

TOTARA COLLEGE

Prospectus

Contents

Introduction	3
Our School Values.....	5
Special Character.....	6
Curriculum Overview	7
Primary Curriculum (Years 0-6).....	8
Secondary Curriculum (Years 7-13)	9
Facilities	11
Taonga Atua	12
Sports.....	13
House groups	14
Extracurricular	15
Uniform.....	16
Student Code of Conduct.....	17
Rewards	18
Behaviour Management	19
Parents.....	22
Governing Board	23
Enrolment.....	24
Preference and Non-preference Enrolment	24
Enrolment Interview	25
Preference Determination	25
Non-Preference Enrolment Criteria	27
Costs	28
Attendance Dues	28
School Costs	28
Contact Us	29

Introduction

Greetings and welcome to our school; we are very proud to be here at Totara and we hope you and your child(ren) will be too.

Totara is a special school. We have small class sizes, plenty of adult help in the classrooms, plenty of variety in the curriculum and high expectations for the achievement and character development of our students. Totara is a safe school. Very few children report bullying issues here and if we hear about it – we'll address it promptly. We are a Year 0-13 school which means we have children start at age 5 and they don't have to leave us until their final year at around age 18. Having such a wide range helps us to maintain a real family feel to learning. The older students naturally look after the younger ones – it's beautiful to watch.

We believe every child is special and unique, containing gifts that the world needs to see. Our role is to assist our students to know themselves and to grow in their own unique strengths to be productive and fulfilled members of society.

We are a Christian school and welcome applicants from a range of Christian backgrounds or if you would like to see your child educated in a Christian environment. We also have some space available for students from families who would not call themselves Christian.

From Year seven we have a focus on careers and learning where we can fit in an ever-changing world. Our senior students have a wide range of opportunities available to them both inside and outside school, including shadowing prospective employers (e.g. electricians, hairdressers, teachers etc.), UCOL courses (a huge range of options such as automotive engineering, barista, construction, computing etc.) and a range of tertiary courses (all paid for by the school).

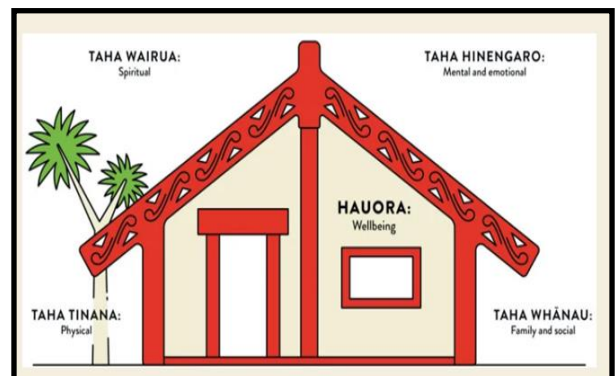
We use a range of curricula to suit our students' learning needs including the National NZ curriculum, NCEA and also the Accelerated Christian Education (A.C.E.) curriculum which teaches students how to be motivated by individual learning.

We concentrate on various aspects of the individual child and their growth and wellbeing as encapsulated in Sir Mason Durie's Te Whare Tapa Wha holistic health model (right).

We welcome you to come and see for yourself – we're sure you'll love the experience.



Dr Peter Ferrar
Principal



Totara College provides biblically based, Christian education to assist parents in bringing up their children in the 'training and instruction of the Lord, so that they may, 'love and serve the Lord their God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength.'

Deuteronomy 6 v 5, Ephesians 6 v 4



I press towards the mark...

Philippians 3 v 14

Reaching our God given potential:
spiritually, academically, socially and physically.

Our School Values

The lens through which we teach Character Development



TOTARA VALUES

Treasure God, everyone and everything He has given us
Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honour your leaders.
1 Peter 2:17

Respect



Start fast, challenge yourself, finish well
Diligence – Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as if working for the Lord.
Colossians 3:23a

Diligence





Integrity

Doing the right thing when no one else is looking
For we aim for what is honourable not only in the Lord's sight, but also in the sight of others.
2 Corinthians 8:21





Kindness

Showing care for others
Be kind and tender to one another. Forgive, just as God forgave you because of what Christ has done.
Ephesians 4:32

Special Character

As a state integrated school (see p23) we operate with a special character as determined by our proprietor board. Our special character is Christian as defined in our statement of faith, which can be found on our website. It essentially says we believe in, and teach, mainstream Christian thought and sound biblical principles.

This is outworked daily as follows:

Each day starts with 20-30 minutes of devotions time which can include anything from bible teaching to prayer to songs to dance (particularly with the young ones).

The first period of the week on Monday is an assembly usually taught by the principal on the devotional theme of the term.

Curriculum material references the Gospel (good news) and biblical statements where appropriate. For example, in Science classes we reference God as the creator of all that we study.

Memory verses are given each term and form part of our Honour Roll reward structure.

Guest speakers are brought in periodically to speak on biblical themes.

In secondary, voluntary discipleship classes are available and these are well attended.

Staff pray for students on a regular basis and all meetings open with a prayer dedicating ourselves to God.



Curriculum Overview

Totara College is an Area or composite school which means we are able to teach Year 0-13 students (generally 5-18 years old). We have approximately 25 staff and a full roll of 75 students so clearly, we enjoy high staff: student ratios and smaller classes.

We believe learning should be safe, fun, engaging, relevant and extending. We believe in teaching students how to look after each other and we don't have a lot of tolerance for students bullying or being unkind. We also believe learning includes teaching about the God who created the universe and loves each one of us.

Varying learning activities is a key strategy for us and we have many different learning environments throughout the school and we have regular trips outside of the classroom as well. Children learn best through a number of different learning experiences, and we try not to keep things the same for too long.



Since we are a state integrated school, we teach the national curriculum like state schools, but our point of difference is that we teach it with a Christian basis.

In the primary years, the focus is on developing young children into adolescence. We teach students the basics of how to read and write (which is all about how we communicate the ideas we have to others) and how to do mathematics (which is how we order the world with numbers). We also teach the other areas of the curriculum such as Science, Physical Education, Technology, Te Ao Maori etc and we have term themes which focus on various aspects of life, for example animals, plants or time. We also teach some of the great stories in the bible such as Noah's flood and Jonah and the Whale.

In secondary school, students go through puberty and begin to turn into adults, so our teaching is both geared towards further knowledge acquisition but also how to question, analyse, critique, design and search out information for yourself.

Creativity and student-led projects is a key area we focus on.

Various curricular are used throughout the school including the Best Evidence Literacy Approach, the Numeracy project, numerous internet-based learning applications such as Mathletics and Reading Eggs, and the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum booklets where appropriate.



Primary Curriculum (Years 0-6)



Our day starts off with about 30 minutes of special character teaching which can be anything from prayer, bible study, singing songs, learning memory verses and discussing how to live as people of good character.

After that we teach reading, writing (literacy) and mathematics (numeracy) before lunch. Our literacy program is developing along the lines of the Best Start Approach to Literacy as designed by Canterbury University and our teachers are constantly growing in their ability and understanding of what it is to teach children to be literate in our modern world.

After lunch, programs revolve around our theme for the term which can be anything from space to dinosaurs to time to tikanga to flight etc. It's very hands on and engaging for the students. We often teach this section in line with our term value (one of integrity, diligence, kindness and respect) to focus on character development as well as learning of content.

Character development is very important to us and we see the



development of positive traits such as honesty, creativity and reliability as being just as important as academic learning.

We use a variety of curricula to achieve learning aims for our children and assess them regularly to ensure they are progressing in their learning.



Since we are a secondary school as well as a primary school, we have specialist facilities that primary schools would not normally have and so our primary students are also taught in these. This is a special part of who we are as a school.

Classes are taught by registered teachers who undergo regular professional development to stay on the cusp of good teaching. Class sizes are small and allow wonderful relationships to form between families and teachers as well as excellent and individualised teaching and learning.

