



Respecting boundaries in areas of shared focus

State-integrated schools thrive when every role is clearly understood and respected. This guide explores how Proprietors can fulfil their vital responsibilities, protecting special character, stewarding property, and supporting enrolment and employment, while maintaining the clear boundaries that allow Boards and Principals to lead with confidence.

Key messages:

Good practice: how we stay in our lane

- **One channel:** agreed communications pathway (no informal direction).
- **One record:** key decisions documented (preference, attestation, approvals).
- **One timeframe:** regular check-ins for assurance, not operational takeover.

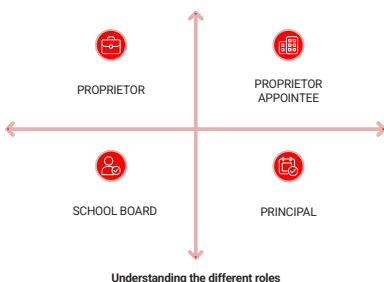
State Integrated School Board Professional Development and Learning Series



Protecting Special Character: Four Key Roles

Effective Governance relies on everyone knowing their role and responsibilities:

KEY ROLES



PROPRIETOR:

Although they do not sit around the board table it is important to know your proprietor and understand what rights and responsibilities they have.

- Core purpose of the school
- Defines special character in Integration Agreement
- Maintains and preserves special character
- Owner of land and buildings

PROPRIETOR APPOINTEE:

The proprietor appointee plays a key role in safeguarding and promoting this special character within the school's policies and practices.

- Maintains and preserves special character
- Channel of communication
- Reports to the proprietor annually
- Has role description
- Reports on special character

SCHOOL BOARD:

The board's is the governing body of the school and has objectives set out in legislation that it must met. The board employs the principal in partnership with the proprietor and ensures special character requirements are met.

- Is Crown entity and the governing body of the school
- Sets out aims and targets in strategic plan
- Employs the principal (in partnership with Proprietor)
- Ensures Catholic special character requirements are met

PRINCIPAL:

The principal is the board's chief advisor and the professional leader of the school.

- CEO and lead adviser to the board
- Leads and responsible for day to day operations of school (within the special character requirements)
- Curriculum delivery, student wellbeing, consulting with community
- Is appointed in partnership with the proprietor/proprietor appointee

Responsibilities and boundaries of proprietors

- 1 — **Enrolment responsibilities:** Proprietors safeguard the special character in enrolment by setting preference criteria, making preference decisions, and ensuring transparency, but they must not manage day-to-day enrolment operations or intervene outside established processes.
- 2 — **Employment role:** Proprietors protect special character through defining expectations for key roles, participating in appointments, and endorsing "**acceptable**" candidates, while avoiding acting as employers by selecting the "**suitable**" applicant, or bypassing the board's authority.
- 3 — **Property stewardship:** Proprietors manage ownership and strategic oversight of property, ensuring maintenance, funding, and approvals align with special character and integration agreements, without micromanaging routine board responsibilities.
- 4 — **Teaching of faith/philosophy:** Proprietors define and safeguard the school's special character identity, set expectations for delivery, support assurance and formation, but must not interfere with pedagogical management or operational leadership.
- 5 — **Boundary maintenance principles:** Clear separation of powers protects governance, management, and proprietorship roles; emphasis on expectations and assurance over control; structured communication channels; and explicit agreements for overlapping roles ensures boundary protection.
- 6 — **Role discipline checklist:** Proprietor actions should relate directly to special character or property stewardship, follow agreed processes, support the board's capability, and respect the principal's operational authority; warning signs include directing staff, informal decisions, micromanagement, and improper enrolment interventions.
- 7 — **Summary:** The proprietor's highest value lies in steady guardianship of special character identity, clear and resourced special character framework, responsible property stewardship, and ensuring enrolment and employment practices support the school's distinctiveness within effective governance and leadership.

Review the one-page summary of the proprietor responsibilities and boundaries, with a boundary test flowchart guiding decision-making to maintain role clarity and prevent boundary drift through documented protocols and communication pathways. See also [Stay in your lane - a proprietors role](#).

Proprietor boundaries in a state-integrated school

This document provides an overview of the four key areas of shared focus between the board and proprietor: enrolment, employment, property, and the teaching of faith or philosophy. The document provides guidance on boundaries, how to avoid overreach, and maintaining clear separation of powers.

Purpose

The proprietor's role in a state-integrated school is to safeguard and preserve the school's special character framework. They do this by exercising their roles and responsibilities in relation to special character and to proprietor property. An intentional proprietor role is essential, but so is a clear understanding of the mandate of the proprietor and the relationship with the school board. Good outcomes depend on clear boundaries, role clarity, and an operating style that builds trust with the board rather than substituting for it.

This document summarises the proprietor's responsibilities in four core areas—enrolment, employment, property, and the teaching of faith or philosophy, and explains how to maintain a proper separation of powers so the proprietor does not drift into the governance or management of the school.

1) Enrolment

What the proprietor is responsible for:

The proprietor defines the preference criteria for enrolment based on the school's special character. This typically includes:

- **Preference framework stewardship:** setting and maintaining the basis on which preference is granted (aligned with the school's special character).
- **Preference decision-making (where applicable):** issuing, declining, or withdrawing preference certificates in line with the special character criteria and any agreed processes.
- **Special character integrity:** ensuring preference is applied in a way that genuinely protects the special character and is defensible, fair, and consistent.
- **Relationship and transparency:** sharing criteria, documentation, and guidance so families and the board understand how preference operates.

Boundary discipline: what the proprietor should *not* do

To avoid drifting into the work of the board, the proprietor should not:

- **Run the school's operational enrolment process** (waiting lists, communications, day-to-day administration).
- **Direct the principal on who to enrol** or intervene in individual operational decisions except through the legitimate preference process.
- **Pressure the board to exceed roll, staffing, or property capacity** where that undermines sound governance or compliance.

Practical boundary tools

- Agree a **Preference Guidance & Process** document (criteria, evidence, timeframe, appeals/review pathway).
- Use a **single channel** for preference decisions (e.g., a proprietor delegate) and keep records.
- Hold **termly enrolment integrity check-ins**: trends, preference demand, and any risks, without taking over administration.

2) Employment (appointments and staffing that affect special character)

What the proprietor is responsible for:

The proprietor's employment role is not to employ staff (that is the board's function), but to **protect special character through appointment related rights and expectations**, commonly including:

- **Special character expectations for key roles**: articulating the requirements for roles that carry special character leadership (e.g., principal, DRS/DRC, senior leaders, specified positions).
- **Participation in appointment processes (where provided for)**: involvement in recruitment/selection processes for special character positions, consistent with agreed process, and legislation.
- **Acceptability endorsement functions (where applicable)**: confirming the candidate can uphold and advance the special character.
- **Formation expectations**: signalling expectations for induction and ongoing formation so staff can authentically contribute to the special character of the school.

Boundary drifting: what the proprietor should *not* do

To maintain separation of powers, the proprietor should not:

- **Act as the employer** (performance management, discipline, day-to-day direction, rostering, leave approvals).
- **Bypass the board** by instructing staff directly or creating parallel reporting lines to the proprietor.
- **Replace merit-based appointment processes** with informal preference or patronage. Special character matters must sit alongside professional competence and the lawful process.

Practical boundary tools

- A clear **Appointments Protocol**: who does what, when proprietor input occurs, what “acceptability” means, and how disagreements are resolved.
- A **Special Character Role Description Addendum** for positions with special character responsibilities.
- A joint **Formation & Induction Plan** (board/principal deliver; proprietor supports and resources).

3) Property

What the proprietor is responsible for:

The proprietor is typically responsible for the **ownership, stewardship, and strategic oversight of proprietor property**, including:

- **Stewardship of proprietor assets**: ensuring buildings/land used as part of the school’s integrated space is protected, maintained appropriately, and fit for purpose.
- **Integration property responsibilities**: managing and funding obligations that sit with the proprietor under the integration framework and related agreements.
- **Strategic property direction**: long-term property planning aligned to special character, enrolment demand, and sustainability.
- **Approvals and controls**: giving consent where required for projects that affect proprietor property, and ensuring works align with standards, insurance, and risk settings.

Boundary drifting: what the proprietor should *not* do

To avoid overreach, the proprietor should not:

- **Manage the school’s day-to-day operational property matters** that sit with the board (minor works, operational maintenance, contractor scheduling for board-funded items), unless agreed.

- **Create confusion by changing expectations mid-project** (scope, funding split, timelines) without documented agreement.

