

EXPECTATIONS

5.1 Special Character: Roles and Responsibilities of Teaching Staff

5.1.1 Every teacher and all other members of staff in a Catholic school are obliged to uphold and support the Special Character and do nothing to damage or undermine it, in both their professional activities and their private lives. This applies regardless of whether a teacher is holding a “tagged” or an “untagged” position.

5.1.2 The following is a copy of a statement which is normally enclosed in application packages for teaching positions or shown to applicants, especially those new to Catholic schools, either at the time of their interview or prior to accepting appointment. The successful applicant is normally asked to sign the statement as a formal acknowledgement that they have seen, understood and accepted it.

“THE CHARACTER OF A CATHOLIC SCHOOL”: BRIEF STATEMENT FOR THE INFORMATION OF TEACHERS

This statement is to be read in association with the school charter, a copy of which is available from the school.

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 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.”

A teacher applying for a position in a Catholic school needs to understand the commitment this involves.

1. All teachers, whether Catholic or not, are part of this “whole school community”. Each teacher is therefore expected to use his or her specific strengths and skills to achieve the goals and purposes of the school, to support the mission of the school.
2. A Catholic school shares the mission of the Church. It does this by helping its young people to become complete persons who possess the knowledge, faith, values and other attributes that make for harmonious living.
3. All subjects are taught for their own value and with their own objectives, but **always** with a Catholic perspective. Catholics believe that truth in every sphere, religious or secular, is from God. We look at the world through “Christ eyes”.

4. The Religious Education Programme is an integral part of the curriculum. The principles, truths and ethics of that programme permeate the whole life of the school. The focal point of the whole school is Christ.

Students are taught that

- God is creator
- Jesus Christ is God-made-man
- their ultimate goal is heaven
- authority to teach and interpret God's revelation was entrusted to the Church and is exercised by the Pope and Bishops.

The school as a whole subscribes to the Apostles' Creed which is the oldest of the formulas used by Christians to express their faith. It accepts the two-fold commandment of Christ, love of God and neighbour, and the other values expressed by Christ as norms of living.

5. No teacher will be required to act against their own conscience or personal philosophy of life. This would be unchristian and contrary to the aims of the school.

However, in accepting a position in a Catholic school it is expected that the teacher realizes that:

(a) Teachers work as a team. Therefore all teachers are expected to contribute, according to their individual strengths and within their personal convictions, to the total purpose of the school. No school can operate successfully if any staff member undermines the efforts of others.

(b) Teachers are role models. A school community rightly expects teachers to act so as to be appropriate models for its young people. Behaviour by a teacher which would give the school community grounds for thinking that the teacher's attitude is antagonistic to the special character of the school would not only be unprofessional, it could damage or even destroy that teacher's effectiveness and credibility.

(c) Teachers in Catholic schools, who do not profess Catholicism, are expected to promote the Catholic character of the school where possible and at the same time, to refrain from doing or saying anything which would be antithetical to the school's special character.

6. New teachers will find senior staff willing to assist them in gaining a fuller understanding of the school and its special character along with solving any difficulties that may arise in the course of their teaching responsibilities. Resources are also available from the school, and professional development is provided as required.

5.2 General Expectations of Teachers in Catholic Schools

5.2.1 Apart from those expectations which are directly related to the Special Character, Catholic schools also require and expect that their teaching staff will abide by the normal professional standards, viz.,

- A professional commitment to high quality teaching standards
- A professional commitment to real learning, including individualised learning programmes for students
- A professional commitment to all round excellence
- A commitment to continuing professional development and teaching effectiveness
- An ongoing commitment to self-review and professional performance appraisal
- The continuing development of leadership for oneself, through the various avenues available
- An on-going commitment to assist and encourage the development of leadership skills among other staff members, particularly those for whom one has a professional responsibility
- The development and on-going improvement of high quality systems and standards, driven by high expectations of oneself, one's students and those staff members for whom one has a professional responsibility.

Teacher Signature: _____ Name: _____

Principal Signature: _____ Date: _____