



SPECIAL CHARACTER FACT SHEET

Professional development and spiritual formation for teachers

MEMORANDUM

TO: Boards of Trustees of Catholic Primary Schools
FROM: New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference
DATE: 29 April 2005
RE: Professional Development and Spiritual Formation for Teachers

The Bishops are aware that one of the biggest challenges facing Catholic schools today is the Professional Development and Spiritual Formation of their teachers.

The Catholic Character of all schools is strongly influenced by the level of faith formation and commitment as well as the professional competence of staff, particularly the Principal. The responsibility of providing opportunities for Professional Development and Spiritual Formation for staff rests with the school Principal and the Board of Trustees. It is vital, therefore, that those holding leadership positions ensure that all staff are encouraged to take part in Professional Development and Spiritual Formation appropriate to their position in a Catholic school. The importance of this was spoken about by Pope John Paul II in September 2004 during the Ad Limina visit of the New Zealand Bishops. The Pope emphasised the need for teachers to have “a solid theological and spiritual preparation”.

We have drawn up the following Guidelines to assist Principals and Boards of Trustees to ensure that all staff participate in both Professional Development and Spiritual Formation to enable them to teach Religious Education effectively and to enhance the Catholic Character of their schools.

The school's Strategic Plan includes a goal, stating that all staff who teach Religious Education will be required to have Level 1 Certification or be **actively** working towards this.

The Professional Development Policy of the school places emphasis on regular and ongoing Professional Development and Spiritual Formation of all staff in areas related to the Catholic Character.

A Catholic Character Professional Development and Spiritual Formation Plan is developed and reviewed annually to address the needs of the staff. This plan includes:

- Information about reporting to parents and Boards of Trustees.
- A plan for each teacher's Professional Development and Spiritual Formation related to the Catholic Character which is part of the annual appraisal cycle.
- Job descriptions for all staff include Professional Standards, and have clearly identified responsibilities for Professional Development and Spiritual Formation related to the Catholic Character.

- Attendance at Professional Development and Spiritual Formation is reviewed as part of the appraisal system of all teachers.
- A minimum of 12 hours Professional Development and Spiritual Formation related to the Catholic Character is expected for all teachers every year.

We ask Principals and Boards of Trustees to adopt these Guidelines and to amend their policies and practices if necessary, to enable them to be met.

As Bishops we are conscious of the good work being done by teachers and all those involved in Catholic education. Be assured of our support as you strive to carry out your ministry in our schools and proclaim the Gospel to the children you teach.

✠Colin D. Campbell Bishop of Dunedin and Conference Deputy for the
National Centre for Religious Studies

On behalf of:

✠John A. Dew Archbishop of Wellington

✠Denis G. Browne Bishop of Hamilton

✠Peter J. Cullinane Bishop of Palmerston North

✠John J. Cunneen Bishop of Christchurch

✠Owen J. Dolan Emeritus Coadjutor Bishop of Palmerston North

✠Patrick J. Dunn Bishop of Auckland

✠Robert W. Leamy Emeritus Bishop of Rarotonga

✠Max T. Mariu Auxiliary Bishop of Hamilton