



# Welcome

*"Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa. Nau mai, haere mai.  
Greetings and warm welcome to Aquinas College."*

**Matt Dalton** Principal

Aquinas College is a proud Catholic community of learners, living our motto 'Kia mau ki te pono' (Hold fast to Truth). Our Touchstones of Family/Whanau, Scholarship, Service, Truth, Prayer and Joy are a special feature of the college providing the everyday context for our values-based philosophy.

We seek to develop young men and women who strive for excellence and pursue their full potential. We believe in the holistic development of students, grounded in Gospel values. We are committed to empowering our students to become compassionate, just and successful citizens, committed to the service of others.

We have 750 students (maximum roll) who love the sense of belonging and the Special Character that is unique to our College. We are privileged to work in partnership with our students' whanau to achieve our vision of developing future Catholic leaders, through faith and action.

***Mā te Atua koe e tiaki. We are blessed by the Lord.***

*The academic focus for our students is based on a broad core curriculum. A strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy is consistent through all levels to enrich students' learning, and opportunities to build on existing knowledge.*

*As students move into the senior school (Year 11–13), they select optional subjects to deepen their specialist subject understanding.*

## COURSES AVAILABLE

FACULTY	YEAR 7-9	YEAR 10	YEAR 11	YEAR 12	YEAR 13
<b>Religious Education</b>	Religious Education	Religious Education	Religious Education	Religious Education	Religious Education
<b>Physical Education</b>	PE and Health	PE and Health	Sports Science	Sports Science	Sports Science
				Outdoor Education	Outdoor Education
<b>Science</b>	Science	Science	Science	Biology	Biology
			Biological Science	Chemistry	Chemistry
				Physics	Physics
<b>Technology</b>	Technology	Technology	Technology	Technology	Technology
	(Hard Materials)	(Hard Materials)	(Hard Materials)	(Product Development)	(Engineering)
	Design and Visual Communication	Design and Visual Communication	Design and Visual Communication	Design and Visual Communication	Design and Visual Communication
	Food Technology	Food Technology	Food Technology	Food Technology	Food Technology
	Digital Technology	Digital Technology	Digital Technology	Digital Technology	Digital Technology
<b>Mathematics</b>	Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics	Calculus	Calculus
			Mathematics with Statistics	Statistics	Statistics
<b>Social Sciences</b>	Social Studies	Social Studies	History	History	History
		Enterprise Studies	Geography	Geography	Geography
			Economics	Economics	Economics
			Business Studies	Business Studies	Business Studies
			Accounting	Accounting	Accounting
<b>Languages</b>	French	French	French	French	French
	Te Reo Maori	Te Reo Maori	Te Reo Maori	Te Reo Maori	Te Reo Maori
<b>English</b>	English	English	English	English	English
					Alternative English
<b>Arts</b>	Music	Music	Music	Music	Music
	Art	Art	Art	Art - Sculpture	Art - Sculpture
	Drama	Drama	Drama	Art – Design	Art – Design
				Art – Painting	Art – Painting
				Art – Photography	Art – Photography
				Art – Printmaking	Art – Printmaking
				Drama	Drama
					Art History







*Touchstone*

# Prayer

## *The College Prayer:*

Loving God, we gather in your name, and ask that your Spirit be with us – a Spirit of wisdom and encouragement, of gentleness and peace.

Be with us in all that we do and help us to make Aquinas College into a truly Catholic educational community,

supporting Family life, promoting Scholarship, seeking Truth in all its forms, Serving and caring for others, grounded in Prayer, and full of Joy.

We make this prayer in Jesus' name, and through the intercession of Thomas Aquinas and of all the saints, AMEN.



*Aquinas College is unashamedly Catholic in character and ethos and we follow Jesus, who according to the Holy Scripture is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). Our College motto is "Hold fast to Truth". Our search for the Truth has its beginning and end in the person of Jesus Christ.*

Our College Prayer asks that God be with us in all that we do. All our endeavours at school: all our Family-building, all our Service and caring for others, our work in the classroom, seeking out Truth in all its various forms, is carried out in response to the love of our Creator God; so we ask that God be with us each day.

Our hope is that Jesus enters the life of every student and transforms them to be the very best that they can be, a person who is a beacon of God's love in the way they live their lives now, and into the future.

- There are external signs that we follow Jesus, signs such as the large cross at the entrance to the college.
- Prayer is a part of every day.
- Holy Mass is celebrated at the College each week.
- School Masses at St Thomas Aquinas parish and All Saints by the Sea parish.
- Chanel Shield competition with other Catholic secondary schools in our diocese.







Touchstone

# Service

*Service is at the heart of our College. We have a culture of serving others.*

Servant leadership is the focus for both staff and students alike. This provides an opportunity for students to go beyond themselves, actively living out the Gospel reflection of “We are His hands here on earth”. We challenge our students to play their part in providing justice to the most vulnerable in our world.

“We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But the ocean would be less without that drop.”

