



## Waikato Diocesan School for Girls Special Character Statement and Framework

### Introduction

Waikato Diocesan School for Girls is a distinguished school with a long Anglican tradition and a strong boarding heritage. It seeks to “make the Dio difference developing young women, who make a worthwhile contribution to our society, in their careers and their families.” Founded in 1909 and with an integrated school status, Dio is entering a new phase of strategic thinking and there is some thought being applied to the need for a cultural audit process. Currently, Dio identifies the following values and special character within its stated ethos:

Waikato Diocesan  
School for Girls

Veritate – By Truthfulness Simplicitate – By Straightforwardness Fidelitate – By Loyalty

Our school seeks to cultivate an awareness and love of God, care for oneself and one another, compassion for the needy and care for creation

The mission statement of the Waikato Diocesan School for Girls: It is the intention of this school to achieve excellence in education within a caring family atmosphere and under the influence of the standards and practice of the Anglican Church.

The special character of the Waikato Diocesan School for Girls is the expression of the thanksgiving for life offered by Anglican worship, together with Religious Education, Boarding, Music, The Arts, Outdoor Education and Corporate Responsibility.

Vicky McLennan, Principal of Waikato Diocesan School, and Anne Mills, Chair of the Proprietors' Board, commissioned Dr Philip SA Cummins and Marcus Edwards from CIRCLE to conduct an audit of the School's Special Character and to consider enhancement strategies. In the light of this work, we submit the following draft augmented Statement of Special Character and Framework for your consideration.

Dr Philip SA Cummins  
Managing Director – CIRCLE  
Adjunct Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania  
[phil@circle.org.au](mailto:phil@circle.org.au)

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## Draft Revised Waikato Diocesan School for Girls Statement of Special Character

**Our values:** Veritate – By Truthfulness, Simplicitate – By Straightforwardness, Fidelitate – By Loyalty

**Our purpose:** Our school seeks to cultivate an awareness and love of God, care for oneself and one another, compassion for the needy and care for creation

**Our mission:** The Waikato Diocesan School for Girls intends to achieve excellence in education within a caring family atmosphere and under the influence of the standards and practice of the Anglican Church.

**Our special character:** the special character of the Waikato Diocesan School for Girls is the expression of the thanksgiving for life offered by Anglican worship, together with Religious Education, Boarding, Music, The Arts, Outdoor Education and Corporate Responsibility.

From its foundation, in the words of its founder Bishop Cherrington, the Waikato Diocesan School for Girls has been envisioned as a school that reflected “ripe scholarship, never ceasing prayer, the courage that comes from sincere conviction, undaunted hope and undying faith.”

The Anglican tradition at Dio plays a pivotal social function. It provides the context for school gatherings in chapel and beyond. It is at the heart of the school’s ongoing curriculum and the lessons on values, behaviour and service that are inculcated within. The use of traditional Anglican liturgical patterns and language in beautiful and creative ways gives voice and graceful articulation to the girls’ thoughts. Singing is an especially joyful and exuberant practice of community. Depth in the shared spiritual experience of devotional practice aids reflection, animates resilience, subdues self-centredness and allows connection with the world and God within it.

As a school that is inextricably linked to the Diocese of Waikato, New Zealand and the international community both by virtue of its traditions and also through the extended reach of its alumnae and their Pakeha and Maori families, the Anglican tradition of Dio also gives impetus to and enthusiasm for engagement with the world, especially through the five marks of mission: proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom; teaching, baptising and nurturing new believers; responding to human need by loving service; seeking to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation; and striving to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. As a result, the motivations to attend to service in this and other ways provide an ongoing and explicit explanatory narrative that helps the girls and the rest of the school to understand the context of what they do to help others and the enduring rationales for why they do it.

