

Rolleston

Christian School

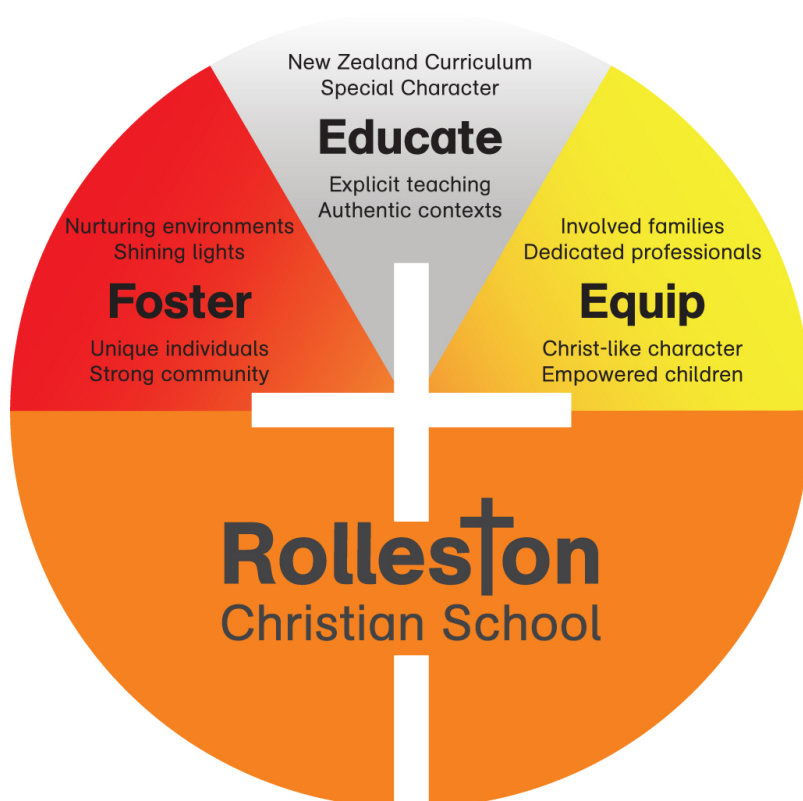
Staff

Handbook



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Embodying the Values of Rolleston Christian School

As a teacher it is important to be aware of the principle that *a student never rises above their teacher*; therefore, in order to develop Christ-like, creative, critical thinkers who enjoy academic success and develop their personal gifts to bring hope and joy to their world, we, the teaching staff at RCS, need to embody the values that fall out of this.

It is expected therefore that at RCS we, the staff, will be known by the following traits:

Christ and Christ-like Character

- Be guided by the Holy Spirit in our own lives, including our professional lives.
- Continue to grow in our understanding of God and who we are in Him.
- Demonstrate Christ-like behaviour towards all members of the school community.
- Demonstrate the characteristics of love found in 1 Corinthians 13.
- Allow the work of the Holy Spirit to flow through us to demonstrate the Fruit of the Spirit.
- Demonstrate integrity at all times.

Creativity

- Think outside the box in relation to our teaching practice.
- Take time to pursue our own creative interests.
- Encourage students in their pursuit of creativity.
- Encourage other teachers in creative approaches.

Critical Thinking

- Read widely.
- Participate in reflective discussion.
- Understand the purpose behind things we do.
- Develop good questioning skills to encourage children.
- Challenge children in their thinking.

Faith in Action

- Seek God about opportunities He is giving us personally.
- Demonstrate a genuine love and belief in the children, and their families, at school.
- Actively encourage children to have ideas for putting their faith into action.
- Approach our work as worship to God.

Unique Individuals

- Encourage students in their own gifts and talents.
- Have a strong awareness of our own strengths, and develop these.

Community

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**Christ-like, creative,
critical thinkers**

- Participate in full school activities.
- Actively interact with children, parents and other staff in a restorative and loving manner.
- Demonstrate humility.
- Offer our strengths to the teaching team.
- Accept help from others who have strengths in an area.
- Actively encourage each individual as God has created them to be.

Academic Success

- Provide high levels of instruction.
- Demonstrate our own learning journeys to students.
- Have a belief in and commitment to all students achieving at the appropriate level.
- Set high standards for ourselves as learners and as professionals.

Quality Teaching and Learning

Our purpose at RCS is to provide an education that enables students to gain high levels of achievement and collective success. Teachers have a vital role to play in student achievement and should therefore take this seriously, and work diligently and smartly to provide quality teaching and learning experiences for students.