Mother Teresa



### **SERVICE GROUPS**

Young Vinnies is a junior branch of St Vincent de Paul Society. There is huge enthusiasm from students from Year 7 to 13 to participate and lead areas of outreach to the less fortunate. Young LEOs is a junior group of Lions who model serving the community in a variety of ways. AC Army is a group who identify needs in the community and work to meet these needs. Students are involved with Loaves and Fishes and Full Stop Van. These are designed to help the most vulnerable children in our community with food and support.

### **SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES**

Our focus on service begins in our tutor classes. There are numerous opportunities for service through taking an active part in a wide variety of committee activities.

### **SERVICE DAY**

Each year, all staff and students offer service to the community for a full day. Students are enthusiastic about the opportunity to provide service to many individuals and groups.

### **FIJI SERVICE TRIP**

Each year a group of Year 13 students and adults travel to Fiji to work with locals building community facilities in the village of Vanuakula.

### **AQUINAS SERVICE PROJECT (ASP)**

The purpose of the Aquinas Service Project (ASP) is for each student entering Year 12 and 13 to identify, design, carry out and reflect on one example of personal service within the community. The expectation is 20 hours but most students do far more.

### **SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

Part of the focus of our student leadership is understanding what it means to be a leader. This is modelled in our college's approach to leadership.







*Touchstone*

# Family

*Aquinas College is more than just a College – it exudes a sense of belonging, joy and community that is uniquely AC.*

Through our meaningful pastoral care systems, attentive staff, and a variety of programmes offered, we encourage each student to be their best self while contributing positively to our school climate, built on respect of self and others.

We care about the well-being of our students and encourage them to be active

and involved at break times. Senior students work alongside staff to support activities for younger students. Lunchtime activities such as organized sport, code club, chess club and book club provide a place for students to connect with others and feel part of the AC family.





*Together we support and build our college family in the following ways:*

- Meeting in tutor groups is an important start to the day. This is an opportunity for students to get to know one another, build relationships through conversations, and begin the day in a safe, accepting environment. The vertical grouping of our tutor classes, based around the four houses, creates a leadership opportunity to interact and provide support and assistance across year levels.
- New students are welcomed to Aquinas College on their first day with a Powhiri. They are briefed by the Year Level Dean on what to expect during their 7-year journey at Aquinas College. The buddy system offered at Aquinas helps new students to settle and familiarises them with our school environment.
- An effective and supportive PTA strives to make Aquinas a joyful place for students, staff and the wider community through the annual Twilight Festival, the Quiz Night, Entertainment Books, fundraisers for various teams and activities and other events.







Touchstone

# Truth

*Being true to oneself involves finding out what values underpin the way you want to live your life.*

Aquinas College encourages personal integrity and strong relationships based on Gospel values. We provide a safe environment where students and staff value and respect each other. Each person is responsible for their own actions and words.



*As well as individual and family work, and the school wide Restorative approach, we provide the following support programmes to foster positive peer relations in our College.*

#### **PEER SUPPORT**

This is a five week programme with Year 11 leaders working with new Year 7 students at the beginning of their school year. The programme is designed to help students achieve success at school by developing relationship skills, self-esteem and sense of belonging.

#### **ATAWHAI SENIOR STUDENT SUPPORT LEADERS**

A select group of Year 12 students are trained to work and support younger students (Years 7 -10). These leaders can also facilitate mediation between students and have ongoing supervision from the College counsellors.

#### **FOCUS GROUP WORK**

Outside providers from various community agencies support students to make positive changes in areas they may be struggling with.

Some students require additional support around building personal resilience. This is facilitated in various ways such as individual counselling, family counselling, group work with the students' teachers, Dean and/or support from an Atawhai.







*Touchstone*

# Scholarship

*Aquinas College students are successful in gaining national qualifications and are well-prepared for their future studies.*

Aquinas College has a broad approach to our curriculum. This means that students learn within all of the eight learning areas of the New Zealand Curriculum as well as in Religious Education.

We aim to prepare our students for a successful future in whatever field they choose to pursue. This involves engaging learning that has a focus on excellence and empowering the student.



*Learning at Aquinas College is about the whole person. We aim to develop literate, articulate, and numerate students who take responsibility for their own learning. They are collaborative and creative problem-solvers who enjoy the challenge and joy of learning. As students move through their time at Aquinas College they begin to develop specialist areas aligned with their interests and passions. We have found that expert teaching of engaged students leads to excellent learning.*

Within our junior school (Years 7–10) we have a broad-based core curriculum that covers all areas of the **New Zealand Curriculum** (including Arts, Languages, and Technology). There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy - students with a strong base in these areas tend to be successful in their later studies.

As students move into the senior school they begin to determine their own course of study by selecting from a comprehensive set of course options.

Results in **NCEA** show that Aquinas College students are successful in gaining national qualifications and are well-prepared for their future studies.

