

Christchurch South Intermediate School Board of Trustees FAQs



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Do I need to have a child at Christchurch South Intermediate to be on the South Board?

No, you don't even need to have a child! A parent trustee is someone elected by the parents, not necessarily a parent themselves.

What does a Board of Trustees do?

A Board provides a school with governance. Governance ensures that an organisation is run in the best interests of its stakeholders, in this case the students, parents, staff, government (Ministry of Education) and the wider community. A Board provides the 'big picture' of strategic direction. It ensures responsibility, accountability, fairness and transparency. The Board also responds to strategic issues as they arise; these may be community matters that are brought to our attention, zoning plans of surrounding schools, correspondence from community members, changes to government education policy, or many other (sometimes unexpected) things.

What a Board does **not** do is become involved in management. Christchurch South Intermediate is managed by the Principal and his management team, who implement the Board's policies and co-ordinate day-to-day activities to achieve the school's goals.

A Board and Principal must work as a team. At South the Board empowers and resources the Principal to make and implement the decisions that drive the school to meet its objectives and to continuously improve.

The table below helps illustrate the governance – management divide:

Function	Performed by
Employer	Board of Trustees
Employing new staff	Principal and the management team, with a Board of Trustees member to ensure a fair, transparent process.
Setting the strategic direction of the school	Board of Trustees
Using staff to achieve strategic objectives	Principal

Assessing staff performance	Principal. A performance assessment is confidential to the individual and senior management.
Assessing Principal performance	Board of Trustees uses a consultant. The Principal's performance agreement requires the Principal to achieve Board of Trustees strategic objectives, including high quality teaching.
Prepares Quality of Teaching Reports	Principal. A Quality of Teaching Report is general in nature, presenting an overall view of teaching quality.
Receives Quality of Teaching Reports	BOT. A Quality of Teaching Report is received in an open meeting, making it a public document.

So, who is on a Board of Trustees?

The South Board consists of five trustees elected by the parents, a trustee elected by the staff and the Principal. The Board elects one of the parent trustees as chair.

The Education Act describes trustees with the unfortunate terms 'parent representative' and 'staff representative'. These terms are open to misinterpretation. For example a 'staff representative' could be misconstrued as a person on a Board to promote the interests of the staff.

Nothing could be further from the truth. All trustees have an equal responsibility to work together as a team to promote the interests of the whole school. Any staff member with concerns raises them with the principal not the staff trustee. Usually a staff concern would be dealt with by management.

But don't I have to be a 'high-powered' person like an accountant or lawyer to be on a Board of Trustees?

Absolutely not! In fact research suggests Boards composed only of accountants and lawyers may not make the best decisions. A key to good governance is a diversity of viewpoints.

So an ideal Board offers different ages, genders, ethnicities, qualifications and life experiences. Having a staff trustee is a source of diversity because it provides the Board with a member besides the principal who understands the inner workings of a school.

Is there any support to help me learn the role of a trustee?

Yes the Ministry of Education provides free training for Board members. Some training sessions are webinars on line for an hour or so during the day or evening; others are evening seminars.

The Christchurch South Intermediate Board also has an induction process that helps all new board members get acclimated with the way our board operates, and uses a shared Google drive that gives Board members visibility of historical board documents that can be very helpful for coming up to speed.

What sort of environment will I be entering if I join the South Board?

Board meetings take place in an atmosphere of friendship and respect. The South Board strives for consensus decisions.

The South Board believes it is a well organised and successful Board of Trustees. It has:

- A strategic plan which projects the school's strategic objectives over the coming three years
- An annual plan which provides specific objectives for the school for the current year and criteria to evaluate performance against at the year's end.
- An established system of principal appraisal
- Mechanisms to monitor and report student achievement and teacher development
- An annual agenda to ensure Board meetings cover all essential business
- A well-developed budgetary process and a sound financial position
- Documented and up to date operational policies and procedures
- Buildings that are modern and well maintained
- Committed staff with high morale
- High levels of student and parent satisfaction

There are always challenges, but Christchurch South Intermediate Boards have always inherited a solid platform for future achievement.

What time commitment would be expected from me as a trustee?

Board meetings take place twice a term on a Wednesday night from 6.30 to 8.30pm. Meetings follow an agenda circulated the previous week. Refreshments are provided at the meeting.

The South Board also has two committees which meet perhaps once a term. The Assurance Committee reviews the school's policies and procedures over a three year cycle. The Appraisal Committee liaises with the consultant employed to work with the principal to develop his annual performance agreement, and to assess his performance against it. This committee also liaises with the principal to assess how well the targets in the Board's annual plan have been achieved.

What (if anything) might I expect in return for my time and efforts as a trustee?

Financially there is nothing except for a token \$500 or so at the end of the year to cover travel to meetings. **But** there is the satisfaction of knowing that you are making a major contribution to your school and your community. **And** being on a Board of Trustees is a great way to enhance your knowledge and experience of governance. This in turn could lead to a role as perhaps a company director or on the Board of another not-for-profit organisation.

So how may I express my interest in being co-opted or elected to the Christchurch South Intermediate Board of Trustees?

By emailing the Board Chair, Rua Murray, to chairperson@chchsouth.ac.nz

Other current parent elected Board members you may know and wish to talk to:

- Mark Callaghan
- Julian Cone
- Keryn Davis
- Craig Reynolds