



St James' Catholic School

Whakaruru Hau

A Sheltering Place

— Te Kura Katorika o Hāto Heemi —

ST JAMES' SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Policy on Special Character and Religious Education

Date Reviewed:	November 2017
Review Team:	T Edwards, M Fennessy, L Eaton, M Balm, A Cawood
Date of Next Review:	February 2020
Connection to the Bishops document "The Catholic Education of School Age Children"	The Catholic school is first and foremost "a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth". Its primary goal is "above all a question of communicating Christ, of helping to form Christ in the lives of others".
Related Documents:	School Charter, All Board Policies, The St James' School Curriculum Delivery Plan, Job Descriptions, Performance Management Cycle, Handbook for the Board of Trustees of New Zealand Catholic Integrated Schools, The Catholic Education of School Age Children
NAG:	1
Community Consultation:	April 2018
Signed:	
Date Reviewed:	

INTRODUCTION

St James' Catholic School is a Roman Catholic Integrated School and the philosophy of Catholic schools is defined by NZCEO (2002). *Catholic schools are established to carry out the Church's mission. Schools provide a Catholic Faith environment which enable young people to develop the attitudes, knowledge and skills to become active and committed members of the faith community and to contribute positively to the world community.*

The philosophy of the Catholic schools in New Zealand is based on a Catholic understanding of Christianity. Catholic integrated schools live and teach the values of Christ Jesus. These values are expressed in the Scriptures and in the practices, worship and doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.

In all Board of Trustees' decision-making the Special Character of the school is paramount. It is the responsibility that all members of our school community respect and maintain the Special Catholic Character of St James' Catholic School.

Goal One of our Charter LIVING WHAT WE BELIEVE states: At St James' Catholic School we will create our future by building a living, Christian community, following Jesus Christ in prayer and active service, where students are formed in knowledge of the Catholic faith and traditions.

Our Shared Vision:

To grow Catholic, Christian, young people, who are CONFIDENT,CONNECTED LIFELONG LEARNERS, inspired by the teachings of Jesus, and who make a positive difference in their community.

For us to effectively reach our **Shared Vision** and work towards Goal One of our **Charter**, we need the guidance and support of **Shared Gospel Values** which are our deeply held beliefs expressed in ways that we think and act, and that support us to reach our **Shared Vision**.

These are:

SAINTS

"Live The Truth"

They are kind and respectful to themselves, each other and the environment.

STRIVE	ACCEPTANCE	INTEGRITY	NURTURE	TALENTS	SERVICE
A willingness to do your best.	A willingness to be a kind person to everybody, no matter what.	A willingness to be HONEST in what I say and do.	A willingness to care for others and the environment.	A willingness to use and develop our gifts.	A willingness to SERVE without being asked or expecting a reward.
This means persevering to make COURAGEOUS choices.	This means LOVING others by welcoming and including them as friends.	This means being truthful, trustworthy and responsible.	This means looking after our COMMUNITY and environment and encouraging them to grow.	This means we use our special abilities HUMBLY for the good of all.	This means using our freedom to make good choices.

How we make our VISION real

The St James' motto is "Live the Truth."

At St James Catholic School, Jesus and His teachings are at the heart of everything we do. We are encouraged and inspired to grow in faith and to learn more about being a member of the Catholic Church. We are a welcoming community who responds practically, with compassion, understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others. We participate positively in service to contribute to the common good of all.

Everyone has a place here. In our safe and inclusive environment we embrace and value diversity. We recognise and respect the uniqueness of every individual within the school community as made in the image and likeness of God. We acknowledge and accept that there is more than one way to achieve the same goal. We value and encourage the development and sharing of everyone's unique ideas, talents, skills, passions and culture. We understand the importance of supporting everyone to be the best they can be in their daily lives.