There is a strong academic focus and students are encouraged to attempt **scholarship programmes** in their final years at the school.

In addition to the excellent preparation that occurs within their formal course of study, students also have the opportunity to be extended through involvement in national and international competitions, trips and international tours, Gifted and Talented Education programmes, and various academic clubs at the school.







Touchstone

# Joy

*St Thomas Aquinas is credited with writing “Man cannot live without Joy” and “Joy is the noblest human act.”*

For us this means loving and respecting ourselves and others, having a positive outlook to all those around us, and enjoying and caring for our environment. In doing this we reflect our love of God. We aim to make this visible in all that we do. At Aquinas College we promote and celebrate optimism and Christian hope, both in the school setting and also in our wider community.

The College’s Catholic character challenges us to bring enjoyment and passion to all that we do. Students enjoy a positive, engaging classroom environment that fosters a love of learning. This, together with the co-curricular life of the College, enables us to share in the joy of participation, progress and achievement.

These activities include our annual house-based Swimming, Athletics and Cross Country events; student-led celebrations on Aquinas Day; PTA’s Twilight Festival; biennial musical productions; International Languages celebrations; our musical groups and choirs; Chanel Shield and other inter-college sports fixtures and competitions.









# Arts

*The Arts Programme at Aquinas College provides a wide range of opportunities for students to express themselves creatively.*

We inspire students to fully develop their artistic potential and meaningful aesthetic appreciation.

Through Art, Music and Drama we pride ourselves on promoting quality and encourage a culture of Pure Joy through our co-curricular groups in the college and community.





*Students at Aquinas College have the opportunity to develop their artistic talents within the classroom setting as well as through a diverse range of extracurricular activities offered to them, including:*

- itinerant music lessons in diverse areas such as strings, percussion, brass, woodwind, and vocal tuition
- school beautification projects that showcase student work
- school performance groups – choirs, string groups, concert and jazz bands, and orchestra
- choral competitions including the Big Sing, and Primary Schools Choir
- drama performances
- our biennial major school productions which occur on the Baycourt stage in Tauranga
- involvement in the Diocesan inter-school competition – the Chanel Shield

At Aquinas College we continually look for creative ways to bring the Arts to life!







# Sport

*Students engage in a wide variety of traditional and emerging sports with a major focus being on using sport as a means to develop the whole person.*

Through effective coaching and mentoring, staff, parents and outside providers ensure Aquinas teams are competitive, and play hard but fair. Above all, Aquinas teams embrace the true spirit in which sport should be played.



*Sport plays a significant part in the life of an Aquinas student. Through the varied programme of traditional and emerging sports available at the College, students have ample opportunity to engage and express themselves from beginner through to elite levels.*

All students are encouraged to represent the College in their chosen codes and we are proud that the majority of them do.

We are proud of our record of outstanding sporting achievements over the relatively short space of time that the College has been open, and it is our intention to continue to build on those.

Our students compete in local competitions and also represent the College at summer and winter tournaments. Year 7 & 8 students compete annually at the national AIMS Games.

#### **AQUINAS COLLEGE:**

- boasts a participation rate of over 70% involvement in Sport compared to the national average of 52%
- is very proud of the fact that many of the students who support the College in sport go on to compete at regional level, with several going on to national and international levels
- offers opportunities for students to be involved in over 30 sporting codes at either competitive and/or social levels
- is extremely fortunate and thankful to be supported by an amazing community of volunteers. Family is one of the touchstones of the College.







# Culture

*Tēnā koutou kātoa.  
Malo e lelei, Talofa lava,  
Ni sa bula vanaka, Malo ni.  
Nau mai, haere mai ki roto i te whānau o Akuina.*

We create a Tūrangawaewae for every learner who joins the Aquinas whānau which is safe, secure and connected. At Aquinas College we aim to recognise the identity, language and culture of every learner. As a community, we act as kaitiaki who work to promote and embrace whanaungatanga, manaakitanga and kotahitanga.



The College has a Māori and Pacific Peoples Mentor who works alongside our pastoral team. This position exists to support the achievement and pastoral care of our students of Māori and Pacific descent. The College is fortunate to be well supported by a Māori Whānau group and a Pacific Peoples' Aiga group. Students are formally welcomed at a full school pōwhiri at the beginning of the year which connects them to our College and brings them into the Aquinas whānau.

We pride ourselves on making connections with our community in wider, holistic learning opportunities to increase the cultural capital of our students. Students also have the opportunity to represent Aquinas College at events such as Kapa Haka, Ngā Manu Kōrero and Pasifika by Nature and Pasifika speech competitions.

### **INTERNATIONAL**

Aquinas College enrolls a limited number of international students at each year level of the school. We value the diversity and cultural enrichment that our International Students bring. Students benefit from a programme of learning, set to meet their own individual learning goals or plans for future study. International students are well supported by the College's Director of International Students and Administrator of International Students. International students fully immerse themselves into College life, join social groups and form long lasting friendships with local students.

