

**So you're the
Trustee of a
Catholic School!**

...now what?



A Handbook for Trustees

Catholic Schools Education Services

Archdiocese of Wellington 2015

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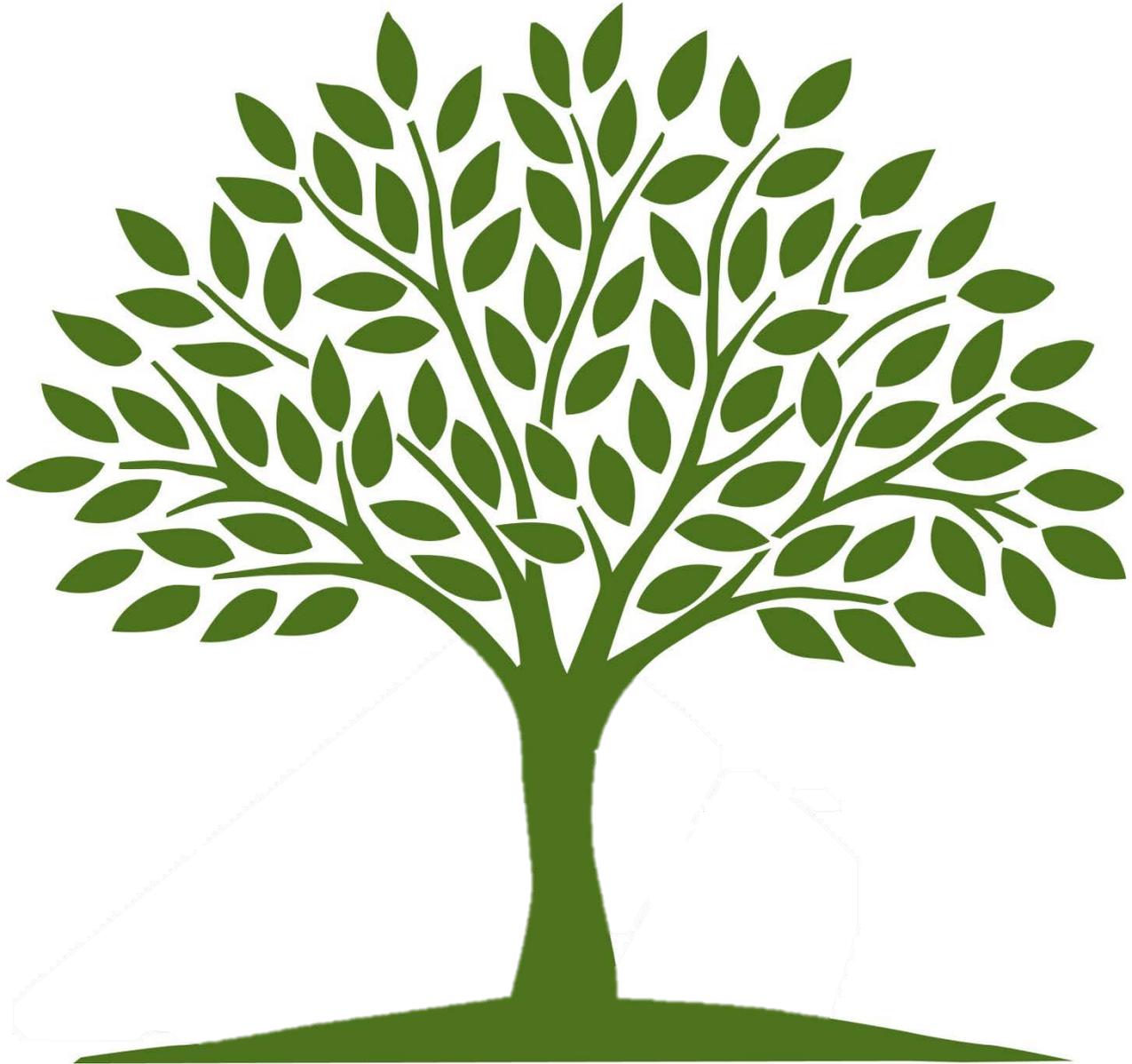
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Acknowledgements:

Some work based on material from:

**Michele Lafferty
Kevin Treston
Denis McLaughlin
Mary Benet McKinney**

The Catholic School as a place of Educational Excellence



Level 6
Level 5
Level 4
Level 3
Level 2
Level 1

The Church of the Future.

Young people who are committed to serving God through others.

Excellent student learning based on best teaching practice

Excellent relationships, based on policies and practices drawn from Gospel Values.

Well appointed and maintained facilities, with plans to improve them.

A committed common belief for children, parents, staff and board.