Practical boundary tools

- A one-page **“Who funds what”** agreement (proprietor vs board vs Ministry), reviewed annually.
- A **Property Decision Pathway**: what requires proprietor approval, typical timeframes, and information requirements.
- Regular **tri-party planning rhythm** (board–proprietor–principal) for 10Y/5Y/annual property planning and urgent works escalation.

4) Teaching of faith or philosophy (special character delivery)

What the proprietor is responsible for

This is the proprietor’s core “why”: ensuring the school’s **special character framework is authentic, visible, and lived**. Responsibilities commonly include:

- **Defining and safeguarding special character**: articulating the foundational values, beliefs, and practices that make the school unique.
- **Expectations for delivery**: setting expectations for how faith/philosophy is taught and embedded (curriculum, liturgy/worship where relevant, pastoral life, community practices).
- **Assurance and review**: ensuring there are meaningful ways to know whether special character is being delivered well (review, self-review support, agreed indicators).
- **Formation support**: providing resources, guidance, and opportunities that build staff capability to deliver special character confidently and safely.

Boundary drifting: what the proprietor should *not* do

To maintain proper separation, the proprietor should not:

- **Take over pedagogical management** (classroom oversight, teacher direction, assessment decisions) which sit with professional leadership and board policies.
- **Create parallel “instruction lines”** to staff that undermine the principal’s leadership.
- **Use special character as a catch-all** to intervene in non-special-character operational matters.

Practical boundary tools

- A concise **Special Character Guidelines** document from proprietor to board (expectations, indicators, reporting frequency). See the Special Character Guideline resource on the APIS website.
- A **Special Character Annual Plan** that sits within the school's strategic and annual planning (owned by board/principal; supported by proprietor).
- An agreed **review/assurance cycle**: what evidence is used, who gathers it, and how findings are acted on.

Ensuring quality governance and guardianship

Effective governance depends on role clarity. The proprietor can be both a vision carrier and a disciplined partner by applying these principles:

1) Separation of powers is protective, not adversarial

Clear boundaries protect:

- the board's lawful governance role (strategy, policy, oversight),
- the principal's management role (operations and professional leadership), and
- the proprietor's guardianship role (special character and proprietor property).

2) Use “expectations and assurance,” not “direction and control”

A good test:

- **Appropriate:** “Here is the expectation; here is the evidence we will review; here is the support we can provide.”
- **Adversarial:** “Do it this way, by this date, and report to us directly.”

3) One voice, one channel, documented agreements

Avoid informal influence that blurs boundaries:

- keep communications structured (chair to chair, proprietor appointee to chair/principal as agreed),
- document protocols (especially for enrolment preference, appointments, and property approvals),
- resolve disputes through agreed pathways rather than personal escalation.

4) Make the grey areas explicit

Where roles naturally touch (e.g., principal appointment; property approvals; preference integrity; special character assurance), agree:

- Who decides, who advises, what information is required, and timeframes.
- Develop and agree on an MOU

A simple “role discipline” checklist

The proprietor is on solid ground when actions:

- clearly relate to special character protection or proprietor property stewardship,
- use agreed processes and are consistently applied,
- strengthen board capability rather than replace it, and
- preserve the principal’s authority to lead operations.

Warning signs of boundary drift issues:

- directing staff or managing operational matters,
- informal decision-making without records or process,
- using approval rights to micromanage,
- intervening in individual enrolment matters outside preference criteria/process.
- wondering around the school talking to teachers and students

Conclusion: the proprietor’s best contribution

The proprietor’s highest value is to be a consistent guardian of special character: keeping the special character clear, resourced, and assured; maintaining property stewardship; and ensuring enrolment and employment practices genuinely support the school’s distinctiveness. When the proprietor respects boundaries and focuses on their role and responsibilities, strong on purpose, disciplined in method, special character is maintained and effective board practice supports the professional leadership of the school.

Respecting Boundaries Test: Flowchart

Use this quick test before acting and making decisions:

START ↓

1

Step 1: Relevance Check

Does this matter relate directly to:

- special character protection/assurance, **or**
- proprietor property stewardship/approval, **or**
- preference/attestation functions (where applicable)?

→ No → **STOP** (sits with board/principal domain)

→ Yes → continue →

2

Step 2: Protocol Confirmation

Is there an agreed protocol/process for this?

