



Aidanfield

Christian School

1 May 2026

Dear parents,

It is the season where parents of pupils in years 6 to 9 consider 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. 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 17 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 in Christchurch has worked together to ensure there is space at year 11 for all preference families wishing to go there. We take this into account every single year. You don't need to get in early to MGS to ensure you don't miss out.

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 school's enrolment scheme. At Middleton 'Preference' is defined as follows:

A preference applicant is a family, which in the opinion of The Christian Schools' Trust, have established a particular connection with the school through membership of, or affiliation with, a church having a Biblical basis of faith consonant with the School's Statement of Special Character as described in s22(a) of the Integration Deed of Agreement.

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, The Arts, 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 specialist areas.



Aidanfield

Christian School

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 achieve highly in 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 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? Very Well!

We monitor this very closely and publish the results in each year's annual report at the end of every year – it's on our website. In Maths, Reading and Writing we have, on average year on year 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. NCEA Co-Requisite testing was introduced in 2023. We do those tests with our Year 10 pupils, and our achievement level is equal to and better than other schools in our network.

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. Middleton is making a significant shift in their course structure for year 11. There will be no disadvantage to any student arriving in year 11 at Middleton. 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.

In short – our pupils are not limited in their curriculum by being at Aidanfield. We work hard to ensure this.



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Christian School

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 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 through mission and service 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.



Aidanfield

Christian School

What about the rumours?

There is no evidence they are true.

Every year there are rumours that suggest 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 am available to talk over any questions you may have regarding the intermediate and junior high school years. Please email me (mark.richardson@aidanfield.school.nz) or make a time to come in and talk over any thoughts, issues or questions that you may have as you consider 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