

Being Church in Aotearoa New Zealand Catholic Schools

**Tū Mai te Hāhi i ngā
Kura Katorika**

A support document for
reemphasising the place
of Catholic schools
in Aotearoa.



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Purpose of This document – Te PūTake o te Kōrero Nei

The purpose of the document is:

- To reemphasise the place of Catholic schools today in fulfilling the mission of Jesus, which is the mission of the Church
- To facilitate rich dialogue of how Catholic school communities can realise their place in the mission of the Church
- To make clear connections between Catholic special character, Religious Education, and the current Aotearoa context
- To expand and support practical application of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference document The Catholic Education of School-Age Children.

Mihi

Te mea tūatahi, ka tukuna ngā whakamoemiti ki te Atua atawhai, mo ona manakitanga kua uhia mai kei a mātou.

Ki ngā maunga nui o ngā rohe kātoa rā, tēnā koutou. Ki te whenua e takatō horahora mai rā, me ngā wai e rere ana, tēnā koutou. E ngā tini aitua kua wheturangitia, haere. Haere ki te Reinga, ki te Hono i Wairua, Hawaikinui, Hawaikiroa, Hawaiki Pāmāmao. Moe mai rā.

Huri noa ki a tātou te kānohi ora. Tēnā koutou. Haere mai te iti me te rahi, haere mai ngā kaiako me ngā akonga, haere mai tātou I runga I te haerenga tapu ki te Karaiti. Karaiti te rama i te pō, nōna te mārāma I te pōuri, nōna te aroha pūmau.

Tēnā koutou kātoa.

First and foremost, let us give all praise to our God of compassion who covers us in generous love.

To the great mountains across the land, we acknowledge you. To the land that spreads out before us, and the flowing waterways, we acknowledge you. To those who have passed on and became as stars in the heavens, farewell to Te Reinga, to the gathering place of the Spirits, to the ancestral homeland. Rest there.

Greetings to you all in the world of light. To each according to their call, to the teachers and students, to us all on this pilgrimage to Christ. Christ the light in the darkness; his, the enlightenment in uncertain times, to him whose life is constant.

Greetings to all.

Whakataukī

“Nā, tēnei te mau nei te whakapono, te tūmanako, te aroha, ēnei e toru; ko te mea nui rawa ia o ēnei ko te aroha.”
1 Koriniti 13:13¹

“Now your word is a lamp to my feet, a light on my path”
Psalm 119:105²

¹ Te Paipera Tapu - Online: “And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.”

² The Jerusalem Bible

Karakia

Kia Īnoi tātou...

E tō mātou Matua I te rangi, Kia whakatapua tōu ingoa, kia tae mai tōu rangatiratanga,
Kia whakaritea tōu hiahia I te whenua, kia pērā anō I to te rangi. Homai ki a mātou aianeī he taro mā mātou mō tēnei rā.
Whakakākoretia ō mātou hara, me mātou e whakakore nei I ngā hara o te hunga e hara ana
ki a mātou. Kaua mātou e tukua ki a whakawaia, engari whakaorangia mātou I te kino.
Amene

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

Amen.³

³ Ko Ngā karakia o Te Miha me Ngā Himene. Māori – English Mass Book. 2012



Whakapapa

Katorikatanga: Catholicism

Māori Katorika: Māori Catholics

Katorika Tauwi: Catholic people coming from elsewhere (Pākehā and others).

- As members of Catholic school communities within Aotearoa, we acknowledge our whakapapa to Hehu Karaiti. As Son of God, Prince of peace, Word made flesh, and Saviour of the world, his word and life fill the world from the mountain peaks to the shore. His light, carried from our tūpuna in faith, has been passed to us to live and share. Jesus the Christ continues to be welcomed into whānau and homes in Aotearoa today, and all of our Catholic communities, schools, parishes, and marae, take up his call to live and proclaim his Gospel.
- We acknowledge the rich relationships of our ancestors – many missionaries and first hearers, Māori and tauwi – who embraced the light of Christ and helped spread the true power and aroha of the Gospel as Catholics in Aotearoa, especially in our Catholic schools.
- We recognise Te Tiriti o Waitangi as our nation's founding document and the mana of Māori as tangata whenua, the first people, and te reo Māori, the first language of this land. This is an active commitment to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its principles of protection, partnership, and participation, which reflect the commitment of the New Zealand Catholic Church. This is an active expression of our Catholic special character.
- We acknowledge our history of prayer, our waiata, hui, and relationships, as well as all of the emerging and ongoing challenges and blessings. In this context of experience and hope, we look to the light of Christ.
- In *The Catholic Education of School-Age Children*⁴ (CESAC), the Catholic Bishops outlined many concepts and challenges in Catholic education and invited school communities to reflect on understandings and practices in Catholic schools. Being Church in Aotearoa New Zealand Catholic Schools affirms all that is in that document and continues the approach of further developing focus on some areas and drawing attention to others. This document does not replace CESAC but is to be read in conjunction with it.

⁴ New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference. (2014). *The Catholic Education of School-Age Children*.

The Story of Catholic Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand

- The history of Catholic schools in Aotearoa New Zealand is one of individual and community faith, service, sacrifice, generosity, and courage. The schools were initially founded and staffed by lay people, then from 1850 onwards, predominantly by members of religious congregations. By the late 1950s pressure from student numbers due to the post-war baby boom and the need to employ more lay teachers placed ever-increasing pressure on the system. It was becoming very evident that to survive, the Catholic network of schools would urgently require state aid. After long negotiations between Church leaders and the Government, the 1975 Private Schools Conditional Integration Act was passed, creating a partnership between the state and the proprietors of Catholic schools.
- Those in Catholic schools today stand on the shoulders of these women and men who have brought us to this point in our story. It is the faith, dedication, sacrifice and financial input of earlier generations that has created a unique and flourishing system of education. This commitment and spirit of generosity needs to continue for the educational and faith development of the many young people in our schools today.
- Today the Catholic school network is diverse – ethnically, culturally, and linguistically. Young people also come from different socioeconomic backgrounds and types of whānau, and have different abilities, learning needs, styles of faith – and some even from other faiths. Catholic schools recognise this and work to ensure every young person's dignity is maintained. It is in this context that Catholic schools are an integral part of the Church's mission to all. Wherever young people and their whānau sit in terms of their connection with the Church, young people in Catholic schools in Aotearoa New Zealand are welcomed as loved by God and are warmly invited to belong more deeply.
- Each Catholic school has a unique whakapapa, a story and a journey from the earliest missionaries, Hapū and whānau, Sisters, Brothers, Priests, and ngā Katekite (Catechists). The story of the whenua the school and church sit on, the mountains and coast, inland rivers, lakes and streams, all have played a part in our faith story of speaking to the belief in the peace, hope and love of Jesus Christ. Our Catholic special character is expressed in as many different ways as the make-up of our schools, from rural towns and urban centres to single-sex and co-educational. We teach in small and large schools, and our students come from many walks of life. Many of our schools connect through their shared founding order or charism. Many join for a wide range of diocesan, spiritual, sporting or cultural events, experiencing a different way of being Church. Yet, we are one faith community, one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, centred in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

For a more detailed description of this history see *The Catholic Education of School-Age Children* or *Catholic Schools: A Heritage to be Proud of*.

