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*He Arotake Whanaketanga mō te Mātauranga*

*Ahurea Katorika*

*Te Ture Tāuke mō ngā Kura Kāinga*

*Noho Katorika*

*Catholic Special Character External  
Evaluation for Development of Catholic  
School Hostels  
Report for*

***Elizabeth House  
Sacred Heart Girls' College  
New Plymouth***

Evaluation conducted on: 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Confirmed Report 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024

## Elizabeth House Hostel Details

**Name of Hostel:** Elizabeth House

**Affiliated school:** Sacred Heart Girls' College New Plymouth

**Proprietor:** Institute de Notre Dame Des Missions Trust Board

**Address:** 9 Pukaka Street, Fitzroy New Plymouth

**Hostel type:** Girls Year 9 – Yr 13

**Occupancy number:** 74

**Hostel Manager:** Marina Walsh

**School Principal:** Barbara Costelloe

**Mission College New Plymouth Trust Board Chairperson:** Mark Butterworth

**Hostel Management Board Chairperson:** Helen Stokes

## Evaluation Team:

**Lead Evaluator:** Pauline Balm

**Accompanying Evaluator:** Teresa Edwards



## The Aims of Catholic Special Character External Evaluation for Development

Effective evaluation processes enable the hostel to understand how boarders are developing in relation to valued outcomes, how improvement actions have impacted on boarders, what needs to be changed and what further actions are required.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the Catholic special character evaluation process produces a focused picture of the impact of Catholic special character on the lives and faith journey of its boarders. The evaluation framework is under five main dimensions:

- Whakawhanaungatanga-the process of developing relationships: relating well to others,
- Manaakitanga-the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others,
- Tikanga-the expected system of values and practices,
- Kaitiakitanga-stewardship of the taonga of Catholic special character,
- Hautūtanga-the capacity to lead.

A collaborative external evaluation process between the hostel and the evaluators helps the hostel to identify what they are doing well and co-construct next steps.

This document provides guidance for a full and thorough evaluation of the Catholic special character of the hostel. It is the recommended evaluation process.

It is between the Proprietor and the Diocesan Education Office as to the timing of evaluations.

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<sup>1</sup> Education Review Office & Ministry of Education, *Effective School Evaluation*. Wellington, 2016.



## Elizabeth House - Introduction

### Mission Statement

Elizabeth House shall be a community with an atmosphere of welcome and love where girls are given the opportunity to open their minds to the awareness of God in their lives and where the Catholic faith is fostered.

Elizabeth House is based on Christian principles, which respect the dignity of each person and recognise them as valued members of our community. It shall be a place where mutual respect is given, self-esteem is developed, learning takes place, spiritual guidance is provided and where girls aim for personal excellence in all things. Elizabeth House is a loving and caring community where young women are safe and nurtured.

### Special Character/ History

Elizabeth House provides a Catholic community which is an extension of the home, a caring environment, fostering learning and personal growth by living the values of Jesus Christ. Sacred Heart Girls' College New Plymouth was established by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions in 1884. Boarding has been part of the school since the very beginning.

In 1972 the hostel and convent (now Adele Senior Living) moved from Powderham Street to the current site following the move of the College nine years earlier. In 2000 Sacred Heart Hostel was renamed Elizabeth House in honour of Sister Mary Elizabeth Molloy the last Sister to be Principal of Sacred Heart Girls' College New Plymouth.

The Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions founded by Euphrasie Barbier have always had education and the empowerment of women as a priority of their work. Students receive a strong spiritual foundation and values formation.

Mission school students strive for personal excellence, learn respect for others, have a heart for the world, respect for creation and the environment and a strong awareness of mission with a global consciousness.

### Progress with Recommendations from the July 2015 Catholic Special Character Review for Development Report

Since the 2015 Catholic Special Character Review Report, Elizabeth House has seen significant changes in leadership. The 2015 report made a number of recommendations (22) under the headings of Stewardship of Catholic Character, Catholic Community and Pastoral Care. The 2024 evaluation team saw evidence of significant progress made under several of these areas.

In light of this, the time between the 2015 review and the 2024 evaluation and given the revised Catholic Special Character Evaluation for Development of Catholic School Hostels in Aotearoa New Zealand document being released in July 2023, this report will not be addressing each recommendation individually. Where there is still opportunity for growth, statements will be made accordingly and under the new dimensions.