High quality teaching at RCS will be:

Christ-centered

- Although students and their growth and development are our focus, this is achieved through an attitude of teaching as worship to God.
- All teaching approaches should reflect Christ and the values He demonstrated as He served and ministered to others.
- Seek the Holy Spirit for guidance, inspiration and His prompting in the classroom.

Relational

- Students need to feel loved, cared for and safe in all areas of the school.
- Endeavor to understand each child as a person and as a learner.
- Endeavor to develop meaningful connections with families.
- Always seek to resolve conflict, behaviour issues and misunderstandings with strong relationships in mind.

Intentional

- Teach students according to their needs, continuing to challenge them in their learning.
- Understand the learning progressions in each curriculum area and plan programmes that ensure students move through these.
- Be well prepared for teaching and learning activities, using a range of teaching approaches that will meet students' learning needs.

Responsive

- Reflect on the effectiveness of teaching strategies and respond accordingly.
- Watch out for and pick up the 'teachable moments' that occur.
- Find teaching and learning approaches and activities that will be effective for the students that you teach, considering ethnicity, abilities, dispositions, gender etc.
- Reflect on the progress of individual students and respond proactively so that students are all making the maximum progress possible.

Empowering

- Give students choices in their learning.
- Scaffold learning experiences, choices and opportunities according to the individual needs of the student, so that students are enjoying success while moving towards being independent learners.

- Develop meaningful learning experiences for students.
- Expect great things of students and support them in achieving this.

Collaborative

- Adhere to the expectations and culture promoted in the school in all ways.
- All teachers are to take an active interest in the development and growth of all children at the school.
- Individual teachers are not expected to know 'everything about everything', but as a team we can support one another in this.
- Positively contribute to the development of great ideas through robust development of an idea as a group.
- Support one another in all aspects of teaching and learning.

Code of Conduct*

At RCS we commit ourselves to professional standards of conduct in all we do. We are committed to working positively and collaboratively with all members of our school community. We also recognise that, in order to provide a safe environment for our students and the highest quality of education, it is important to maintain our own personal well-being and growth.

Principle 1.0 Commitment to our Students

1. We put the well-being of our students first, respecting their rights and dignity, as unique individuals, nurturing their individual sense of self-worth, and serving their spiritual, academic and human needs.
2. We enable students to develop personal responsibility, including commitment to their own wellbeing, that of their community and the world.
3. We help students to see the relevance of the Good News of Salvation, challenging them to live by gospel values in their daily lives, and developing their potential for Christian leadership in society.
4. We focus on delivering the best possible educational programmes that suit each student, challenging them to achieve the highest possible standards which reflect their abilities.
5. We work to deliver the best possible Living Christianly programmes for our students, and to relate these programmes to their daily lives.
6. We work to provide a safe physical and emotional learning environment for our students.
7. We endeavour to exercise restorative justice in resolving discipline issues.

Principle 2.0 Commitment to Parents and Caregivers

1. We support parents and caregivers in their responsibility for their children's education; therefore we treat them with respect at all times, collaborating with them and respecting their right to know, understand and share in decisions that affect the education and welfare of their children.
2. We report their children's progress regularly, and as needed, with professional clarity.
3. We offer supportive ways to assist parents' involvement in their children's education and spiritual development.
4. In our Living Christianly and other programmes we work to enhance family life and the home-school relationship.
5. We respect privacy and confidentiality of information.

Principle 3.0 Commitment to our Community

1. We actively participate as part of the wider Church, supporting the work of the local churches and seeking their guidance as required.
2. We protect the reputation of students, parents, staff and Board members.
3. We support the authority, decisions and leadership of our Proprietor and those who work to sustain and develop Christian education.
4. We support the integral relationship of the Christian school and the Church.

5. We promote the peace of Christ in the world by modeling co-operative behaviour and peaceful solutions to conflict.
6. We support and work with other Christian schools, for the good of the Christian school system.
7. We commit ourselves to honouring the Treaty of Waitangi.
8. We actively value the ethnic diversity of New Zealand society.

Principle 4.0 Commitment to Education

1. We are committed to deepening our professional understanding and knowledge of the principles and delivery of authentic Christian Education.
2. We work in partnership with the Ministry of Education.
3. We respect and support the work of all associated with the national education system.
4. We contribute to wider educational debate and development in our society.
5. We model and support professional behaviour within our school by conscientiously fulfilling our defined roles.