As the inheritor of a tradition of Anglican stewardship, Dio is supported by a living history and a set of evolving traditions that help girls to understand “the Dio way” of learning and leadership. Academic attainment based on a set of personal goals is an integral part of this tradition, enhanced by a sense of the importance of nurturing girls to be well-rounded in themselves and also in their contribution to a broader society. Dio girls inherit a strong legacy of leadership based on confidence, capability and compassion, imbued with adaptability and an implicit permission to challenge the status quo and drive meaningful change, both in school and in life. The school supports these through rich and relevant pedagogies, pastoral care, restorative practice and programs that are implemented sensitively and rigorously so as to bring about mindful continuation of the best of established methodologies alongside considered, responsive and iterative improvement in and renewal of culture at Dio.

In this way, the special character of Dio provides an education for the girls of the Waikato and beyond that is characterised by excellence, well-roundedness, fine citizenship and learning for life, all within the traditional and vital Anglicanism of an established and successful integrated girls’ school.

## Draft Framework for Evaluating the Implementation of the Revised Waikato Diocesan School for Girls Statement of Special Character

What follows is a draft Special Character Framework comprised, on the vertical axis, of the Waikato Diocesan School Special Character descriptors, and, on the horizontal axis, of the CIRCLE School Improvement Domains. In each cell of the framework, formed at the intersection of the special character descriptor and the improvement domain, rubrics are recorded which define performance criteria with respect to the special character under consideration. These rubrics can be used for the planning and evaluation of the special character area being considered.

For example:

Dio Special Character Descriptor	CIRCLE School Improvement Domain: Student Achievement
The attainment of the School mission of achieving excellence in education within a caring family atmosphere and under the influence of the standards and practice of the Anglican Church	All students perform academically to the best of their ability

The Special Character descriptors consist of the Waikato Diocesan School for Girls: Values; Vision; Mission; Worship; and Integration statements and an extended version of the five Marks of Mission developed for use in a School Context.

The CIRCLE School Improvement Domains are: Student Achievement; Relationships; Communication; Initiatives; and Reputation. A video overview of the CIRCLE School Improvement Framework can be found at: <http://www.circle-learn.com/bachelor-of-education-professional-honours-qualification/building-performance/videos/>

Sample rubrics have been entered into the framework, these are illustrative of the ways in which the special character statements may be worked out in the life of the school, however the school community may and probably will develop further or different rubrics informed by their strategic processes and goals. A number of rubrics have been entered to stimulate thinking as to what the implication of a particular special character statement may imply and in turn these raise the question as to how this goal can be achieved and measured. The development and evaluation of rubrics is a powerful way to align the community's actions with its stated character, foundational mission and contemporary aspiration. In particular Governance bodies and Senior Management teams can use such frameworks to give focus to the planning and evaluation of school performance.

During CIRCLE's final consultation with Dio the Framework will be discussed and the rubrics further refined and developed. This linkage of rubrics to planning, implementation and evaluation processes will be explained.

CIRCLE School Improvement Domains	Student Achievement	Relationships	Communication	Initiative	Reputation
<b>Waikato Diocesan School for Girls Stated Special Character Descriptors</b>					
Values: The modelling and demonstration of the values of veritate, simplicitate, fidelitate by the students, staff and other members of the Dio community <sup>1</sup>	Students can recite the motto of the school and understand the meaning and intent of the Latin	The values of veritate, simplicitate, fidelitate are taught within the values program of the school with clear illustrations of the ways these can be demonstrated and lived out	The values of veritate, simplicitate, fidelitate are highly visible in the School's promotion material  The values of veritate, simplicitate, fidelitate are translated into contemporary terminology and illustrated in ways that the general Waikato community can understand, identify and resonate with through school publications and advertising	The relationship with the Sisters of the Community of the Sacred Name is further developed to enable the Dio community to deepen its understanding of the practice of veritate, simplicitate, fidelitate	The distinctive understanding of Dio, within the wider community, is enhanced through the promotion and practice of the values of veritate, simplicitate, fidelitate
Vision: For Girls: Preparing confident, resourceful and resilient young women to make a positive difference in their world	Staff are familiar with the best teaching and learning strategies and pedagogies for girls	Dio staff attend to professional development through their relationships with professional associations of girls schools	Dio publications outline the distinctive nature of girls education to parents in ways that equip parents to participate meaningfully in this endeavour	Dio contributes to the professional development of others in the wider community who work with girls	Dio is recognised for its excellence in educating girls
Purpose: The pursuit of the school purpose of cultivating an awareness and love of God, care for oneself and one another, compassion for the needy and care for creation	Chapel services contribute to an awareness of God among students	Students demonstrate a high level of Emotional Intelligence in their self awareness and relationships with others	Dio communicates its purpose to prospective parents	The Community Service Program coordinators identify areas of contemporary need and rally the school to assist	The school is recognised and valued by its community service partners

