



EMPLOYMENT FACT SHEET

EXPECTATIONS OF STAFF IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Not all employees of a Catholic school have to be Catholic. However, every teacher (and every member of staff) is obliged to uphold and support the Catholic Character in all they do and must do nothing to damage or undermine it. This requirement applies to both staff members' professional activities and their lives outside the school.

The Board needs to develop a policy to ensure that each teacher or staff member has a clear understanding of what they undertake when they accept a position at a Catholic school. Candidates can be asked if they are prepared to actively support the specific values that a Catholic School stands for, both in their teaching and in the behaviour they model.

It is strongly recommended that this document is included in the application pack, and that the Board require candidates to sign this document to show that they have read it and understand what is expected of them. This may be done when the offer of employment is accepted, and the signed document may then be filed with the appointee's records.

The Board's policy document needs to specify what a tagged position requires in relation to Catholic Character.

Appointment of teachers

When determining which applicant is best suited to a particular teaching position, the Board must balance the following requirements:

- the Board's obligation to appoint teachers so that the school will reflect the Catholic Character in its teaching and conduct
- the need to have competent teachers to fulfil the educational objectives of the school and provide for the special needs of the students
- the need to be just and equitable to all who wish to apply for the position
- the gender and ethnic balance of the staff as well as the proportion of Catholic teachers to teachers of other faiths and beliefs already in the school.

The Board needs to ensure that it appoints teachers who can contribute actively to the school's special character, or at least are sympathetic to the school's objectives, as set out in the school charter or elsewhere.

Statement of Expectations for Staff of a Catholic school

The Catholic Church has developed an international network of schools which with all their diversity of culture and language are a Catholic faith community within the wider faith community of the Catholic Church, including parish, diocese, and universal Church. Therefore, the Catholic school's mission is aligned with that of the Church:

- To share the Gospel message of Jesus Christ¹ and so bring about the reign of God: sharing and living the love of God shown in the words and actions of Jesus Christ to create a world of tika, pono and aroha.

Catholic schools have been established to promote the strong character formation of young people based on Gospel values and Christian virtues by providing a quality education within the context of the Catholic faith². In doing so, they support young people's spiritual journey hīkoi wairua and pass on the faith to the next generation.

The Catholic school exists within Aotearoa New Zealand as a state integrated school with a special character. This special character is defined in the school's 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 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.

Each Catholic school is unique in terms of history of place; whakapapa, including its founding Religious Congregation's or patron's charism³; and mana whenua, so the expression of its Catholic special character will vary.

A person applying for a position in a Catholic school needs to understand the commitment this involves as follows:

- All staff, whether Catholic or not, are part of the whole school community. Each staff member is therefore expected to use their specific strengths and skills to support the mission of the school.
- The Catholic school educates for the strong formation of young people based on Gospel values and Christian virtues by providing an education within the context of the Catholic faith.⁴
- The curriculum and specific subjects are taught for their own value and with their own objectives. In doing so, a Catholic school seamlessly weaves a religious dimension, particularly a Catholic worldview, across all it teaches, models and practices.
- The Religious Education programme is an integral part of the curriculum. It is specific education in a body of religious knowledge, skills and values which forms a major part of the wider school curriculum and provides a learning platform from which the living-out of faith in families and the parish community may be understood and embraced⁵. The students learn:
 - Te Atua God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in relationship with humanity and all of creation.
 - Te Rongopai Good News reveals this relationship through sacred scripture and the Tradition of the Church.
 - Ā Tātou Whakapapa Our Story connects the rich story of the Church with our own stories.
 - Kai Noho Hāhi Being Church involves developing understanding of discipleship, virtues, values, and morality.
 - Mana Tapu Grace, Aroha Pūmau Holiness, Whakaaronui Wisdom, Tika Justice, Īnoi Prayer permeate Catholic teaching and play a significant part in each person's hīkoi wairua spiritual journey.

The school 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 Jesus Christ, to love God and neighbour and the other values expressed

¹ Jesus was given the title Christ or messiah, meaning anointed one, in the New Testament of the Bible, as he is chosen by the Holy Spirit to bring about God's kingdom.

² Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*

³ An extraordinary spiritual gift from God, to serve God and others

⁴ Ibid

⁵ National Centre for Religious Studies (2021) *Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith* (p. 8)

by Jesus Christ as norms for living. The focal point of the whole school is Jesus Christ.

No staff member will be required to act against their own conscience or personal philosophy of life. Such a requirement would not be in keeping with Catholicism and is contrary to the aims of the school.

However, in accepting a position in a Catholic school it is assumed that staff members realise that:

- Staff work as a team. Therefore, all staff 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 positive efforts of others.
- Staff are expected to recognize and respect the school's Catholic special character and be actively involved in the total life of the school, in a manner which respects the religious instruction given and religious observances practiced within the school, irrespective of their personal beliefs.
- In schools with a defined charism staff are also expected to recognize and respect that charism.
- Staff are role models for students, colleagues, parents/caregivers in respecting and (subject to personal conscience and beliefs) living the mission and values of the school.
- Staff who do not profess Catholicism are expected to recognize and respect the Catholic special character of the school, and to refrain from doing or saying anything in connection with performing their role within the school that would undermine or inhibit the school's ability to provide education with a Catholic special character.
- Staff are expected to read and abide by the *Principles of Commitment for Staff in Aotearoa New Zealand Catholic Schools* (NZCEO, 2023).

New staff will find others who are willing to assist them in gaining a fuller understanding of the school and its Catholic special character, and in solving any difficulties that may arise in the course of their work. In addition, the following resources will also be helpful:

- The school's strategic plan
- *The Philosophy of Catholic Schools in New Zealand* (NZCEO, 2014)
- *The Catholic Education of School-Age Children* (NZ Catholic Bishops Conference, 2014)
- *Sharing the Gospel Today: NZ Catechetical Directory* (NZ Catholic Bishops Conference, 2012)
- *Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith Religious Education Curriculum for Catholic Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand* (National Centre for Religious Studies, 2022)
- *The Declaration* (New Zealand Council of Proprietors of Catholic State-Integrated Schools, 1997, revised 2007)
- *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 Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (Congregation for Catholic Education, July 1998)

I agree to uphold the expectations outlined in this document.

Staff member:

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Principal:

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Date: