

Table of Contents

Purpose.....	3
1. Introduction	4
1.1 Purpose of the Manual.....	4
1.2 The Nature of a State Integrated School	4
1.3 How to use this manual along with the template for populating	4
2. Governance Framework	4
2.1 Legal Status and Obligations.....	4
2.2 The Strategic and annual plan	5
2.3 Governance and Management Boundaries.....	5
3. Board Composition and Roles	5
3.1 Composition of the Board	5
3.2 Roles and Responsibilities	6
3.3 Conflict of Interest	6
4. Relationship with the Proprietor.....	7
4.1 The Governance Partnership	7
4.2 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)	7
4.3 Communication Protocols	7
5. Governance Policies	8
5.1 Purpose of Governance Policies	8
5.2 Policy Development and Review.....	8
5.3 Governance vs Management.....	8
6. Meetings and Decision-Making.....	9
6.1 Meeting Structure and Standing Items	9
6.2 Decision-Making Processes	9
6.3 In-Committee Procedures	9
7 Finance, Property & Risk Management	10
7.1 Overview	10
7.2 Budgeting and Reporting.....	10
7.3 Property Ownership and Maintenance	10
7.4 Risk Management.....	10

8 Employment and Staffing	11
8.1 Board as Employer	11
8.2 Special character tagged Positions and Proprietor acceptability	11
8.3 Shared Staff Arrangements	11
8.4 Professional Development and Formation.....	11
9 Enrolment and Preference.....	12
9.1 Overview of Preference Enrolment.....	12
9.2 Roll Management and Enrolment Scheme	12
9.3 Non-Preference Students and Appeals	12
9.4 Maintaining Integrity of Enrolment Data	12
10 Special Character Governance	13
10.1 The Role of the Proprietor.....	13
10.2 Formation and Induction.....	13
10.3 Monitoring and Review.....	13
10.4 Decision-Making Alignment	13
11 Board Evaluation & Continuous Improvement.....	13
11.1 Purpose of Evaluation	13
11.2 Carver and Values-Based Frameworks	14
11.3 Review Cycle and Reporting	14
12 Appendices and Tools	15
12.1 Purpose of Appendices	15
12.2 Summary of suggested appendices	15
12.3 Using the Tools	15

Governance Manual Template – State Integrated School Board (New Zealand)

2025 Edition – Association of Proprietors of Integrated Schools (APIS)

Purpose

This Governance Manual has been developed by the Association of Proprietors of Integrated Schools (APIS) as a guiding resource for Proprietors and School Boards working together within New Zealand’s state-integrated education system.

Its purpose is to provide a shared understanding of governance roles, obligations, rights and relationships that sustain the unique identity of each integrated school while ensuring full compliance with education legislation and policy.

Unlike state school board manuals, this resource recognises the dual stewardship that characterises integrated schools where the Proprietor safeguards the school’s special character and property, and the Board governs operational and educational matters on behalf of the Crown.

Guidance for School Boards

Integration brings a unique governance partnership. Each decision should be tested by two questions:

- 1 Does this uphold the *special character*?
- 2 Does this meet our *statutory duties as a Crown entity*?

Good governance exists when both responses are “yes”.

See examples of Governance Manual templates on the APIS website and review the online governance [toolkit](#) for resources and templates.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Manual

This manual serves as a reference for Board members and Proprietor appointees. It provides clarity on governance processes, explains the legislative framework governing integrated schools, and outlines expectations for collaborative decision making.

It is intended to support gaining a shared understanding of processes such as:

- Board induction and board member professional development and formation;
- Annual self-review and planning;
- Policy alignment with the Proprietor's special-character guidelines; and
- Preparing for external reviews or audits.

1.2 The Nature of a State Integrated School

A state-integrated school operates as part of the public-education system but retains its special character, defined and protected under the Education and Training Act 2020, Schedule 6, and the school's Integration Agreement.

The school is both a Crown entity (through its School Board) and a faith- or philosophy-based community (through its Proprietor).

1.3 How to use this manual along with the template for populating

Boards should tailor this manual to reflect their local context while broadly keeping the structure intact. It should be reviewed annually alongside the school's strategic plan and MOU with the Proprietor.

References to appendices (e.g. *Appendix I – Special Character Guidelines*) link to companion documents supplied by APIS are also recommended.

2. Governance Framework

2.1 Legal Status and Obligations

Boards of integrated schools are Crown entities under the Education and Training Act 2020, responsible to the Minister of Education for the governance of their schools.

In state integrated schools, these responsibilities must be carried out in alignment with the Proprietor's legal rights and duties relating to property ownership and special character.

The key legislative pillars are:

- *Education and Training Act 2020* (governance, employment, and curriculum).
- *Schedule 6* (integration agreement terms).

