

## NOTRE DAME CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL SCHOOL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

### 1) MANDATE

Notre Dame Catholic High School Council (School Council or the Council) is guided by the applicable statutes of Ontario (i.e. including the *Education Act* and the Ministry of Education's Regulation 612, as well as other applicable statutes and regulations) and the goals and policies of the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario (School Board or the Board), including the Board's Administrative Procedures. The School Council will work, in cooperation with school staff, parents, students, the School Board and the Town of Carleton Place and associated municipalities within Lanark County, in the following way:

- a) Provide information and advice to the Principal, staff and the Board, and to dialogue and communicate on school matters as they pertain to school initiatives, policies, organization, management and activities. These may include any of the following areas as identified by the Council:
  - Catholic curriculum and programs in the school
  - pupil achievement
  - school community communications strategy
  - school code of behaviour
  - development, implementation and review of Board policy
  - school budget priorities and local capital improvement plans
  - fundraising activities
  - special activities (cultural and extra-curricular activities)
  - involvement of community support agencies in the school
  - community use of school facilities
  - dress code
- b) Provide opportunities for the school community members to be more directly involved in the education of their children.
- c) Provide liaison/communication between parents, staff, students, parish, the local communities, and the School Board.
- d) The School Council shall consult with parents of pupils enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the Council. At times, the School Council may make recommendations to the principal of the school or to the Board on any matter.

## 2) MEMBERSHIP

- a) The School Council will consist of the following membership (Council members):

*Elected Council Members:*

- a minimum of 6 to a maximum of 12 parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school as elected by the parents/guardians (hereinafter referred to as the elected parents/guardians), such that at least 50% + 1 of Council members are elected parents/guardians. Exceptions to the maximum may be made at the discretion of Council;
- one representative of the school's teaching staff elected by the teachers;
- one non-teaching member of the school staff elected by members of the non-teaching staff; and
- one student representative (i.e. the President of the Student Union or their designate).

*Appointed Council Members:*

- the school principal;
- the pastor or his representative from Holy Name of Mary Church Parish in Almonte;
- the pastor or his representative from St. Mary's Church Parish in Carleton Place;
- up to three (3) community representatives chosen ;by the elected Council members for a specified period of time, one of whom shall not be a parent;
- the local school Trustee as an ex-officio, non-voting member; and ,
- additional representatives of the community as invited from time to time by the Council to meet special needs or to work on special projects.

- b) Dual representation will be allowed when an elected parent/guardian is subsequently asked by the parish or the non-teaching staff to sit as its representative.

- c) When the parish representative is not a parent or the pastor, s/he may also fulfill the requirement of a non-parent ratepayer/community representative.

- d) The non-teaching staff and the teaching staff will also elect one (1) alternate each to attend Council meetings if the respective elected representative is not available.

- e) The Council will refer to the "Administrative Procedure" for Catholic School Council with regards a person's qualification to sit on the School Council if such person is employed either by the school or the Board.

- f) The Chair of the Council must be an elected parent/guardian who is then elected to the position of Chair by the elected parents/guardians and the principal. The Chair will hold the same qualifications as Trustees as outlined in the Education Act, (e.g., s/he must be a Catholic ratepayer).
- g) The Chair/Co-Chairs of the School Council and the majority of the Council Members must be Catholic and must hold the same qualifications as a Board Member (resident in the zone, a Canadian citizen, at least 18 years of age and be a Roman Catholic). Non-Catholic members of the School Council must at least have their residential educational taxes directed to the Separate School system.
- h) Some of the positions on Council may remain vacant if no candidate is willing to serve.

### **3) TERM OF OFFICE**

- a) Elected or appointed Council members will hold office from the date s/he is elected or appointed (whether that be at the first regular meeting or otherwise) until the date of the first meeting of the School Council after the elections are held in the next school year.

