

**POLICY 1.6
Special Character**

Ratified at Board Meeting	31.03.22
Next Review Due	2025

RATIONALE:

Aquinas College is a place to encounter and seek a relationship with the living God, who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth. Our Touchstones and the spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas enable our community to grow a deeper understanding of Gospel values through the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ. Students are companioned to be servant leaders who positively influence the lives of others.

The Board positions the Special Character of the college as the primary strategic priority and recognises that Special Character is the framework within which the whole school curriculum is delivered; it is, in fact, integral to everything that takes place in the school, or on behalf of the school and its community.

The Board expects high standards of conduct across the school community reflective of the Special Catholic Character of the college.

The Board will ensure that all decisions and actions undertaken by the Board promote and enhance the Special Character of the college as provided for in the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act 1975 and the Integration Agreement.

The Strategic Plan and Annual Plan are reflective of the priority placed on Special Character.

DELEGATIONS:

The Board delegates to the Principal responsibility for:

- Developing and implementing systems to integrate Gospel values into all aspects of school life.
- Promoting and providing professional development for staff.
- Liaising with the parish community in regard to school masses, sacramental programmes, ministry opportunities, youth groups etc.

GUIDELINES:

The Principal and Senior Leadership Team will ensure that:

- All procedures, structures and the physical environment reflect the teachings of Jesus Christ and the College Touchstones.

- Opportunities for prayer and encounter with Christ are created for both students and staff.
- Those seeking enrolment at Aquinas College are made aware that support of the special character of the College is a condition of enrolment.
- Those seeking employment at Aquinas College are made aware of the expectations for staff employed in a Catholic School and understand the importance of reflecting and supporting the Special Character of the college.
- Staff are companioned on their journey of faith formation and encouraged to be personal witnesses of their faith.
- Teaching and learning materials in all areas of the curriculum support the Special Character and uphold the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- The national curriculum for Religious Education is provided in accordance with the requirements set down by the NZ Catholic Bishops Conference.
- Internal self-review and reporting systems are in place to ensure the provision of religious instruction and Special Character is monitored and reported to the Board and school community.
- Connections are forged with parish communities and opportunities created for students and whanau to participate in the mission of the church.
- The Proprietor is provided with an Annual Compliance Attestation.

ASSOCIATED LEGISLATION / SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:

- Aquinas College Integration Agreement
- [Part 33 of the Education Act 1989](#)
- [Handbook for Boards of Trustees of NZ Catholic Integrated Schools](#)
- [Expectations of Staff Employed in a Catholic School](#)
- [Code of Ethics for Staff and Board of NZ Catholic Schools](#)
- [The Catholic Education of School-Age Children \(NZ Catholic Bishops Conference\)](#)