



# Aquinas College

## Annual Plan 2024

**Vision Statement:** Educating Catholic Servant Leaders through Faith and Action

**Mission Statement:** At Aquinas College, we dedicate ourselves to the education of students grounded in the Catholic traditions of hope, faith, and love, while honouring our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Our philosophy is to nurture a deep sense of belonging within a faith community that honours and uplifts each individual's identity. We inspire students to believe with reason, empowering them to realise their true potential and pursue personal excellence. We accompany young people to become Disciples of Christ, dedicating ourselves to developing servant leaders who positively influence the lives of others.

### Our Touchstones

**Family** - We grow an authentic sense of belonging when we show care, compassion and love to all in our community. We are called to love one another just as God first loved us. As a faith community, we belong to a Family that cares for us and provides us with a nurturing environment to grow.

**Scholarship** - We seek personal excellence in all we do, realising that hard work and resilience are necessary to reach our true potential. The Touchstone of Scholarship is connected with our search for Truth. We must develop our ability to think, reason and understand to see God's fingerprint in creation. St. Thomas Aquinas gave us an excellent example of Scholarship in his devotion to faith and reason.

**Truth** - Jesus is the Truth we aspire to. He is our Truth and the model for us as disciples. The search for Truth is continuous by seeking a moral way to live our lives and ground ourselves in a set of values upon which we can base our whole being.

**Service** - Service is central to our mission and ministry as Christians. Jesus calls us to put the needs of others before our own, particularly those most vulnerable in our society. We are encouraged to recognise the face of Christ in others and respond to their needs through our understanding of Catholic social teachings.

**Prayer** - We are called into a personal relationship with Christ through a life of Prayer. Jesus himself took time out to pray before anything he did. Through Prayer, we will grow and develop our personal relationship with our heavenly Father. Our Christian lives are a journey nourished by Prayer to support not just ourselves but those who journey with us.

**Joy** - Knowing Jesus intimately through a personal encounter is the Joy we all aspire to and connects us to the message of the Gospel. This Joy is known as Beatitudo, the Joy that can only be found in God. Putting our trust in God and focusing on Christ rather than our circumstances enables us to experience Joy even in times of hardship.

# Core Commitments – Strengthening and Safeguarding Our Practice

*To guide our journey over the next three years, the following section outlines our Core Commitments, which are integral to the fulfilment of our Mission and Strategic Objectives:*

1. **Strengthen Catholic Ethos:** Continuously reinforcing the Catholic ethos within our college. Ensuring that all activities, teachings, and interactions not only embody our Touchstones and the teachings of Christ, but also actively cultivate an environment of respect and dignity.
2. **Inclusive and Holistic Learning Environments:** We are committed to further developing teaching and learning environments that are inclusively accessible and deeply rooted in Catholic values, respecting the dignity and worth of every individual. Simultaneously, we strive for assessment practices that are designed to be fair, consistent, and equitable, providing every student with an opportunity to demonstrate their learning and achievements in a manner that aligns with our commitment to inclusivity and personal excellence.
3. **Academic Excellence and Equity:** Sustain college-wide academic excellence, focusing on reducing disparities in achievement among different genders and ethnic groups, thereby promoting equitable educational opportunities.
4. **Wellbeing Support:** Prioritise the wellbeing and mental health of our students and staff, ensuring a supportive environment that fosters holistic growth and resilience.
5. **Teacher Development and Support:** Maintain our commitment to providing teachers with ongoing professional development and support, focusing on the evaluation of their impact on student learning and adapting methods for better outcomes.
6. **Cultural Responsiveness and Mātauranga Māori Integration:** Strengthen the integration of Mātauranga Māori and the aspirations of Te Tiriti o Waitangi into all aspects of the college's functioning, promoting cultural responsiveness and respect for Tangata Whenua.
7. **Strengthen Community and Parish Partnerships:** Build reciprocal relationships with parents, families, and Parishes for active involvement in faith formation and educational process.
8. **Strengthen Partnerships with Māori and Pacific Communities:** Build reciprocal relationships with Māori, Whānau, Hapū, Iwi and Pacific communities to support local curriculum development and foster authentic connections.
9. **Integration of the Aquinas College Graduate Profile:** Deepen the integration of the Aquinas College Graduate Profile into our learning experiences and programmes, ensuring that graduates embody the college's Touchstones and aspirational goals for them.
10. **Ongoing Internal Evaluation:** Uphold our commitment to continuous internal evaluation, with a particular focus on Special Character, Curriculum Development and Pastoral Care, to strengthen and safeguard our systems and processes. Ensuring that subsequent action plans are developed and implemented effectively.

