



How Special Character Guides the Curriculum

In State Integrated Schools

Special character shapes the philosophy, values, and educational approach — influencing what is taught, how it is taught, and the culture of learning.

State Integrated School Board Professional Development and Learning Series

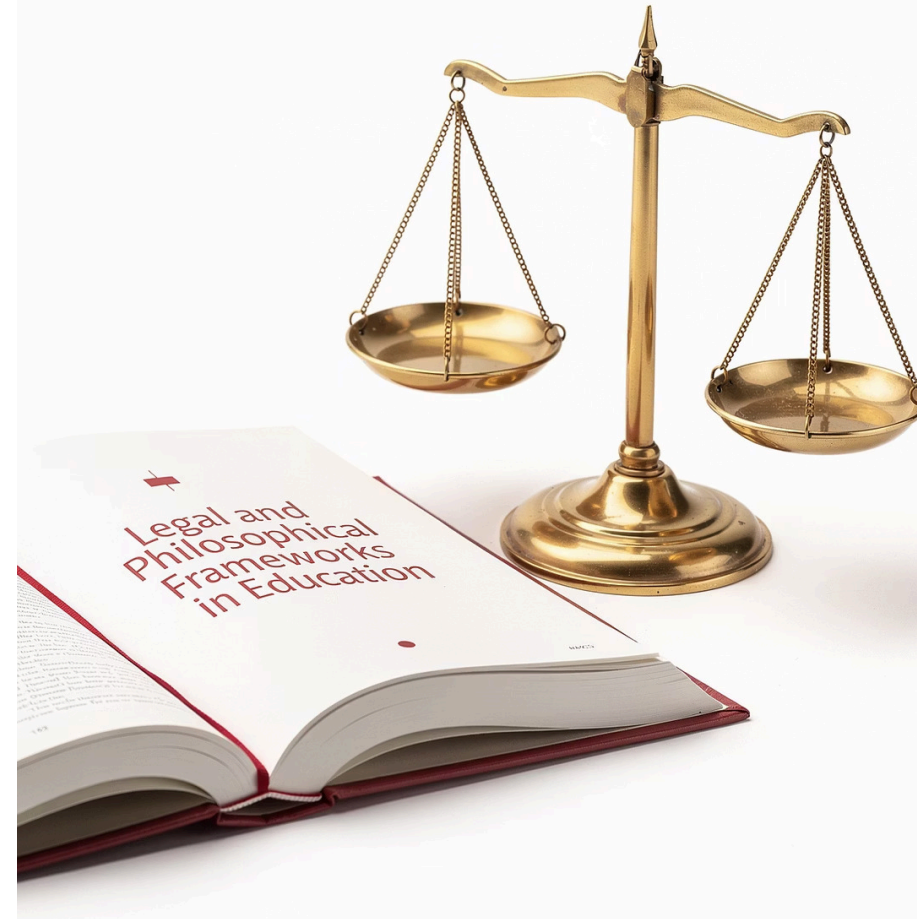
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What Is "Special Character"?

The Ministry of Education defines a school's special character as the philosophical or religious framework within which the curriculum is delivered.

Under Schedule 6 of the Education and Training Act 2020, integrated schools have the legal right to reflect their special character through their teaching and conduct. The Proprietor is responsible for preserving that special character.

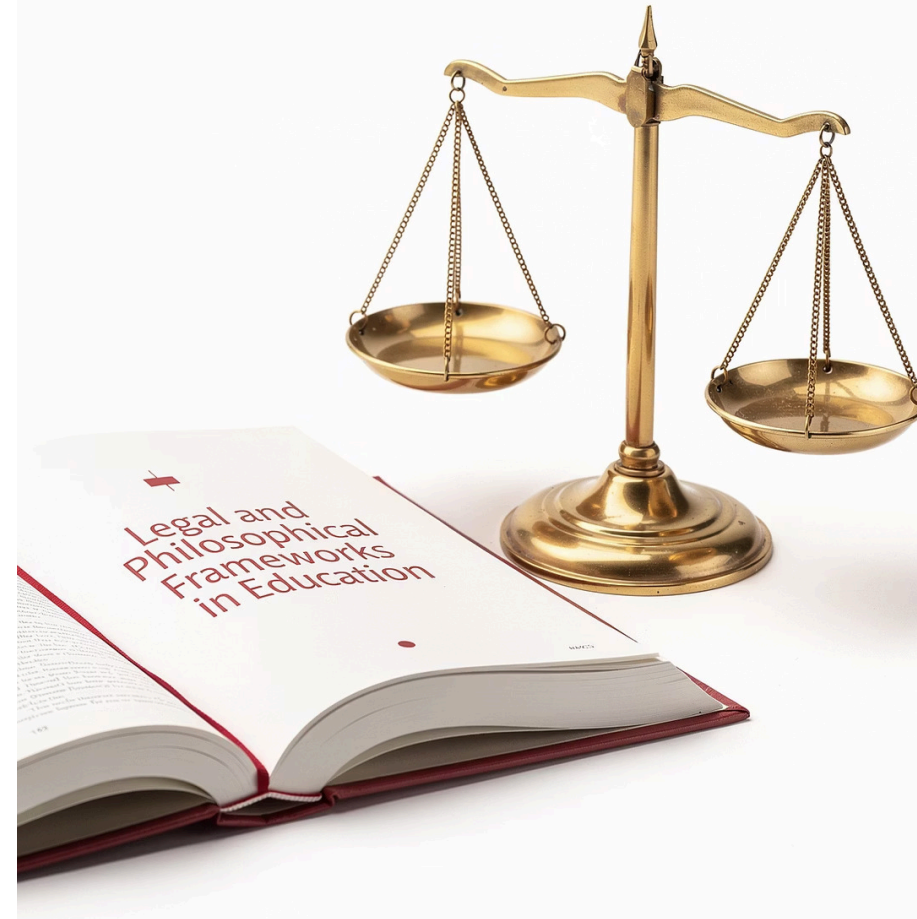
Education with a special character means education within the framework of a particular or general religious or philosophical belief, and associated with observances or traditions relating to that belief.