The Special Character of a Catholic School is defined in the Integration Agreement as follows:

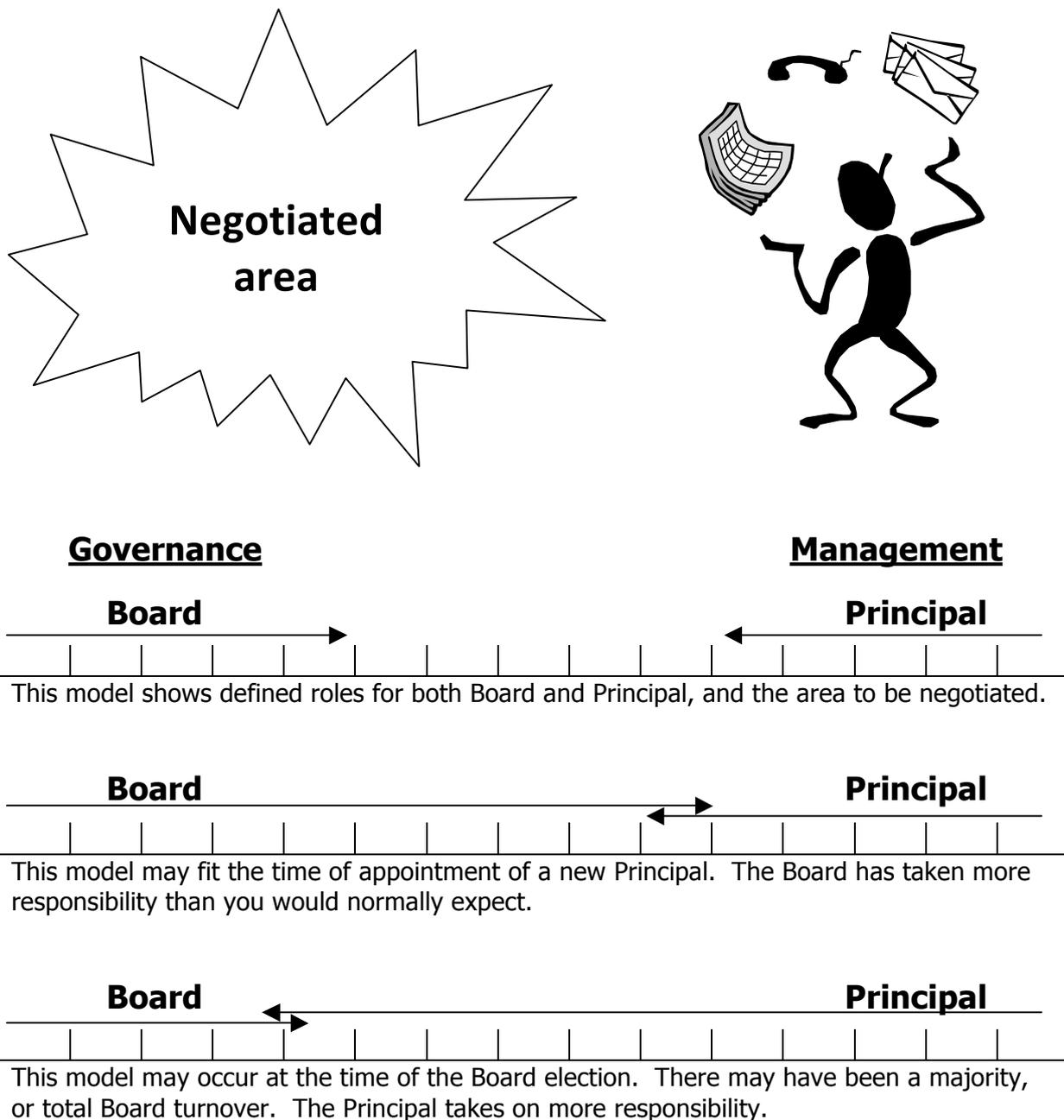
"The school is a Roman Catholic school in which the whole community, through the general school programme and in its religious instructions and observances, exercises the right to live and teach the values of Jesus Christ. These values are as expressed in the Scriptures and in the practices, worship and doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church, as determined from time to time by the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese."

Working Relationship between Principal and Board

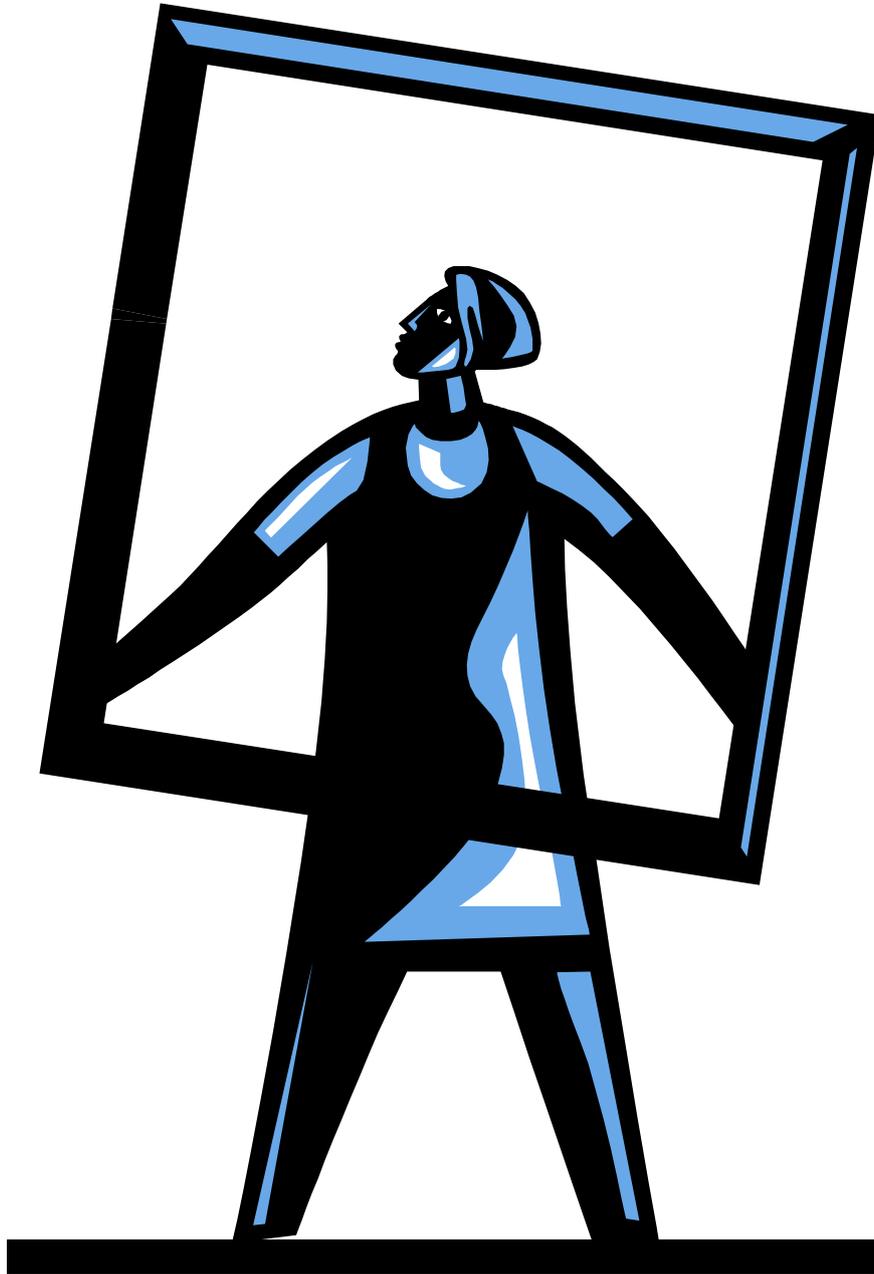
The Principal and Board must recognise that there will be times and situations where areas of input and decision-making must be flexible.

