



## CATHOLIC SPECIAL CHARACTER POLICY

### Outcome statement

The Catholic special character of the school is safeguarded and strengthened.

### Scoping

The Board will be kaitiaki of the Catholic Special Character, protecting, preserving, and sheltering this taonga for future generations. The Board, management and staff actively support and foster the specific shared gospel values that the school stands for, both in teaching and the behaviour they model. The wider school community safeguards and strengthens an environment that enables students to develop the attributes, knowledge, and skills to become active and committed members of the faith community and contribute positively to the world community. Students will have the opportunity, within the contest of their own culture to encounter Christ, grow in knowledge of Him and His Church, and to live a life of Christian witness.

### Definitions

Integration Agreement	The Integration Agreement is the Deed of Agreement dated 6th February 1982 as varied by Supplemental Deeds including a Deed of Agreement dated 22 December 1997.
Proprietor	Pursuant to the Integration Agreement the Mission College New Plymouth Trust Board (CC27614) assumes the responsibilities and obligations as the Proprietor for Sacred Heart Girls' College and is known as the Proprietor for the purposes of this policy.

### Delegations

Responsibility and accountability for Catholic Special Character rests with the whole board, with no individual board member or committee having decision-making authority unless it has been delegated and documented. All sub delegations are approved by the board, as are revocations.

## Limitations and expectations

Board actions		Standards
1. The Board recognises the right of the Proprietor to supervise, maintain, protect and safeguard the Special Character of Sacred Heart Girls' College	1.1 1.2	1.1 The Board consults, communicates, and works with the Proprietor to ensure Catholic Special Character is safeguarded and strengthened  1.2 The Proprietor's appointees on the Board have the responsibility to report back to the Proprietor on matters relevant to the preservation and safeguarding of the College's Special Character.
2. The Board ensures that the vision and strategic direction for the school clearly and explicitly reflect the Catholic Special Character of the school.	2.1 2.2 2.3 2.4 2.5	2.1 The Board incorporates and honours the requirements of Schedule 6: Education and Training Act 2020 and the school's Integration Agreement 2.2 The Board consults, communicates, and works with the Proprietor to ensure Catholic Special Character is safeguarded and strengthened 2.3 Strategic planning is based on internal and external evaluation findings and includes the aim of continued strengthening of Catholic Special Character in the school 2.4 Board policies and school procedures explicitly reflect Catholic Special Character to ensure that decision making is from a Catholic perspective 2.5 Board documentation reflects that the school, as part of the Church, has a responsibility for helping to form Christ in the lives of others, and is committed to this work
3. The Board demonstrates a genuine commitment to Te Tiriti of Waitangi and bi-cultural partnership.	3.1	3.1 Refer to the Te Tiriti of Waitangi Policy
4. The Board has a plan for annual Catholic Special Character internal evaluation, which includes the evaluation of one of the four dimensions of Catholic Special Character each year.	4.1 4.2	4.1 The Board receives regular reports from management on Catholic Special Character and Religious Education 4.2 Internal evaluations involve staff, students, whānau and parish personnel
5. The Board approves a budget that ensures funds are allocated for the development and maintenance of the Special Character of the school.	5.1 5.2 5.3	5.1 The school's annual budget provides separate funding lines for Catholic Special Character and for Religious Education 5.2 The Board ensures that opportunities and financial assistance are available for at least the principal and DRS to take part in an annual retreat and/or to have ongoing spiritual accompaniment 5.3 The Board ensures that opportunities and budget are available for professional development and formation in Catholic Special Character (including Religious Education where appropriate) for the Board and all staff
6. The Board acknowledges the Proprietor's ownership of the land and buildings and other improvements as set out in the College's Integration Agreement.	6.1 6.2 6.3 6.4 6.5	6.1 The Proprietor gives the Board exclusive right to the possession and use of the school premises, including buildings and chattels but maintains the right to access the property  6.2 The Proprietor is responsible for providing new or additional buildings if there are changes to the state school minimum accommodation code, or approved roll increase  6.3 The proprietor with responsibility for major maintenance works with the board to ensure there is an effective 10 year rolling property plan  6.4 The Proprietor meets insurance costs associated with the land and buildings and other improvements that are specified in the Integration Agreement  6.5 The Board has no authority to make structural changes to the buildings or grounds without consulting the proprietor
7. The Board is actively engaged in the school and parish community.	7.1	7.1 The Board engages in the school and local parish/es community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• involving whānau as fully as possible in the life of the school, especially those who are vulnerable and with differing needs</li> <li>• collaborating and supporting its local parish/es in the evangelising work of the Church</li> </ul>

## School procedures/supporting Documentation

- Integration Agreement
- Board strategic plan
- Annual budget
- The Education and Training Act 2020
- The Declaration of the Proprietors of Catholic Schools in New Zealand on the Essential Characteristics of Authentic Catholic School Education
- Handbook for Boards of Trustees of New Zealand Catholic State Integrated Schools
- The Catholic Education of School Age Children (New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2014)
- He Arotake Whanaketanga mō te Mātauranga Ahurea Katorika-Te Ture Tāuke mō ngā Kura Katorika: Catholic Special Character Evaluation for Development Catholic State Integrated Schools Aotearoa New Zealand
- The school's latest Catholic Special Character Review/Evaluation for Development report
- Special Character Guidelines as attached below.

## Monitoring

The Proprietor's Representative on the board reports to the Diocese annually. This report is prepared in consultation with the Director of Religious Studies.

The Director of Religious Studies to meet with the board on occasion


General reporting by the Principal to the board

## Legislative compliance

[Education and Training Act 2020 Schedule 6](#)

[Education \(School Boards\) Regulations 2020](#)

Reviewed: May 2025	Next Review: May 2028
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Signed (Presiding Member): 	Date of Board Meeting reviewed and accepted:  Wed 28 May 2025
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## Special Character Guidelines

To assist with the implantation of the Special Character Policy the Board in conjunction with the Principal and Senior Leadership Team are committed to undertake the following:

- Ensure there is a pastoral care and counselling programme for staff and students
- Make every effort that meetings, celebrations, liturgical occasions and college ceremonies will strongly reflect the Catholic Character of the College.
- When making appointments the Board and the Principal will take into account the Catholic Character of the College and will endeavour to ensure that all tagged positions are filled as required by the College's Integration Agreement.
- Make every effort to include daily prayer and regular liturgy as part of student life and of the meetings of the College staff and committees.
- The role of the Chaplain will enhance the Special Character of the College as per their job description.
- The principles of the empowerment of young women by way of Caritas donations and donations to charities which support women and young children are to be encouraged.