→ No → **PAUSE** and establish/confirm process (chair-to-chair / documented pathway)

→ Yes → continue ↓

3

Step 3: Nature of Action

Is the action “expectations & assurance” rather than “direction & control”?

- **Expectation:** “Here is the standard; here is how we’ll check it; here’s support.”
- **Control:** “Do it this way; report to us; we will manage it.”

→ Direction & control → **STOP/RESET** (risk of proprietor boundary drift)

→ Expectations & assurance → continue →

4

Step 4: Role boundaries

Does it preserve role boundaries?

- **Board:** governance/oversight
- **Principal:** management/operations
- **Proprietor:** special character + proprietor property

→ No → **STOP** (re-route through board/principal)

→ Yes → **PROCEED** (document, communicate through agreed channel)

✓ **PROCEED**



Common Pressure Points and Solutions

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Common Pressure Points and Solutions

This table summarises typical areas of tension between the Proprietor and Board, with suggested proactive approaches to prevent or resolve issues.

Area	Common Tension	Suggested Solutions / Proactive Approaches
Property	Unclear boundaries between integration and operational property responsibilities.	Maintain a written property responsibilities schedule (integration vs operational) agreed by Proprietor and Board; review annually and attach to the Maintenance Plan / 10YPP.
	Timing and communication when urgent repairs impact teaching.	Agree an urgent works protocol (who contacts whom, expected response times, temporary room relocations); schedule an annual joint maintenance meeting with a shared 10YPP timetable so both parties see upcoming works.
	Board frustration where Proprietor approval delays projects.	Set clear approval thresholds and timelines (e.g. approvals within X working days); use a simple project proposal template so information is complete first time; include a standing item on capital projects status at joint meetings.
	Perceived inequity in how maintenance priorities are set by the Proprietor.	Share the Proprietor-wide prioritisation criteria and how the school fits within that; hold an annual joint maintenance meeting to discuss priorities, rationale and trade-offs, and record agreed actions.
Staffing & Appointments	Disagreement over candidate suitability or the weight of special character criteria.	Agree written selection criteria (including special character expectations) before advertising; ensure panel members understand the balance of professional and special character requirements; debrief after key appointments.
	Misunderstanding of the Proprietor's right of attestation versus the Board's right of appointment.	Include a clear Attestation vs Appointment section in the governance manual; provide induction for Board and panel members on the legal roles; use a standard process map showing where attestation sits in the appointment timeline.
	Staff disputes where alignment with special character is questioned post-appointment.	Ensure role descriptions and codes of conduct explicitly reference special character expectations; address issues early through professional growth, formation and support; where needed, follow agreed HR and complaints processes with Proprietor input.

Common Pressure Points and Solutions - Continued

Area	Common Tension	Suggested Solutions / Proactive Approaches
Enrolments	Pressure from community demand for places.	Maintain an up-to-date, Board-approved enrolment policy aligned with the Integration Agreement; communicate clearly that spaces are limited and preference criteria apply; regularly review roll data and projections with the Proprietor.
	Perceived inconsistency in the issuance of preference certificates.	Ensure preference criteria and processes are clearly documented and available to whānau; provide training for those issuing certificates; periodically review samples with the Proprietor or parish/faith authority.
	Parent appeals regarding preference decisions.	Publish a simple appeals/queries process (who to contact, expected timeframes); keep written records of decisions and reasons; involve the Proprietor or parish/faith authority where appropriate.
	Lack of communication on roll returns and waiting lists.	Agree a termly reporting schedule: roll returns, waiting list summary, projected enrolments; keep a shared, updated waiting-list record accessible to key school and Proprietor personnel.
Special Character	Scope creep where "special character" is interpreted differently by each party.	Anchor decisions in agreed special character documents (Integration Agreement, Proprietor guidelines); hold an annual joint reflection on special character priorities; use shared language and frameworks (e.g. core practices) across Board, Proprietor and leadership.
	Inconsistent review or lack of clarity about accountability for special character outcomes.	Establish a regular special character review cycle (e.g. every 3 years) and annual self-review; clarify in writing who is accountable for what (Proprietor, Board, principal); report outcomes and actions through Board and Proprietor.
	Resistance when Proprietor requests policy or practice changes.	Use a consultative approach: explain the theological/legislative rationale, provide draft wording, and allow time for Board and staff feedback; agree implementation timelines and support (formation, resources).
Finance & Operational Matters	Disputes about use of funds or perceptions of cross-subsidisation.	Provide an annual financial briefing with clear explanation of funding sources, attendance dues, and what they may/may not be used for; share summary SCD/Proprietor reports with the Board where appropriate.
	Lack of understanding of restrictions on attendance dues.	Include a plain-language attendance dues explainer in the governance manual and parent information; provide annual refresher to the Board and key staff; ensure communications to whānau are consistent with Proprietor policy.