- *Crown Entities Act 2004* (public-sector expectations).
- *Integration Agreement*

Guidance for new board members

Read the school's *Integration Agreement* carefully. It is your foundation document as binding as legislation. Every governance decision should be compatible with it.

2.2 The Strategic and annual plan

Each Board must maintain a strategic plan setting out its goals, priorities, and performance indicators.

In state integrated schools, special character is a required and guiding dimension of these documents. Boards should consult the Proprietor before finalising or amending their strategic and annual plans. The strategic plan sets out the special character expectations which are fed into the annual plan, the principal reports to the board on annual plan progress and sets a cycle of review.

Governance Reflection

A well written strategic plan is a covenant between the Board, the Proprietor, and the community. It ensures that operational objectives serve the overall special character goals of the school.

2.3 Governance and Management Boundaries

The Board governs, setting direction, approving policy, and monitoring outcomes. The principal manages implementing policy and leading the day-to-day operation. The proprietor provides assurance that the special character is honoured within both governance and management decisions.

It is suggested that the governance manual include an appendix on *Shared Sites and Shared Staff Protocols* for examples of how responsibilities are delineated when staff or property are shared between Proprietor and Board.

3. Board Composition and Roles

3.1 Composition of the Board

An integrated-school Board includes:

- **Parent representatives** elected by the community;
- **Proprietor's representatives** appointed to safeguard the special character;
- **The Principal** (as chief executive and educational leader);
- **A staff representative**; and
- **A student representative** (for secondary schools).

Proprietor's appointees hold equal standing with other trustees but carry an additional duty to ensure decisions remain consistent with the Integration Agreement and the overall special character framework.

3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The **Presiding Member** (Chairperson) leads the Board's work, ensuring integrity of process and constructive relationships with both the Principal and Proprietor.

The **Principal** acts as the Board's chief executive, responsible for professional leadership and implementation of policy.

The **Proprietor's appointee** oversees compliance that special character is safeguarded and maintained and act as liaison with the Proprietor.

3.3 Conflict of Interest

Boards must manage conflicts openly and fairly. Proprietor's appointee should declare any interest arising from their connection with the Proprietor body, especially in property, staffing, or policy matters.

Transparency preserves the integrity of both governance and the partnership relationship.

Governance Reflection

Effective boards embrace their diversity of roles. The strength of integrated governance lies in balanced perspectives of parents, Proprietor, staff, and students all working together for a shared purpose.

4. Relationship with the Proprietor

4.1 The Governance Partnership

The defining feature of an integrated school is the formal partnership between the Proprietor and the Board.

The Proprietor retains ownership of the land and buildings and is legally responsible for protecting and promoting the school's special character.

The Board governs the state funded educational operation on behalf of the Crown.

Both entities are autonomous but mutually dependent therefore effective governance relies on ongoing dialogue, mutual respect, and clearly understood boundaries.

A strong working relationship includes:

- **Regular communication** between the Presiding Member and the Proprietor or proprietor's agent.
- **Transparency** in matters affecting property, staffing, enrolments, or special character.
- **Joint problem-solving** when issues cross shared areas of focus.

Guidance for effective relationships

Keep the Proprietor informed early when policy changes, property works, or staff appointments may impact the special character. Ensure a no surprises approach; early engagement builds strong partnerships.

4.2 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Most integrated schools operate under an MOU between the Proprietor and the Board.

The MOU records shared expectations, communication pathways, and dispute-resolution processes.

It should be reviewed every three years or whenever the Integration Agreement, property arrangements, or governance composition change.

4.3 Communication Protocols

Routine matters are managed through the Principal; strategic matters through the Presiding Member.

Where issues involve special character or property, direct liaison with the Proprietor is appropriate.

A short annual meeting between the Proprietor or agent and the full Board is recommended to maintain alignment.

Governance Reflection

Think of the Proprietor as the guardian of the school's identity. They are often the

founder of the school, defining the special character and vision and mission. When communication is regular and respectful, the partnership strengthens the school's integrity and public perception.

5. Governance Policies

5.1 Purpose of Governance Policies

Governance policies set out the rules and boundaries that guide decision-making. They translate legal obligations into practical direction for management and ensure continuity across Board terms.

In an integrated school, every policy should be checked for compatibility with the Integration Agreement and the Proprietor's Special Character Guidelines

5.2 Policy Development and Review

Policies should follow a clear cycle:

1 Draft → Consult → Approve → Implement → Review.

The review schedule may be built into the annual governance calendar. Proprietor consultation is recommended for policies concerning property, staffing of tagged positions, enrolment or religious formation that would impact the special character framework.