In other words governance and management are not always clear cut.

When these situations occur, the Principal should work closely with the Board Chairperson to negotiate appropriate measures.

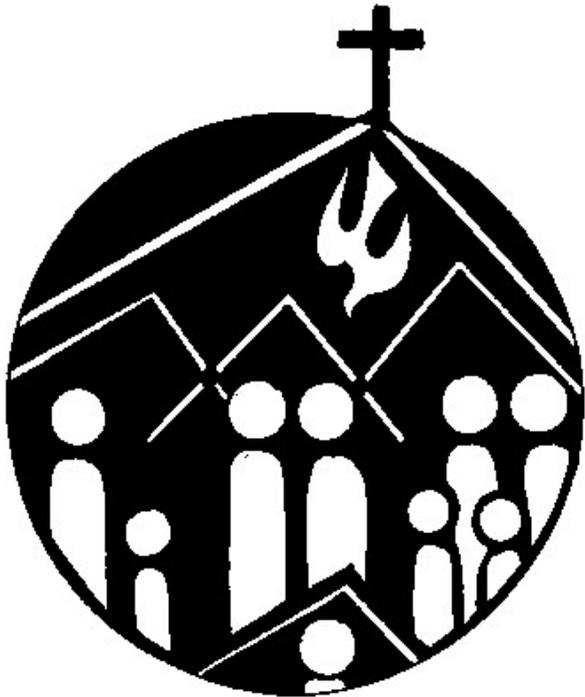


The Big Picture



If the Board does not have the big picture anything can be in the frame!

What are the essential elements?



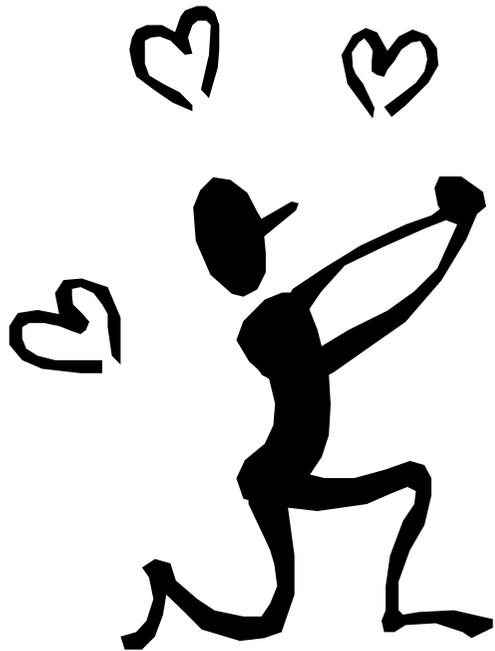
- They are those aspects of Catholic Character that should be present in every school.
- They are those elements that cause people to know the school is a Catholic one.