**Dimension One: Whakawhanaungatanga-the process of developing relationships: relating well to others.**

***What is happening in the hostel to ensure that all those involved are building collaborative, inclusive and respectful relationships?***

Elizabeth House strives for boarders, staff and whānau to know each other, have a sense of belonging and as a Catholic community be supported in their development of a strong relationship with Christ. It is through knowledge that living in community brings both rights and responsibilities that allows the Manawa Mission values of Ako, Manaakitanga and Wahine to be lived out authentically at Elizabeth House.

The Mission Statement of Elizabeth House is clearly grounded in whakawhanaungatanga. The intention to ensure boarders are supported and cared for by all staff is also outlined in the Elizabeth House Handbook, *"We enjoy developing strong relationships with the girls ensuring their wellbeing is looked after and they feel loved, accepted, and listened to."*

Due to a number of factors, Covid-19 being a significant one, a reset of hostel culture was necessary. The Hostel Manager and CEO have been strategic in their approach working alongside the girls to develop new traditions contributing to a culture that the RNDM Sisters would be proud of.

There are a number of intentional activities whereby building collaborative, inclusive and respectful relationships has been the intended outcome. These include:

- Orientation sleepover
- Big Sister/Little Sister
- Boarder Council
- Table dinners
- Hostel competitions

The core values of Ako, Manaakitanga and Wahine Toa which are at the heart of Sacred Heart Girls' College, are also at the heart of Elizabeth House. Boarders were able to give examples of how these core values are practiced in everyday living as community.

Under the Code of Conduct for Boarders Ako, Manaakitanga and Wahine Toa are clearly aligned to the rights and responsibilities of each boarder.

Gathering boarder voice through regular surveys such as the Hauora - how are you doing survey? as well as feedback from the student council are important ways the Hostel Manager and CEO determine the health of the culture within the hostel. A next step would be to use this data gathered to track common themes / concerns of the girls and address them strategically.



***What is the impact or effect of building collaborative, inclusive and respectful relationships on the life and faith journey of the boarders?***

It is apparent that there is mutual respect between the hostel staff and boarders. It is evident that there is a culture of care for their physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

In open and honest conversations, boarders shared:

- rules do show they care for us and about us
- special character is part of hostel life
- the hostel is a family, the sisterhood continues and is lived out in hostel life. Doesn't mean it's perfect but it is real
- it's a circus – lots of personalities, laughter, never a time of silence, sisterhood connections are strong
- one good aspect of a special character hostel is we are never alone, we look out for each other

A recent survey indicated there is a positive partnership between home and hostel. For the majority of whānau, Elizabeth House provides a *“caring and inclusive environment for the girls upholding and reinforcing Catholic values in the way the girls interact.”* (parent voice)  
Hostel staff communicate openly and in a timely manner with parents, contributing to building collaborative and respectful relationships.

**Next Steps for Development**

***What can be done differently to improve the process of developing relationships?***

A desire from the senior boarders, particularly the Year 13 Lead Team was to strengthen relationships across year levels more intentionally, as a way to build collaborative, inclusive and respectful relationships. Unpacking whakawhānau, the process of developing relationships: relating well to others, could be a priority for the student council.



**Dimension Two: Manaakitanga-the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others.**

***What is happening in the hostel to ensure that all are welcome, their mana and tapu is maintained and the safety of all is protected?***

The underlying philosophy of Elizabeth House is that while on site boarders experience Catholic family life. This means that all are welcome as a gift from God and the hostel has the appropriate systems in place to ensure that manaakitanga reflects Jesus' own care for others. This is to include hostel safeguarding practices and support for all in the hostel community.

Systems and structures in place that promote a positive and safe environment for all boarders included:

- restorative practices
- pathways for pastoral care
- positive, relational interactions between staff and boarders
- access to support networks which include family, the matrons, siblings in the hostel and their peers.

***What is the impact or effect of practices that are welcoming, maintain mana and tapu, and protect the safety of all?***

Boarders felt that what is in place to ensure their mana and tapu is maintained was effective in contributing to a culture of care. There is a close connection between hostel and home and this reinforces the importance of the hostel being 'home away from home.'