Introduction – Te Kupu Whakataki



This document is written in support of all who are connected with Catholic schools in Aotearoa. With clear language and grounded concepts, it contextualises and links several key Catholic education documents⁵ on the Aotearoa Catholic education landscape. The primary concept of 'being Church' refers to:

"individual and collective actions, responses and participation in the world in terms of understanding and living what it means to be in God's Catholic Church family... and how I develop and apply these understandings to my own life and all creation. This is also the theme to particularly develop and consider a 'Catholic worldview'".⁶

The intention of this document, whether considered as a whole or in smaller sections, is to provide a useful guide and tool for constructive kōrero and practice in your kura.

⁵ Including *Tō Tatou Whakapono Our Faith*, *Catholic Special Character Evaluation for Development*, and *The Catholic Education of School-Age Children*.

⁶ National Centre for Religious Studies. (2021). *Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith – Religious Education Curriculum for Catholic Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand*.

The Nature and Purpose of Catholic Schools – Te Āhuatanga Me Te Wairua

Reign of God, Te Mana o te Atua: a term used in both the Old and New Testaments to describe the fulfilment of God's will over creation and human history. Also referred to as the Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven.

Evangelisation: the process by which the Catholic Church, inspired by the Holy Spirit, shares with others the message of Jesus Christ throughout the world.

New Evangelisation: primarily addressed to those who have drifted from the Church in traditionally Christian countries.

What is a Catholic school?

1. In the Aotearoa NZ context, the nature of Catholic schools is primarily defined in points 4 to 10 of CESAC. The Catholic school with all its diversity of culture and language is a Catholic faith community within the wider faith community of the Catholic Church, including parish, diocese, and universal Church. Catholic schools are founded in and function as part of the wider Christian Catholic community united in Christ. Through this relationship, the young people in a Catholic school and their whānau experience what it means to be part of a faith community within the context of the Catholic Church.
2. The Catholic school exists within Aotearoa New Zealand as a state integrated school with a special character. This special character is Catholic in nature and is at the core of all that the school does. The Catholic school is embedded in the Church; it is the Church in action, an authentic expression of the Church's mission⁷ to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the World, and sharing and living the love of God shown in the words and actions of Jesus Christ to create a world of tika justice, pono truth and aroha love. This is evangelisation.
3. The Catholic school is also a major place for the new evangelisation. Consideration should be given to new ways of bringing the Gospel to those who feel disconnected from their faith, particularly those who believe it has no meaning for them.⁸ Hence the new evangelisation calls for a renewing of people's understanding of the Catholic faith and its application to today's world and to their own lives.
4. Catholic schools have been established to promote strong character formation of young people based on Gospel values and Christian virtues by providing a quality education within the context of the Catholic faith.⁹ In doing so, they support young people's spiritual journey hīkoi wairua,¹⁰ and the passing on of faith to the next generation.¹¹
5. The education that takes place in a Catholic school, as with other schools, passes on culture to the next generation.¹² What differs for a Catholic school is that it seamlessly weaves a religious dimension, particularly a Catholic worldview, across all it teaches, models and practises. In doing so, the school brings faith, culture, and life into harmony, nurturing a Christian vision for living and seeing the world and assisting its young people to embrace a Christian way of living.¹³ Poipoia te kākano kia puāwai – nurture the seed and it will blossom.
6. Catholic schools are also part of Aotearoa through our community connections with one another and through a formal agreement with the Ministry of Education as state-integrated schools.¹⁴ In essence, this means that the Catholic school is equal with any other school on the Aotearoa educational landscape: the state pays for salaries and maintenance of buildings; Catholic schools teach the state New Zealand Curriculum through a Catholic lens; and Catholic schools are required to uphold their Catholic special character, including the teaching of Religious Education.

⁷ NZ Catholic Bishops Conference. (2014). The Catholic Education of School-Age Children. (#6)

⁸ Sultmann, W. & Brown, R. (2014) Catholic school identity and the new evangelization. Journal of Religious Education. Vol. 62:1-13

⁹ Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977). *The Catholic School* – reflected in the term "hīkoi wairua spiritual journey" as used throughout Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith (2021) the national RE curriculum.

¹⁰ National Centre for Religious Studies (2021) Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith. (pp. 24-27)

¹¹ An excellent resource being YouCat (2011) – the Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church

¹² Congregation for Catholic Education. (1977). *The Catholic School*.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Government of New Zealand (2020) *Education and Training Act*.

Formation: in this context involves deep learning to nurture and sustain religious and spiritual understandings to support the sense of mission, purpose and hope.

7. The law also requires that the state-integrated school's 'special character' be maintained, and for Catholic schools this is supported by approximately 95% of students on the school roll having 'preference', meaning preferential entry. Preference is defined and retained in the Education and Training Act 2020 as "a particular or general... religious connection" with the school's special character.¹⁵ 'Preference' is not a term which judges the faith or value of young people, or the school's attitude towards them.
8. Preference is designed to ensure those children from families with a religious connection to the Church have priority for Catholic education. The NZCBC has established the preference criteria. This is to be used by the delegated agents of the diocesan Bishop (usually the parish priest) in determining a student's legal right to claim preference of enrolment. Preference students must be enrolled in advance of non-preference students; and non-preference students can only be enrolled if there is space within the school's maximum roll.
9. At heart, the Church's fundamental reason for Catholic schools is to interconnect the evangelisation and integral formation of the young people present.¹⁶ This evangelisation and formation will be ineffective if it does not take into consideration the culture, language, signs and symbols of the young people who are its focus.¹⁷

What are the goals of Catholic education?

