

Science Years 0–10: Conceptual Focus Statements

The New Zealand Curriculum, August 2026.

Topic	Phase 1 Years 0–3	Phase 2 Years 4–6	Phase 3 Years 7–8	Phase 4 Years 9–10
Physical Science				
Materials / Matter	Objects are made from materials that have different properties and uses.	Matter has measurable properties and can undergo physical and chemical changes that rearrange matter.	All substances are made of particles, and their arrangement and interaction can change.	The properties and behaviour of substances are determined by atomic structure and interactions between atoms.
Chemical Change	<i>Not taught in this phase</i>	<i>Not taught in this phase</i>	<i>Not taught in this phase</i>	Substances have properties that can be tested for. The properties of reactants can be used to predict the products of chemical reactions.
Matter Interactions and Energy	Light and sound travel and interact with materials.	Humans use the transfer of thermal energy and electric charge through materials for a range of purposes.	Materials absorb, reflect, transmit, and respond to light and heating in predictable ways.	Physical systems involve interactions between matter, fields, and the transfer of energy.
Motion and Forces	Pushes and pulls affect the movement of all objects.	Forces act on objects and can change their motion in predictable ways.	Speed describes how fast an object moves. An object's motion is determined by the force applied to it.	Forces affect the motion of objects and how they interact with their surroundings.
Earth and Space	<i>Not taught in this phase</i>	Humans have developed models of the natural world by observing patterns and gathering evidence, enabling us to understand, explain and predict natural phenomena.	Year 7: Earth has observable and predictable patterns as it orbits the Sun. Year 8: Earth's crust has natural materials which can change form and can be used by humans.	Year 9: The Solar System has been and continues to be explored through observation, evidence, and advances in technology. Year 10: Processes within Earth's systems cycle materials and change Earth's surface over time.
Biological Science				
Organism Diversity	Organisms live in diverse ways including how they grow and feed.	Organisms inherit traits through reproduction. There is more diversity between species than within species.	Individuals who survive in their environment pass on their traits to offspring.	An organism's survival and characteristics are influenced by biological systems, genetic information, and environmental factors.
Life Processes	The human body senses, interacts with, and obtains resources from the environment for survival.	Body systems work together to enable movement, digestion, and circulation to be carried out.	All organisms need to carry out specific life processes for survival.	Multicellular organisms require regulatory and nervous systems to move essential substances, respond to stimuli, and maintain internal balance.
Ecosystems	Organisms interact with each other and share the resources of a habitat.	Habitats are places where organisms live, interact with other organisms, and obtain the resources they need for survival.	An ecosystem is a community of organisms interacting with the biotic and abiotic components of their environment.	Resilient ecosystems are dependent on connected processes and material cycles.

Source: Ministry of Education | Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga — The New Zealand Curriculum, Science Years 0–10 (proposed content, August 2026).