

Timaru Christian School

Integration and Special Character

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History and background

Planning for the opening of a Christian School in Timaru began in December 1992 with the first meeting of the Investigating Committee. The tasks of this committee included setting out the Christian Foundations of the school (i.e. Special Character), the formulation of policies and procedures, the preparation of documents for the Ministry of Education, plus finding a teacher and a location to start from. The documents of particular importance were the [Statement of Faith](#) and the [Foundation Document](#).

Early on it was decided that the school should be non-denominational rather than attached to a particular church. It was decided to do this to be accessible to a wide section of the Christian community.

On 5 December 1995 the Timaru Christian Schools Trust was established with the following purposes:

1. *To foster, promote and encourage education from a Christian world view in South Canterbury, New Zealand.*
2. *To establish and maintain a school or schools in New Zealand for the education of the young and to include in the scheme of such education instruction in the Christian faith as set out in the Holy Scriptures.*

This trust (commonly called the “Trust Board” or abbreviated to TCST) was a natural and necessary progression from the Investigating Committee.

TCS opened as a private school in January 1996 in the room behind the pipe organ at College Road Trinity Presbyterian Church with 16 students. As a private school we opened with Provisional Registration and were responsible to fund property rental, teacher salary, curriculum and supporting material, etc. We charged a percentage fee of nett family income (10% + GST for one child and 12% + GST for 2 or more children). So for example a family in a nett income of (say) \$30,000 at the time with two children would be paying \$4,050 per year. Compared to most other private schools this was very cheap but this is Timaru! If we say that an average nett family income today might be (say) \$55,000, this would equate to \$6,600 per year. Attendance Dues currently paid at TCS are \$650 + GST per student per year. Attendance Dues have only been raised once so far in the life of the school.

As a private school there were two problems in terms of finance:

1. North Haven Limited offered the use of the back of the section at 91 North St (North Haven) to the school and in November 1996 classrooms were transported from Otago Polytechnic in Dunedin to the site. These were the classrooms in use at integration in January 1998. As the school grew the need for a bigger building and site arose. The Watlington Intermediate site became available and again North Haven Ltd fulfilled the need with the purchase of the amazing facilities on 8 April 2010. Many families could not afford the fees. The reality is that you had to be totally committed to the concept of Christian Education to pay those figures!
2. We were not able to pay “going rates” for our teacher – our first teacher was getting about 50% of the salary at the time.

Hence the decision was made to integrate. This was not made lightly since we did not want to lose our independence. However this move was necessary to allow us to operate responsibly and to be an affordable option to the local community. Integration required a considerable amount of preparation and paper work which was completed to allow TCS to migrate to integrated status on 21 January 1998. Since then we have been blessed with financial input from the Government and in reality, have felt very little restriction in the implementation of our Special Character. When ERO visits, they want to check how well we are implementing our Special Character.

The Integration Deed is between North Haven Ltd (the Proprietors Bryan and Sharon Rapsey) and the Crown (i.e. Her Majesty the Queen acting by and through the Minister of Education). It could be said that this Deed is like our “treaty”. The regulations would not allow an integration agreement to be signed between a family trust and the Crown, so the company called North Haven Ltd was established with Bryan and Sharon as shareholders to allow this to proceed.

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In this context the Special Character has a precise meaning. It is not something that can be changed without re-negotiating the Integration Deed. So TCS cannot independently change/update/revise the Special Character at a whim.

The Integration Deed and Supplementary Agreements can be viewed at:

<https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/information-releases/issue-specific-releases/integration-agreements-for-state-integrated-schools/integration-agreements-for-state-integrated-schools-t/#TimaruChristian> .

As an integrated school we are effectively a State School with three main points of difference that are the prime responsibility of the Proprietor:

1. We have a Special Character that permeates our entire school system.
2. The buildings and associated infrastructure are owned by the Proprietor. Integrated space refers to the parts of the building that have been negotiated between the Ministry of Education and the Proprietor to be used for the operation of the school. Some payment is

received by the Proprietor from the Ministry of Education for the upkeep of these parts of the building.