10. In the Aotearoa NZ context, the goals of Catholic education are primarily defined in points 11 to 18 of CESAC. "First and foremost, every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth".¹⁸ The Catholic school is a place of education and a faith community. Over and above its academic goals, it is where the ethical formation of young people centred on the person and teachings of Jesus Christ occurs through the insights of faith revealed through the acquisition of values and the discovery of the truth.¹⁹ Thus, the Catholic school's core function is "communicating Christ".²⁰
11. The New Zealand Catholic Bishops remind us that the central goals for Catholic schools, through their educational endeavour, are to:
 - Provide a genuine encounter with Jesus Christ, leading to a committed relationship with him
 - Create a deep desire to grow in knowledge of Christ, his teachings, and his Church
 - Bring Catholic faith, culture, and life into harmony
 - Communicate Christ's Gospel of love, mercy and justice, in both word and deed.²¹
12. The achievement of the goals of Catholic education depend to a great extent on the teachers and leaders in the school.²² Their commitment and witness to how the Christian message is lived makes the difference between a school that is strong in passing the Catholic faith to the next generation and a school where religion is taught.²³
13. In order to achieve its educational goals, a Catholic school must continue to remain current²⁴ with best practice in the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, child psychology, and teaching and learning pedagogy. And, to achieve its faith goals, a Catholic school must have the best-qualified teachers in Religious Education and Catholic special character who receive regular Catholic special character formation.

¹⁵ Ibid Sch. 6, Cl. 26

¹⁶ Congregation for Catholic Education (2022) *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*.

¹⁷ Paul IV (1975) *Evangelii Nuntiandi: Evangelisation in the Modern World*.

¹⁸ Benedict XVI (2008) Address to Catholic Educators of the United States.

¹⁹ Congregation for Catholic Education (1977) *The Catholic School*.

²⁰ John Paul II (1979) Message to the Catholic Educational Association of the United States.

²¹ NZ Catholic Education Office (2022) *Catholic Special Character Evaluation for Development*

²² Congregation for Catholic Education (1982) *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witness to Faith*.

²³ Congregation for Catholic Education (1977) *The Catholic School*.

²⁴ NZ Catholic Bishops Conference (2014) *The Catholic Education of School-Age Children*.



What is Catholic special character?

14. Special character for any state-integrated school is firstly defined within the Education and Training Act 2020 as “education within the framework of a particular or general religious or philosophical belief, and association with observances or traditions appropriate to that belief”.²⁵ The more particular definition of our Catholic special character is defined in each Catholic school’s Integration Agreement: “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.”²⁶
15. Many factors contribute to a school’s Catholic special character including:
 - The beliefs, values, traditions, and practices of the Catholic Church, and how they are expressed by both Māori Katorika and Katorika tauwiwi
 - The religious content of its curriculum
 - The witness of people living their faith as disciples of Jesus.

It is the interaction of these factors that creates the Catholic identity of the school.²⁷

16. Many Catholic schools in Aotearoa New Zealand were established by Religious Congregations whose founders were women and men of strong faith who saw a need to live out more fully the Gospel message. In such schools their charism, an extraordinary spiritual gift from God to serve God and others, has evolved as its own ‘deep story’²⁸ within the school in the form of:
 - The vision of the founder
 - Adopted symbols and mottoes
 - The inspirational documents of the Congregation, and writings of the founder
 - The setting, the cultural background, the personalities and the early focus and stories of its members.²⁹
17. More recently, schools established without a link to a religious order have developed their own charism from their founding stories which may be focused on a saint or other significant person and their locations, adopted symbols and mottoes.
18. While honouring their founders and patrons, schools must remember that these people were first and foremost disciples of Jesus, and their charism is not the totality of the school’s identity. Rather, it is a lens through which the school’s Catholicity, oriented fully towards encounter with Jesus, is seen.
19. The whanaungatanga, close relationship, between parish/es and parish school/s is a vital factor in supporting Catholic education in both school and parish. Leaders of each community need to respect and support one another with generosity, courage, and creativity, in the complex mahi of developing knowledge and engagement in their shared mission of spreading the Gospel.

²⁵ Government of New Zealand (2020) *Education and Training Act*. Section 10.

²⁶ New Zealand Catholic Education Office (2020) *Handbook for Boards of Trustees of New Zealand Catholic State-Integrated Schools* (p. 16)

²⁷ NZ Catholic Bishops Conference (2014) *The Catholic Education of School-Age Children*.

²⁸ Kavanagh, A. & Pallisier, U. (2016) *Will Catholic Schools be Catholic in 2030?* (p. 46)

