

15 May 2023



Aidanfield
Christian School

Dear parents,

It is the season where parents of pupils in years 6 to 9 ponder the high school path their child might take.

At Aidanfield, much like Hillview and Emmanuel, we have a school structure that is different from most in the city in that we graduate our pupils at the end of year 10. We do this in very deliberate partnership with Middleton Grange School and this model has served hundreds of teens very well over the last 15 years or more. However, because it is different it can raise questions in parents' minds and I would like to help in answering some of the key questions and bring peace of mind in staying at Aidanfield!

Being involved at Aidanfield to the end of year 10 brings no disadvantage to your child – and in fact adds many advantages!

Will my child get into Middleton Grange at Year 11 if I don't get them in now?
YES - for preference families.

We have an agreed pathway from our school into Middleton at year 11. Despite rumours, no 'preference' family has been turned away at year 11 from the graduating ACS year (year 10). The network of Christian schools has worked together to ensure there is space at year 11 for all preference families wishing to go there. You don't need to get in early to MGS to ensure you don't miss out. Our Christian schools network in the city plans carefully around this issue.

Non preference families will always find it hard, if not impossible to get into MGS no matter what year they apply. This is recorded in each schools enrolment scheme.

Will my child get the specialist teaching they need in these important years?
YES.

At year 9 and 10 we employ high school trained and/or experienced teachers in specialist areas of English, Maths, Science, Social Studies, PE/Health, Languages. We have experienced and dedicated teachers working in the year 7 and 8 area. The rotation/option subjects all have teachers with a background in those areas.

Our middle school staff have links to other high schools and our programmes are designed to ensure our pupils have every opportunity to be very well prepared to at achieve highly in NCEA level one wherever they go at year 11.

We monitor the academic progress of our past pupils for the three years after they leave us. Over the years we have been doing this, ACS pupils who have the ability and commitment have had close to 100% achievement at NCEA level one most at a merit or excellence level. They continue to do very well in the

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following years. We know we prepare our students very well for the coming years and the evidence supports this.

How well do pupils at ACS achieve in year 9 and 10?

We monitor this very closely and publish the results at the end of every year. In Maths, Reading and Writing we have, on average over 85% of our Year 9 and 10 pupils achieving at or above national expectation. This compares very well with any other high school – and much better than many! For a full breakdown of achievement levels at ACS refer to our Analysis of Variance on our website ([Aidanfield.school.nz/about us/Board of Trustees/](http://Aidanfield.school.nz/about-us/Board-of-Trustees/) then documents and download.

Will my child be able to choose their subject at year 11 if they haven't been at Middleton in the years before the senior years? YES

If you refer to the Middleton Senior College course guide you will see just about all courses can be started in year 11 with no prerequisite. The Technology subjects our year 9 and 10 pupils take prepare pupils to step into Technology courses at year 11. For pupils who are thinking of doing graphics there may be extra work required to ensure success at year 11 in these courses. Any language will require an option choice before year 11. Parents should refer to Middleton staff for guidance on course entries. Our language programme at ACS allows pupils to study their choice of language from year 9.

Our curriculum is as wide as any high school curriculum at year 7 to 10! Our pupils will have the opportunity to do all the core areas as well as languages, visual arts, Coding, Dance, Drama, PE, Health, Music, Careers, Te Reo, and Rui Challenge. In the technologies they can choose from all the options available to Middleton Grange Year 9 and 10 pupils. The Year 7 and 8 pupils do all the options that the Year 7/8 pupils have access to at Hillmorton, and Middleton.

Notwithstanding the interruptions that COVID has been, the missions opportunities are wider at ACS than other schools. In short – our pupils are not limited in their curriculum by being at Aidanfield. We work hard to ensure this.

Why change at year 11 when most schools change at year 7 or year 9?

The point of transition into another school is important. Generally, pupils who are 15 years old are better prepared personally to make the change and cope well with it than pupils who are 11 or 13 years of age. This is supported by educational research. For the younger group they are often dealing with personal changes and insecurities that have mellowed by the time they reach 15. The evidence that we have shows that pupils who change schools when they are older are generally better prepared to make the change, and continue their learning journey uninterrupted, compared with those who are younger. Don't forget that by year 11 they have also learned a lot about MGS through the links that we have already made for them in Technologies.

What about the opportunities available in a larger school?

This is a tricky one. We are limited a bit by our size. However, it is always worth exploring the opportunities that are actually available to year 7 to 10 at any high school. Often the opportunities that are broadcast go to senior pupils in years 11 to 13. If this is an issue for you please ensure you ask careful questions of whatever school you are looking at to see what year 7 to 10 pupils actually are involved with or able to be involved with. ACS pupils have many and varied opportunities that both are similar to as well as different from those offered at any high school. We often find that our pupils have more opportunity as they are not competing with large groups of pupils their own age!

The education outside the classroom programme (eg. our camps, events, ski trips) at ACS is strong, challenging and provides opportunities that are not possible at other schools. Our leadership

focus and growing opportunities for international exposure are unique in the Christian Schools Network for the middle years.

It is definitely worth staying the course at ACS

At Aidanfield we have the advantage of knowing each of our pupils very well. The attention they get is personal and we are able to respond to where each of them is at in a way that larger schools are not able to.

Our aim at Aidanfield is to develop a strong and vibrant middle school. As we have increasing numbers of pupils in the middle years we are able to increase the range of opportunities that are available.

Every year there are rumours that suggest lots of children leave at the end of year six or eight. There is no substance to the annual rumour that lots of children leave! I have numbers going back years to prove this. By far the majority of families choose to have their teens at ACS until the end of year 10 and find this works very well.

Would you like to talk this over?

I would appreciate the opportunity of talking over any questions you may have regarding the intermediate and junior high school years. Please email me (mark.richardson@aidanfield.school.nz) or come in and talk over any thoughts, issues or questions that you may have as you ponder the coming years. I am very happy to spend time with you if this was helpful in making your decision.

Grace and peace

Mark Richardson
Principal