

## Topic: Special Character

### Rationale

Special Character is defined in the Integration Agreement as:

*“The school is a Roman Catholic School in which the whole school community, through the general school programme and in its religious instruction 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 Diocese.”*

Our school will be a place where students have the opportunities to encounter Jesus.

*“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.” Pope Benedict XVI (2008)*

As a Catholic Primary School we have the responsibility to build a faith community instilled with the values of Mary and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

### Purpose

- To ensure that in our Curriculum Delivery, Pastoral Care, Catholic Community and in our adhering to the Statutory Requirements, all staff at Sancta Maria Catholic Primary School, maintain and appreciate our Special Catholic Character as defined in the Private Schools Integration Act and the Schools Integration Agreement.
- To promote in the whole school community respect, maintenance, awakening and deepening of our Catholic Character embedded in the charism of Mary.
- To ensure the Gospel values of Jesus Christ permeate all aspects of school life.
- To acknowledge the significant role played by the Parish Priest and the importance of the support of the St Luke's Parish Community in relation to the Special Character in the School.
- Witness to Jesus Christ through service to others, promoting a sense of the mission of the Church.

### Guidelines

1. Each school year a dimension of the school's Catholic Special Character will be reviewed following the process required by the Proprietor.
2. It is the responsibility that all members of our school community respect and maintain the Special Catholic Character of Sancta Maria Catholic Primary School which is led by the Principal and Director of Religious Studies.
3. Board members, particularly Proprietor Representatives, will have knowledge of their role and staffing requirements, as defined by the school's Integration Agreement.
4. Parents who send their children to SMCPs, show their support for Special Catholic Character by signing the enrolment form which requests support for Special Catholic

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Character and by participating in school activities, especially those that support the Special Catholic Character.

5. The school will teach the Religious Education programme in a way that promotes children's learning and provides opportunities for prayer, sacramental celebrations, rituals and service to others.
6. As we support and develop the faith community of our school we will be an integral part of Saint Luke's Catholic Parish Community.
7. Our school programme and environment will reflect both the bi-cultural and multi-cultural nature of Aotearoa New Zealand.
8. The Parish Priest, through weekly Masses and regular contact with the School will assist in the maintenance of the Special Catholic Character of the school.
9. At the beginning of each year staff will be reminded of the importance of nurturing and upholding our Marian Charism and Special Catholic Character in our Curriculum Delivery, Pastoral Care and Catholic Community.
10. Children and teachers will be involved in the planning and participating in class/team/school Masses, liturgies and special events that celebrate our faith.
11. The school is committed to appointing staff who will reflect, uphold and be involved in the Special Catholic Character of the school.
12. Ensure the "tagged" teaching positions, as outlined in the Schedule from the Catholic Integrated Schools Board, are filled by committed Catholic teachers to help maintain the Special Character of the school.
13. On appointment staff will sign the "Character of a Catholic School" form to ratify their support of Special Catholic Character.
14. Teaching staff will be required to take advantage of opportunities for professional development in the area of Special Catholic Character.

### Conclusion

Through involving the whole school family and St Luke's Parish community we will provide a warm, positive, gentle and nurturing environment, which reflects the Special Catholic Character of Sancta Maria Catholic Primary School. Through this we will develop commitment to and an appreciation of our faith and live out the Gospel values in our daily lives.

**Approved on:** 19/03/2019

BOT Chairperson *Mario Barbafiera* Principal *Gina Benade*

**To be reviewed** in accordance with the Board's self-review programme – in 2022