1. A Holistic Approach



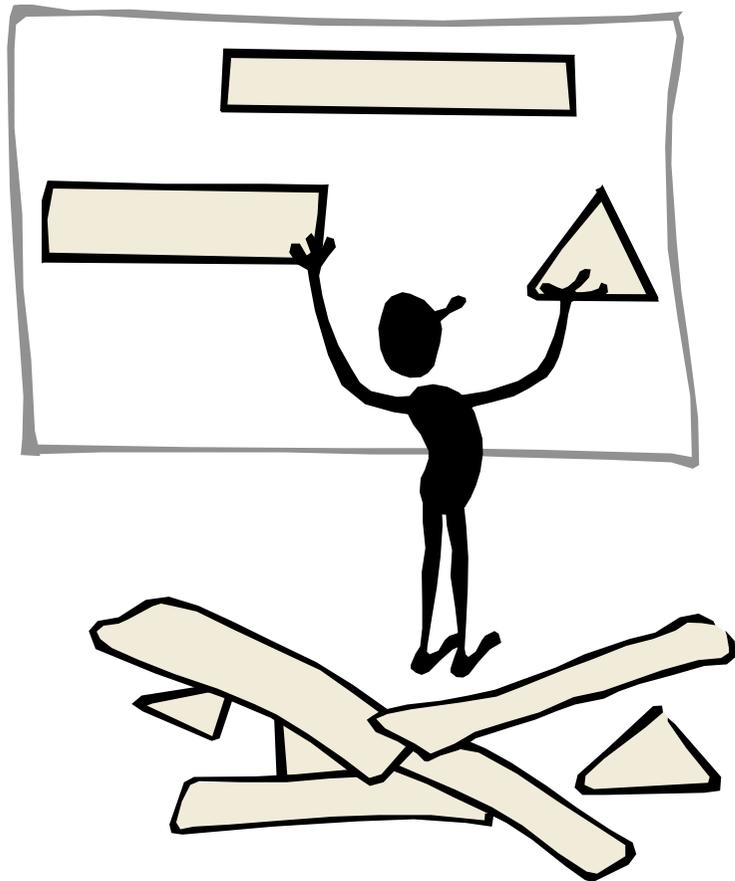
- An approach to education which involves more than the curriculum.
- A belief that the people are essentially religious.
- We help children find their place in the universe.

2. Gospel Values



- Values taught and lived by Jesus.
- Will be seen in evidence in policy and practice.
- Sometimes pressures of time and work cause them to be overlooked.

3. The Catholic Story



- Marks the school as belonging to a 2000 year old tradition.
- Not saying we are better than others.
- Five aspects of heritage to consider: sacramentality, Catholic heritage, 4 marks, charisms, mission.

4. Quality Education



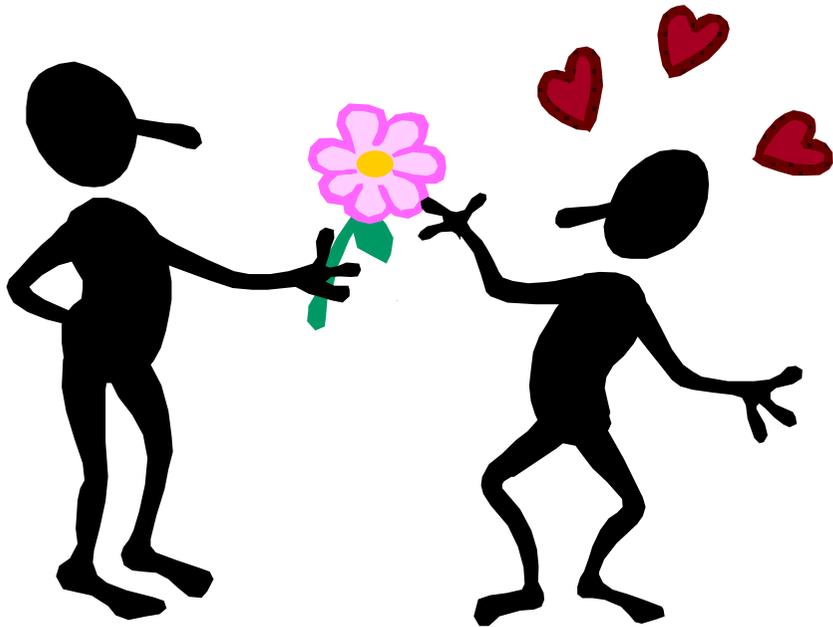
- Commitment to pursue best possible education for pupils.
- Opportunities for the school and the pupils to be the best they can be.

5. Discernment



- A prayerful reflection on the paths of life.
- Sorting out in the presence of the Spirit what is right and holy and the discovery of God's will.

6. Pastoral Care



- Face of Catholic Character.
- Translate the Mission Statement into daily living.
- The caring response of members of the school community to each other.

7. Community



- Living in God's image of community relationships.
- Valuing every member of that community.
- Ensuring all feel that they belong.
- Investing your gift in the

community.

8. Justice



- Raise awareness of unjust structures.
- Model just practice through policy.
- Treat all members fairly.

9. Earth Partnership



- Not simply a greenie fad.
- Living in partnership with other life forms.
- Helping pupils appreciate the earth's beauty.

10. RE Curriculum



- Not confined to times of prayer and explicit instruction.
- Infuses the curriculum with gospel values and is a unifying force in the school.

What do values look like in your school?

- ❖ Take a look at your Charter and decide what values your school espouses. An example of such values may be:
 - Gospel values
 - Dignity
 - Integrity
 - Love
 - Inclusiveness
 - Excellence

- ❖ Look at the beliefs around each value. They may be written in the form of a statement. For example:
 - **Gospel values** – our school’s model of living is Jesus. Our life and our relationships are shaped by our Catholic, Christian beliefs.
 - **Dignity** – our school enhances the self-esteem and respects the dignity of each person.
 - **Community building** – our school values and works towards a positive partnership between itself, family, parish and the wider community.
 - **Integrity** – our school believes that our actions and behaviour must reflect what we say.
 - **Love** - our school provides an atmosphere of kindness, empathy and understanding in a secure environment which encourages independence.
 - **Inclusiveness** – our school welcomes, respects and values differences and the uniqueness and gifts of each individual.