<sup>1</sup> The School may wish to develop this value section by incorporating the 'CENTRAL' foundational values of Courage, Empathy, Integrity, Tolerance, Respect, fAith and diLigence.

<p>Mission: The attainment of the School mission of achieving excellence in education within a caring family atmosphere and under the influence of the standards and practice of the Anglican Church</p>	<p>All students perform academically to the best of their ability</p>	<p>Pastoral Care structures of the school contribute to the flourishing of a caring environment for all staff and students</p>	<p>Anglican Diocese of Waikato representatives on the proprietors Board keep the school fully informed of church matters relevant to the school</p>	<p>The school makes available to the parent body documentation related to the academic performance of the school</p>	<p>The school is well known for the excellence of its academic results</p>
<p>Worship: The expression of the thanksgiving for life offered by Anglican worship</p>	<p>There is a regular timetable of worship that all students participate in</p> <p>Major school events contain a liturgical component of thanksgiving</p> <p>Senior students are competent in writing and leading prayers expressing gratitude and thanksgiving for life</p>	<p>Opportunities are scheduled for the wider Dio community to participate in worship</p> <p>The virtue of gratitude is clearly understood and practiced in the school community</p> <p>The relationship of parents to the school is characterised by gratitude and thanksgiving for the foundation of the school and its contribution to the education of its daughters</p>	<p>The school website, newsletters and periodicals showcase the worshipping life of the school</p>	<p>An annual service for alumni is offered</p>	<p>The Anglican Diocese of Waikato views the worshipping life of the school as an exemplar of best practice in worship</p>
<p>Programs: The planning, implementation and evaluation of programs relating to Religious Education, Boarding, Music, The Arts, Outdoor Education and Corporate Responsibility<sup>2</sup></p>	<p>All students receive an education in Religious studies, Music, The Arts, and Outdoor Education</p>	<p>Day and Boarding students enjoy good relationships with each other where their respective school experience is enhanced by each other</p>	<p>School publications regularly and comprehensively showcase these dimensions of the schools life</p>	<p>The special character 'tab' on the website is updated termly with new content in the four student areas of the special character agreement (Religious education, music, the arts and outdoor education)</p>	<p>ERO commend the school on the nature of its special character programs</p>

<sup>2</sup> This section is of particular concern to the Proprietors Board and could be expanded to consider each of the special character areas defined in the integration agreement separately. Of particular importance in that task would be the consideration of 'corporate responsibility' which is not included in this table