### **Next Steps for Development**

***What can be done differently to improve practices that are welcoming, maintain mana and tapu, and protect the safety of all?***

Purposeful and intentional induction of new staff, along with regular formation time for all staff throughout the year, will lead to a strengthening of shared language, understanding and practices that strengthen manaakitanga. Topics to be covered include;

- Manawa Mission
- Restorative Practice
- Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L)
- National Safeguarding Standards and Guidelines in a hostel context
- Physical restraint training
- RNDM charism and its application to contemporary society – engaging Sr Anne Sklennars to work with staff and boarders
- Principles of Catholic Social Teaching



### **Dimension Three: Tikanga-the expected system of values and practices.**

#### ***What is happening in the hostel to ensure that the beliefs, values, traditions and practices of the Catholic church are lived in a contextually and culturally appropriate way?***

Within Elizabeth House, beliefs, values, traditions and practices of the Catholic Church mirror those of Sacred Heart Girls' College. In this way boarders are supported to experience a natural integration of faith and life.

Through rituals, practices and traditions woven through the daily routines of Elizabeth House, its Catholic identity is witnessed and evident. These include:

- Boarder opening day Mass
- Weekly liturgies at Adele Chapel
- Elizabeth House Feast Day
- Nightly prayers
- Opportunities to engage with the Catholic Parish of New Plymouth Confirmation preparation
- Respectful relationships that reflect the dignity of each person as created in the image and likeness of God

Staff expressed confidence in the way they actively support the Catholic special character of Elizabeth House. There is a sense of shared responsibility to ensure the Mission of Elizabeth House is safeguarded and strengthened by all.

#### ***What is the impact or effect of this on the life and faith journey of the boarders?***

The hostel mirrors the busyness and complexities of family life. Elizabeth House creates an environment for girls to continue to be the best possible version God created them to be. Boarders shared that Elizabeth House is a place where Christ is at the centre. There is always time to welcome Christ into their lives. The faith journey that is intentionally nurtured during College hours is reflected in routines of hostel life.

### **Next Steps for Development**

#### ***What can be done differently to ensure that the beliefs, values, traditions and practices of the Catholic church are lived in a contextually and culturally appropriate way?***

Engage Sr Anne Sklennars RNDM to lift prayer and liturgy opportunities to be more reflective of the spirituality of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions. With support, boarders at all levels will be more than capable of bringing life to existing prayer and liturgy time to reflect the RNDM spirituality of contemplation.

Practices of the Catholic Church as expressed by Katorika Māori is an area for growth. This is an active expression of Catholic special character and an expression of the Catholic Church's commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Whilst this has been identified in the Elizabeth House Annual Goals and a recommendation from 2015 – time is needed to develop indicators of success and a plan of support. This will be a journey for the Hostel but one that complements/ sits alongside the College journey. The input of the CEO will be valuable in ensuring there will be progress with this next step.





#### **Dimension Four: Kaitiakitanga-Stewardship of the taonga of Catholic special character.**

##### ***What is happening at board, hostel leadership and student leadership level to safeguard and strengthen the hostel's Catholic identity?***

At Elizabeth House kaitiakitanga/stewardship of the hostel's Catholic special character, specifically the charism of the RNDM Sister sits with the MCNPTB, HMB, Hostel Manager, CEO and hostel staff. Each entity has an understanding of this taonga they are entrusted with safeguarding and strengthening, as outlined in the following documentation;

- Trust Board Deed
- Special Resolution of Mission College New Plymouth Trust Board to vary the Trust Deed, 2023
- Elizabeth House Mission Statement
- Elizabeth House Handbook 2024
- Strategic Plan and Annual Goals
- Board Meeting Minutes and Reports
- Job Descriptions
- Elizabeth House Policies and Procedures
- Deputy Head Girl – Special Character
- Daily Routines Timetable

##### ***What is the impact or effect of board, hostel leadership and student leadership to safeguard and strengthen the hostel's Catholic identity?***

The framework for how this hostel operates as a Catholic entity, and the commitment of the various groups invested in Elizabeth House, protects its Catholic identity for future generations.

#### **Next Steps for Development**

##### ***What can be done differently at board, hostel leadership and student leadership level to safeguard and strengthen the hostel's Catholic identity?***

Aligning the strategic plan of Elizabeth House to that of Sacred Heart Girls' College, reinforces the relationship between the two entities. From an outside perspective however, the current Annual Goals for 2023/2024 are not manageable. Many of the bullet point statements/goals are business as usual. Rather than populate an annual plan with these, many could be included in a staff handbook. A more manageable approach would be significantly fewer goals that are developmental, specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound. This will not only be manageable to achieve but also reflect practical limitations of a hostel context.