Communication for effective governance

In state-integrated schools, the Proprietor and the Board share a fundamental responsibility to foster an environment where every student can achieve their full potential. This partnership is anchored in a collective commitment to both educational excellence and the preservation of the school's unique special character.

The success of this vision relies on robust, transparent communication between both parties. By establishing clear channels for communication and mutual understanding, the Proprietor and the Board create an integrated governance system that ensures special character is safeguarded and maintained.

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Communication Protocols

Effective governance relies on clear and consistent communication channels between the Proprietor and the Board. The following protocols ensure a harmonious and proactive partnership:

01

Regular Liaison & Joint Planning

Termly meetings between the Board Presiding Member and Proprietor Chair, including an annual joint planning session covering key areas: roll, staffing, property, and special character.

03

Timely Information Exchange

A mutual commitment to promptly provide information regarding decisions or developments that impact either party.

02

Pre-statement Consultation

Both parties will consult prior to any media or public statements that could materially affect the other's reputation or operations.

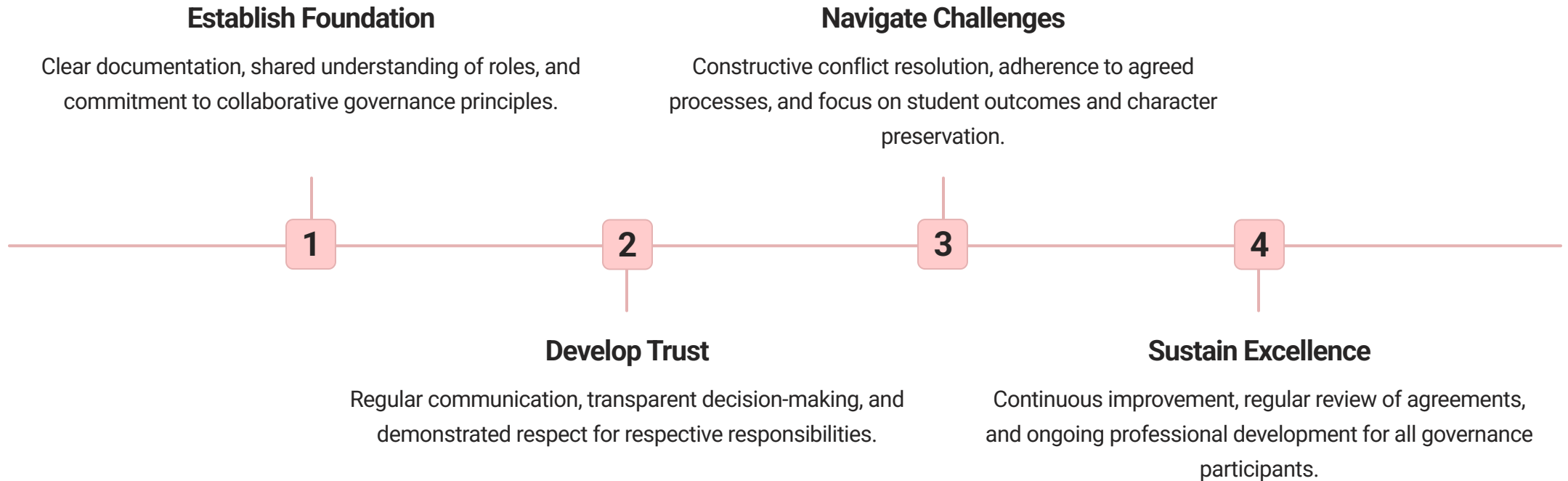
04

Proactive approaches to resolving tensions

Review the content below for suggested approaches that can prevent tensions arising between the proprietor and the school board.



Building Effective Governance Partnerships



Successful state integrated school governance depends on robust partnerships between boards and proprietors. These relationships thrive when built on mutual respect, clear communication, and shared commitment to both educational excellence and special character preservation. By understanding respective roles, utilising available resources, and maintaining focus on student wellbeing and achievement, boards and proprietors create governance environments where integrated schools flourish. The journey requires ongoing attention, but the outcome is distinctive, values-based education within the state system, benefiting generations of students and communities.