### **Kiato (Strategic Objective) Empowering Every Learner**

A commitment to ensuring that every learner achieves equitable outcomes and personal excellence within our Catholic educational environment. A strengths-based approach that nurtures a secure sense of language, culture, and identity of every learner. A responsive, rich, broad, and deep localised curriculum, implemented through adaptive and effective teaching strategies.

#### **Strategic Goals (2024-2026)**

1. Foster inclusive teaching and learning environments rooted in Catholic values to empower every learner.
2. Develop culturally responsive and adaptive teaching strategies.
3. Embed Mātauranga Māori throughout the curriculum.

#### **Annual Goals (2024)**

1. Successfully integrate UDL principles across all classrooms to accommodate diverse learning styles and needs, enhancing inclusivity and student success.
2. Strengthen integration of Mātauranga Māori principles in curriculum planning and delivery, fostering culturally responsive and adaptive teaching.

### **Kiato (Strategic Objective) Educationally Powerful Partnerships**

A commitment to establishing educationally powerful connections, fostering reciprocal relationships that enhance student learning and outcomes. An emphasis is on cultivating strong, collaborative connections, particularly with whānau, hapū, and iwi, ensuring our students are confident, connected, and actively involved learners, ready for future success.

#### **Strategic Goals (2024-2026)**

1. Foster a culture of community collaboration, engagement, feedback and effective communication.
2. Strengthen connections with Māori, whānau, hapū and iwi.

#### **Annual Goal (2024)**

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan to enhance clarity, organisation, and engagement in school decisions and events.

### **Kiato (Strategic Objective) Tūrangawaewae**

A commitment to cultivating a positive college culture, guided by our Catholic ethos and dedicated to upholding the principles of Te Tiriti. A focus on faith formation in a nurturing environment rich in respect, inclusion, and collaboration, where the well-being, mana and dignity of each person are held paramount.

#### **Strategic Goals (2024-2026)**

1. Deepen spiritual formation, Catholic identity and connection with Parishes.
2. Uphold and promote respect and dignity of every person.
3. Enhance cultural inclusion and belonging.

#### **Annual Goal (2024)**

1. Strengthen our approach to faith formation to deepen students' personal relationship with Christ.
2. Enhance and sustain positive behaviours aligned with Catholic values.

### **How will our goals and actions give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi:**

Our approach recognises Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a foundational document that guides our actions and targets. By embedding Mātauranga Māori throughout our curriculum and practices, we honour hapū, iwi, and tangata whenua aspirations as set out in Te Tiriti. Our goals and actions work toward acknowledging the status of Māori as tangata whenua and ensuring their knowledge and perspectives are integral to our educational framework. Our focus on inclusive environments and respectful communication aligns with upholding the mana and dignity of Māori culture, language, and traditions.

## Annual Goal 1

Successfully integrate UDL principles across all classrooms to accommodate diverse learning styles and needs, enhancing inclusivity and student success.

### Goal Statement

Our commitment is to adapt our teaching methodologies to honour the diverse learning styles and needs of every student through the use of UDL. We aim to foster an inclusive and dynamic learning environment that recognises the individuality and potential of each learner. Our focus is on ensuring that all students not only engage more deeply with their learning but also to experience personal excellence, embodying our holistic Catholic educational approach.

### Link to Strategic Goals:

Foster inclusive teaching and learning environments rooted in Catholic values to empower every learner.

Develop culturally responsive and adaptive teaching strategies.

Uphold and promote respect and dignity of every person.

### Where we currently are at:

In 2023, stakeholder consultations revealed an inconsistent perception of how effectively our school meets individual learning needs, with several comments suggesting a need for greater accommodation of diverse learners. Our Curriculum Review noted that while Universal Design for Learning has been implemented by some teachers, there remains a disparity in a consistent application across year levels and learning programmes.