- ❖ If your school does not have belief statements around the values in the Charter, it would be a good idea to develop some statements. One way in which it could be done is:
 - Take the values reflected in your Charter
 - Each person write their beliefs around each value
 - In groups of four, take those beliefs and write a common values statement
 - Come together as a whole group and get consensus on each values statement.
 - **DON'T stop there!!!**

Now figure out what each value is going to look like in the day-to-day life of your school.

Maybe it would be interesting for you as a Board to look at your procedures in terms of what the gospel values look like.

Inclusiveness

Our school welcomes, respects and values differences and the uniqueness and gifts of each individual

What does it look like?

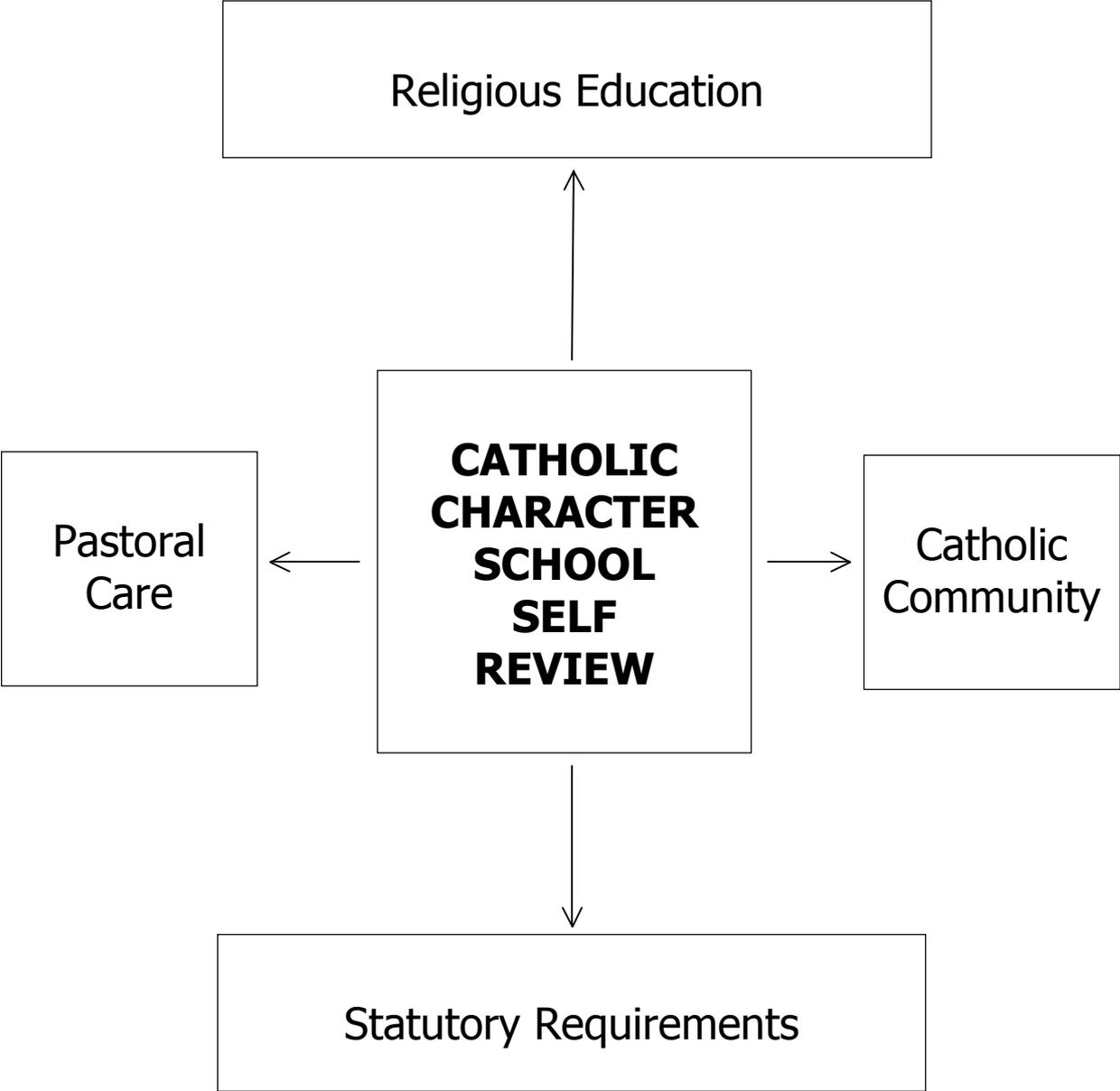
- Signs in different languages
- Art work representing different cultures
- Resources that will meet the needs of all e.g. toilet and changing facilities
- Access for all
- Signs and maps understood by all
- People representing different cultures and abilities
- All children joining in games and activities
- Teachers with physical resources and training to enable them to meet the needs of all
- Guests being warmly welcomed
- Extra time and resources given when necessary
- Teachers using strategies to actively involve all children.

What does it sound like?

- Welcoming
- Warm greetings
- Peer mediation skills
- Problem solving strategies
- Different languages
- Words of encouragement offered
- Acknowledgement of different gifts and skills
- Being listened to
- Positive manner – e.g. telephone
- Positive comments and affirmation.

What does it feel like?

- Secure, a sense of belonging
- Feeling valued
- Happy
- Positive
- Able to take risks
- Able to achieve
- Able to express your views
- Able to be yourself.