As a Year 0-13 school, family relationships (whanaungatanga) are important to us and the senior students are expected to (and enjoy) playing a part in the tutoring of the younger students.



Secondary Curriculum (Years 7-13)

Our students can choose from a wide range of subjects in small classes that would be the envy of many schools. In the past we focussed on students learning from course booklet material, but now we offer subject expertise in many areas. At secondary school level we currently offer:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science (Chemistry, Biology, Physics)
- Social studies
- Woodwork
- Engineering
- Food Technology
- Rural Studies
- French
- Careers
- History
- First Responders (Police, Ambulance, Fire and Emergency etc)
- The arts (Music, Drama, Dance, Fine Art etc)
- Physical Education
- Sport
- Robotics



We can also access learning through Accelerated Christian Education, Te Kura (the NZ correspondence school) and various aspects of digital learning.



We also have a close relationship with UCOL and other tertiary providers in Palmerston North and our senior students can choose a range of subjects through these such as Construction and Building, Forklift Driving, Microbiology and Genetics, Beauty Therapy, Computing, Gaming, Design, pre-Nursing, Veterinary Nursing etc.

Our students can achieve NCEA (National Certificates in Educational Achievement): Level 1-3 as well as the Accelerated Christian Education certificates at Levels 1-3. Both pathways can lead to University Entrance if the student desires and students can choose the subjects and pathways that are best suited to them.

In secondary, we have a significant focus on careers and where the students are headed after they leave us, what strengths they have and what vocations they are best suited to.



Facilities

For a small school, we are very well resourced. We have large, picturesque grounds with many native trees, playgrounds, slides and a sandpit. We have an outdoor basketball court which also doubles for netball, volleyball and general physical education classes. Our classrooms all have a variety of teaching resources associated with them and we have purpose-built specialist facilities for Science, Hard Materials technology (Woodwork and Engineering) and Food Technology. We also have a computer suite, library and a generous hall which is used for productions, dances and as an indoor gymnasium.



Taonga Atua

We have a special needs suite which caters for significantly disabled students. The room called Taonga Atua (treasured space) is their home room and they have regular forays around the school and into the classrooms as well as outside trips, for example to Riding for the Disabled which occurs weekly. We have 3 staff in this area and are supported by a wide range of educational professionals through the Ministry of Education and ACC.



Sports

Sports are a focus for us, as is physical activity. We organise a number of sporting activities as well as competitions with the local or regional schools. At present, basketball is a huge focus for the school with our senior boys and girls teams playing the regional teams in a weekly evening competition in Palmerston North. In 2024 our boys' team won their league against the 'big boys schools' such as Palmerston North Boys' High and Fielding High and we are very proud of them.

We also have regular swimming lessons for all age groups, cross country running, gymnastics training and a variety of other events



House groups

When students are enrolled at Totara College, they are immediately placed in a house group. The house groups are named after key figures or groups in the Bible's Old Testament: Judah, Levites, Abraham and Zebulun.



The house groups are under House Leaders who lead them in sports and other challenges during the course of the year. Each event gives points towards the overall House shield which is awarded at the end of year prizegiving.



The purpose of House group events is to promote the following:

- Competition and fun
- A different aspect to schooling for students to enjoy
- Opportunities for student leadership growth
- Opportunities for the whole school to come together, despite the large age ranges
- and for the older ones to learn how to look after the younger ones (tuakana-teina relationships). The younger ones may also need to learn how to give appropriate respect to their elders. This facilitates family type relationships or 'whanaungatanga'.



Extracurricular

In addition to our packed learning curriculum, we believe in many educational experiences outside of the classroom. This includes camps for all classes (level of experience is dependent on the age range of the children involved), field trips and other senior student experiences such as tertiary education opportunities, work experience, choirs, school balls etc.



Uniform

The college uniform is an important part of developing pride, loyalty and school identity. All students must wear the correct uniform in school and on school trips and activities. Our uniform policy is available on our website with prices; it can be purchased through the front office.