Guidance for effective relationships

When updating a policy, always ask: "Could this affect the special character, property, enrolment or special character tagged roles?"

If the answer is yes, involve the Proprietor before final approval.

5.3 Governance vs Management

Boards govern through policy; Principals manage through procedures.

Micromanagement blurs accountability and undermines leadership.

Good policy states **what** must be achieved and *what* must be avoided leaving the **how** to management.

Governance Reflection

By staying strategic, boards empower the Principal to lead and the Proprietor to safeguard the special character goals of the school.

6. Meetings and Decision-Making

6.1 Meeting Structure and Standing Items

Board meetings provide the formal arena for decision making.

They must be scheduled, minuted, and conducted according to the school's Standing Orders and the *Education and Training Act 2020*.

Every agenda should include:

- Principal's report.
- Proprietor's correspondence or report.
- Finance and property updates.
- Health, safety, and risk monitoring.
- Special Character reflection or formation moment.

6.2 Decision-Making Processes

Decisions are made collectively. The Presiding Member ensures that debate is balanced, dissent is respected, and consensus sought where possible.

Matters of policy or compliance should be formally minuted; informal consensus may guide day-to-day operational advice.

Where an issue impacts special character, Proprietor's appointees should be consulted before final resolution.

Guidance for effective governance

If unsure whether a topic is governance or management, ask: "Does this set direction or oversee performance?"

If yes → Board role. If it concerns day-to-day operations → Principal's domain.

6.3 In-Committee Procedures

Some discussions particularly those involving personnel, property negotiations, or disciplinary matters, should occur **in committee**.

The Board records the resolution to move in committee, keeps confidential minutes, and passes a further resolution to return to open meeting.

Proprietor's appointees remain for all matters discussed as they are full members of the board.

7 Finance, Property & Risk Management

7.1 Overview

Financial and property stewardship are joint responsibilities shared between the Board and the Proprietor.

The Board is responsible for the use of state funded operational grants, staffing salaries, and resources.

The Proprietor owns and maintains the land and buildings and funds capital improvements through attendance dues and proprietor fundraising.

A well functioning relationship ensures these two streams operate in compliance and in support of the school's strategic plan.

Guidance for effective governance

Boards must not use state funds for Proprietor property projects unless approved by the MOE. Equally, Proprietor attendance dues cannot subsidise teaching and learning resources funded by the Crown.

7.2 Budgeting and Reporting

Boards prepare an annual budget aligned to the strategic plan and submit financial statements for audit.

Budgets should be reviewed each term with clear variance reporting and transparent communication to the proprietor on matters of shared responsibility (e.g., maintenance planning or capital works).

7.3 Property Ownership and Maintenance

Under the Integration Agreement, the Proprietor retains ownership of the land and buildings. The Board undertakes routine maintenance, and minor capital works as defined in the agreement, while the Proprietor is responsible for capital improvement and structural integrity.

All major works should be included in the 10-Year Property Plan (10YPP) jointly developed with the Proprietor and Ministry of Education.

7.4 Risk Management

Risk registers help Boards identify and monitor risks in finance, property, governance, and compliance. Risks relating to special character, employment practice, or Proprietor assets should be recorded and reviewed jointly.

8 Employment and Staffing

8.1 Board as Employer

The Board is the legal employer of all staff (except where contracted by the Proprietor). It must ensure fair and transparent processes aligned with employment law and collective agreements.

The Principal is responsible for day-to-day management of staff but the Board retains overall accountability.

8.2 Special character tagged Positions and Proprietor acceptability

Certain positions (called “tagged” or “special character” roles) carry special character responsibilities under the Integration Agreement and Education and Training Act 2020. In a primary school appointments to these roles require a Proprietor to select the acceptable candidates and provide a short list to the board so they can appoint the most suitable candidate. In secondary schools a proprietor appointee must be on the appointment committee if there is one set up. This supports the agreement that the candidates meet the proprietors special character expectations. Boards should consult the Proprietor before advertising or appointing to a special character tagged role.

8.3 Shared Staff Arrangements

Where a staff member works across Proprietor and Board roles (e.g., administration, caretaker, or counsellor), a written secondment or cost sharing agreement is required. Clear accountability and line management arrangements avoid conflict of interest and support effective pastoral care.

8.4 Professional Development and Formation

Boards should ensure staff have access to ongoing professional learning and special-character formation.

Proprietor bodies may offer formation programmes or retreats that should be supported as part of the school’s annual PD plan.

Guidance for effective governance

Formation is not optional, it ensures a clear understanding of special character.

Budget for it and ensure staff and board attendance to support a shared understanding of special character.