What does the legislation say?

Sch 6, Cl 6: Other matters that may be included in integration agreements:

- (1) Without restricting the provisions that may be included in an integration agreement, an integration agreement may include provisions for 1 or more of the following matters:
- (c) describing the education with a special character for which the school is or was originally established:
 - (d) prescribing the religious or philosophical instruction and observances that are to form part of the school programme after integration



3 Ways Special Character Shapes the Curriculum



Curriculum Framework & Teaching Philosophy

Schools can teach, develop, and implement programmes that reflect their educational philosophy or faith tradition.

- A protected right for all integrated schools.
- Guides the overall teaching approach
- Sets the values and worldview behind the curriculum
- Schools implement programmes aligned to their educational philosophy



Curriculum Content & Methods

Special character is expressed in educational aims, curriculum content, teaching methods, organisational structures, festivals and celebrations.

- Influences subject content
- Sequencing, developmental focus
- Shapes pedagogical methods

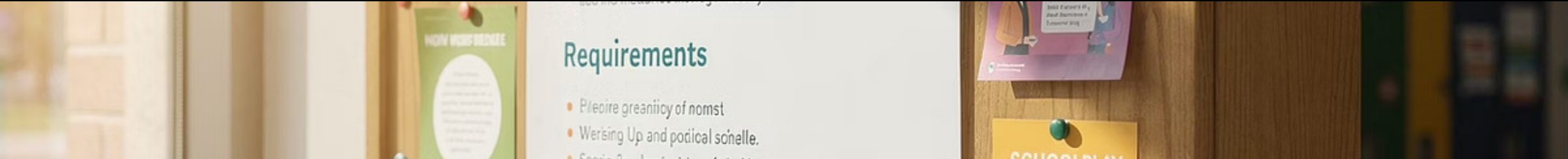


Whole-School Culture & Environment

Special character shapes the ethos, traditions, and daily life of the school.

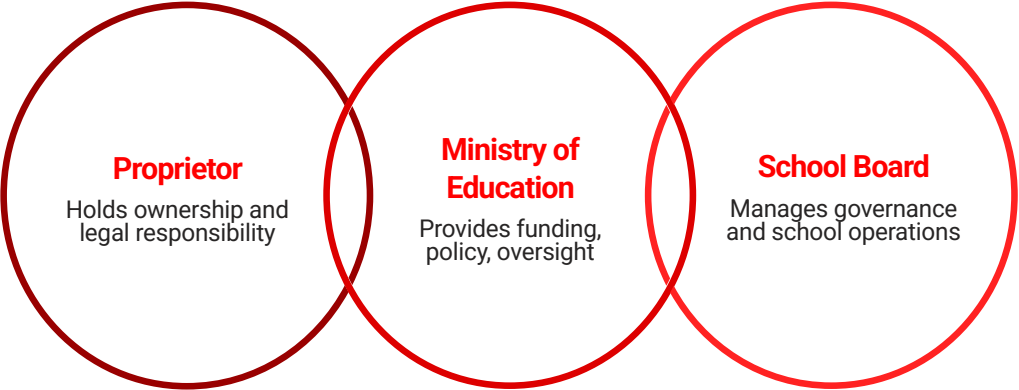
- From classroom rituals to school-wide events.
- Creates a learning environment consistent with the school's values
- Visible in daily conduct and teaching practices

Special character defines *how*, *what*, and *why* learning happens.



Partners and Support

Key Partnerships



State Integrated Schools are communities of partnership. The partners are the Proprietor of the school, the Ministry of Education, and the School Board. Each partner has a legal responsibility to maintain the school's special character.

Support Network

It is important to know who is there to support and guide you in your role as a school board member. Your primary contacts are:



[New Zealand School Boards Association](#)



[Ministry of Education](#)



[APIS](#) - For free advice and support, training, and workshops.