Year 1-6



Year 7-13

Senior Girls Skirt
Year 7 to Year 13

Traditional knee-length skirt with back hem split and concealed zip for a seamless finish.

DETAILS

CODE: SKIRT01
100% Polyester. 100% Machine Washable.
Available in a variety of colors. Please contact the school for more information.
© 2018 Hazzard & Co. All rights reserved.

Senior Girls' Pants
Year 7 to Year 13

SENIOR OUTER UNIFORMS

Soft Shell Jacket (existing)
Year 7 to Year 13

Senior Tie
Year 7 to Year 13
Optional but compulsory for Formal occasions

Blazer—supplied and held at school for formal occasions. (not a very good picture)

Student Code of Conduct

At Totara College our values are our required standards of behavior and we teach them daily to inculcate good character into our growing young people. Students are therefore taught and expected to adhere to normal standards of:

Respect: Treasuring God, everyone and everything he has given us and treating others as we would want to be treated ourselves.

We expect to see traditional practices such as saying 'please', 'thank you', 'sorry' and 'excuse me', keeping the grounds tidy, looking after those younger or those less fortunate, respecting all differences in people e.g. ethnicity, gender, world views different to our own etc.

Kindness - Showing care for others. Looking after others with compassion and empathy. We tend to rephrase negative words such as 'bullying' with questions such as 'are you being kind when you did that?' 'How can you change your behaviour so that it is kind?' 'What are you going to do to make it better?' 'How are you going to make sure it doesn't happen in the future?'

Integrity – Doing the right thing, even when no one else is looking.

Diligence – Work hard, challenge yourself, finish well.



Rewards

To facilitate teaching of positive behaviours, we have a variety of awards that are given out. Examples include: classroom certificates, assembly values certificates, Honour Roll trips and cups and awards given out at prizegiving ceremonies.

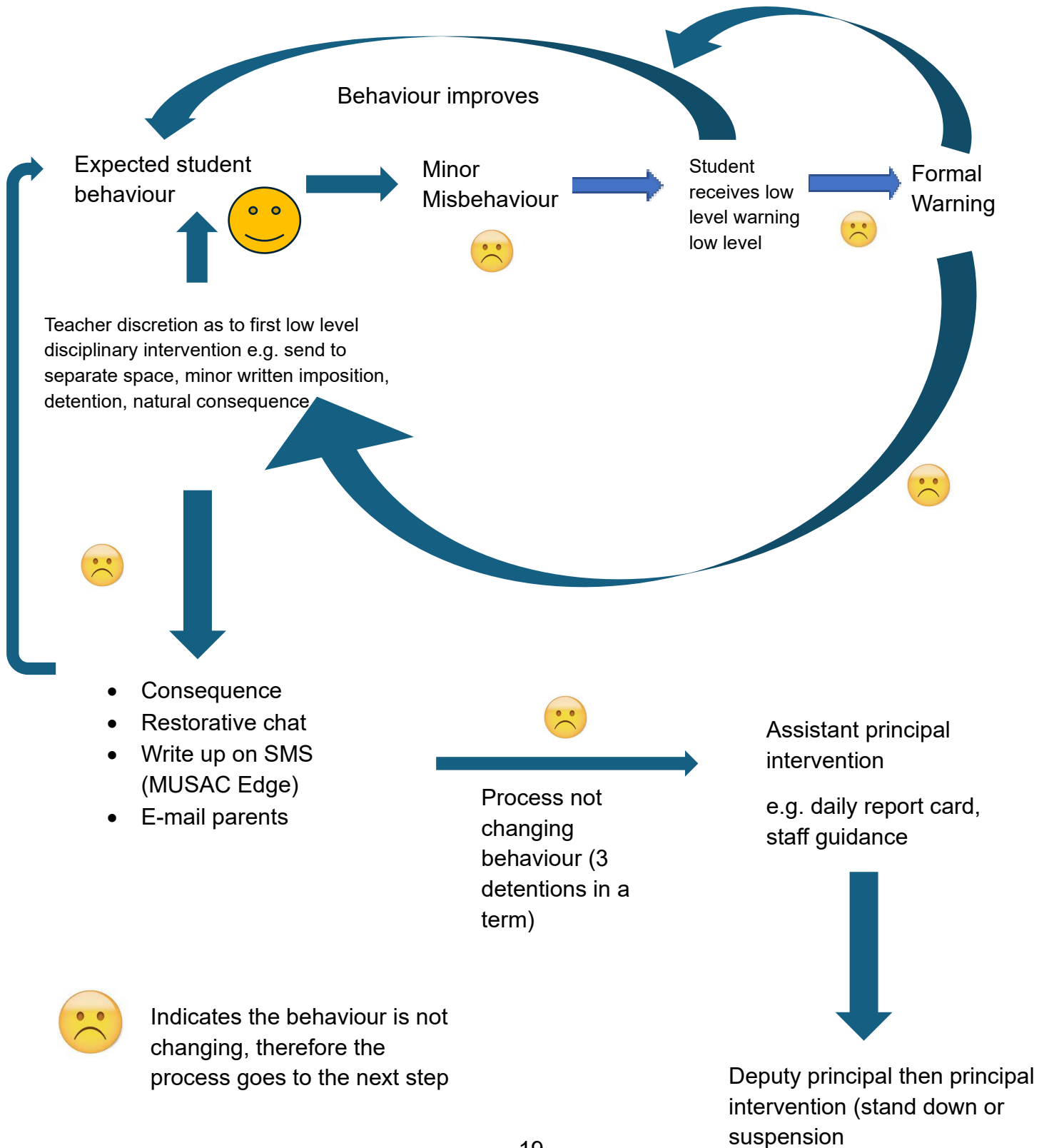
Our termly Honour Roll trips are a special event for each class and they are awarded at the end of each term based on the achievement of three things:

- Achieving the goals set with the teacher or teacher aide
- Acceptable standards of behaviour
- Memorisation of the term bible memory verse



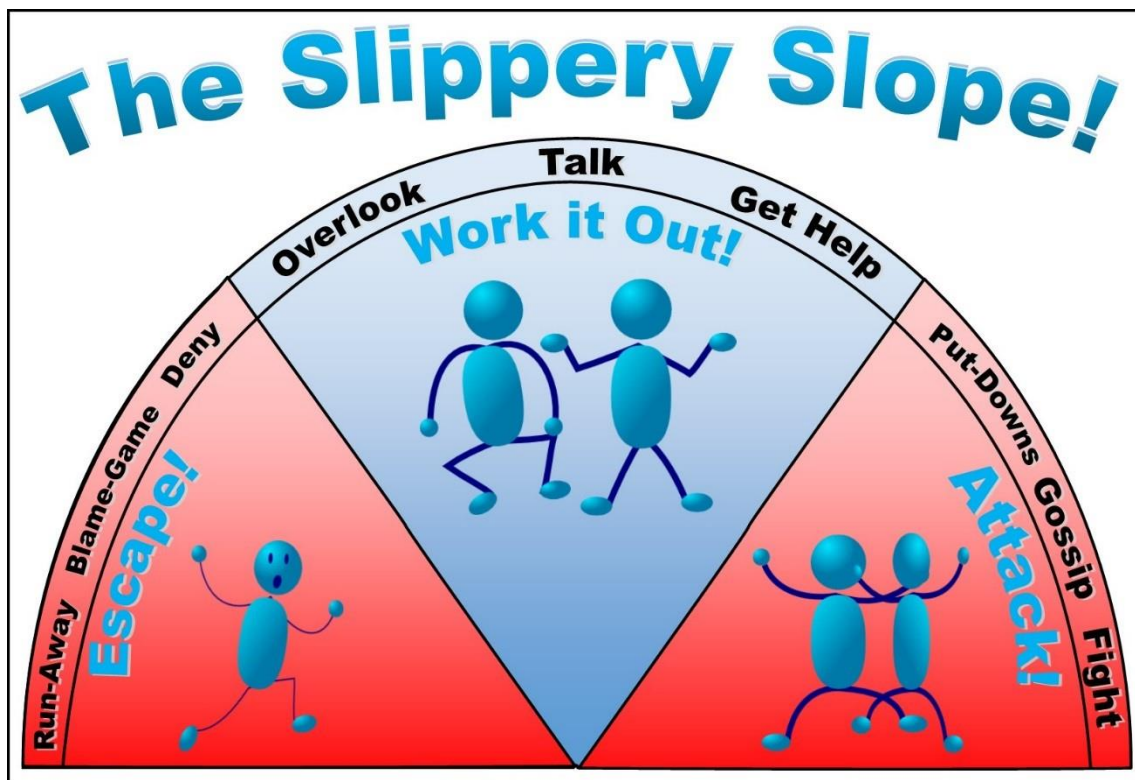
Behaviour Management

Maintaining acceptable standards of behaviour can include the stick as well as the carrot ie both positive and negative consequences for behaviour. Our behaviour management policy is available on our website but excerpts of this policy include:



Peacemaker Strategies for resolving conflict

The Peacemaker Programme is based on the idea that when students are faced with challenging situations our gut instinct is to either 'fight' or take 'flight'. These two extremes of behaviour are ineffective ways of dealing with conflict. As per the blue sector in the diagram below, it is far better to overlook certain behaviours, talk it through or get help to resolve the conflict. The 'Slippery Slope' diagram can be an effective teaching tool for helping students to realise how they can appropriately deal with a conflict situation.



Restorative Practise

Restorative Practise can be considered as a key part of the blue sector of the Peacemakers 'Slippery Slope' diagram above.

The essence of restorative practices is simple: human beings are happier, more productive and more likely to make positive changes in their behaviour when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them.

Restorative approaches enable links to be made between wrongdoers and those they have harmed, punishment and the actual offence.

When working with students who have made poor behaviour choices the following methodology is a good process:



Restorative processes are:

- Minor misbehaviours: Restorative chat between the teacher and the students concerned
- Major misbehaviours: Restorative midi or full monty - facilitated by experienced, trained staff

(Exceptional circumstances: At times, senior management may deem an issue too serious to warrant the above and move straight to the consequence eg illegal or unsafe behaviour).