Principal 5.0 Commitment to Ourselves

Recognising that we can only fulfill our responsibilities to others if we fulfill our responsibilities to ourselves:

1. We nurture our spiritual growth and deepen our understanding of the teachings of Christ and his Church.
2. We strive to live by values of truth, honesty, justice, goodness, love, compassion, reconciliation and respect for others.
3. We sustain our personal wellbeing, striving for balance in our work, recreation, rest and emotional life.
4. We actively participate in a faith community outside of the school.
5. We actively participate in the faith community within the staff.

**Code is based on the Code of Ethics for staff and boards of New Zealand Catholic Schools.*

A signed copy of this Code of Conduct will be kept in your Personnel File.

Working Together as the Body of Christ

As a staff we are one body working together for a common purpose. Our common purpose is to teach children in a Christ-centered learning environment for the glory of God. In order to do this effectively it is expected at RCS that staff will actively participate in the following activities and processes in order to work together effectively.

School Structure

The school will operate in two main hubs. A junior hub and a senior hub. The junior hub will have children from Years 0-3. The senior hub will have children from Years 4-6.

Both groups will be taught by a collaborative group. The Hub Leaders will be responsible for the collaborative planning process in their team and have oversight for the education of the children in their hub. The Principal and Deputy Principal will have responsibility for the development of school wide systems and development.

Prayer and Devotions

Staff will all participate in a prayer and devotion time each morning from 8.10am - 8.25am. This will be a time to focus on God together at the start of the day, lift the school community up in prayer and encourage one another in our own spiritual growth and development.

Professionalism

It is expected that staff conduct themselves in a professional manner, and that a Christian environment and ethos should enhance this not counteract it. Staff should dress in an appropriate way, presenting a professional front but also in a practical manner for the tasks needing to be done. All behaviour, language and interactions should reflect Christ-like character, including Jesus' ability to set appropriate boundaries with those around him.

Hours of Work

It is expected that staff will be available for fellow members of the school community between 8am and 4pm every day of the week, as a minimum. Outside this, it is important that clear lines of communication are maintained between staff in order to make sure that staff have enough time to work collaboratively together. Staff are to only work on-site after dark if there is more than one person on-site, and if working on-site during the weekend, should be vigilant about personal safety and let someone know where they are and when they are expected to be home.

Meetings

Formal meetings will be held twice a week, on Monday and Wednesdays, and it is expected that all staff prepare to engage in these meetings until 5pm. In order for meetings to be productive and meaningful it is expected that all staff will come to the meeting prepared and ready to contribute. Prior to the meeting, an agenda or specific intended outcomes will be distributed, and records will be kept to demonstrate the work that was achieved and as a reference point for clear understanding.

Meetings will have two foci.

1. Collaboration - these meetings will be focused on the development of unit planning, school events, administration, and day to day running of the school.
2. Development - these meetings will be focused on the professional growth and development of staff and the school.

These meetings will rotate between full school meetings, hub meetings and small focus group meetings. A schedule for meetings will be published on the Google Calendar at the start of each term, including who is responsible for running the meeting.

There will be a full school community meeting with families once a term. This will be developed in order to enhance the educational partnership between home and school. It is expected that all staff will participate in and contribute to these events.

Conflict between staff

It is important at RCS that all conflict is dealt with in a loving, truthful manner and that all parties maintain their integrity at all times. Conflict does not need to be seen as a negative, but can rather be viewed as an opportunity to serve, love and understand our fellow members of staff.

As Christians it is important that restoration and positive relationship are the end products of any conflict, therefore it is expected that all staff follow the guidelines set out in Matthew 18 when dealing with conflict.

1. Approach the other person in private and discuss the issue.
Ensure you approach them with the intent to find a solution and move forward.
2. If you feel this did not result in a positive way to move forward take another person with you to discuss the matter.
The other person should be someone that is able to help both parties to see each other's side and mediate to find a positive way forward.
3. If you feel this did not result in a positive way to move forward then discuss the matter with a person who is in authority.

Resources

As a collaborative team it is expected that resources will be shared openly and looked after responsibly by all members of staff.

Planning and Paperwork Expectations

Preparation is essential for effectively meeting the needs of students and making the most of the valuable time we have with them. In preparing for teaching and learning, teachers are expected to have a clear understanding of what they are teaching and why. All preparation should reflect a clear understanding of each child as a person and a learner, and should optimise learning opportunities for students, both academically and holistically.