3. Attendance Dues for the upkeep of integrated space can be (and are) charged to parents/care givers by the Proprietor. Payment of the Attendance Dues is a condition of enrolment and continued attendance at the school (paragraph 26, pg 7 of the [Integration Deed](#)).

For the Special Character aspects of the Integration Deed, see [Appendix 3](#).

The proprietors' role as above is to “*preserve and safeguard the Special Character*”. This is done as guardians rather than in a direct governance role however the School Board does have proprietor representatives. This role is undertaken in the environment of a non-denominational school which encompasses a range of views that must be taken into account. Bryan originally delegated Proprietor responsibilities to the Timaru Christian Schools Trust which he in due course joined as a Trustee. As from 1 April 2024 the delegation mentioned as been discontinued with Bryan and Sharon taking on the role that is theirs (ref. “26th April 1999 TCS Supplementary”). The School Board structure allows for up to four Proprietor Representatives, two of which as from April 2024 are Bryan and Sharon. Further information can be found in [Schedule 6 “State Integrated Schools” of the Education and Training Act 2020](#). Despite the normal role of the proprietor to operate as guardians, Schedule 6 under the title of “Preservation of Special Character of State integrated schools” says:

“If, in the proprietor’s opinion, the Special Character of the school as defined and described in the integration agreement has been or is likely to be jeopardised, or the education with a Special Character provided by the school as defined and described in the integration agreement is no longer preserved and safeguarded, the proprietor may invoke the powers conferred on the proprietor by this schedule.”

Section 39 (I) says that the powers and responsibilities of proprietors include:

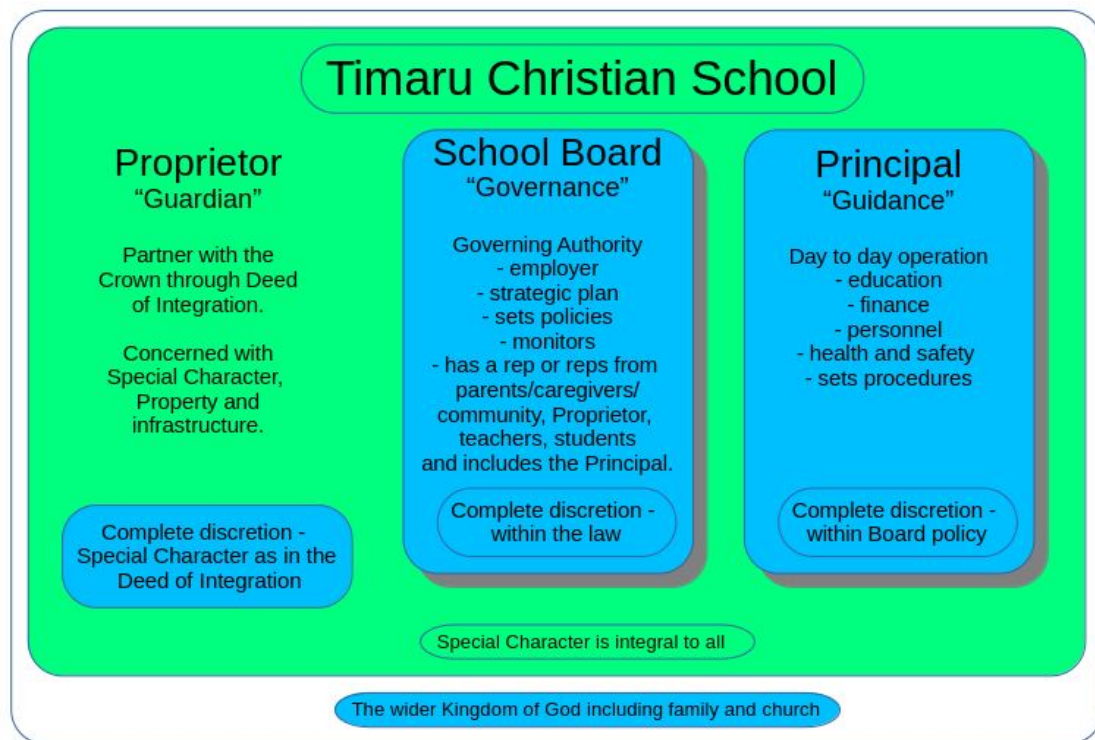
“...with the proprietor’s agents and licensees, have at all reasonable times access to the school to ensure that the Special Character of the school is being maintained.”

