



## EMPLOYMENT FACT SHEET

### REQUIREMENTS OF THE PRINCIPAL POSITION (SCH 6, CL 47 (a))

The appointment of a principal is arguably the most important decision a Board has to make. The whole Board or alternatively the appointments committee (excluding the incumbent principal) shortlists the applicants, conducts interviews and inquiries, and recommends an appointment to the Board. It is helpful to have a person from the Diocesan Catholic Education Office and a current principal (a Catholic principal, if available) as advisers and to seek advice from NZSTA. It is important that anyone involved declares any potential conflict of interest.

The Integration Agreement requires that the appointee:

- be willing to take part in religious instruction
- be able to do so
- accept these requirements as a condition of appointment.

The Integration Agreement also requires the appointee to “accept and recognise a responsibility to maintain and preserve the special character of the school”. This implies that the Board must also be satisfied that the person selected accepts the responsibility to uphold the special character and recognises what that responsibility entails.

The Education and Training Act (Schedule 6, Cl 52) requires the principal of a primary school (being a Sch 6, Cl 47 position) to be “acceptable” to the Proprietor in terms of the special character of the school. In secondary schools, acceptability is ultimately the Board’s responsibility. It is the initial test that all candidates must meet (see *Process for establishing acceptability*, above). The Board’s decision may be subject to judicial review if acceptability is not properly established.

If in the Board’s view an applicant fails to meet any of these requirements and/or is unwilling to fulfil them, then the Board cannot appoint that applicant. The Board must consult the referees to test that all the requirements are met and must record the evidence obtained.

The principal takes up an important religious and pastoral responsibility in the Catholic community. The person appointed must therefore be a fully committed Catholic, committed to Catholic religious practices and to leadership of Catholic education.

In this context, the phrase “take part in religious instruction” means taking part at the level of principal. This implies being willing and having the necessary professional and personal qualities to:

- assume leadership of the religious aspects of the school
- provide leadership in specific dimensions of Catholic Character development
- be ultimately responsible to the Board for the religious programme of the school and for its religious observances
- take Religious Education classes whenever the organisation of the school requires
- be a suitable role model and Gospel witness for staff, students and parents
- assume an appropriate leadership role in school and parish liturgies or prayer services.

The “religious instruction” referred to is that which is “appropriate to the special character of the school”. The Integration Agreement notes that the religious instruction and observances are laid down by the Bishop of the diocese.

It is recommended that the principal possesses leadership-level certification in Religious Education. If an appointee does not have this level of certification, the Board can request (or make it a condition of appointment) that the appointee studies to gain the qualification within an agreed timeframe and may offer to assist.