Documentation is a necessary part of the teaching and learning process, both as a system for accountability and as a way to record the growth, development and achievement of students, but teachers should spend the majority of their time on the preparation of learning activities and lessons, and use systems for recording these that fulfill more than one purpose.

As a Team

RCS is designed to allow for collaboration between staff to meet the needs of the children. Planning and working as a team allows teachers to work from one another's strengths and provides internal systems of accountability. As a learning hub it is expected that teaching and learning plans are developed collaboratively in some part and that personal teaching and learning plans are openly shared at all times. Team leaders will coordinate the logistics of teachers working collaboratively in the environment, maximizing on teacher strengths and passions, in order to meet the individual needs of the students.

Core Subjects

In the area of core subjects it is expected that each individual teacher will have a clear understanding of the learning progressions needed for the individual students they are responsible for. Careful preparation needs to be done in order to allow students to move through these progressions. The development of self-motivated and self-managing learners is a core goal in the learning programmes developed in the literacy and numeracy. The recording of teacher preparation should therefore double up as a way for students and parents to understand and take ownership of the process.

Rich Learning Programmes

Due to the nature of the Rich Learning Programme and the action learning models that will be embraced, the planning of the Rich Learning Programme needs to be both carefully thought through and also completely open to an organic direction. The 'Big Picture' for the Rich Learning Programme each term will be developed by the full staff, so that the whole school is working towards a similar outcome. Each hub will then flesh out the more focused learning intentions for the students in their hub. Teachers will then work collaboratively over the term to reflect on and mold rich learning into the direction that the hub, as a whole learning community, leads. Records of this planning will be developed collaboratively and should always be an organic, living document.

Assessment

Formal assessment data will be kept on the school's SMS. Learning progressions in the core subjects should be kept in collaboration with individual students and celebrated together.

Reflection

Teachers will engage regularly in group reflection on the effectiveness of their preparation and the teaching and learning activities. This reflection will allow for the growth and development of teachers through careful monitoring of the effectiveness of their programmes and the invitation it creates for teachers to share ideas and brainstorm solutions together.

Learning at Home

Learning at Home expectations will be published as a school, on the school website. More holistic homework will be planned together as a full staff or as a hub, and homework that helps families to reinforce learning of groups of students will be published on the website on a Monday morning. Teachers are therefore to have this to the person in charge by 9am Monday morning.

Relief Teaching

If you have a planned absence it is expected that this will be accommodated for within your planning, both as a team and as an individual. Planning that is left should allow the student's learning to carry on as needed.

In the event that a staff member is sick then it is the responsibility of the team leader to ensure that the relieving teacher is aware of the programme for the day, however the open nature of planning expectations at RCS should allow a relief teacher to follow plans as closely as possible.

Communication Expectations

Within school

Communication within a team is key to ensuring a collaborative, smart approach works.

It is expected that staff, both full time and part time, will keep up to date with what is happening in the school through:

- Looking at the Google Calendar
- Attending meetings and actively participating in these
- Asking questions when unsure of something
- Reading regular emails sent by the leadership team

It is expected that staff will communicate with their peers and the leadership team regularly, constructively, efficiently, and in a timely manner, thinking carefully about the means of communication for the purpose in which they are communicating.

Wider school community

Proactive communication is essential for the smooth running of a successful learning community. School newsletters will promote the approaches to teaching and learning that are occurring in the school, and the achievements that are being made. All teaching staff will be called upon to contribute to these.

Developing a positive relationship with families, through friendly chatter or communicating positive things about someone's child, sets a strong platform for educational partnerships to work. It is expected that teaching staff make regular contact with families, particularly if there are concerns or issues. It is suggested that teachers make a note of the regularity of conversations they have with families and make an effort to connect with those parents that natural relationships aren't being developed.

All staff are expected to be outside at the end of the school day, both in order to ensure that students are waiting safely for their parents, and also to connect with parents as they come to collect their children. The school will communicate to parents that any lengthy, or in-depth conversations about their children should be scheduled in advance, so that meetings are productive, and beneficial to the students. The school will communicate to parents that before school the teachers' priority is to connect with students and ensure there is a smooth start to the learning for the day, therefore parents should not speak to teachers for long periods of time at this point, unless previously arranged.

Any significant communication that is being distributed in the school name must be approved by the principal before distribution. All other communication is at the discretion of the individual staff member, but it is expected that staff members will always conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner.