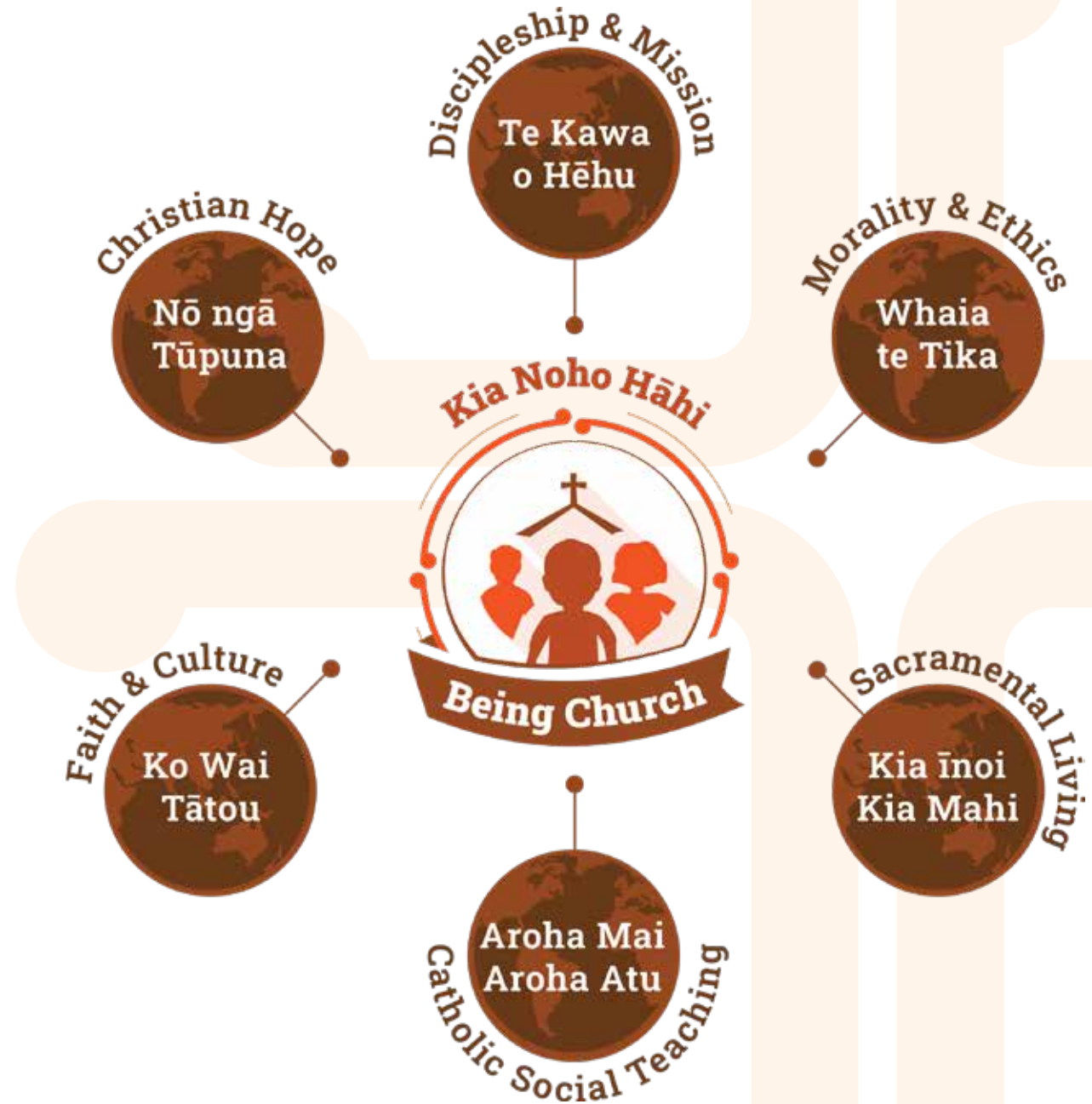
²⁹ Ibid



20. Teachers and leaders in Catholic schools play an important role in witnessing to the Catholic faith in their living out of Catholic special character. To act as kaitiaki of this taonga of Catholic special character, teachers and leaders should continue their own Catholic special character and personal faith formation. This is critical for modelling and articulating the Catholic faith and sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with young people and the wider community.
21. For a school's Catholic special character to affect the faith life of its young people, the school must ensure the identity, culture, language and symbols of both Māori Katorika and Katorika tauwi are included in its practices and curriculum. Therefore, tikanga and te reo Māori expressions of Katorikatanga are incorporated into all aspects of Catholic special character, including Masses, liturgies, retreats and prayer.
22. The school board safeguards and strengthens Catholic special character through policies and school procedures, ensuring there is a strong vision and strategic direction for Catholic special character. Therefore, the board's professional development and formation in this area is of vital importance.
23. To safeguard and strengthen Catholic special character, the Catholic school engages in the process of robust internal and external evaluation of Catholic special character. This process produces a focused picture of the impact of Catholic schooling and the effectiveness of its goals on the lives of young people in the school. Each diocesan education office has staff who can guide the school board and senior leadership team in this work. Both the internal and external process is explained in *He Arotake Whanaketanga mō te Mātauranga Ahurea Katorika – Te Ture Tāuke mō Kura Katorika: Catholic Special Character Evaluation for Development – Catholic State-Integrated Schools Aotearoa New Zealand* document.

Being Church

The following elements intentionally link with the **Kia Noho Hāhi Being Church** theme in the Religious Education Curriculum *Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith*³⁰.



³⁰ National Centre for Religious Studies (2021) *Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith*. (pp. 49-51)

Faith and Culture – Ko Wai Tātou



24. The Catholic school communicates Jesus in human culture and helps form in its young people, staff and wider community a Christian vision that builds up the reign of God.³¹ This creates meaning and purpose in their lives by helping them to understand, access, critique and value the resources of the worldview of the current culture, their faith and their own life experiences.³² If we fail to understand how faith interprets the world, the popular culture of the time will take precedence.³³
25. Catholic education occurs in a world which is struggling with fragmentation and conflict, and Catholic schools, as part of the Church, are called to “contribute both to the evangelising mission entrusted to her by Jesus and to the construction of a world in which human persons feel they are brothers and sisters”.³⁴ In Aotearoa New Zealand Catholic schools, the Catholic special character provides the context within which sharing the Gospel and whanaungatanga, being whānau to one another, creates a culture where all members of the school community may flourish.
26. “Culture is the human space within which people encounter the Gospel.”³⁵ It is a gift and taonga in our schools and present in many dimensions in the Catholic school climate including elements of whakapapa, ethnicity, language, religiosity, and social standing. These cultural elements provide a dynamic lens through which one experiences and expresses the time and place of our school’s Catholic Character: its beliefs, values, traditions, and practices, as grounded in the Gospel and the Tradition of the Catholic Church. Therefore, it is important that the cultural background of every young person is honoured and nurtured, and that any racism, negative racial bias or other discrimination is quickly addressed and overcome.
27. In Catholic schools of Aotearoa, understanding how Jesus’s teaching and the Tradition of the Church calls us to live with all people is a critical dimension of Catholic education. It includes acknowledging that tangata whenua have ‘mana motuhake’³⁶ in Aotearoa and within the Church. It is further established in Pope John Paul II’s invitation and statement: “It is as Māori that the Lord calls you; it is as Māori that you belong to the Church, the one Body of Christ.”³⁷ Catholic Social Teaching provides an additional framework for better understanding and living Te Tiriti principles of protection, partnership, and participation in our communities.
28. In the faith context of Catholic schools, the rich contribution and participation of many cultures supports individuals and communities in recognising that culture is not static but dynamic in helping bring about the reign of God. We are called to share in this collective endeavour, drawing on each other’s gifts and strengths, challenging and supporting one another as we grow together in faith. This puts culture into a creative context, constantly being perfected.³⁸

Mana motuhake: self-determination, awareness of self and personal dignity, and awareness of the dignity of the other.

Catholic Social Teaching: a body of thought, sourced from Scripture (both the Old and New Testaments) and the Church’s official teachings, concerning social, economic, and ecological issues.

³¹ Congregation for Catholic Education (1998) *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*

³² D’Orsa, J. & D’Orsa, T. (2012) *Catholic Curriculum: A Mission to the Heart of Young People*.

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Congregation for Catholic Education (2022) *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*. (#7)

³⁵ National Centre for Religious Studies (2012) *Sharing the Gospel Story – The Catechetical Directory for Aotearoa New Zealand*. p. 20

³⁶ Tate, H.A. (2010). Towards Some Foundations of Systematic Māori Theology. He tirohanga anganui ki ētahi kaupapa hōhonu mō te whakapono Māori. iP82, 283

³⁷ John Paul II (1986) *Homily*, Auckland, New Zealand, 22 November.