Catholic Character – School Review

An external review of Catholic character will take place every four years. This will encompass all dimensions.

In order to be able to effectively, efficiently and accurately review the Catholic Character, it is necessary to have clearly defined dimensions, which incorporate all aspects of Catholic Character. These key dimensions have been identified as:

1. Religious Education
2. Pastoral Care
3. Catholic Community
4. Statutory Requirements

These dimensions are also encompassed within The Declaration on Authentic Catholic School Education, issued by the New Zealand Council of Proprietors of Catholic Integrated Schools.

Three year cycle of Annual Self Review

- Each year schools will select **one** of the key dimensions of Catholic Character for Self-Review so that within the 3 year cycle all dimensions will be reviewed.
- Each dimension has a number of focusing questions and a series of performance indicators which may be addressed as part of the school's Self-Review in Catholic Character.
- Each school has been sent a Diocesan Manual for use in the review. A disk was sent with the manual. The National Manual may be used if you choose. This will be used for external reviews.
- The Proprietor's Report will be written in conjunction with the school self-review and sent to Catholic Schools Education Services with the review.



The Authentic Catholic School

What are we all about?

Characteristics of an authentic Catholic School

- We aspire for excellence in education
- Our structures promote an authentic community
- We provide opportunities for meaningful communal prayer and worship

- We collaboratively plan retreats or reflective experience
- We provide a curriculum that reflects Catholic values and teaching
- We provide extra curricula activities which focus primarily on the welfare of the students
- We have implemented an organised and professionally resourced pastoral care programme

- We have substantial outreach initiatives for the needy, poor and marginalised
- We promote a leadership that is practised as stewardship
- We have an understanding that employment in a Catholic school entails a sense of vocation for all
- We know that for some it is an acceptance of a ministry.

Denis McLaughlin

So... if we are an authentic Catholic school we offer a holistic education based on the gospel values.

What about our reporting and planning?

The Charter

1. Catholic Character

- Vision
- Values
- Mission

Charter Contents Checklist	Yes (tick)
1. The aim of developing, for the school, policies and practices that reflect New Zealand's cultural diversity and the unique position of the Māori culture.	
2. The aim of ensuring all reasonable steps are taken to provide instruction in Tikanga Māori (Māori culture) and Te Reo Māori (Māori language) for full time students whose parents ask for it.	
3. A long-term strategic planning section that establishes your Board's aims and purpose.	
4. A long-term strategic planning section that establishes for the next 3 to 5 years your Board's aims, objectives, directions and priorities for intended student outcomes, your school's performance and use of resources.	
5. A long-term strategic planning section that includes any aims or objectives that designate your school's special characteristics or its special character.	
6. An annually updated section that establishes for the relevant year your Board's aims, directions, objective, priorities and targets relating to intended student outcomes, your school's performance and use of resources.	
7. An annually updated section that sets targets for the key activities and achievement of objectives for the year.	
8. Your Board's aims, objectives, directions, priorities and targets for student achievement, including assessment of students against any National Standard.	
9. Your Board's aims, objectives, directions, priorities and targets for your Board's activities aimed at meeting general government policy objectives for all schools, being policy objectives set out or referred to in national education guidelines, and specific policy objectives applying to your school.	
10. Your Board's aims, objectives, directions, priorities and targets for the management of your school's and Board's capability, resources, assets, and liabilities including human resources, finances, property and other ownership matters.	
11. All annual or long-term plans (or a summary or reference to them), your Board is required to have or has prepared for its own purposes.	

The National Education Guidelines (NEGs)

National Education Guidelines

The National Education Guidelines are defined by Sections 60A of the Education Act 1989

The National Education Guidelines have five components:

1. **National Education Goals**, which are
 - statements of desirable achievements by the school system, or by an element of the school system; and
 - statements of government policy objectives for the school system
2. **Foundation Curriculum Policy Statements**, which are statements of policy concerning teaching, learning, and assessment that are made for the purposes of underpinning and giving direction to -
 - The way in which curriculum and assessment responsibilities are to be managed in schools:
 - National curriculum statements and locally developed curriculum
3. **National Curriculum Statements** (that is to say statements of -
 - The areas of knowledge and understanding to be covered by students; and
 - The skills to be developed by students; and
 - Desirable levels of knowledge, understanding, and skill, to be achieved by students, during the years of schooling)
4. **National Standards**, which are standards, in regard to matters such as literacy and numeracy, that are applicable to all students of a particular age or in a particular year of schooling.
5. **National Administration Guidelines** (NAGs), which are guidelines relating to school administration and which may (without limitation) -
 - set out statements of desirable codes or principles of conduct or administration for specified kinds or descriptions of person or body, including guidelines for the purposes of section 61:
 - set out requirements relating to planning and reporting including -
 - communicate the Government's policy objectives:
 - set out transitional provisions for the purposes of national administration guidelines.

The National Education Guidelines given effect by three parts of the Education Act

1. **Section 61 (2)** which states:

The purpose of a school charter is to establish the mission, aims, objectives, directions, and targets of the Board that will give effect to the Government's national education guidelines and the Board's priorities.
2. **Section 61 (4) (b)** .

