

THE CHARACTER OF A CATHOLIC SCHOOL
(brief statement for the information of teachers)

This Statement is to be read in association with the School Charter.

The Special Character of a Catholic school is defined in the Integration Agreement as follows:

öThe school is a Roman Catholic school in which the whole school community, through the general school program and in its religious education and observances, exercises the right to live and teach the values of Jesus Christ. These values are as expressed in the Scriptures and in the practices, worship and doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, as determined from time to time by the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese.ö

A teacher applying for a position in a Catholic school needs to understand the commitment this involves.

1. All teachers, whether Catholic or not, are part of this öwhole school communityö. Each teacher is therefore expected to use his or her specific skills to achieve the goals and purposes of the school.
2. A Catholic school assists the Church in its mission. It does this by helping its young people to become complete persons who possess the knowledge, faith and other attributes that make for harmonious living.
3. All learning areas are taught for their own value and with their own objectives. Catholics believe that truth in every sphere, religious or secular, is from God.
4. The Religious Education Programme is an integral part of the curriculum. The principles, truths and ethics of that programme permeate whatever the school does. The focal point of the whole school is Christ. Students are taught that God is creator; that Jesus Christ is God-made-man; that their ultimate goal is heaven; that authority to teach and interpret God's revelation was entrusted to the Church and is exercised by the Pope and Bishops. The school as a whole subscribes to the Apostles' Creed which is the oldest of the formulas used by Christians to express their faith. It accepts the two-fold commandment of Christ, love of God and neighbour, and the other values expressed by Christ as norms of living.
5. No teacher will be required to act against her/his own conscience or personal philosophy of life. This would be unchristian and contrary to the aims of the school.
However, in accepting a position in a Catholic school, it is expected that the teacher realises that:
 - (a) Teachers work as a team. Therefore, all teachers are expected to contribute, according to their individual strengths and within their personal convictions, to the total purpose of the school. No school can operate successfully if any staff member undermines the efforts of others.
 - (b) Teachers are role models. A school community rightly expects teachers to act so as to be appropriate models for its young people. The values in a Catholic school are unabashedly Christian values. All staff in a Catholic school are expected to model these values in their behaviours and to teach and proclaim them to their students. Behaviour by a teacher which would give the school community grounds for thinking that the teacher's attitudes is antagonistic to the Catholic character and Christian values of the school would not only be unprofessional, but it could also damage or even destroy that teacher's effectiveness and credibility.
 - (c) Teachers in Catholic schools, who do not profess Catholicism, are expected to promote the Catholic character of the school and at the same time, to refrain from doing or saying anything which would be antithetical to the school's Special Character.
6. New teachers will find senior staff willing to assist them in gaining a fuller understanding of the school and its Special Character along with solving any difficulties that may arise in the course of their teaching responsibilities. In addition, the following will be found helpful and copies can be found in the staffroom or school library:
 - Religious Education Programme Curriculum Statement for Catholic Primary Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand; (NCRS, 1996)
 - The Declaration, (New Zealand Council of Proprietors of Catholic Integrated Schools, 2008)