



St Mary's Catholic School, Papakura Board of Trustees

CATHOLIC SPECIAL CHARACTER POLICY

RATIONALE:

Our Special Character 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 instruction 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.”

PURPOSE:

1. To ensure that through our curriculum delivery, pastoral care, and spiritual climate and in adhering to the statutory requirements, all in the school community maintain our Catholic Special Character as defined in the Private Schools Integration Agreement.
2. To ensure the Gospel values of Jesus Christ permeate all aspects of school life.
3. To encourage all in the school community (including Board of Trustees, St Mary's PTFAs, staff, parents, caregivers, whanau and children) to reflect our Catholic Special Character in their conduct and behaviour.

POLICY:

1. Each school year a dimension of the school's Catholic Special Character will be reviewed following the process required by the Proprietor.
2. The Proprietor's Representatives on the Board of Trustees will ensure all members of the Board are aware of their role in helping to maintain the Catholic Special Character of the school.
3. Board members, particularly proprietor representatives, will have knowledge of their role and staffing requirements, as defined by the school's Integration Agreement.
4. The school, through the Principal and the Director of Religious Studies, will regularly communicate with the parish, through liaison with the Parish Priest.
5. Preparation for the reception of First Eucharist and the Sacraments of Confirmation and Reconciliation is a Parish responsibility, and will be supported by the school. The school recognises its role in ensuring that religious observances are part of the life of the school, so that children experience sacramental celebrations and rituals that are appropriate to their stage of development.

6. The school will teach the Religious Education programme in a way that promotes children's learning and provides opportunities for prayer, sacramental celebrations and rituals.
7. The school environment will reflect the Catholic Special Character of the school.
8. To support and encourage growth in the Catholic faith in the school and community, there will be varied and enriching experiences for the school community with indoor/outdoor liturgical services with the Parish priest.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

In order to fulfil this policy, the Board and management have developed, and will regularly review, the following Procedural and Administrative Guidelines associated with "Special Character":

Religious Education

St Mary's Curriculum

PB4L Matrix and Handbook

REFERENCES:

- *The Handbook for Boards of Trustees of New Zealand Catholic Integrated Schools; 2010 Edition*
- *Integration Agreement*
- *The Catholic Education of School-age Children*

APPROVED 25 March 2021

Board Authorisation – Board Minutes of 25 March 2021

TO BE REVIEWED in accordance with the Board's bi-annual programme of self-review - Term One, Even Years