³⁸ Congregation for Catholic Education (1982) *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*. (#20)



29. In the broader context of secular New Zealand, Catholic schools should enable young people to develop critical skills to analyse contemporary culture so that they may be active constructors of culture rather than passive consumers. Young people should develop capacity to identify the attitudes and values of contemporary culture, understand what these mean for society, and develop a Catholic response.³⁹ In a real and positive way, Catholic schools are consistently countercultural through prioritising Gospel-centred values and virtues which are other-centred, as seen in the words and actions of Jesus, rather than secular values which are often self-centred.
30. Within Catholic special character, support for developing these Gospel understandings and responses is provided through the mandated national Religious Education (RE) curriculum *Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith*. RE is not an isolated subject but rather “a 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 embraced”.⁴⁰
31. For students with a committed relationship with Jesus Christ, RE must deliver at the level needed to sustain their desire to grow in knowledge and understanding.⁴¹ While necessarily supporting faith formation through being invitational, meaningful, theologically sound, and embedded in the context of the lives of young people, RE also supports a “system of values and understandings that resonates even if young people choose not to believe in God”.⁴² For this reason, RE is compulsory in Catholic schools and personal faith is invited, encouraged, and nurtured but not expected or required.
32. In choosing to attend a Catholic school, whānau and young people choose to engage with and value the Catholic special character of the school through engagement in its beliefs, traditions, and practices. Through participation in the life of the school community, including Religious Education, young people develop experience, knowledge, and skills to bring together “faith, culture and life, which is the keystone of the educational mission”.⁴³
33. Catholic schools are places where young people and their whānau learn more about the Catholic Church and have an opportunity to grow in faith. Staff and students encounter Christ in one another and from this encounter learn what it means to be Catholic. Catholic schools are places where, without pressure, a clear invitation is present for young people and their whānau to more deeply connect with the parish and the sacramental life of the Church beyond school and receive the Sacraments if they have not already done so.
34. There is a need to consistently explore challenges and successes regarding the school's faith and culture. External, formal Catholic Special Character Evaluation⁴⁴ supports this by recognising and affirming good practice and highlighting the need for further development. Part of the evaluation process is consistently conducting ongoing internal evaluation.
35. The Principal, with support from the Director of Religious Studies (DRS) and all staff, is responsible for maintaining and developing the Catholic special character and creating opportunities to articulate how faith, culture, and life are brought into harmony. The school board holds governance responsibility in this area, and all parents and whānau play an important part in ensuring the school to which they have chosen to belong is authentically and vibrantly Catholic.

³⁹ National Centre for Religious Studies (2021) *Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith*.

⁴⁰ National Centre for Religious Studies (2021) *Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith*. (p. 8)

⁴¹ NZ Catholic Bishops Conference (2014) *The Catholic Education of School-Age Children*. (#61)

⁴² National Centre for Religious Studies (2021) *Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith*. (p. 8)

⁴³ Congregation for Catholic Education (2022) *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*. (#29)

⁴⁴ NZ Catholic Education Office (2022) *Catholic Special Character Evaluation for Development*.

Discipleship and Mission – Te Kawa o Hēhu



36. Pope Francis invited “all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day”.⁴⁵ This invitation to encounter the risen Christ and to develop a personal relationship with Jesus lives at the heart of all Catholic schools. This is what it means to be a disciple and to share in the mission of the Church to spread the Gospel of Jesus.
37. In many parts of Aotearoa today, Catholic parish communities are becoming smaller, and Mass attendance is falling, yet most Catholic school rolls remain steady or growing. There is clearly an awareness and appreciation of the quality of Catholic education and, at the same time, a disconnect with parish life and the Sacraments. From as early as 1990,⁴⁶ the term “New Evangelisation” has been used to reach out “to those who have drifted from the Church in traditionally Christian countries”.⁴⁷ Catholic schools play a significant role in helping reconnect ‘drifting’ Catholics to Jesus’s call to discipleship and participation in the mission of the Church.
38. The Catholic school is an important part of the Church’s mission, and awareness of this should enter and inform “every moment of its educational activity [as] a fundamental part of its very identity and the focus of its mission”.⁴⁸ As the NZCBC notes in its *Guidelines for the Granting of Preference of Enrolment in New Zealand Catholic Schools*: “There is a need for Bishops’ agents who sign preference cards to have a pastoral approach, recognising the significant role they play especially in the re-evangelisation of non-practising Catholics.”⁴⁹ This is by way of invitation, opportunity, and witness.
39. When enrolling a child, parents/caregivers and young people commit to valuing and participating in the Catholic special character of the school, and thus to experiencing and sharing the Gospel message. In this way, just as the Church provides a foundation for the school community, the community plays a part in supporting the Church and sharing in its mission.
40. All young people in our schools, and indeed all people, are on a hīkoi wairua, a spiritual journey.⁵⁰ For young Catholic people, their hīkoi wairua is particularly nourished through learning in RE, wider experience, and participation in Catholic special character. Those young people and whānau who belong to other faiths are also welcomed with all their rich cultural and spiritual diversity and are invited to participate and contribute as fully as possible. Their gifts and talents are recognised as contributing to the school’s culture, though their hīkoi wairua may have less connection to a personal Catholic identity.
41. Participation in RE and school liturgies is required as part of school life, and it is important that all young people learn what Catholics believe and experience a lived witness and invitation to encounter Christ and belong to his Church, but this must not be confused with expectation for them to become Catholic. “Catholic schools do not demand adherence to the faith; however, they can prepare for it... to create the conditions for a person to develop a gift for searching and to be guided in discovering the mystery of their being.”⁵¹

⁴⁵ Francis (2013) *Evangelii Gaudium*. (#3)

⁴⁶ John Paul II (1990) *Redemptoris Missio*. (#33)

⁴⁷ XIII Ordinary General Assembly Synod of Bishops (2011). The new Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith – Lineamenta. (Preface)

⁴⁸ Congregation for Catholic Education (2022) *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*. (#21)

⁴⁹ www.nzceohandbook.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Full-Guidelines-for-granting-preference.pdf

⁵⁰ National Centre for Religious Studies (2021) *Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith*. (pp. 24-27)

⁵¹ Congregation for Catholic Education (2022) *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*. (#28)