<b>Five Marks of Mission</b>					
<b>We proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom</b>					
We encourage a commitment of our lives to God, through prayer, teaching, worshipping and a desire for spiritual growth, both at a personal level and a school community level, which includes seeking God's will and a thoughtful stewardship of our time, talents and finances.	Students can articulate and define clearly the dimensions and indicators of 'spiritual growth'	The school chaplain and religious education staff build relationships with students that demonstrate their commitment to God	School publications showcase examples of faithful living, for example in stories of students who have taken up endeavours informed by their faith	The school champions creative thinking in the ways in which thoughtful stewardship can be cultivated and enshrined within the community and beyond	The school is recognised by those within its community and outside it for being dedicated to its mission of faith, worship and stewardship
We continue to identify the ways in which the life of the Diocesan School for Girls is informed and enabled by the tradition and practice of Christianity and we endeavour to communicate and convey this with integrity to the wider community	Through the Religious Studies program students study one of the gospels and become familiar with narrative intent of the author	The school develops and builds relationship with media and communication personnel throughout the region	Articles are written for the Waikato Times describing the schools community service projects and the faith that informs and motivates them	The school uses special chapel services, for example the Christmas Carol Service, to 'tell' the Christian story	The Anglican Diocese of Waikato recognises the ambassadorial qualities of Chapel and Mission Prefects for the witness of the Church
<b>We baptise and nurture new believers</b>					
We create a sense of belonging and nurture so that all within the school community are cared for appropriately and given opportunities to learn about the Christian faith and be baptized and/or confirmed.	Students leave the school with an understanding of the Christian faith	The interactions students share with their staff are central to their formation of a sense of belonging and a growing understanding of their faith	The message that everyone within the school community is cared for appropriately and taught in the Christian faith is constantly communicated through well-considered means and resources	Regular opportunities for baptism and confirmation are available to members of the community	The school is widely known and applauded for its reputation as a place that has the capacity to nurture all people at various stages of their faith journey by teaching them about the Christian faith
We provide experiences that express the breadth of Anglican Spirituality and which are meaningful, honest and thought provoking.	Students are familiar with a variety of styles of prayer and have experienced their use in a variety of settings	The school recognises and engages its potential for growing its members' spirituality through relationship	A common understanding of the school's expressions of Anglican Spirituality is shared by the community and is communicated both to them and between them	The school provides meaningful, honest and thought provoking experiences of worship for the variety of stakeholders it engages with	It is widely and commonly known that the school excels in offering experiences of Anglican worship that are powerful in their meaningful, honest and thought provoking nature

We assist students and staff to grow in their awareness, knowledge and familiarity with Anglican forms of liturgy, devotion and belief.	Students know the Lord's prayer and can recite it <sup>3</sup>  Students experience the richness of 'A New Zealand Prayerbook' and are familiar with the forms, structure and cadence of Anglican liturgy	The school has productive relationships with the Anglican Diocese of Waikato	The school advertises its confirmation class program	Students develop 'mission chapel service'	The wider community understands and appreciates the quality and benefit of an Anglican Education
We foster and celebrate our links with the life and work of the Anglican Diocese of Waikato and convey to all staff and students that we are members of this family.	Students understand and are joyous about the clear connection their school shares with the Anglican Diocese of Waikato	A relationship characterised by open dialogue and reciprocity anchors the foundational link between the school and the Anglican Diocese of Waikato and encourages an ongoing partnership in life and work	Staff and students are communicated with in respect of their standing as members of the Anglican Diocese of Waikato and the implications this has for the life and work of those within the school community	Dio takes initiative in celebrating its role within the Anglican Diocese of Waikato	A public knowledge is cultivated in respect of the school's long-standing and proud engagement with and membership of the Anglican Diocese of Waikato
We respond to human need by loving service					
We are intelligently and sensitively aware of the community around us so we can respond to the hopes and hurts particular to the people of this area and those further away.	Students are knowledgeable regarding the social needs of the communities in the Waikato	The school builds enduring relationships with agencies addressing the needs within the Waikato	The school broadly communicates its sensitive cultural awareness of human needs and its unconditional response to this	Service learning is central to the faith development of students but also to the school's capacity to respond to the human needs of others	The school earns its reputation for responding in kind and with loving service to the hopes and hurts particular to the people of the Waikato and those further away
We develop ways of speaking that identify and explain 'service' as an outworking of the Christian faith and Anglican character of the school.	Students engage in activities of service learning and are keenly aware of how these activities are the tangible extensions of their Christian faith and the Anglican character of Dio	Dialogue through relationship encourages a common understanding of service within the life of the school	A common language is distributed and espoused within the school community as to what service entails and what shape it takes in the lives of students and staff	Staff interlace the school's common language of service into their classrooms making clear links to the Christian faith and the Anglican character of Dio	Service is widely seen and understood to be a form through which the Christian faith of the school and its Anglican character is expressed and celebrated