Role of the Proprietor Appointee

This resource outlines the primary responsibility of the proprietor appointee which is to represent the interests and values of the school's proprietor on the school board.

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The Proprietor's Appointee

BALANCING THE RIGHTS OF THE PROPRIETOR AND NEEDS OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

The Proprietor's Appointee plays a vital role in bridging the Proprietor's interests with the board's governance responsibilities. Understanding this role is essential for every board member.



Appointment Authority

The Proprietor can appoint **up to four members** of the Board to ensure their interests are represented. The Proprietor also retains the right to remove and replace appointees at any time.



Full Board Rights

Proprietor's Appointees are **full board members** with all the rights and obligations of other members — including full voting powers on all matters before the board.



Leadership Eligibility

Appointees have the right to be elected as the **Presiding Member (Chairperson)** of the Board, enabling them to lead the governance of the school at the highest level.



Key aspects of Proprietor Appointee role:

1. The **primary responsibility** of the proprietor appointee is to represent the interests and values of the school's proprietor on the school board. The appointee ensures that the school's special character, as agreed upon in the school's integration agreement with the government, is maintained and preserved.
2. **Maintaining the School's Special Character:** State-integrated schools are granted a high degree of autonomy to maintain their unique special character. The proprietor appointee plays a key role in safeguarding and promoting this special character within the school's policies and practices. They may provide input on matters related to curriculum, values, religious education, and other aspects that align with the school's ethos.
3. **Balancing Interests:** While the proprietor appointee represents the proprietor's interests, they are also part of a broader school board responsible for the overall governance of the school. Therefore, they must balance the interests of the proprietor with those of the parent and community representatives to ensure the best interests of the students and the school as a whole.
4. **Accountability:** Like all board members, the proprietor appointee is accountable for their decisions and actions as part of the school board. They must adhere to the legal and ethical responsibilities associated with school governance, such as financial stewardship, policy development, and strategic planning

For more information, read the board policy under Part B (7) Proprietor's Appointee Role Description Policy. The [policy framework](#) is available for download and adaptation to meet the context of your state integrated school.

Key Relationships: Integration Agreement, Proprietor Appointee, and Board Policy

The effective operation of a state integrated school relies on the strong interrelationship between its Integration Agreement, the board, the Proprietor's Appointee, and the school board's policies. These elements form a symbiotic structure, ensuring both educational achievement and the preservation of special character.



The Guiding Document

The Integration Agreement (IA) is the foundational legal text defining the school's special character. It outlines the values and framework that all board policies and Proprietor decisions must adhere to, acting as the ultimate reference point for governance.