Restorative chat: a 2–4-minute conversation between teacher and students (these can be held in a classroom or on the playground etc) examples could be: homework not completed, students being unkind to each other, off task in the classroom, not following instructions, disrespectful but minor misbehaviour etc.

Restorative midi conversation: facilitated formal conversation, which resolves serious issues between students.

Restorative full monty: facilitated formal conversation where all affected parties are present. These usually involve parents and others and can take two hours or more. These are only facilitated by experienced, trained staff.

Carrying out a Restorative Conversation:

Restorative Conversations focus on accountability, healing & needs. A good format for a restorative conversation is as follows:

1. **What** happened?
2. **Who** has been affected? How?
3. **What** needs to be done to put things right? (which may include a consequence which is agreed during the conversation)
4. **How** do we make sure it is not going to happen again?
5. **When** shall we follow this up (often the same time next week)?

Parents

Totara College prides itself on having close relationships with its parents who, are the first teachers in a child's life.

As a result parent communication is vital and we seek to achieve this by:



- Periodic family forums (and BBQ get togethers)
- Parent teacher interviews
- Fortnightly newsletters
- Using the Skoolloop app, Class Dojo app (new entrants), general emails and the website for general and urgent information
- Parent signatures for detention slips and contracts if misbehaviour becomes unusual
- Being available after school for parent meetings.

We also love to see parents involved in school things such as trips, camps projects, assemblies, functions and special events.

We welcome and encourage all parents to take an active and inquisitive role in the education of their children.



