unique learning journey.</p>
	<div>Whakapapa</div> <div>Tangata Whenuatanga</div> <div>Hapori</div>	<p>Tāniko is a uniquely Māori variation of whatu (twining) and is used to weave the colourful, intricate borders of cloaks, creating geometric patterns which tell the stories of whakapapa.</p> <p>Weavers take inspiration from patterns of significance for iwi and whenua however, ultimately use these patterns to tell their own stories. For example the ‘niho taniwha’ pattern (saw edge / monster’s teeth) may have deep ties and association with the Waikato ‘he piko he taniwha’ (For every turn of the Waikato river, there is a taniwha) yet this pattern is employed by many weavers in designing taniko.</p> <p>A cloak, over its lifetime, absorbs the mana (prestige) first of the weaver and subsequently of every wearer and every event it is associated with thereafter.</p> <p>The Tāniko symbolizes ‘Ahurea Tuakiri’, highlighting the significance of whakapapa and the importance of people and place in shaping our identity.</p>
	<div>Manaakitanga</div> <div>Kaitiakitanga</div> <div>Kotahitanga</div>	<p>Manu, or bird, feathers were chosen by weavers with great care to transfer the mauri (life force) from manu to the wearer through the kaakahu.</p> <p>The mana (prestige) of kahu huruhuru derives from the Māori belief that birds are the children of Tāne (god of the forest), and a messenger between the spiritual and physical realms. Each bird has a mauri (life force) and special qualities, and these become part of a cloak’s essence and personality. Very rare feathers lend great mana to a cloak and its wearer. The kiwi holds particular significance. The elusive and mysterious nature of this nocturnal bird gives kahu kiwi greater mana (prestige) than other feather cloaks.</p> <p>The Manu feather symbolises ‘Kindness and Respect’, and how by honouring and respecting others we give and receive mana.</p>

Awhina Tamarapa and Patricia Wallace, 'Māori clothing and adornment – kākahu Māori - Weaving traditions and technique', Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/interactive/40989/the-symbolic-meaning-of-kakahu-cloaks> (accessed 20 May 2020)