42. Teaching is a 'vocation'.⁵² This word particularly resonates in the Catholic school context, centred on Jesus's call to discipleship.⁵³ All teachers and staff in a Catholic school commit to upholding the Catholic special character through words and actions, including participation in school liturgy and prayer. In so doing, teachers serve as "effective witnesses of the Gospel",⁵⁴ and each hīkoi wairua, including that of young people, whānau and staff, is also nurtured through shared spiritual journeys.
43. While all teachers and staff in a Catholic school model and witness its mission of spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ, there are also specific leadership roles that support this Catholic kaupapa:
- The **Principal** is the school's faith leader. While the DRS shares much of the mahi and wānanga, the principal is primarily responsible for leading and managing the school's Catholic special character.
 - In supporting the Principal, the **Director of Religious Studies**, or equivalent named position/s when roles are split, holds the primary roles of curriculum leader for religious education; of implementing Catholic special character development; and of coordinating celebration of the liturgical life of the Church at school.
 - The **School Board** has governance oversight of the Catholic special character, and as such, its members overtly and intentionally participate in the mission of the Church.
Thus, the Principal, DRS and School Board, in collaboration with the wider school community, shape the faith-based vision of the school and bring it to life.
 - **Teachers in Special Character Positions** (formerly 'tagged teachers')⁵⁵ have a formal role as committed, practising Catholics in witnessing the life and mission of the Church in Catholic schools.
 - **Religious Education teachers**, who may or may not hold special character positions, teach the RE curriculum and, as such, require appropriate qualifications, formation, permission,⁵⁶ and capacity to present knowledge, answer questions, and model what it means to be Catholic.
44. Not all staff in a Catholic school will be Catholic. However, the choice to teach in a Catholic school includes a conscious personal choice to recognise and respect the Catholic special character of the school, including participation in prayer and liturgy, and in a primary school context, even teaching RE. The expectation is that, in good conscience and without pressure to change their personal beliefs, teachers will support and not undermine or inhibit the school's education with a Catholic special character.
45. Priests have an important role in supporting the school in living out its mission within the Church. While individual commitment, expectation, and capacity vary widely for various reasons, it is clear that clergy and school leaders, and the whole school community benefit from "dialogue and walking together".⁵⁷ At the same time, the priestly role comes not from a position of clerical power but is perceived as a "ministry they have received" and a "free and generous service to be offered".⁵⁸ Our schools are blessed by the positive and supportive priests with whom they share the mission of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus.

⁵² Congregation for Catholic Education (1982) *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*. (#37)

⁵³ NZ Catholic Bishops Conference (2014) *The Catholic Education of School-Age Children*. (#47)

⁵⁴ Congregation for Catholic Education (1982) *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*. (#9)

⁵⁵ The common term for Cl47 Special Character Positions as required in the Education and Training Act (2020)

⁵⁶ Teachers not holding 'special character positions' who are expected to teach RE need the permission of the diocesan office to do so.

⁵⁷ Congregation for Catholic Education (2022) *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*. (#82)

⁵⁸ Francis (2019) *Christus Vivit*. (#98)



46. All Catholic special character leadership roles require appropriate qualifications evidencing sound Catholic knowledge and understanding. This is critical for supporting young people's religious education and faith formation through effective teaching and the capacity to enter into rich dialogue. Provision and funding of appropriate professional learning and formation time is the responsibility of all School Boards and Principals of Catholic schools. In Aotearoa, qualifications are provided through the Catholic Theological College (part of Te Kupenga – Catholic Leadership Institute), and additional professional learning and development is available through diocesan education offices and associated Religious Education Advisors.
47. It is important to recognise that most Catholic schools experience challenges and barriers in terms of growing discipleship and commitment to the mission of the Church to live and teach Christ Jesus. Such obstacles may include low student and whānau engagement with Catholic sacramental life; little interest in Religious Education; difficulty recruiting appropriate leaders and teachers; complex relationships with the parish; or frustration with the granting of preference. However, in an increasingly secular society, the necessity to authentically rise to these challenges with creativity, vision, and hope is needed more than ever. School leaders in kōrero and wānanga with the wider local community, including school whānau, student leaders, mana whenua, and the diocese, have an opportunity and responsibility to:
- Know and name the positive experiences within their school
 - Know and name the challenges
 - Dialogue and investigate solutions and next steps
 - Work together to effect deeper engagement, change, and growth.

In facing these challenges, the school connects with the very mission of Jesus to make disciples of all nations, conscious that the work is not ours alone but that he is with us “always, until the end of the age” (Matthew 23:20).

Sacramental Living – Kia Īnoi Kia Mahi



48. The Eucharist is the “source and summit” of Christian life.⁵⁹ It is in the Mass that we most profoundly experience Christ’s presence in the form of bread and wine, the words and actions of the priest, the Gospel, and the community gathered. Therefore, it is in the context of the Eucharist that the Catholic school community most clearly recognises its identity and mission as followers of Jesus and members of the Church.
49. Sunday Eucharist is an encounter with Christ and with one another that nourishes and forms individuals and the wider community. Many Catholic school families and staff regularly experience this. At the same time, however, it is recognised that for many individuals and whānau, regular Mass attendance has become rare. The school community is warmly invited to work with their parish priest to explore ways to help reconnect families with the central element of Catholic life and to participate in this Sacrament, which can touch hearts so deeply.
50. While all people who come to Mass ‘participate’ rather than attend, members of school communities are particularly encouraged to take part as fully as possible in the liturgy. Roles such as altar serving, offertory, children’s liturgy, choirs, etc., provide a range of opportunities for young people and whānau to feel they are contributing meaningfully. Regular parish/school Masses, where schools take responsibility for planning and filling most roles in the Sunday Eucharist, are an excellent way of bringing the parish and school communities together. The hope is that the young people and their whānau will always feel at home and be just as welcome and involved in all Sunday Masses.
51. School and parish communities are encouraged to make space for and utilise cultural practice and language, including symbol and ritual, to celebrate the Eucharist and other liturgical gatherings through the authentic participation of those involved. All young people should have regular opportunity to share and recognise their Catholic traditions in celebrating together the liturgy of the Church. Where possible, miha Māori should become an established part of school and parish life.
52. Preparation to receive the Sacraments is an important part of a young person’s hīkoi wairua spiritual journey. They not only need to receive quality and appropriate education and formation, but to experience and recognise these Sacraments alive in the adults they encounter. Teachers, parents/caregivers, priests and parishioners, must actively support young people in their sacramental journey, which begins well before receiving the Sacrament and continues throughout their lives, through example and words of encouragement, connection and faith. In this context, sacramental programmes are also a significant opportunity to promote the relationship between parish and school.
53. Every person is on a hīkoi wairua, a spiritual journey. An important role of the Catholic school is to help young people develop knowledge, attitudes, and skills to grow and navigate this journey. Prayer is an important dimension of this hīkoi wairua and learning to pray in a range of meaningful ways and styles within the Catholic tradition, including individual and collective occasions of prayer, are at the heart of the Catholic school.

