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**CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND – THE BISHOP'S
OFFICE –
Te Taumata o te Pihopa Katorika**

June 2016: Bishop's Appointees Newsletter



Catholic Diocese of Auckland

To All Bishop's Appointees on School Boards of Trustees

Following the triennial Board of Trustees elections, the governance of your schools rests with your new Board of Trustees. As my Appointee on this Board you play a critical role and I thank you for accepting this responsibility for the next three years.

While you have a specific role to safeguard and strengthen the Catholic Special Character of your school, it is essential that **all** trustees understand and accept that this is also their shared responsibility and must take precedence in every aspect of the Board's governance responsibilities.

It is important that all trustees appreciate that your school is part of the mission of the Catholic Church and that Catholic Special Character should be imbued in all aspects of school life. Ensuring that the identity of your school is authentically Catholic, is an unending work that requires constant initiative, both creative and traditional.

I suggest that one of the first things you need to do as a Board is to ensure that each trustee has a copy of and reads the NZCBC publication *The Catholic Education of School Aged Children*. This can be downloaded and printed off from the NZCBC website. This document then needs to be unpacked at a meeting so that the entire Board is united and committed to ensuring that your school truly fulfills the goal of Catholic schools - **bringing people to Christ**.

At the heart of the document is the statement of Pope John Paul II: "**Catholic Education is above all communicating Christ, of helping to form Christ in the lives of others.**"

"Many factors combine to create the Catholic character of a school. It is this character that the Catholic community hopes will create that 'encounter with the living God' which will lead the young person to become a committed disciple of Jesus Christ." (Section 44). It is "that intimate encounter with God which is the beginning of an adult commitment to Jesus Christ and his Church." (Section 50).

The school is charged with facilitating the disciple's journey, or the progression:

1. From encountering Christ: facilitated by the Catholic teachers and staff of the school, especially by those holding S65 positions. Students need to not only be provided with positive role models but also given opportunities to encounter Christ through good experiences of prayer, spiritual retreats, meaningful liturgies, and participation in the sacraments including Reconciliation.
2. To growth in knowledge: a well resourced and engaging Religious Education programme taught by well qualified teachers and formation which leads to growth in Catholic virtues and values.
3. And to the lived common good approach and witness of the wider faith community within which the school is situated usually a parish or group of parishes .

The teachers in your schools are involved in the major work of evangelisation. Hence your Board needs to actively support the education and formation of

Please share this newsletter with all members of your Board

your teachers to ensure that the formation offered to students is authentically Christian and Catholic.

Excellence is a Gospel value and parents and students deserve an education that fully develops each student's gifts and talents that prepares and equips them to become caring and responsible members of society. However the pursuit of academic excellence cannot be at the expense of the primary goal of Catholic Schools. The Private Schools Integration Act 1975 enshrined that the Catholic Special Character is the very reason for the existence of our schools.

As mentioned above all that occurs at the school must be grounded in the Catholic Special Character of the school. Our schools are not schools that just teach Religious Education, begin the day with prayer and have Masses that classes attend on a roster basis or the occasional full school Mass. The whole teaching and learning programme must be reflective of the fact that your school is a Catholic school. Paragraph 8 of the document explains that all schools pass on culture to new generations through their transmission of knowledge. However *the education provided by the Catholic school differs from other schools in that: "Its task is fundamentally a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life: the first is reached by integrating all the different aspects of human knowledge through the subjects taught, in the light of the Gospel; the second in the growth of the virtues characteristic of the Christian."* I challenge you to look at how well your school does this.

Your school's relationship and linkage with the parish or group of parishes is something that I encourage you to nurture. It is important to recognise that your school community is an arm of the parish or group of parishes, is part of the wider community of the Catholic Diocese of Auckland and the Church in Aotearoa New Zealand. *"Within a diocese a common good ethos and practice must underlie the relationships between all the parishes and schools, as all ultimately participate in the teaching ministry of the Church. A strong commitment to the common good should unite and support parish and school in carrying out their individual roles and the role they share."* (Section 76)

Please remember that *"one of the most important things a Catholic school can do in the interests of the common good is to encourage young people to become a significant force, in numbers, in the life of the parishes the school serves."* (Section 77).

May God bless you as you begin your term of office and helping to form Christ in the lives of others.

Yours sincerely in Christ

+ 

+ Patrick Dunn
Bishop of Auckland

BOARD OF TRUSTEES TRAINING SESSIONS

First hour—Chris France NZSTA— BOT Governance Responsibilities

Second Hour—2 concurrent sessions on Catholic Special Character and Property Matters

Date	Time	Venue
Thursday 7 July	7.00 – 9.00pm	Holy Cross School and Parish Hall, Papatoetoe
Saturday 30 July	9.30 – 11.30am	Christ the King Church Hall, Owairaka
Wednesday 10 August	7.00 – 9.00pm	St Columba Centre, Ponsonby
Wednesday 17 August	6.00 – 8.00pm	St Francis Xavier Catholic School, Whangarei
Thursday 18 August	6.00 – 8.00pm	Pompallier Catholic School, Kaitaia