



Principal Competencies

Ref: Position of Principal at Mount Mercy College

In 2011 a group of Principals, Deputy Principals, Chairpersons of Boards of Management and representatives of Trustees working with the JMB identified the following key competencies as being essential for the effective performance of the role and function of Principal in a faith school:

- Leadership in a Faith School
- Organisational and Administrative Skills
- Strategic Development & Management
- Relationship Management & Interpersonal Skills
- Self-awareness & Self-management Skills

Each of these competencies is defined in a school context below, where the all-round development of the student is the key focus.

Following an examination of the positive and negative behavioural indicators set out below, the Board should choose behaviour indicators which the Board believes are most relevant to the needs of their school and in which the successful candidate should be able to demonstrate his/her competence.

The Application Form should ask the candidates to set out their experience of how they have demonstrated particular aspect(s), chosen by the Board of Management, of the competence in question.

1. Leadership in a Faith School
<p>Definition: Promotes educational leadership that reaches for the highest academic standards and achievement while at the same time building the school community in a culture and religious tradition that is in accordance with the school's founding intention, the values of its mission statement and its expressed philosophy. It focuses on improving instruction to enable teachers to teach at their best and students to learn at their utmost. It fosters a climate of trust that motivates and inspires others to commit to ongoing development that will support the educational and spiritual goals/objectives of the school. It ensures that results are achieved in a caring and compassionate environment.</p>
<p>Sample Behavioural Indicators</p>
<p>Positive (focusing on how the candidate is/would be faithful to the founding intention, values and philosophy of a faith school):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates an understanding of the provenance of the school's characteristic spirit and ethos and has the capacity to communicate a compelling understanding of that spirit and ethos to all partners in a manner that generates enthusiasm and commitment. • Shows commitment to the continuous professional development of staff in relation to

the purposes, values and goals of the Patron/Trustees.

- Can articulate clear objectives for faith development in the school and is a reflective practitioner in that regard. Places faith development appropriately within the whole school planning and review process.
- Shows commitment to the integration and transmission of Gospel values through curriculum and can motivate a school in giving Christian witness and outreach.
- Facilitates the creation of a shared school culture that reflects the core values and ethos of the school.
- Shapes a vision, based on high expectations, for the all-round development, including appropriate academic success, for each student who is seen as a unique child of God.
- Knows what to do and say when conflict arises over faith issues. Has the capacity to react with clarity, flexibility and an ability to listen when such issues arise.
- Demonstrates an awareness of current educational thinking about RE and Catechesis and the challenges facing faith schools within the national and international context.
- Acts as a personal role model for the faith and values of the school and for the standards and performance levels in the school.

Positive (focusing on how the candidate provides educational leadership):

- Contributes to a school-wide vision of commitment to high standards and the success of all students, based on clear articulated standards.
- Focuses on building a sense of school community encouraging teacher collaboration and self-evaluation.
- Is personally familiar with what is required to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Realises the importance of setting goals that support teachers in appreciating the value of their work and in establishing a sense of identity and personal motivation within the school.
- Cultivates leadership in others so that teachers and other adults assume their part in realising the school's vision.
- Demonstrates an awareness of current educational and social issues, as well as the specific needs of the school and local community.
- Clearly outlines the direction, required performance, and challenges of the school to all key partners.
- Adapts leadership style to the situation and people concerned to ensure an optimum outcome.
- Creates a climate conducive to education so that fruitful and respectful interactions may prevail.
- Demonstrates an ability to address issues and/or manage change in a creative and effective manner.

Negative:

- Is not comfortable in integrating the discourses of faith and education and shows little understanding of or sympathy for the school's expressed philosophy, faith heritage or charter.
- Shows little cognisance of the specific factors involved in leading a faith school and has taken no steps to prepare for such a role.
- Does not know how to handle appropriately conflict arising in the context of the school's mission statement, characteristic spirit and ethos.
- Does not demonstrate a vision for the all-round development, including appropriate academic success, for each student.
- Does not demonstrate a vision for improving instruction and creating a climate conducive to education.
- Does not cultivate leadership in others.
- Does not demonstrate an awareness of all relevant context issues.
- Does not share the vision for the school effectively with all concerned.
- Does not provide clarity about shared goals and objectives.
- Does not contribute to creating a culture of autonomy and independence amongst the team.
- Uses a limited style of leadership activities regardless of situation or people involved.

2. Organisational and Administrative Skills

Definition: Uses a range of system supports and processes to establish a systematic course of action for self and/or others to ensure accomplishment of objectives. Sets priorities, goals and timetables to ensure effective use of time and all resources.

Sample Behavioural Indicators:**Positive**

- Develops or uses systems to organise and keep track of information
- Manages people, data and processes to foster school improvement.
- Establishes and maintains records for all staff and manages all processes related to the recruitment, selection and management of staff.
- Manages the allocation of finances and maintains accurate records for all financial information.
- Demonstrates an appreciation of the importance of sound financial planning.
- Is aware of the obligations of the Principal to administer the financial affairs of the school on behalf of the Board of Management.
- Manages the use and maintenance of all school facilities.
- Prioritises issues and activities according to importance and urgency.
- Allocates relevant decision making and other responsibilities to the appropriate staff member and provides the necessary support to delegate effectively.
- Anticipates issues and potential obstacles and takes necessary action
- Creates action plans for achieving performance expectations.