A school charter must include the Board's aims, objectives, directions, priorities, and targets in the following categories:

 - ... (b) the Board's activities aimed at meeting both general government policy objectives for all schools, being policy objectives set out or referred to in national education guidelines, and specific policy objectives applying to that school
3. **and Section 62 (2)** which states
A school charter must be prepared and updated in accordance with national administration guidelines.

The Role of the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

Introduction

The Chairperson is the school's leader in all community, public and non-professional situations. The Chairperson's role is to oversee all Board activities and to act as spokesperson for the Board.

The Chairperson is (re)elected each year following the AGM.

Key Tasks

- To provide leadership to the Board of Trustees
- To provide appropriate support to the Principal
- To ensure that an annual Performance Agreement is negotiated and carried out with the Principal
- To facilitate Board meetings and establish a working code of ethics
- To adhere to and develop meeting procedures
- To create and maintain an environment of unity, common purpose and harmony within the Board of Trustees
- To ensure that the Board operates within its governance role
- To assist subcommittees through processes and procedures
- To document how NEGs and NAGs are being implemented by maintaining a programme of self review
- To ensure that appropriate documentation is filed for official agencies to view
- To work with the Principal and Board in the formation of an Annual School Development Plan
- To draw up a monthly agenda for Board meetings.

The Role of the Principal on the Board of Trustees

Introduction

The Principal is the link between the Board of Trustees and the school. It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure free and positive communication is maintained.

Key Tasks

- To liaise regularly with the Chairperson
- To prepare a Principal's report for each meeting of the Board of Trustees and the Annual Meeting
- To implement policies and procedures
- To contribute constructively to Board of Trustee meetings
- To lead the Board of Trustees where necessary in the formation of policies and procedures
- To inform the Board of Trustees of the ongoing welfare and progress of the staff, pupils and community
- To provide the Board of Trustees sub-committees with school based information which would be necessary for completion of their tasks
- To inform the Board of Trustees of education activities
- To present an education plan annually
- To report on the curriculum with respect to NAG 1.

By liaising with the Board of Trustees in a manner which is informative, pertinent and in a way that is understood by all members, the Principal will maintain a school which allows all pupils access to the education required by the Charter.

Ack: Peter Bradley

The Role of the Proprietor's Appointee

Introduction

The role of the Trustee concerned with Catholic Character is to ensure the Catholic Character is preserved and maintained.

This is defined in the Integration Agreement as follows:

"The school is Roman Catholic in which the whole school community, through the general school programme and in its Religious Instructions 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 the Diocese..."

Key Tasks

- Tagged positions – ensure they are filled by teachers who meet the requirements
- Religious Education Courses – ensure teachers have the opportunity for professional development in this area and to ensure funding is provided
- Link between School and Parish – ensure that all that is possible is done to site the school community within the larger parish one
- Maximum Roll – ensure it is not exceeded
- Board Policies – to ensure these policies reflect the school's Catholic Character
- Board Practice – to ensure BOT practice reflect Catholic Character
- Building Maintenance – ensuring the buildings leased to the Board by the Proprietor are kept in satisfactory condition
- Annual Report – ensuring that an Annual Report is forwarded to the Proprietor at the time of the Self Review Report
- To report to the Proprietor if any cause for concern is held for the preservation of the school's Catholic Character.

NB: All trustees have an obligation to maintain the Catholic Character of the school. The tasks above are those that the Proprietor's representatives should particularly ensure are carried out.

The Role of the Parent and Staff Elected Board Member

All Board Members

- Are accountable to the Chairperson.
- Make themselves accessible and sympathetic to the needs of the staff and parents
- Accept the paramount importance of the Charter, Acts and employment contracts when making decisions
- Attend the required number of meetings per year as well as various sub-committee meetings as required
- Are prepared to accept responsibilities within the Board
- Acknowledge the importance and need for continuous training related to their position
- Adhere to the Trustee Code of Conduct.

Policy on Catholic Character

Rationale:

The Private Schools Conditional Integration Act 1975 provides for Integrated Schools to deliver education with a Special Character. This means providing an environment where people experience, learn and live out the values of Jesus Christ in accordance with the worship, teaching and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church.

Guidelines:

The Catholic School Community will endeavour:

- To help children grow in their personal relationship with God
- To foster self esteem and respectful relationships based on a commitment to the dignity, culture and equality of all persons, and modelled on gospel values
- To teach and maintain all Christian values including: reconciliation, justice, integrity of the environment, honesty, peace and a preferential option for the disadvantaged
- To encourage concern for others through the practice of pastoral care of, and by, all those associated with the school community
- To foster an awareness in children of their wider membership in the church universal, and their responsibility in its mission.

Procedures:

The school will:

- Adhere to the Catholic Character goals and objectives as outlined in the Charter document
- Provide systematic instruction in faith via the Religious Education Programme approved by the Archbishop of Wellington, as well as utilising other resources
- Develop a daily prayer life through the school
- Provide opportunities for children and parents to participate in celebrations of the Eucharist, Sacrament of Reconciliation and other liturgical celebrations
- Establish a sound working, worshipping and pastoral relationship with the Parish or Parishes
- Ensure that all systems and policies within the school reflect the Catholic Character as provided for in the Private Schools Conditional Integration Act 1975 and in the Integration Agreement for the school.
- Provide staff and members of the Board of Trustees with opportunities for ongoing development in their faith and a deepening awareness of their participation in the teaching and pastoral mission of the Church
- Develop and carry out a process of annual review of Catholic Character that will focus on the areas of curriculum, pastoral care, spiritual climate, statutory requirements and report annually to the local Bishop by way of the Proprietor's Report
- Ensure that the physical environment of the school is reflective of Catholic culture
- Provide a Pastoral Care statement and a document of implementation.