⁵⁹ Paul VI (1964) *Lumen Gentium*



54. The spiritual formation of students, teachers, staff, the board, and the wider school community is a critical area of school life because it nourishes our faith and orients us to the presence of Jesus in our lives and our shared relationship with the one God. The school has a responsibility to support such formation, which includes growing young people to be active and contributing members of the Church.
55. School retreats are important in spiritual formation and are distinct from leadership training or events. Retreats aim for young people to recognise and grow the spiritual dimension of their lives through opportunities and reflection for encounters with the living God. They require overt intent and planning to avoid being undermined by ecological, social, or leadership activities that are similar to those experienced in any state school.
56. Tamariki/rangatahi and their whānau feel valued, and the community is enriched with the normalisation of tikanga and wairuatanga Māori in the Catholic special character of the school. The practice, performance, use, and symbols of taonga Māori witness the school's Catholic special character.
57. Chaplains and youth ministers in secondary schools are an integral part of sacramental living within the school, and it is important that the Principal and DRS work collaboratively with them.

Morality and Ethics – Whaia te Tika



58. The Church recognises that parents play an invaluable role as the first educators of their children.⁶⁰ Pope Francis stressed that Catholic schools and families must work together in this endeavour “to face the new educational challenges that come from contemporary culture, from society, from mass media, from new technologies”.⁶¹ Referring to his Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis stressed that “school is not a substitute for parents but is complementary to them. Therefore, collaboration between the various components of the educational community must never be lacking. Without frequent communication and mutual trust, a community is not built, and without a community, it is not possible to educate.”⁶²
59. The Catholic school helps children and young people grow in all areas of life by providing an environment for moral and ethical human formation from a Christian perspective, which “considers the totality of the person”⁶³ and includes growth and understanding in areas reflecting their:
- Social development
 - Cultural identity
 - Morality
 - Spirituality
 - Emotional wellbeing
 - Physicality
 - Intellectual ability
 - Human sexuality.

A Christian’s journey to wholeness includes growth in all these areas.⁶⁴

60. Through moral and ethical formation, the Catholic school is a place where critical thinking is taught, and the development of mature Gospel moral values and understanding of the Christian virtues is supported. Doing so encourages young people, teachers, and the community to ask *What kind of life should I lead? What kind of person should I be?*⁶⁵ The whole Catholic school community is called to use this formation in morality and ethics for a better society. This response in faith and action is a response to our encounter with Jesus Christ.
61. It is the encounter with Jesus Christ and coming to know him that calls Catholics to act both morally and ethically – not just encounter with lofty ideas or acquiring knowledge.⁶⁶
62. Catholic schools see the development of moral and ethical values as central to their work in education. Therefore, they have adopted the practice of identifying, defining, and promoting a set of Gospel values and Christian virtues. These are based on what is evident in the Gospels as lived by Jesus Christ and embedded in a school’s founding order/charism.⁶⁷ They are not abstract objectives to be admired or precast solutions to issues but are absolute values and virtues that relate to real-life contexts and situations so that they can become an integral framework for living and decision-making.⁶⁸ These Gospel values and Christian virtues are integrated into all aspects of the school’s life.

⁶⁰ Congregation for Catholic Education (1965) *Gravissimum Educationis* (#3)

⁶¹ Pope Francis (2018) Audience with members of the Italian Parents’ Association – 07.09.2018.

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Congregation for Catholic Education (1983) *Educational Guidance on Human Love*. (#35)

⁶⁴ National Centre for Religious Studies (2021) *Wonderfully Made in God’s Image: A Revised Framework for Human Sexuality Education in Aotearoa Catholic Schools*.

⁶⁵ NZ Catholic Bishops Conference (1991) *Health and Moral Education*.

⁶⁶ Pope Benedict XVI (2005) *Deus Caritas Est*. (#1)

⁶⁷ See NZCBC (2014) *Catholic Education of School-Age Children*, #54, 69-73, for more detail.

⁶⁸ Congregation for Catholic Education (1977) *The Catholic School*.



63. Gospel values are strengthened through education in the four cardinal virtues: prudence (which enables us to act well in all situations); justice (to give others their due); fortitude (to do what is right in the face of difficulties); and temperance (to control our desires and avoid ill-treatment of others and abuse of situations). Together, these virtues help young people respond to moral and ethical questions and see both the realities and the possibilities of the world in which they live.⁶⁹
64. Moral education includes human sexuality and relationship formation. These are essential parts of the Catholic school curriculum, as understanding human sexuality is vital for knowing ourselves and others. Education and formation in this area are privileged responsibilities: the preciousness of a human person needs to be fostered, especially given the many social pressures and misconceptions young people encounter today. Therefore, it is imperative that all teachers involved in human sexuality and relationship education or counselling, and ideally all school staff, should complete the National Centre for Religious Studies formation programme *Having Life to the Full*.
65. Often, secular moral and ethical knowledge and/or programmes lack a worldview consistent with the Catholic Church's teaching. Therefore, the Catholic school must have a system to ensure a Catholic perspective is included in all curricula and programmes presenting a Catholic understanding of the issues covered.⁷⁰
66. The Catholic school must be a place where moral and ethical values are communicated through the way people interact and relate to each other based on the Catholic culture of the school. Teachers, students, and whānau can all be active witnesses to faith through their communications and interactions.
67. The Catholic school recognises diversity of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, faith background and ability amongst its young people. As the school educates for a "culture of care",⁷¹ the dignity of every person, their mana motuhake, community, language, ethnicity, religion, people, all human rights, and care of our "common home" are upheld. In doing so, the young person is supported in developing their own moral and ethical "compass",⁷² grounded in Church teaching.
68. A moral and ethical compass, based on Church teaching, is evident in the school's behaviour management and pastoral care systems. All young people are to be respected, known, shown aroha, cared for and supported, thus upholding the mana and tapu of every person. This includes the application of national safeguarding guidelines and processes.⁷³
69. As we address the negative consequences of colonialism in Aotearoa New Zealand, the Catholic school uses its formation in Gospel values and Christian virtues to address racism, cultural bias or discrimination that is evident or brought to its attention.

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ NZ Catholic Bishops Conference (1991) *Health and Moral Education*.

⁷¹ Congregation for Catholic Education (2022) *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*.