... but with the proviso of section 42 that:

“The right of access specified in [clause 39\(2\)\(i\)](#) does not give a proprietor the right to question the curriculum or the teaching methods adopted by the teachers, both of which are, subject to this Act, controlled by the principal of the State integrated school.”

The Proprietors are at the beginning of a process of working out succession. It is expected that this process will take some time.

A diagram of TCS Structure and Roles is shown on the next page.



TCS structure and roles (based on a diagram supplied by Andy van Ameyde)

Appendix 1: Statement of Faith

Timaru Christian School

STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. We believe in the one true and living God, eternal in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Creator of heaven and earth.
2. We believe that the Holy Scriptures are the only inspired and infallible written revelation of God to man and the supreme authority in all matters of life and faith.
3. We believe that man was created in the image and likeness of God, to have dominion over the earth and to do all things to the glory of God.
4. We believe that all have sinned, falling short of the glory of God, and come under His righteous judgement.
5. We believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin, crucified, died and was buried. On the third day He was raised from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father and will personally return in glory to judge the living and the dead.
6. We believe by God's grace, through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are saved if we turn from our sin and believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour.
7. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all mankind to the eternal blessedness of the saved and the everlasting punishment of the lost.
8. We believe in the on-going work of the Holy Spirit to equip, inspire, empower and encourage God's people to witness and work in faith.
9. We believe in one holy universal Church, of which Christ is Head. He draws together the Body of believers by His Spirit and Word, through faith and unity of purpose to further the Kingdom of God.
10. We believe in God centred education providing the foundation of all learning, teaching the Lordship of Christ in our world.
11. We believe that God has given parents the responsibility to train their children according to His Word, and therefore acknowledge that the school is an extension of the home.

Appendix 2: The Foundation Document

Timaru Christian School

Foundation Document

Preamble

This Christian school has been established to bring glory to Jesus Christ. The training of our children in the knowledge and understanding of God's Living Word and its application in every aspect of life is far too important to be left to chance. In obedience to God's commands in Dt 6:4-7 and in Prov. 22:6, this school offers parents one means of providing a learning environment that sets a firm foundation for life and acts as an extension of the home.

School Foundations

Christ as the Cornerstone (Acts 4:11)

- Christ as the centre to bring Him glory and honour. He is the foundation that we are building the school on.

Covered in prayer (Col. 4:2)

- staff prayer meeting on a daily basis
- prayer in assembly
- monthly prayer meeting for parents/supporters
- prayerful oversight from the Board * - seeking God's will
- ongoing arranged intercessors
- newsletter(s) so that people are informed.

Bible believing Christian Teachers (Eph. 5:1-2, Luke 6:39-40)

- required to agree to the Article of Faith
- be good at applying faith to life
- exhibit a Christ centred love for children
- exhibit a God given desire and ability to train and instruct in the ways of the Lord
- exhibit the fruit of the Spirit as listed in Gal. 5:22.

God Centred Education Teaching Wisdom (Col. 3:16)

- wisdom is the basis of all knowledge.
- teaching love - the whole school is centred on the Lord and the children will pick up on this.
- encouraging a personal relationship with the Lord.

Have a healthy Christian school atmosphere or tone (Gal. 5:22)

- parents, teachers and children trusting in the Lord to fulfil His will in their lives, working together in love.

School life and education directed by the Bible. (Ps 119:105)

- as revealed by the Holy Spirit, the Bible will be used as the authority in school life and teaching.
- a Bible centred approach to the overall development of the child.

Curriculum

A Bible based curriculum. (Col 2:8 & Proverbs 1:7)

- an approach to learning that ensures that all areas of the curriculum are measured against the Bible.
- to foster and develop our Judaeo-Christian heritage.

God centred education teaching wisdom (Proverbs 4:4-5)

- Curriculum to teach wisdom as practical insight with spiritual implications, directing children towards God.

Education from a Christian world view (Romans 12:2)

- Curriculum to teach that God is the beginning and end of all (Rev. 1:8). Christ's atoning death and resurrection to be central to teaching. Where possible subjects are to be taught to include Christian principles.