Negative

- Does not create clear plans or schedules for achieving objectives.
- Does not develop systems or processes to track progress of objectives.
- Does not create contingencies to deal with obstacles to achieving objectives.
- Keeps limited or no records of information on staff, financials or facilities as well as related to achievement of objectives.
- Does not delegate relevant decisions and tasks or create a culture to support this.

3. Strategic Development & Management

Definition: Demonstrates the ability to take a broad and long term view of the needs of the school's purpose and objectives.

Sample Behavioural Indicators:**Positive:**

- Demonstrates an understanding of how to develop and lead a strategic plan for the school, with the Board of Management and the Patron/Trustees.
- Knows how to develop a school culture that is faithful to the purposes, values and goals of the Patron/Trustees.
- Has a thorough understanding of the detail of relevant legislation.
- Demonstrates personal pedagogical excellence and applies these personal standards in creating a community of learning.
- Helps develop a shared vision for the school in the future.
- Involves all partners in creating and promoting that vision
- Takes a long and broad view of the needs of the school.
- Constantly re-evaluates the purpose, objectives and activities of the school.
- Knows how to develop a culture of self-evaluation in the school.
- Develops strategies for the future and thinks through the consequences of actions taken.

Negative:

- Does not demonstrate a clear understanding of the requirements of relevant legislation.
- Does not demonstrate personal pedagogical excellence.
- Does not have a clear vision of the future of the school.
- Does not involve others in creating a vision for the school.
- Does not take a long term or broad view of the needs of the school.
- Does not review strategies or the consequences of decisions.

4. Relationship Management & Interpersonal Skills

Definition: Uses a range of communication skills to build and sustain constructive and supportive relationships with all key partners.

Sample Behavioural Indicators:

Positive:

- Demonstrates an understanding of the key relationship that exists between the Principal, the Board of Management and the Patron/Trustees.
- Develops a positive school culture and demonstrates the skill to deal effectively with people.
- Builds and maintains strong relations with staff, students, parents and others by using a range of communication skills to influence and persuade them.
- Demonstrates the ability to write and speak clearly so that others will understand the message and demonstrates a willingness and ability to actively listen to all partners to ensure they have a true understanding of other people's needs.
- Is alert and sensitive to opportunities to enhance the effectiveness of the school and ready to follow them through.
- Builds a logical approach to addressing problems and tasks by drawing on own knowledge and experience as well as calling on other resources as necessary
- Demonstrates the ability to make balanced decisions, based on all relevant information and input from relevant people.
- Demonstrates the ability to continue with a course of action despite setbacks; maintains an optimistic approach
- Has the ability to state clearly what the school stands for, represents the needs of all and advocates on behalf of the school and all partners.
- Manages conflict situations effectively.
- Sets clear objectives for all team members, provides the resources to deliver as well as feedback to review performance standards.

Negative:

- Does not demonstrate the skill to manage key relationships.
- Uses a limited range of communication skills in dealing with other people.
- Does not represent the needs of all partners in the school.
- Does not deal with conflict situations in a timely or effective way.
- Does not provide clear guidelines or support to team members.
- Does not write or speak clearly; does not actively listen to others.
- Uses a limited range of communication skills when influencing others.
- Is not open or sensitive to opportunities.
- Does not take all information into account when solving problems.
- Does not always make decisions when required or make effective decisions.
- Does not cope positively with obstacles and may give up early.

5. Self-awareness & Self-management Skills

Definition: Refers to the ability to be aware of and to understand one's own emotions and to manage them in one's dealings with others. It includes the ability to receive and act on feedback.

Sample Behaviour Indicators:

Positive:

- Demonstrates an ability to perceive emotions e.g. recognising non-verbal signals.
- Recognises the role that emotions can play in thinking and cognitive activity.
- Understands that emotions can carry a wide variety of meanings.
- Demonstrates an ability to manage emotions effectively, to respond appropriately to one's own emotions and to the emotions of others.
- Demonstrates a high degree of self-awareness e.g. being able to read one's emotions and recognise their impact on others.
- Shows an ability to control one's emotions and adapt them to changing circumstances.
- Has clear knowledge of their personal strengths and limitations.
- Shows both confidence and humility where/when appropriate.

Negative:

- Has a tendency to blame others for their feelings.
- Carries grudges and is unforgiving.
- Does not consider the feelings of others before acting.
- Is a poor listener, interrupts and misses the emotions being communicated.
- Shows poor empathy or compassion.
- Is rigid, inflexible; needs rules and structures to feel secure.

The Board of Management will use these competencies in devising the Application Form. Each Board is recommended to indicate to the Selection Committee, through the Role Profile it develops, the importance of each of the competencies relative to each other. The Selection Committee can reflect this in its allocation of marks for the competencies at the shortlisting stage and in the allocation of time and marks for them at interview stage.