<sup>3</sup> This particular area of the table could be completed by the Chaplaincy and Religious Education team, with input and feedback from Senior Management

<p>We develop and integrate cross-curricular links between service projects and academic programs in order to deepen student's understanding of the situations they enter and critically evaluate and modify their practice of service.</p>	<p>Students attending the St Christopher's Mission trip have studied the geography and economy of Fiji</p>	<p>Relationships are developed between teachers involved in the education of children at St Christopher's and Dio staff to share in professional learning and to develop the preparation course for those students visiting the orphanage</p>	<p>St Christopher's is a recipient of all relevant Dio publications and communications</p>	<p>Dio develops a scholarship to support a St Christopher's girl to go university</p>	<p>Dio is a valued partner in the work of Tikanga Polynesia in Fiji</p>
<p>We continue to develop programs that commend, assist and encourage students and alumni in the practice of service and philanthropy.</p>	<p>Service trips for students and planning in respect of other ways for service learning to occur commend and make clear the school's commitment to the practice of service</p>	<p>A solid network of relationships connecting students, staff and alumni ensure greater reach and impact in terms of opportunity for practices of service and philanthropy</p>	<p>A successful communications plan with the school's students, staff and alumni secures influence and interaction with the practice of service and philanthropy</p>	<p>Creative and strategic thinking opens up possibilities for programs of service</p>	<p>Dio is known for its commitment to developing programs that connect students and alumni to projects of service and philanthropy</p>
<p>We seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.</p>					
<p>We use restorative practice in the school.</p>	<p>Students understand restorative practice principles and processes</p> <p>Students engage restorative practice in situations of conflict</p> <p>Senior students act as mentors to new students in the inculcation of restorative practice in the school</p>	<p>Relationships within the Diocesan School Community are marked by a commitment to restorative practice</p>	<p>The school makes available explanatory literature on restorative practice to all members of the school community</p> <p>Dio school publications highlight the understanding, practice and contribution of restorative practices to the community</p> <p>Orientation processes include an introduction to restorative practice and their practical functioning and implications for all members of the Dio community</p>	<p>Senior staff have KPI's related to restorative practice described in their year goals</p> <p>An annual project related to restorative practice is pursued within the school</p>	<p>The school is recognised within the community for the excellence of its restorative practice</p> <p>The school develops strategic alliances with organisations that can assist the development, evaluation and recognition of its restorative practice</p>

