

## ST JAMES' SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### POLICY ON SPECIAL CHARACTER AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

July 2010

#### RATIONALE

St James' School is a Roman Catholic Integrated School and the philosophy of Catholic schools is defined by NZCEO (2002) as *Catholic schools are established to carry out the Church's mission. Schools provide a Catholic Faith environment which enable young people to develop the attitudes, knowledge and skills to become active and committed members of the faith community and to contribute positively to the world community.*

The philosophy of the Catholic schools in New Zealand is based on a Catholic understanding of Christianity. Catholic integrated schools live and teach the values of Christ Jesus. These values are expressed in the Scriptures and in the practices, worship and doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.

#### PURPOSES

1. To provide a Policy statement to ensure the school will honor goal number one of the Charter "Living what we believe", which is:  
To build a living, Christian community, following Jesus Christ in prayer and active service, where students are formed in knowled3. To ensure Religious Education is taught according to the guidelines of the New Zealand Bishops Conference
4. To encourage each member of the school community to:  
Grow in the culture of LOVE based on God's LOVE for us,  
Respect the rights of others, their freedom and worth,  
Evangelise and share the Good News and Gospel of Jesus Christ,  
Uphold the moral principles based on the teachings of Christ.

#### Our Gospel SUPER Values

SELF CONTROL	I am following Jesus example of LOVE when I show Self Control, Patience, Tolerance and Reliability.
UNITY	I am following Jesus example of LOVE when I show Unity, Kindness, Compassion and Service.
PERSEVERANCE	I am following Jesus example of LOVE when I show Perseverance, Hope, Commitment and Excellence.
ENTHUSIASM	I am following Jesus example of LOVE when I show Enthusiasm, Creativity, Determination and Purposefulness.
RESPECT	I am following Jesus example of LOVE when I show Respect, Forgiveness, Honesty and Justice.

## **IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY**

1. That Catholic Education is promoted as a lifelong process.
2. That in all Board of Trustees' decision-making the Special Character of the school should be paramount.
3. The Board of Trustee members will be given the opportunity to keep up to date on matters relating to Special Character through the Principals' monthly report, the Special Character sub-committee minutes and the fortnightly newsletter.
4. Each Board of Trustees' monthly meeting is to commence with a prayer.
5. The Director of Religious Studies and the Special Character sub-committee of the Board of Trustees will meet monthly.
6. That the Proprietors Representatives on the Board of Trustees will report annually to the Proprietor on matters relating to Special Character.
7. That adequate funds be provided on a yearly basis to maintain and update Religious Education resources
8. The opportunity is given for the staff to meet weekly for prayer.
9. Time will be given to staff for strand exit and entry meetings to enable teachers to reflect on the Religious Education strand taught and prepare for the upcoming strand.
10. Opportunity will be provided annually for staff to participate in Faith Formation courses and other relevant courses related to the school's Special Character. Adequate funding is to be provided for these.
11. The Director of Religious Studies (DRS) will assist the Principal in providing leadership aimed at enhancing the Catholic Character of the school.
12. The Director of Religious Studies will oversee the Special Character Induction of new staff
13. The Director of Religious Studies will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the Religious Education teaching and learning Programme.
14. The community will be informed about Religious Education Strand Learning through the Family/Whanau book, Book Look, Student Led Celebrations, the newsletter, homework, and the SUPER Start Transition to school programme, etc.
15. The school community will promote the values of Self control, Unity, Perseverance, Enthusiasm and Respect.
16. That the partnership between St Patricks' Parish and St James' School be fostered

17. That pastoral support and care for students and families be encouraged within the St James' Catholic School Community.
18. That children will be provided with opportunities to celebrate their faith through school/Parish Masses, liturgies and prayers.
19. The students will be introduced to a variety of opportunities to enable and empower them to undertake Christian acts of service to promote social justice.
20. That students be given opportunities to pray using the traditional prayers/karakia introduced at each level, and to explore a variety of ways of praying using the scriptures, music, writing, art, symbols, literature and liturgy.
21. That students where possible explore the historical heritage of the Mercy Sisters and their charism.
22. Preference families whose children are unbaptised will be supported to choose the sacrament of Baptism for their children.
23. That teachers follow the guidelines for teaching the Religious Education programme advised by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference and allocated at each level as:
  - Year 1      3x30 minutes a week
  - Year 2      3x30 minutes a week
  - Year 3 -6    3x35 minutes a week
24. The non preference (non Catholic) and tagged (Catholic) staffing requirements will be in accordance with the school's integration agreement.
25. All the following documents and practices should take into consideration this policy:
  - School Charter
  - All Board Policies
  - The St James' School Curriculum Delivery Plan
  - Job Descriptions
  - Performance Management

**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

Special Character Compliance Requirements available on the Catholic Education office website <http://www.nzceo.catholic.org.nz/media/resources/publications/schools-philosophy.pdf>.

Handbook for the Board of Trustees of New Zealand Catholic Integrated Schools  
 St James School Annual Strategic Plan

Signed: .....

Approval Date: .....

Review Team: C. Cosgrove, L. Te Paiho, T. Edwards, D. Pacheco

Next Review: 2013