

Girls like being girls, but girls' sense of self has a particular cost to it. Girls often get the impression that they are second-class citizens in some schools. They are not used to acknowledging and celebrating their own achievements, successes, competencies and talents. 'Listening to Girls', Australian Education Council on the National Policy for the Education of Girls in Australian Schools, January 1992.

'...understandings are emerging from the research evidence suggesting that co-educational settings are limited in their capacity to accommodate the large differences in cognitive, social and developmental growth rates of girls and boys between the ages of 12 and 16. In contrast, this evidence suggests that during these key adolescent years, single-sex settings better accommodate the specific developmental needs of students.' (Rowe, 2003)



Girls' schools provide an environment that is not only good in and of itself, but that in its re-definition of competitiveness and collaboration of autonomy and connectedness, presents a model that other schools do well to emulate.

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### **For further reading**

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Listening to Girls (1992) *Australian Education Council on the National Policy for the Education of Australian Schools*.

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*Achievement, Leadership, Success: A Research Report on the Educational, Professional, and Life Outcomes of Girls' Schools in the United States* (2000). [www.ncgs.org/Pages/publi.htm](http://www.ncgs.org/Pages/publi.htm)

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Sax, Dr L. *Why Gender Matters*.

Spender, D\* & Sarah, E (1980) *Learning to Lose: Sexism and Education*, *The Women's Press, London\**.

Tutchell, E (1990) *Dolls and Dungarees: Gender Issues in the Primary School Curriculum*, *Milton Keynes, Open University*.

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**Why a Girls' School?**

## ***‘Sometimes separate isn’t equal – it’s better’***



Girls’ and boys learn differently; research continues to refine our understanding of these differences. As schools respond and move away from the ‘one size fits all’ practices of old, girls’ schools have continued to create outstanding learning environments.

Girls’ schools are dynamic and challenging places, working for growth of the whole person. They fit young women for a future where problem-solving and decision-making, healthy relationships, confidence and on-going learning are all vital to a fulfilling life.

## ***Girls’ schools are ‘can do’ environments***

- Girls in girls’ schools achieve significantly stronger academic results than any other groups in New Zealand.
- Girls are taken seriously.
- Girls set the agenda, and their voices are heard.
- Teachers can finely match their teaching to the ways girls learn, and develop their courses to girls’ needs.
- Girls dare to take intellectual risks because the classroom is an area for co-operative discovery.
- In girls’ schools girls see strong female role models, and learn to expect successful outcomes for their own efforts.
- All activities are open to girls; they participate, influence and lead.
- Girls thrive and excel in collaborative teams.
- Girls can work through the challenges of adolescence in safety.
- Girls’ schools allow girls to work out their relationships with each other in safety.
- Girls have first place on the sports field, at the computers, in front of the microphone and in class.
- There is no obstacle preventing girls from exploring a career in any area.
- Girls’ achievements are celebrated.



*Parents who choose to enrol their daughters in a girls’ school are signalling their strong support for academic satisfaction and personal confidence for their daughters.*

*They recognise the importance of a safe learning environment that will allow their daughters to develop and achieve their academic goals. They acknowledge the importance of teaching staff who set high standards based on years of experience of what girls’ can achieve. They know the value of a well educated young woman in today’s society and that their daughters’ chances of being an educated young woman are most likely to be realised in a girls’ school.*

*Equally important is the confidence which comes from interacting with good role models, learning skills of leadership and sharing in a rich co-curricular life, with other girls.*

*Linda Fox, Principal  
Kelston Girls’ College*