### What do we expect to see by the end of the year?

- **Planning:** Planning demonstrates that all Learning Areas have a clear focus on the development and utilisation of UDL strategies across all of their learning programmes. There will be evidence of thinking to support accommodations and adaptations when developing learning activities. This will be supported by on-going staff PLD.
- **Delivery:** Increased student participation, engagement, and academic achievement across learning areas, indicating that our teaching practices are effectively addressing diverse learning needs. Teachers demonstrate a higher level of application and skill in applying UDL principles, as reflected in planning, delivery, and assessment methods. Observations of creative and innovative teaching methods that align with UDL principles, showing a shift towards more flexible, student-centred learning environments.
- **Monitoring:** Data enquiries are completed and reported throughout the year to make informed adjustments to teaching practices, ensuring continuous improvement in academic outcomes for all students. Evaluative measures will be carried out using on-going internal review, a self-reflection continuum, and a student evaluation tool. Teachers can evidence their growth using the self-reflection continuum and establish the next steps for professional development, learning area development, and school-wide understanding of UDL principles.

### [Implementation Plan](#)

**Responsibility:** VZL, KEN

## Annual Goal 2

Strengthen the integration of Mātauranga Māori principles in curriculum planning and delivery, fostering culturally responsive and adaptive teaching.

### Goal Statement

To actively enhance the integration of Mātauranga Māori principles within our curriculum planning and delivery processes, thereby fostering a learning environment that reflects cultural responsiveness and is adaptive to the diverse educational needs of our students. This goal aims to deepen the understanding and appreciation of Mātauranga Māori and Māori values among all students, while simultaneously ensuring that our teaching methods are flexible, innovative, and aligned with the guiding principles of both Catholic ethos and the aspiration of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

### Link to Strategic Goals:

Develop culturally responsive and adaptive teaching strategies.

Embed Mātauranga Māori throughout the curriculum.

Strengthen connections with Māori, whānau, hapū and iwi.

### Where we currently are at

In 2023, the Pou Ārahi Mātauranga Māori role was established as an active step towards realising the school's aspirations of implementing Mātauranga Māori. He Pou Tarāwaho - Mātauranga Māori Framework was also developed in 2023 to help guide our kura in implementing Mātauranga Māori throughout all aspects of the school. In the 2023 Strategic Plan consultation survey, there was a dissonance between the way our whānau and students judged our practice compared to staff when asked *"How do you feel Aquinas College effectively acknowledges Te Tiriti and meaningfully incorporates te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into everyday life?"*.

### What do we expect to see by the end of the year?

- **Planning:** Planning demonstrates an increase in content and resources that are explicitly aligned with Mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori principles. This will be evident in the number of units, lessons, or activities developed or revised to incorporate these principles.
- **Delivery:** Student engagement and understanding of Mātauranga Māori principles are improved, innovative teaching methods are adapted to be more culturally responsive, and there are reported changes to the classroom environment that are inclusive. Student engagement and understanding will be reviewed through surveys, self-reflection, or assessment. Teachers should reflect and document innovations in their teaching practice that were positive and culturally responsive as reflected in the **Mātauranga Māori Framework** and **Ka Hikitia Ka Hāpaitia**. Māori language and cultural references in teaching and learning material relevant to Tauranga Moana, hapū, and iwi should be visible in all teaching and learning environments.
- **Monitoring:** Teaching practice has been reviewed using a self-review continuum to identify areas of improvement and active steps are being put in place to determine steps of improvement. Student data has also been reviewed to identify any positive academic achievement changes, particularly for Māori students, that have occurred due to the integration of Mātauranga Māori.

### [Implementation Plan](#)

**Responsibility:** HAP

### Annual Goal 3

Develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan to enhance clarity, organisation, and engagement in school decisions and events.

#### Goal Statement

This year, we are dedicated to developing and implementing a comprehensive communication plan. Our objective is to significantly enhance the clarity, organisation, and effectiveness of our internal and external communications. We aim to create an environment where information is not only accessible but also facilitates active participation and collaboration in all aspects of school life. This initiative reflects our commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and community involvement in shaping a vibrant educational experience.

#### Link to Strategic Goals:

Foster a culture of community collaboration, engagement, feedback and effective communication.