<p>We offer an open-hearted and open-minded place of welcome which is non-judgmental and accepting of difference.</p>	<p>Students are encouraged to develop an open-heart and an open-mind when confronting and having to consider difference</p>	<p>Extending beyond the imperative of showing acceptance, the culture of Dio is one that affirms the school as a place of welcome where difference is treated with an open-heart</p>	<p>It is clearly communicated to the school's wider community that Dio's commitment to social justice demands non-judgemental open-hearts and an implicit acceptance of difference</p>	<p>The school encourages its students, staff and alumni in thinking broadly about the ways in which the practice of accepting difference is lived out and embedded within the culture of the school</p>	<p>The school proudly earns its reputation as a place of welcome which is non-judging and accepting of difference</p>
<p>We find ways of promoting peace.</p>	<p>Students are aware of and engage with organisations that foster the peace making process in the world, for example, Amnesty International</p>	<p>The school's programs of outreach in addition to its partnerships and affiliations with other organisations whose goals are similarly charitable secure additional resources and means of promoting peace</p>	<p>The school's commitment to promoting a peaceful world is widely understood and consistently communicated to its community members</p>	<p>Student activity and practices of service are targeted at securing peace</p>	<p>Dio is recognised for its unwavering pursuit of peace and reconciliation</p>
<p>We identify academic subjects that deal with issues of justice, reconciliation and social development and construct a particular 'special character' Dio approach to these.</p>	<p>In the application of their core academic endeavours, students are exposed to issues of justice, reconciliation and social justice with a view to inculcating and achieving a sound social conscience along with a passion for peace and reconciliation</p>	<p>The interactions that students share with their staff are key in nurturing and growing their social consciences in respect of justice, reconciliation and social development</p>	<p>In identifying key academic disciplines that have the potential to foreground issues of justice, reconciliation and social development, a unique 'special character' Dio approach is shaped and communicated with students</p>	<p>The selection and consideration of academic subjects is instrumental in facilitating student consideration of significant issues of justice, reconciliation and social development</p>	<p>Parents of Dio students are keenly aware of the education their daughters receive and the potential impact this has to inculcate a sound moral and ethics code in their daughters' hearts</p>

We strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth					
We provide quality education about the environment and the ways in which we can help.	Students achieve an education in the environment of their world, the harms being visited upon it, and the means through which they can help prevent or stop these	Interaction with staff is integral in helping students' understanding of the environment and the dangers it faces, complemented by interaction and the building of relationships beyond the classroom	The school widely communicates its vision for educating girls about the environment as a vehicle for achieving a more sustainable world	The development of several programs undertaken in the life of a Dio girl secures her full and quality education about the environment and the ways in which she can help	The school has a reputation for being committed to educating its students about the environment and also the ways they can help sustain it
We support people and organisations who work in various areas of need financially and with prayer.	Students are responsive to human need in financial, material and prayerful ways	The school community is aware of its partner relationships with those who work with people in need	The school communicates stories of its support of people and organisations who work in various areas of need	The school works with St Christopher's to support their work with orphans	The school proudly shares its support of other people and other organisations who work in various areas of need
We engage in active service individually and as a school community.	Students are encouraged to actively participate in projects of service learning both as an individual and as a member of the school community	Dio recognises the potential of the individual to engage in active service yet equally acknowledges and champions the power of the collective and the impact of service when approached collaboratively by many in partnership and relationship with one another	Projects of service, whether carried out individually or as a school community, are communicated, commended and celebrated by Dio	The scope for initiative in the area of active service is extensive given members of the school community can engage in either an individual way or as a member of the whole school community	The school is known for its commitment to active service accomplished at both an individual level and a whole school community level
We practice wise management of the resources of the school in a manner that is pro-active and based on principles of good stewardship.	Students are shown through their education the ways in which the school wisely resources and manages its operations	The interconnection and sensitive balance between management and stewardship sits at the heart of Dio's culture and this is foregrounded in the relationships within the school community	The approach of the school toward its management of resources is based on clearly communicated principles of good stewardship	The approach of the school toward its management of resources is pro-active and relies to a degree on initiatives centred around the principles of good stewardship	The school is well known for its wise management of resources that is pro-active and in keeping with sound principles of good stewardship

<p>We care for and enhance the Dio school site in ways that tangibly express our stewardship and the connection of Dio with its wider community.</p>	<p>Students study the ecology of the school site</p> <p>Students study the various sustainability initiatives associated with the school site, for example water conservation, native planting, erosion control, and sustainable architectural solutions</p>	<p>Significant alumni and contributors to the school are recognised in the naming and architecture of the buildings</p>	<p>A guide to the site is published for new members of the community and visitors</p>	<p>Open days to site are run for interested members of the public to learn about the history, tradition and educational vision of Dio</p>	<p>The importance and significance of the Waikato Diocesan School site is recognised in the wider community</p>
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