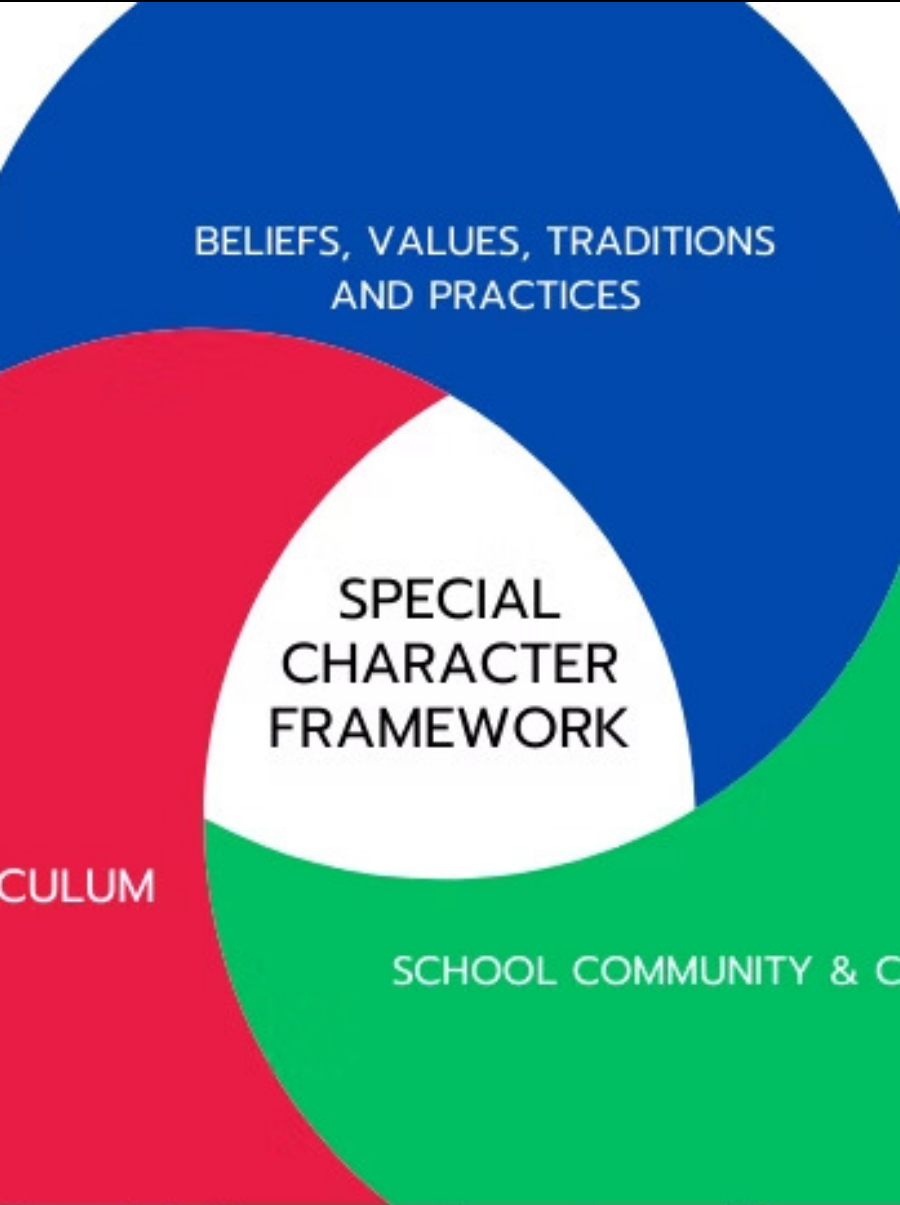
Voice of the Proprietor

The Proprietor's Appointee is crucial for upholding the special character outlined in the IA. They ensure the Proprietor's vision is integrated into board discussions and provide essential guidance on how policies reflect the school's unique identity.



Policy in Action

Board policies translate the Integration Agreement and the Proprietor's rights and obligations into practical, actionable expectations. They establish clear processes, assign responsibilities, and ensure all operational decisions consistently support the school's special character and educational outcomes.



***Special Character is not an add on -
its foundational***

Special Character Guidelines

The Special Character Framework shapes the philosophy, values, and educational approach of state integrated schools. This influences what is taught, how it is taught, and the culture of learning.

The proprietor has a key role in providing Special Character Guidelines to school boards to ensure the school's special character is expressed, preserved, and enhanced in all aspects of governance, leadership, and daily operation.

This resources includes both summary pages and comprehensive information. We encourage boards to access the information in a way that works for them and their timeframes.

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Minimum Governance Standards for the Board Regarding Special Character



Safeguard & Strengthen

Actively keep special character central to all governance decisions and school operations — a core obligation.



Legal Framework

Comply with the Education and Training Act 2020, ensuring special character is never jeopardised and is reflected in teaching and conduct.



Plans, Policies & Procedures

Ensure the strategic plan, annual plan, and policies reflect the school's special character philosophy and identity.



Four Key Areas

Govern with special character in mind across Property, Employment, Enrolment, and Curriculum & Teaching.



Appropriate Staffing

Support appointments that recognise special character, including staff composition aligned with the school's identity.



Reporting to the Proprietor

Report annually on special character matters and communicate issues early to ensure risks are identified and addressed.

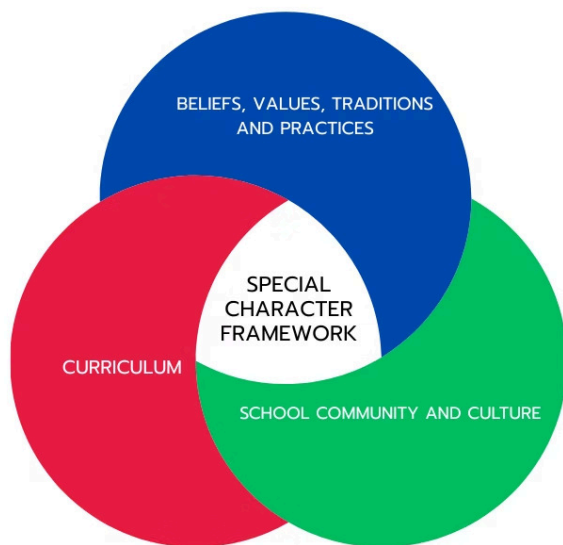


Positive Culture

Place special character at the centre of planning and foster a culture that reflects the school's values, traditions, and identity.

