

ST HILDA'S COLLEGIATE SCHOOL

Location Dunedin

Integrated, Years 7 to 13

Roll 410 (one third of whom are boarders)

Ethnicity Pakeha 91%; Maori 6% Asian 2%

Principal Christine Leighton

History

From its beginnings in 1896 as a private girls' school established by Anglican nuns, St Hilda's School has had a values system. The school's special character as a state integrated school is still firmly within the Anglican tradition, though enrolment information states that "we welcome students from any background who are in sympathy with Christian values and ethics."

While over time the values of the school have been reviewed and refocused to meet the needs of a changing world, St Hilda's has never in its 110 years let its values base diminish. Today values are as central to school life as they have ever been.

In recent times the focus of traditional values has been on developing young women as global citizens. Art Costa's "Habits of Mind" has also provided useful material to support the values and provide a structure. Through this programme thinking skills and values can be linked.

The programme is constantly evolving. While the values themselves do not change there is a constant effort to find ways in which to provide an appropriate context for the times we live in. Also the school is conscious of finding the correct balance between what could be termed values, what is Christian teaching and what is appropriate for the modern world.

Systems

- A new chaplain, chosen for "a new fresh young approach" started at St Hilda's earlier this year. He is responsible for Religious Education and chapel services, assisted by chapel prefects. The school has two whole-school chapel services per week for all staff and students. Values are worked into these services.
- The school used to follow the system of having a value per fortnight as a focus, but have moved away from that in favour of integrating the values into all school activities.
- Students are fully involved in the running of the school. Sacristans (chapel prefects) assist the chaplain, helping to choose themes for services. There is a

Safe School committee of eight students who promote the school's values. This is linked to the Dunedin Safer Schools Charter, which is a City Council initiative. At St Hilda's this is a prestigious group – "it's cool to be on the committee". These students are supervised by the Guidance Counsellor and have an email address that can be used by any student who feels she is being bullied or needs support.

- A detailed and well-presented student handbook (example attached) includes: Chapel ("At St Hilda's our Chapel Services are very important...Our Christian faith has a central place in the School." St Hilda's Core Values and Beliefs; Statement of Expectations for St Hilda's Students; Code of Conduct: Rights and Responsibilities; and full details on Concerns and Complaints Procedures.
- The Board of Proprietors has a "Special Character Committee" that includes three parent representatives. This group oversees the special character of the school, reviewing the school's special character and periodically surveying parents.

Results

- The school has a very good tone, students are proud to be there.
- There is strong parent support. The Parents and Friends Association is very strong. There is one 100% support for the Religious Education programme and good attendance by families at school services.
- Discipline issues are rare. There is a system in place which identifies potential problems early, and a strong pastoral care network operating successfully. Mutual respect and understanding between staff and students is an expectation.
- The school sets very high expectations and students are self-motivated.

Key Features

- The Principal is central to the school's values system and its most important role model.
- Traditional Christian values, long established in the School, have been refocused to meet the needs of students in today's world.
- The programme is well-integrated into all areas of School life.