A Shared Wisdom Model

Mary Benet McKinney

Members of a Pastoral Board operate on the principal of shared wisdom.

As members come together as a group to share the very wisdom of God, each is given a piece of that wisdom.

Therefore, if each member has been given a piece of that wisdom, then each has the responsibility to share that wisdom with others.

Further, if each member has been give a piece of God's wisdom, then each member needs to listen when that wisdom is being shared.

The bottom line of the philosophy of shared wisdom is a deep faith that the Spirit lives in the group – and speaks through the lived experience of each.

The process of sharing wisdom may be likened to completing a jigsaw. Each person has a piece of the jigsaw which, when matched with the other pieces of wisdom, forms a complete picture.

No one person can claim all the wisdom, because if that was so, then that person would be God.

Commitment to sharing the wisdom at Board meetings also implies the acceptance of taking responsibility for preparing for meetings, attending meetings and co-operating with all involved.

Board members reach decisions through consensus. To share decisions in a church model is to take the time to do the listening, the praying and sharing that is necessary to reach a consensus. There is a need to let go of the need to win.

Consensus is reached only after suitable and wide ranging discussion and consultation occur. The four ingredients of decision-making in the shared wisdom model are gathering data, reflection, sharing information and consensus testing. The latter occurs when all members can live gracefully with the decision, even though some may have differing points of view. In attempting consensus all issues should be fully aired and all members should be heard. Members need to be selfless, dispassionate, sensitive and frank in relation to an issue.

Consensus is assisted through the process of discernment.

Discernment involves a challenge to individuals to develop a greater spiritual depth.

Discernment may be defined as a "graced ability".

The Process Skills

These are meeting skills that support the shared wisdom model and allow the wisdom of the group to surface. When a group develops competency in these skills, the responsibility for decision making and for the success of the meeting falls equally on every participant.

Task Skills

Task skills refer to behaviours that are concerned with the group getting its job done. They are:

- **Initiating** - bringing new ideas, questions and suggestions to the attention of the group. Clarity is critical to the skill of initiating.
- **Seeking information** – requesting facts, ideas, opinions, feelings. Sincerity in seeking others' wisdom is necessary.
- **Giving information** – offering facts, information, concerns, suggestions. Each member of the group needs to recognise his or her obligation to share wisdom.
- **Clarifying** – interpreting information and ideas, defining terms, clearing up confusion. Clarifying saves much wasted time.
- **Summarising** – pulling together related ideas, restating what has been discussed. This allows the group to move on to the next step.
- **Tracking the agenda's** – bringing the group or an individual back on target, keeping the group focused, confronting topic jumpers. Practising this skill is often an uncomfortable but necessary task.
- **Consensus testing** – doing a 'whip-around', a quick survey of each member, to see if the group is near a decision, testing a possible conclusion, checking that all the wisdom has surfaced. This is a most useful skill, especially for the Chairperson or Leader.

Maintenance Skills

These skills are important to the morale of the group. By developing these skills, group members maintain good and harmonious working relationships and create an atmosphere that enables each member to contribute maximally. These skills include:

- **Gate keeping** - controlling the channels of communication by
 1. Opening gates (helping others get into the discussion) and
 2. Closing gates (providing equal time for all)
- **Encouraging** - supporting, being friendly, showing interest in the discussion, indicating an attitude of respect for others' wisdom.

- **Negotiating** - considering compromise, identifying what is agreed upon as well as what is in conflict, modifying in the interest of the group, trusting the wisdom of the group.
- **Standard testing and setting** - testing group satisfaction with norms and procedures, offering alternatives for consideration.
- **Expressing feelings** – verbalising feelings, trusting the validity of personal feelings.
- **Tracking the discussion** – bringing the group back to a point that has been lost or ignored, getting the group going again.

Decision-making Skills

Groups are making decisions all the time. They must understand how decisions are being made and judge the appropriateness of the process. Inappropriate decision-making techniques are described below. In each case someone in the group needs to name what has happened and ask that all members of the group be allowed to share wisdom and participate in the decision.

1. **The plop** occurs when the group makes a decision by ignoring the contribution and the person making the contribution. This is always a negative way of making a decision. The group needs to deal with lost wisdom.
2. **The self-authorized decision** happens when someone announces a decision and carries it out without checking with the group. If the group allows this to happen, the self-authorized decision becomes the group's decision.
3. **The handclasp** happens when one member of the group supports another's suggestion and the two proceed to make a decision without checking it out with the group. If the group allows this to happen, the decision of the two members becomes the group's decision.
4. **A minority decision** occurs when a subgroup railroads a decision through.
5. **A majority decision** is made when a majority is allowed to push through a decision over the objections of the minority. Because it is a win-lose situation, this is an inappropriate way to arrive at decisions in a shared wisdom model.

The group needs to agree in advance that all decisions will be consensus decisions. Only then will the group be able to arrive at decisions that can be lived with gracefully by all of its members.

Those involved in a shared wisdom model will need to learn these process skills, practice them, and evaluate their own performance as well as the group's growth and faithfulness to these skills. Reflections 9 and 10 are provided to guide groups in testing their understanding and skill development.

From Sharing Wisdom Mary Benet McKinney