GUIDELINES:

Formation

1. Catholic Education is promoted as a lifelong process.
2. Opportunity will be provided annually for staff for their own spiritual formation.
3. **Teaching staff will be required to take advantage of opportunities for professional development in the area of Special Catholic Character**
4. The Proprietor has the expectation that all staff appointed to a tagged position with recommendations will commence those recommendations in the second year of their tenure.
5. Staff meet weekly for staff prayer.
6. Each Board of Trustees' full Board meeting is to commence with a prayer and a short reflection on some aspect of our special Catholic character.
7. Learners will be provided with opportunities to celebrate their faith through school/Parish Masses, liturgies, sacramental celebrations and observances, prayers, service activities etc.
8. Learners will be introduced to a variety of opportunities to enable and empower them to undertake Christian acts of service and to promote social justice.
9. Learners will be given opportunities to pray using the traditional prayers/karakia introduced at each year level, and to explore a variety of ways of praying using the scriptures, music, writing, art, symbols, literature and liturgy.
10. Learners will explore the historical heritage of the Mercy Sisters and their charism.
11. Pastoral support and care for learners and families be well organised and supported within the St James' Catholic School Community

Reporting and Review

12. The Director of Religious Studies and the Special Character sub-committee of the Board of Trustees will meet twice a term.
13. The Proprietors Representatives on the Board of Trustees will report annually to the Proprietor on matters relating to Special Character.
14. Each school year a dimension of the school's Catholic Special Character will be reviewed following the process required by the Proprietor.
15. Use of internal review and evaluation will develop Catholic character strategic and annual goals.

Finances

16. Adequate funds will be provided on a yearly basis to maintain and update Religious Education resource and professional/spiritual learning.

Leadership

17. The non preference (non Catholic) and tagged (Catholic) staffing requirements will be in accordance with the school's Integration Agreement.
18. "Tagged" teaching positions, will be filled by committed Catholic teachers to help maintain the Special Character of our school.
19. On appointment staff will sign the "Character of a Catholic School" form to ratify their support of Special Catholic Character
20. The Director of Religious Studies (DRS) will assist the Principal in providing leadership aimed at enhancing the Catholic Character of the school.
21. The Director of Religious Studies will oversee the Special Character Induction of new staff.
22. The Director of Religious Studies will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Religious Education teaching and learning programme.

Teaching/ Learning/Communication

23. Our school programme and environment will reflect both the bicultural and multicultural nature of Aotearoa New Zealand.
24. Teachers will follow the guidelines for teaching the Religious Education programme advised by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference and allocated at each level as:

Years One and Two:	1 hour 40 minutes	e.g 5 x 20
Years Three and Four	1 hour 40 minutes	e.g. 5 x 20 or 4 x 25
Years Five and Six:	2 hours	e.g 4 x 30

17. Time is given to staff for Strand Exit and Entry meetings to enable teachers to reflect on the Religious Education strand taught and prepare for the upcoming strand.
18. All teaching staff in partnership with the DRS will create prayer and Religious Education Goals as part of our annual Performance Management Cycle.
19. The school community will be informed about Religious Education Strand Learning through the Term Learning Overview, Family/Whanau Book, Home Learning the fortnightly newsletter, Nga Kakano Transition to school programme, parent enrolment meetings with the Principal.
20. Board of Trustee members will be given the opportunity to keep up to date on matters relating to Special Character through the Special Character sub-committee minutes and the fortnightly newsletter.

Enrolment

21. Parents show their support for Special Catholic Character by sending their children to St James' Catholic School, by signing the enrolment form which requests support for Special Catholic Character and by participating in school activities, especially those that support the Special Catholic Character.
22. Preference families whose children are unbaptised will be supported to choose the sacraments of Baptism /Reconciliation, First Communion for their children.

Parish Relationship

22. The partnership between the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit Parish and St James' Catholic School will continue to be nurtured and strengthened.

SPECIAL CHARACTER

The Board of Trustees is committed to ensuring the Catholic Character, Values and Philosophy of Hato Heemi (Whakaruru Hau) underpin all Governance and Management Policies and Procedures.