Minimum Governance Standards for the Board Regarding Special Character - detail and reference

1. **Safeguard and strengthen the special character.** Boards of state integrated schools must actively safeguard and strengthen the school's special character, ensuring it remains central to all governance decisions and school operations. This is a core governance obligation. [apis.org.nz]
2. **Operate within the legal framework (Education and Training Act 2020).** Boards must comply with all duties under the Education and Training Act 2020, including the requirement that special character must not be jeopardised. The Act confirms that integrated schools have the right to reflect their special character through teaching and conduct. [legislation.govt.nz]
3. **Reflect special character in the school's plans, policies, and procedures.** Boards must ensure the strategic plan, annual plan, and policies reflect the philosophy and identity of the school's special character. [apis.org.nz]
4. **Maintain governance standards across four key areas of shared focus.** Boards have special character responsibilities in relation to: • Property • Employment • Enrolment • Curriculum and Teaching. These four areas must be governed in ways that uphold the school's special character. [apis.org.nz]
5. **Ensure appropriate staffing for special character.** Boards must support staffing appointments that recognise the school's special character, including consideration of special-character positions and staff composition that aligns with the school's identity. [apis.org.nz]
6. **Maintain regular communication and reporting to the Proprietor.** Boards must report annually to the Proprietor on matters affecting special character and communicate any issues early. This accountability ensures risks are identified and addressed. [apis.org.nz]
7. **Promote a positive culture aligned with the school's philosophy.** Boards must place special character at the centre of planning and foster a culture that reflects the school's values, traditions, and identity. [apis.org.nz]



The Three Pillars of Special Character
Special Character is not an add on - its foundational

Why Special Character Guidelines Help

What the Guidelines Provide

A clear statement of the Proprietor's expectations for how the Board governs and protects the school's special character, with a shared framework for planning, reporting, and review.

Core Practices

Guides how special character is implemented in culture, curriculum, spiritual life, service, and community engagement.

Clarity & Consistency

Promotes transparency in governance and ensures the Board understands how to give effect to the school's special character.

Stronger Partnerships

Reduces friction by preventing role confusion, strengthens trust through shared expectations, and supports evidence-based reporting and risk management.

Defined Standards

Clear definitions of special character, its purpose, and minimum governance standards for strategic planning, staffing, enrolment, property use, and communication.

A Clear Framework for Stewardship

Shows *what* must be protected, *how* it should be expressed, and *where* accountability sits.

Transparent Assurance Processes

Creates a clear cycle of reporting, evidence collection, and risk management so both parties can act early if special character is at risk.

Special Character Guidelines - what to include

What is the primary purpose of the Special Character Guidelines Template?

The guidelines are designed to help the school board preserve and strengthen the school's special character, ensuring it is incorporated into governance while meeting state school obligations.

How is "special character" defined and expressed within the school?

The guidelines need to clearly express the special character of the school's religious or philosophical foundation. It defines how the special character is evident in teaching, relationships, worship, leadership, and decision-making, with the Board ensuring all major decisions align with this character, and not just evident in religious education or education philosophy teaching.

What are the minimum governance standards for the Board regarding special character?

The guidelines should set out the minimum standards required for the board regarding special character. This would include being visible in the strategic and annual plans, included in policies and principal appointments, considered in board composition and development, and monitored through regular reporting and review cycles.

What kinds of questions are Board members encouraged to ask to keep special character central in governance?

The guidelines could include those questions the Board is encouraged to ask such as: how proposals strengthen or protect special character, possible risks, stakeholder involvement, staff support, and to use feedback to continually improve the implementation of special character within the school.

What actions are outlined if the school's special character is at risk?

If risks such as policy drift or sustained complaints arise, the process involves early notice to the Proprietor's appointee, joint problem definition, corrective actions, assurance reporting, and escalation procedures to safeguard the special character.