Governing Board

Like all state schools, Totara College is governed by a school Board. The purpose of the Board is to ensure that Totara College fulfils its responsibilities to the college Charter, Board policies and that the school meets its legal obligations to the Ministry of Education. In 2024, our Board was comprised of:

Elected parents: Isabelle Omundsen, Ricky Carnie (Deputy Chair), Calder Woodfield (Chair) and Clayton Locke

Proprietor representatives: Gavin Welsh and Trevor Viljoen

Co-opted member: Andrew Grocott

School based members: Peter Ferrar (principal), Ruth Peters (staff representative) and Kyan Carnie (student representative)

The Board sets the overall direction for the school through its policies and its annual and strategic (three year) plans. The Board meets twice a term in the school staff room. Meetings take about two hours, are open to the public and follow the general format:

- Introduction and apologies
- Consideration of the previous meeting's minutes
- Principal's report on current business and progress against the annual goals
- Financial reports
- General business

In addition a state integrated school also has a proprietor board who are responsible for maintaining the land and buildings to an acceptable level, charging attendance dues to fulfill this obligation and ensuring that the school is offering its special character effectively.



Enrolment

Full enrolment procedures are on our website and available from the school office.

The following steps occur prior to enrolment:

1. Interview and orientation with the principal
2. Signing of forms:
 - School requirements
 - a. Enrolment application
 - b. Medical/Health/Authorisation form
 - c. Blanket consent form
 - d. Student computer and cell phone usage form
 - Proprietor's requirements:
 - a. Spiritual Foundations document
 - b. Statement of Faith
 - c. Preference category enrolment:
 - i. Christian Special Character Reference form from church leader (for 'particular' category, preference enrolment) **or**
 - ii. Attendance at Christian worldview course and signing of worldview document (for 'general' category preference status)
3. Provide the following:
 - a. Birth certificate **or** passport and residency visa (or certified copies)
 - b. Prior ECE or school reports
 - c. Immunisation records
4. Enrolment interview

Confirmation of enrolment will be by phone call and follow up written letter.

Preference and Non-preference Enrolment

Totara College is a state integrated Year 1-13 school with a Christian special character. The school was founded on the intent to support parents and caregivers in their role of raising children in the ways of God.

The basis for its integration is an agreement between the Ministry of Education and the school proprietor (Dannevirke Christian Fellowship) whereby the Ministry agrees to resource the school and pay salaries similarly to any other state school and allows the school to operate under the proprietor's definition of 'special character'.

The proprietor agrees to put up the land and buildings (which they own) for the teaching of the national curriculum within their special character and to maintain these assets to an acceptable level.

Proprietors are entitled to charge attendance dues from parents towards the upkeep of the site asset.

Those attendance dues are currently set at: \$575 per annum.

The purpose of this document is to define the preference terms used in enrolment.

Enrolment Interview

At enrolment, students will be placed in one of two categories: preference or non-preference by the proprietor delegate. This is important since the school operates two separate rolls based on these terms and is only allowed so many students in each. Currently 90% preference, 10% non-preference. If a roll is full, then the student will be placed on a waiting list pending space.

Please note this is a term from the Integration Act only. Once students are enrolled there is no difference between the two categories and students will not know of the existence of such.

Preference Determination

The proprietors have recently allowed for two categories of preference enrolment:

1. Particular connection – those who are regular attendees of a Christian church or
2. General connection – those who agree to support the statements of Christian character

1. Particular connection to the special character

Applicants who wish to have their child enrolled under the Particular Connection pathway should:

1. Have their pastor/minister/elder/priest fill out the **Christian Special Character reference form** to confirm membership, faith status, and regular attendance at a Christian Church

2. Have **read** and **signed** (where necessary) to support each set of documents:

Special Character Statements:

- Spiritual Foundations Document
- Statement of Faith
- Introduction to a Christian Worldview

College Character Statements:

- Parent agreement (in enrolment application). Both parent/caregiver and students (if year 9 and above) are asked to sign these.
- Student Behaviour Management guidelines (as detailed in this prospectus)
- Family Involvement (as detailed in this prospectus).