9 Enrolment and Preference

9.1 Overview of Preference Enrolment

Integrated schools operate under a dual enrolment system defined by the Integration Agreement:

- **Preference students** meet criteria set by the Proprietor (usually based on faith or philosophical alignment).
- **Non-preference students** may be enrolled up to the limit specified in the agreement.

The Proprietor defines the preference criteria and retains authority to determine eligibility. The Board is responsible for administering the process in accordance with the Proprietor's guidelines.

Guidance for effective governance

Preference enrolment is not a discretionary Board function.

Always consult the Proprietor if doubt arises about eligibility or capacity.

9.2 Roll Management and Enrolment Scheme

Boards must manage roll numbers within the maximum approved roll which is set out in the Integration Agreement.

When demand exceeds places, Boards must apply their enrolment policy or scheme fairly and in accordance with the Education and Training Act 2020.

Consultation with the Proprietor and MOE is required before altering the roll.

9.3 Non-Preference Students and Appeals

The Board may enrol a limited number of non-preference students where space exists and were doing so does not displace eligible preference students.

The Proprietor must be kept informed of non-preference numbers and any appeals arising from admissions decisions.

Appeals should be managed according to the school's published policy and with reference to the Proprietor's guidelines.

9.4 Maintaining Integrity of Enrolment Data

Accurate records of Preference Certificates/evidence and enrolment categories must be maintained and auditable.

Regular internal reviews of roll composition are recommended to avoid breach of the Integration Agreement.

Guidance for effective governance

Treat the enrolment register as a compliance document.

Accurate data protects the school from risk and upholds its public accountability.

10 Special Character Governance

10.1 The Role of the Proprietor

The Proprietor defines and safeguards the school's special character as set out in the Integration Agreement. This responsibility includes ensuring the special character is visible in curriculum, culture, leadership, and community life.

The Board's governance role is to ensure all policies, planning, and practices support and enhance that special character.

Guidance for effective governance

Before each major policy or initiative, ask: "How will this strengthen the school's special character?" If the answer is unclear, seek the Proprietor's advice early.

10.2 Formation and Induction

Formation ensures everyone involved in the life of the school understands and lives the special character.

All trustees, staff, and new leaders should participate in induction and periodic reflection opportunities.

Proprietors often provide annual formation programmes or retreats.

10.3 Monitoring and Review

Every three years, the Proprietor conducts a **Special Character Review**.

Boards should engage openly with the findings, include actions in their strategic plan, and report progress annually.

This process affirms what is working and identifies areas for renewal.

10.4 Decision-Making Alignment

All policies and decisions must align with the special character guidelines as defined by the proprietor.

Where ambiguity arises, the Presiding Member and Principal should consult the Proprietor before final resolution.

11 Board Evaluation & Continuous Improvement

11.1 Purpose of Evaluation

Effective Boards commit to reflection and learning.

Annual self-review identifies strengths and development needs across areas such as leadership, strategy, compliance, and partnership with the Proprietor.

APIS recommends using both the **NZSBA Self-Review Tool** and the **Proprietor Governance Evaluation Framework**.

11.2 Carver and Values-Based Frameworks

Some Boards adopt the **Carver Policy Governance** model, focusing on clear “Ends” and executive limitations. Others prefer a values-based approach linking strategy to the school’s mission. Whichever model is used, the Board must ensure that accountability, transparency, and special character alignment remain central.

Guidance for effective governance

Evaluation is not about fault finding but stewardship.

Ask: “Are we governing wisely, ethically, and in service to our overall goals and objectives?”

11.3 Review Cycle and Reporting

- **Annual Review:** Board self-assessment and reflection meeting.
- **Triennial Review:** Proprietor led governance or special character review.
- **External Feedback:** Integration of Education Review Office (ERO) findings. Results inform the Board’s professional development plan and MOU review.

12 Appendices and Tools

12.1 Purpose of Appendices

Appendices provide working templates and examples to support consistent governance practice across integrated schools.

12.2 Summary of suggested appendices

Appendix	Title	Purpose
A	Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Template	Defines Proprietor–Board partnership, communication, and dispute processes
B	Enrolment policy	Illustrates preference and non-preference enrolment criteria
C	Special Character Guidelines	Details the proprietors special character expectations, such as formation, decision-making, and review processes
D	Governance Calendar	Maps annual planning, policy review, and reporting cycle
E	Risk Register Template	Supports proactive identification and mitigation of governance risks
G	Annual Meeting and Agenda Examples	Provides sample formats for effective meetings
H	Shared Sites and Shared Staff Protocols	Sets out expectations for shared environments

12.3 Using the Tools

Boards should maintain digital copies of all templates and complete them annually or as required. These tools reinforce accountability, transparency, and alignment with governance best practice standards.