#### Where we currently are at:

In 2023, community feedback highlighted the need for improvement in our school's communication. Staff have also expressed mixed views regarding the effectiveness of internal communication. This underscores the critical need for enhancing our communication strategies. Recognising the fundamental role of effective communication, we acknowledge these concerns as pivotal for guiding our efforts to refine and strengthen our communication framework.

#### What do we expect to see by the end of the year?

- **Planning:** Growing our capacity to understand the 'gaps' in our internal and external communications.
- **Delivery:** A comprehensive communication plan will be fully implemented, marked by consistent use of standardised templates and guidelines across all faculties and teams. Enhanced clarity, organisation, and effectiveness in our communications will lead to greater engagement and participation within our school community.
- **Monitoring:** A robust feedback and monitoring system to track the effectiveness of the communication strategies.

#### [Implementation Plan](#)

**Responsibility:** LS, DAL

## Annual Goal 4

Strengthen our approach to faith formation to deepen students' personal relationship with Christ.

### Goal Statement:

This year, Aquinas College reaffirms its commitment to nurturing the faith formation of all students, guiding them towards a vibrant, living relationship with Christ. Our objective is to facilitate students' progression in their faith journey, fostering meaningful connections with our parish community and a deeper participation in the Eucharist. We are dedicated to creating a range of opportunities that enable personal encounters with faith and encourage students to explore their identity and sense of belonging.

### Link to Strategic Goals:

Deepen spiritual formation, Catholic identity and connection with Parishes.

### Where we currently are at:

In recent years, we have provided opportunities for every student to encounter Christ with the support of the NET Team and through peer-with-peer ministry through our Retreats and daily school life. This has provided our students with an open invitation to come to know the person of Christ and to experience personal growth in their faith. Recognising that each person is on their own unique path. Our team of Tagged Teachers have supported the ongoing sacramental journey of our students through invitation into our Sacramental Programme. Set Free and Regeneration are Diocesan events that have promoted an opportunity for an encounter with Christ.

### What do we expect to see by the end of the year?

- **Planning:** Enhance understanding of students' spiritual needs and how they relate to Christ by gathering insights through surveys, group discussions, and research in faith formation.
- **Delivery:** Foster increased participation in the celebration of the Eucharist and in partnership with our Parishes, seek to introduce Youth Masses specifically designed for student involvement to increase their sense of belonging. Develop a comprehensive faith formation plan from Year 7 to Year 13 with connected themes, offering intentional and progressively deeper opportunities to encounter Christ. Additionally, focus on equipping teachers to be witnesses of their faith so they can effectively support students' faith journey.
- **Monitoring:** A strategic roadmap for continued faith formation planning, informed by student voice, comprehensive self-review outcomes and action plans.

### [Implementation Plan](#)

**Responsibility:** RBN

## Annual Goal 5

Enhance and sustain positive behaviours aligned with Catholic values.

### Goal Statement

This year, Aquinas College is dedicated to nurturing an inclusive and respectful environment, where every individual's sense of belonging is enhanced, and positive behaviours are celebrated. While we have a strong foundation of respect and dignity, our focus will be on reinforcing these values in all interactions, especially in areas identified for improvement. Through this, we aim to reduce instances of bullying, cyber-bullying, and unkindness, fostering a community that lives out the teachings of Christ in every aspect of school life.

### Link to Strategic Goals:

Uphold and promote respect and dignity of every person.

Enhance cultural inclusion and belonging.

### Where we currently are at:

Current reflections indicate instances where interactions and relationships do not always reflect and uphold the human dignity of every person or align to the Touchstones of our college.

### What do we expect to see by the end of the year?

- **Planning:** Growing our capacity to use evaluative pastoral care data and measures to develop proactive strategies to support holistic Catholic values and cultivate a sense of belonging.
- **Delivery:** Development of a school-wide system to recognise positive behaviours and acts of kindness.
- **Monitoring:** A robust monitoring system to track the effectiveness of the school-wide system to recognise positive behaviours and acts of kindness will be established. A strategic roadmap for continued pastoral development, informed by comprehensive self-review outcomes and action plans.

### [Implementation Plan](#)

**Responsibility:** JEF, RBN