Therefore, three next steps are suggested;

- The development of a staff handbook which includes the non-negotiables around actions that safeguard and strengthen Catholic special character.
- An annual plan with fewer goals and action points, Goals that are developmental, specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time bound and that progress can be reported against will make the biggest impact.
- Use of the next steps of this evaluation in the annual plan.



## **Dimension Five: Hautūtanga-the capacity to lead**

### ***What is happening at board, hostel leadership, and student leadership level to evidence Catholic qualities of leadership?***

In a Catholic hostel, a key aspect of leadership (Board, CEO, hostel staff and students) is the capacity to build up the hostel's faith community.

At Elizabeth House there is a multi- dimensional level to the administration structure that ensures the hostel is governed, managed and run efficiently. The Trust Board, Management Board, Hostel Manager and CEO all contribute to this. Each partner in this administration structure is aware of and prioritises a Catholic vision for Elizabeth House.

As an authentic faith witness, the CEO of Elizabeth House, who is also the Tumuaki of Sacred Heart Girls' College, understands Catholic faith leadership and this is evident in her leadership style.

The leadership of the Hostel Manager also ensures Catholic special character is prioritised and safeguarded. Formal reporting to the Trust Board begins with Catholic special character under the strategic goals. The Managers' Christian faith is reflected in her leadership.

For the first time, the Head Boarder Team and Hostel Manager attended the RNDM Retreat in 2024. This provided an opportunity to strengthen and develop leadership through a specific Catholic RNDM lens. There have been some further faith leadership opportunities provided for the Head Boarder Team from the College Chaplain.

### ***What is the impact or effect of board, hostel leadership, and student leadership?***

The Manager and CEO realising the importance of investing time in the Head Boarder Team is beginning to provide these young women with the opportunity to take ownership of their leadership roles. They are beginning to understand what their responsibility is and how they can make a difference to and add value to the Catholic special character dimension of hostel life. They felt enriched having attended the RNDM leadership retreat whilst spending time with the Sisters. As a result, they spoke quite passionately about possibilities moving forward.

## **Next Steps for Development**

### ***What can be done differently at board, hostel leadership, and student leadership level to evidence Catholic qualities of leadership?***

- The development of a formalised student leadership plan.
- With the Special Resolution of MCTBNP to vary the Trust Deed, a natural next step would be to ensure changes made are fully understood by all parties. New roles and responsibilities that are clearly delineated in the Trust Deed are given time to be unpacked. If this is not prioritised there is a risk that lanes can become blurred and while intentions are good, actions may undermine the integrity of the changes.

For example, hostel policies are in need of review to reflect changes in legislation and reflect decision making from a Catholic perspective. Procedures that outline how these policies are implemented also require review. This is a big piece of work and one that requires time and expertise. Aligning hostel policies with college policies but



with a hostel contextual lens, is a next step. The process of unpacking policies in an operational manner, through procedure, would sit with the Hostel Manager and CEO. A perceived conflict of interest may exist if this work was led by the Hostel Management Board.



**Catholic Special Character Evaluation Report Summary**  
**Areas of growth since the 2015 review of Elizabeth House**

A suite of policies and procedures have been written specifically for Elizabeth House.

The Elizabeth House Handbook clearly states the Mission of the hostel. Catholic special character is prioritised throughout, including linking the College values to the Code of Conduct.

The development of a strategic and annual plan.

Job descriptions show full expectations around responsibilities of safeguarding Catholic special character.

Nightly prayer for junior boarders and a weekly liturgy is planned for and part of hostel life  
Behaviour expectations of boarders align to the PB4L model used at the College.

Head Boarders Team attendance at RNDM Retreat Day

The evaluation team is confident that the Elizabeth House CEO and Hostel Manager have the willingness and ability to address the next steps for development fully before the next external evaluation. The Catholic Education Office staff are available to assist the Hostel Manager and CEO in writing an action plan to address these next steps.

The evaluation team thank the community of Elizabeth House for the welcome, hospitality and cooperation extended to them and for the opportunity to experience the way that they safeguard and strengthen the Catholic special character. The organisation and preparation for the external evaluation by the Hostel Manager and CEO is greatly appreciated.



Pauline Balm

Evaluation for Development Advisor



Teresa Edwards

Manager of Catholic Schools