If at any time a staff member feels uncomfortable about the means in which a member of the school community is communicating with them they need to approach a more senior member of staff to support them in the communications. This includes emails, and it is expected that a potentially controversial email will never be sent without having another person give feedback before it is sent and senior management being CC'd into any responses. At all times any conflict should be dealt with in person, therefore a brief email can be sent inviting the person to attend a meeting.

Performance Management System

At RCS the Performance Management System is designed to form systems of accountability and professional growth that will ensure students are always receiving the best possible educational experience. The Performance Management System will also ensure that teachers have the necessary evidence to renew their registration and develop their personal career aspirations.

Job Descriptions/Performance Agreements

Job descriptions will be reviewed at the beginning of each school year. The job performance agreement will set out the foundational expectations for teaching staff, areas of extra responsibility for that year and the plan for professional growth and development that year. These performance agreements and the progress towards meeting them will be formally reviewed in the middle of the year and again at the end of the year.

Accountability

Systems of accountability at RCS will not produce extra work for teachers or management, but will simply be part of the day to day systems that ensure teachers are meeting the Registered Teacher Criteria and Professional Standards, fulfilling the requirements of the agreed on job descriptions and that high quality teaching and learning is occurring.

- Planning and assessment data is to be openly shared at all times, on Google Sites.
- Learning Hubs will plan collaboratively.
- Learning Hubs will analyse assessment data collaboratively.
- Teachers will rely on one another in the execution of high quality teaching and learning programmes.
- Teachers will work in open environments with other staff.
- Formal observations will occur once a term by either the Senior Teacher or Principal. These observations will be based around the agreed areas of development, along with the general effectiveness of the teaching approaches and learning environment. Formal feedback will be recorded.
- Reflective discussions will occur in both teams and between individual teachers and members of senior leadership.

Professional Growth and Development

In order to model the desired outcomes we have for our students, and also to provide the best possible education both now and in the future it is expected that staff live from a 'growth mindset'. In addition to the 'business as usual' aspects of teaching and learning that will be maintained through systems of accountability, it is also expected that teachers strategically implement new approaches. New approaches will be approached in the same manner that student's action learning inquiries work. Teachers should aim to work through two projects per year, but only if the first project has become a sustainable 'business as usual' approach.

Process for Project Based Development

1. Staff member, or group of staff members, propose a project to the Leadership Team, explaining why they think it will be an effective idea, how it fits with the overall direction of the school and hub.
2. The Leadership Team gives feedback on the project and helps to refine it.
3. Staff member begins to implement the project, as part of this process the staff member should participate in:
 - Professional readings
 - Professional discussions
 - Professional development courses
 - Presentations and reflections with other staff members
 - Reflection on results
 - Refining approaches
4. Staff member presents their project to the rest of the teaching staff.

NB. Staff need to be constantly aware of why they are doing what they are doing and what the effect of the approach is on the children they are teaching, and communicate this with interested stakeholders.

External Appraisal

In order to provide accountability and growth for the school leadership team an external appraiser will appraise two members of staff on a rotational basis. These staff will be selected on a cycle.

Administrative Expectations

Sick Leave

As a school we are committed to looking after the wellbeing of staff and ensuring that the people working with children are in a strong position to do so. It is important then that staff members take sick leave when they need to. Staff are to call the Principal by 7am if they are not going to be able to attend school that day, with the preferred option being that staff alert the Principal of the need to take a day off the evening before. The school will, whenever possible, use regular relievers that are familiar with the school culture and expectations.

Discretionary Leave

Staff need to approach the Principal, then follow up in writing, to apply for discretionary leave. Extended leave will need to be applied for, in writing, to the BOT. Leave will be awarded on a case by case basis in accordance with the Collective Agreement and the school's values.

School Policies and Procedures

It is expected that all staff at RCS are aware of all documentation related to the day to day running of the school. All school documentation should be 'living' and easily seen in the day to day running of the school. They will therefore be reviewed and revised annually by all staff. These include:

1. The RCS Curriculum Framework
2. The RCS Health and Safety Manual
3. The RCS Performance Management Framework
4. The RCS Charter

Finances

All spending must be approved by the Principal, and will be in accordance with the school's budgetary and strategic priorities.

Reimbursement will be given in accordance with the Collective Agreement, and when the circumstances and expenditure were pre-arranged with the Principal. All receipts must be kept and a copy given to the Office Manager.