3. Complete a parent orientation (with the principal or delegate).

4. Attend an enrolment meeting which involves the principal (or delegate) and the proprietor delegate. The proprietor will decide as to Preference status.

5. Continue to uphold and actively support the intention and integrity of the documents signed.

6. To maintain the integrity of intent and support, these documents should be reread and signed each year.

7. Continue attending regular Christian services to demonstrate intent to align with the Christian Special Character. If the Special Christian Character is reported as not supported, we may ask for another Reference form to remain in the Preference Criteria.

2. General connection to the special character

Applicants, who wish to establish a General Connection to the Christian Special Character, must establish to the satisfaction of the Proprietors that their children will be raised with the beliefs and values that are aligned with the Special Character of the College, and will need to:

1. Attend an interview with the principal
2. Complete a parent orientation.
3. Complete the Enrolment Application package
4. Have read and signed to support each set of documents:

Special Character Statements:

- Spiritual Foundations Document
- Statement of Faith
- Introduction to a Christian Worldview

College Character Statements:

- Parent agreement (in enrolment application). Both parent/caregiver and students Year 9 and over are asked to sign these.
- Student Behaviour Management (as detailed in this prospectus)
- Family Involvement (as detailed in this prospectus).

4. Attend and complete an Enrolment course covering 'Introduction to a Christian Worldview', 'Statement of Faith explanations', and 'Special Character Guidelines'. This is for parents/caregivers and students Year 9 and older.
5. Attend an enrolment meeting which involves the principal (or delegate) and the Proprietor delegate. The proprietor will decide as to Preference status.
6. Continue to uphold and actively support the intention and integrity of the documents signed. To maintain the Integrity of intent and support, these documents should be reread and signed each year.
7. Attend regular Christian services at least once a term to demonstrate the intent to align with the Christian Special Character. If the Special Christian Character is reported as not supported, the proprietor may request the parents to attend another course or obtain a Reference form to remain in the Preference Criteria.

Non-Preference Enrolment Criteria

In this category, parents/caregivers of the student do not need to be members of a local Christian Church or have Christian convictions or beliefs but must still:

1. Have an interview and orientation with the principal (or delegate).
2. Complete an Enrolment Application Form
3. Have read and signed to support each set of documents:

Special Character Statements:

- Spiritual Foundations Document
- Statement of Faith
- Introduction to a Christian Worldview

College Character Statements:

- Parent agreement (in enrolment application). Both parent/caregiver and students Year 9 and over are asked to sign these.
- Student Behaviour Management guidelines (as detailed in the prospectus)
- Family Involvement (as detailed in the prospectus).

Continue to uphold and actively support the intention and integrity of the documents signed. To maintain the Integrity of intent and support, these documents should be reread and signed each year.

4. Attend an enrolment meeting which involves the principal (or delegate) and the Proprietor delegate.

Costs

Attendance Dues

The difference between a state integrated and a school state school is that the proprietors own the land and buildings rather than the Ministry of Education. As a result, proprietors are entitled under the law to charge parents attendance dues to assist with the general maintenance of the site.

Attendance dues are \$575 per annum and are the



responsibility of the proprietor to collect. Normally an invoice is sent out post enrolment and parents can liaise with the proprietor as to how the money is paid: weekly, monthly, annually etc.



School Costs

School fees are a voluntary donation that schools often ask of parents. Totara College does not ask for these

Stationery costs: The school supplies all student stationery when students need it and to offset the cost of this with a one-off annual charge to parents of \$57.50.

Technology costs: The school provides most of the expenses for technology but charges a small amount to parents for students involved to account for expenses over and above the curriculum. This is \$15 per term. \$60 per annum.



Contact Us

Totara College

3 Ruahine Street,

PO Box 152

Dannevirke 4942

Phone: (06) 374-6165

Email office@totaracollege.school.nz

