

The Character of a Catholic School

Brief Statement for the Information of Teachers

This statement is to be read in association with the College Charter, a copy of which is available from the College.

The special character of a Catholic school is defined in the Integration Agreement as follows:-

“The school is a Roman Catholic school in which the whole school community, through the general school programme and in its religious instructions and observances, exercises the right to live and teach the values of Jesus Christ. These values are 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”.

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 “whole school community”. Each teacher is therefore expected to use his or her specific skills to achieve the purpose of the school.
- 2 A Catholic school assists the Church in its mission. It does this by helping its pupils to become complete persons, that is to say persons with knowledge, faith and norms of living which are harmonised.
- 3 All subjects are taught for their own value and with their own objectives. Catholics believe in the value of all human knowledge as it is part of God’s truth.
- 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. The pupils 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 the 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 his or her own conscience or personal philosophy of life. That would be un-Christian and contrary to the aims of the College.

However, in accepting a position in a Catholic school it is assumed that the employee 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 College. No school can operate successfully if any one employee undermines the efforts of the others.
 - b) Teachers are role models. A school community rightly expects teachers to act so as to be appropriate models for children. Conduct by an teacher which would give the College community grounds for thinking that the teacher's attitude is antagonistic to the special character of the College would not only be unprofessional, it could damage or even destroy that teacher's effectiveness.
- 6 New teachers will find senior staff willing to assist them in gaining a fuller understanding of the College and its special character and in solving any difficulties that may arise in the course of their teaching duties. In addition, the following will be found helpful. Copies will be found in the staff room or College library.
- We live and teach Christ Jesus – NZ Catechetical Directory; NZ Catholic Bishops' Conference, 1974.
 - The Catholic School; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977.
 - Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982.
 - The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988.
 - The Church's Confession of Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults; German Bishop's Conference. St Ignatius Press, 1987 (San Francisco).