⁷² Ibid

⁷³ <https://safeguarding.catholic.org.nz/>

Catholic Social Teaching – Aroha mai, Aroha atu



70. Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is a body of thought sourced from Scripture (both the Old and New Testaments) and the Church's official teachings concerning social, economic, and ecological issues. It has grown out of the recognition that Christians are called to take responsibility in their personal and public lives to foster God's reign of justice and peace in their times and situations.⁷⁴ The growth of the Church's social teachings has been built on and developed as the Church responds to major events in the world. CST helps Catholics to overcome the separation of the Gospel from life and to integrate faith and life to create a more just world.
71. The principles of CST are a collection of key themes that have evolved from papal encyclicals and bishops' encyclicals (letters) and statements to the Church and the wider community. The two major themes arising from CST are:
 - Human Dignity Te Mana o te Tangata: Every person is created in the image of God. Therefore, each person is invaluable and worthy of respect as a human family member. The person's dignity grants them inalienable political, legal, social, and economic rights. All other rights and responsibilities flow from our dignity as human persons.⁷⁵
 - Common Good He Painga mā te Katoa: We are social beings created by God to live in community, not as individuals. The common good is the sum total of all those conditions of social life that enable individuals, families and organisations to improve the social, physical and emotional wellbeing of people in society so they can reach fulfilment.⁷⁶
72. In response to the principle of human dignity, Catholic schools strive to educate for an environment that respects and upholds the dignity of all its young people, staff, and community by promoting inclusivity, valuing and providing for a diversity of needs, respecting difference, and involving parents and whānau as fully as possible in the life of the school, especially those who feel marginalised in an academic and faith environment.
73. The Catholic school aims to educate young people about promoting the common good and working towards a just and equitable society. This includes fostering a sense of civic and Christian responsibility, ethical decision-making and encouraging active participation in social and political issues, thus working for the good of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

⁷⁴ Catechism of the Catholic Church, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM, (#541,671)

⁷⁵ <https://www.catholic.org.nz/social-action/principles/>

⁷⁶ John XXIII (1961) *Mater et Magistra*. (#74)

Principles of CST: for further explanation of all nine principles see [Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand](#).



74. The other core principles most referred to are:
 - Subsidiarity Mana Whakahaere
 - Stewardship Kaitiakitanga
 - Distributive Justice Te Tika ka Tohaina
 - Participation Nāu te Rourou, Nāku te Rourou
 - Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable He Whakaaro Nui mō te Hunga Rawakore
 - Solidarity Whakawhanaungatanga
 - Promotion of Peace Te Whakatairanga i te Rangimārie.
75. In a Catholic school, all members recognise Māori as tangata whenua and respect the rights of mana whenua, as they are committed to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its principles of protection, partnership, and participation, which is an enactment of the Catholic Church's CST and the Catholic special character of the school.
76. CST influences and provides a framework for everything in the Catholic school. To assist the school community in experiencing and understanding how they can live in right relationship with God, ourselves, others, and all of creation, CST should be consistently evident in the school's:
 - Board policies, procedures and decision making
 - Leadership models
 - Promotion of excellence as part of the spiritual quest
 - Employment processes and practices
 - Induction programmes so that all feel welcome, safe, and included
 - Consultation processes
 - Curriculum and lived experiences of its young people
 - Equitable allocation of resources
 - Stewardship of resources
 - Pastoral and behaviour management procedures
 - Actions to reduce the barriers to participation and attendance
 - Environmental practices
 - Relationships and structures that encourage solidarity between schools (Catholic and others).

Christian Hope – Nō ngā Tūpuna



77. Christian hope, as with all virtues, comes from God and leads us back to God, which is its goal. Christian hope offers us courage and light in the darkest times and sustains us with the truth that God leads us through difficult times on our journey to heaven. Pope Francis reminded us that “The Holy Spirit works without rest for the sake of humanity and the world, and even the greatest pains of history will be overcome: this is the hope that resounds every morning!”⁷⁷ Therefore, the Catholic school teaches and models that God’s desire and plan of love, justice and peace for humanity and all of creation will prevail.
78. Christian hope must be expressed in our actions. It empowers us to live differently, requiring us to respond with pūaroa compassion, supporting each other, near and afar, in difficult times, and wanting the best for each other and creation. This is modelled in all interactions with young people, staff and the wider community. From this, all learn that they are unconditionally loved by God and, therefore, loved by us. Pope Francis asked us to be ‘converters’ of goodness – to respond to evil by doing good. As Christians, we must “nurture tomorrow’s hope by healing today’s pain”.⁷⁸
79. Today’s society and culture present many challenges and difficulties for young people, which should be realistically recognised. Identity crisis, loss of trust in social structures, insecurity, the absence of personal convictions and absolute values, social media, climate change and war can result in hopelessness. But these challenges should, at the same time, be viewed and confronted with a healthy optimism and with the courage that Christian hope provides.⁷⁹ It is in understanding the power of Jesus’s teachings on the reign of God that we understand all evil will be overcome through living Jesus’s Gospel, which is often countercultural.
80. The Catholic school as a hope-filled Catholic community offers modelled pathways that lead to hope:
 - Opportunities for community members to pray, communally and personally, within the liturgy and spontaneously. Prayer helps us in our difficult times and in those of our community and of the world. Through prayer, we know that God is always there to listen. Prayer helps us be hopeful and to give hope to others.
 - Understanding that our well-intended actions are not futile, even when they appear to be, because God’s indestructible love gives them meaning and importance, giving us the courage to continue. Even when we encounter our own or others’ suffering, God enters into that suffering – evidenced in Jesus on the Cross – and hope in the resurrection offers the courage to continue, knowing that our efforts will overcome evil and reduce misery.
 - Understanding that justice is not always given and received in this world, but God is just, and justice will be given in eternal life, offers us hope.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Francis (2017) Wednesday Audience 2 August.

⁷⁸ Francis (2021) World Day of the Poor Mass.

⁷⁹ Congregation for Catholic Education (1982) *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*. (#26)

⁸⁰ Benedict XVI (2007) *Spe Salvi*.



81. The Catholic school faith community provides its members with the opportunity to find and offer hope through the accompanying and support of each other and the community. This is evident in many aspects of the school, including its:
- Gospel values and Christian virtues education
 - The prayer life of the school
 - Pastoral care programme
 - Tuakana-teina structures
 - Faith peer ministry programme
 - Peer support programmes
 - Guidance counselling
 - Environmental sustainability practices
 - Social action programmes.
82. Catholic schools, which live differently because of their faith, are emblems of hope and light in the darkness: they “shine like stars in the world”.⁸¹ The story of their founding order/s, which is Christ-centred, presents an example of how lived faith brings light into difficult times, both past and present. Through exploring this story, schools can find a model and example of how Christian hope is experienced today, oriented towards aroha for others, and finds its ultimate conclusion in eternal life and happiness with our loving God in heaven.

⁸¹ Philippians 2:15b

Conclusion – Mihi Whakamutunga



83. Catholic schools are a rich blessing in the Aotearoa landscape, and so too are you who share our faith in the belief that God's grace through the love of Jesus Christ brings about a better world. Let us journey together, confident in our schools and grateful for the gifts our communities bring in support of our young people's hīkoi wairua by sharing in this sacred mission. Kia tau te rangimārie.

I koa ahau I tā rātou meatanga mai ki ahau, "Tātou ka haere ki te whare o Ihowā!"
I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!"⁸²
Christ is Risen, Alleluia, Alleluia!

⁸² Psalm 122.1

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