Must prepare the child to interact in the world (life skills) (Titus 2:7-8)

- Equipping children to apply Christian principles to everyday living. Giving a Christian perspective to the world's systems, problems and challenges.

Directing children's attitudes (Eph. 4:22-24 & 5:1-2)

- Teaching to establish lasting Christian character. Helping children to form attitudes that reflect Christ in all areas of life.

Successful academic education leading to a high individual standard (Col. 3:23-24).

- a curriculum structured to nurture individual students to reach their fullest potential, academic or otherwise.
- a curriculum to develop student's self examination of personal development without comparison with others (Gal. 6:4 NEB).
- a curriculum to develop academic skills to allow students to successfully continue in secondary education.

School Structure

Controlled by a Board consisting of Christians only (2 Cor 6:14).

- Board Members* required to give a written agreement to the Statement of Faith.
- Board Members* must not be a recent convert, be of good reputation, must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith and be proved in their commitment to Christ's work.

The School to operate as an extension of the home:

- The school to foster an extended family atmosphere.
- The school will apply ethical and disciplinary standards which are consistent with those in the home.

Parent controlled:

- Parents who agree with the Statement of Faith will:
 1. Have control* through the Board* .
 2. Be involved in the Board elections as per the Constitution.

Must maintain a Christian character over time (1 Cor. 15:58)

- it is the responsibility of the Board, parents and staff to ensure that the curriculum, pupil mix, school structure and tone maintains a distinctive Christian character over time.

General

Parent and Community involvement (Romans 15:29)

- interaction with parents and the community is to be encouraged to enrich the daily life and family atmosphere of the school.
- the school will endeavour to be a blessing to the community.

Interdenominational base (1 Cor.12:12-14)

- A non-sectarian in approach

Must be within the laws of the land (Romans 13:1)

- the school will operate within the laws of the land unless it contravenes the scriptural principle of Acts 5:29.

* [Note: The Foundation Document was written before TCS was opened when only one Board was envisaged. So when the "Board" is mentioned, this refers to the Timaru Christian Schools Trust which also operated as the School Board of the private school until integration. Hence there are some references made to the Board and Board members that are not applicable under integration. It is recognized that the Foundation Document was not formally included into the Integration Deed as a whole however some of the principles were].

Appendix 3: Extracts about Special Character from the Integration Deed

Timaru Christian - Integration Agreement 21 January 1998

Special Character Agreement

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The School's Special Character as hereinafter described, shall incorporate education with a Special Character as provided in the School AND IT IS HEREBY AGREED AND DECLARED that the School shall at all times in the future be conducted and operated so as to maintain and preserve the School's Special Character and these presents shall be interpreted so as to maintain and preserve the Special Character of the School.

Special Character Statement

18 (a)

Timaru Christian School is a non-denominational, Christian school catering for Years 1 to 8. It was established by the Timaru Christian Schools Trust in 1996 to bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ and to provide a learning environment that sets a firm foundation for life in keeping with Christian beliefs and values.

[**Note:** TCS was extended from a “Year 1-8 Primary School” to a “Year 1-10 restricted composite school” in January 2017].

18(b)

The Special Character of the School is determined by Christian beliefs and values held by North Haven Limited as set out in the Statement of Faith in the Fourth Schedule. North Haven Limited, a body corporate, has the responsibility to determine from time to time what is necessary to preserve and safeguard the Special Character. All members of the School community, proprietors, trustees, parents, staff and pupils are expected to support the Special Character of the school. All school policy and guidelines will be developed and implemented in ways supportive of the Special Character of the School.

Mission and Goals

18(c)

The mission of the Timaru Christian School is to provide a God centred, quality education in a community built on Christian beliefs that:

- i. nurtures each student's growing relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, preparing them to be salt and light in the world;
- ii. extends the physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual needs of each child in a caring Christian environment;
- iii. reflects in the presentation of its curriculum, including all the New Zealand Curriculum Statements, God's purposes as revealed in the Scriptures and in the risen Lord Jesus Christ;
- iv. permeates all aspects of School life.