### **4) ELECTION PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

- a) Elections shall be held during the first 30 calendar days of each school year.
- b) The Principal shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of Council members, on behalf of School Council, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent of every pupil enrolled in the school. Such notice may be given to the parent's child for delivery to his/her parents and by posting the notice in the school in a location accessible by parents.
- c) Each parent/guardian seeking election must be nominated in writing by at least two other parents/guardians.
- d) An election committee shall be struck by the Council to assist in the gathering of nominations and the running of the elections. No one standing for election or the spouse of anyone standing for election shall be a member of this committee.
- e) The election committee shall:
  - provide nomination forms;

- seek nominations of parents/guardians of children at all grade levels within the school;
  - request a profile from all candidates and make these available to the electorate;
  - conduct the elections (by secret ballot);
  - assist the principal in notifying all candidates of the results; and,
  - keep all results and related information confidential.
- f) Only the names of the successful candidates will be made public, not the election standing nor the number of votes. A list of candidates and their standings will be kept on file by the Council for use in the event that a vacancy on the Council occurs.
- g) All individuals standing for election shall be notified of the results prior to the results being released to the school community.
- h) Should elected Council positions become vacant prior to an election, the Council shall replace the vacant member by appointment from the non-elected candidates in the previous election. If this is unsuccessful, the Council may request that interested parents/guardians from the school community submit their names for consideration. From these names the Council shall appoint an individual.
- i) When a vacant spot on Council is filled, the successful individual's term shall expire at the time of the next election.

## 5) MEETINGS

*"Regular" shall apply to meetings of the elected and appointed members.*

*"General" shall apply to meetings of the elected/appointed members and the general school and parent community.*

- a) All Regular and General meetings of the School Council shall be open to the public and may be held at the School or some other location that is accessible to the public. The Principal, on behalf of the School Council, shall give written notice of the dates, time and locations of the meetings of the council to every parent of every pupil who, on the date of the notice, is enrolled in the school. Such notice may be given to the parent's child for delivery to his/her parents and by posting the notice in the school in a location accessible by parents.
- b) All Regular and General meetings of the School Council will open with prayer.

- c) At the first Regular School Council meeting of each academic year, the elected parents/guardians and the principal shall elect, from the elected parents/guardians, the individuals to serve as the Executive, including the Chair, vice-Chair, Secretary and/or Treasurer. The Council may choose to operate with the positions of co-Chairs, rather than Chair and vice-Chair.
- d) There will be at least four (4) Regular School Council meetings during the school year. Regular School Council meetings will be held at the call of the Chair. In addition, each General School Council meeting will be immediately preceded by a Regular School Council meeting.
- e) A meeting of the School Council cannot be held unless a majority of Council Members that are parents, are present at the meeting and that the Chair/Co-Chairs and the principal (or designates) are in attendance.
- f) The minutes of previous Council meetings and the agenda for the next Regular or General Council meeting shall be posted in the school office one week prior to the Council meeting.
- g) Any member of the school community may suggest an item to the agenda of the Regular School Council meeting by making a request in writing at least two (2) weeks prior to the announced date of the Regular School Council meeting. The request may be given to either an elected Council member or to the principal.
- h) General School Council meetings will be held at least once a year to inform the general school and parent community of the Council's activities. The dates shall be publicized.
- i) Prior to each General School Council meeting, the Council will meet to set the agenda.
- j) Only Council members may add items to the agenda from the floor during a General School Council meeting. Council members shall make every reasonable effort to make the Chair aware of additions from the floor prior to the commencement of the meeting.
- k) An elected Council member who has missed two (2) consecutive Regular Council meetings may be removed from the Council at the request of the elected Council members. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Council.
- l) From time to time, as situations warrant, impromptu School Council meetings may be held at the call of the Chair.

- m) Council may establish committees to carry out specific functions and will seek widespread participation in these activities.
- n) Council will operate in a manner that provides a structured approach that is non-judgmental, based on no-fault discussion, and uses consensus and compromise as the usual method for developing recommendations and plans.
- o) Council shall respond to requests from the Board.

**6) VOTING**

- a) Each School Council member is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the council.
- b) Each member of a sub-committee of the School Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the sub-committee.
- c) The Principal is not entitled to vote in votes taken by either the School Council or by a sub-committee of the Council.

**7) MINUTES, FINANCIAL RECORDS, ANNUAL REPORT**

- a) The School Council shall keep minutes of all of its meetings and records of all of its financial transactions.
- b) School Council minutes and records (at least four years worth) shall be available at the school for examination without charge by any person.
- c) The School Council shall submit a two-page (maximum) written report in the month of May to the Principal and the Board regarding the Council's activities for that school year. The School Council shall provide an overview of its fundraising activities in this annual report. The Principal, on behalf of the Council, shall make this report available (e.g. on the school website or from the school office) to every parent of each pupil enrolled in the school as at the date of the notification.

**8) ROLES**

- a) Role of the Chair
  - Communicate with the principal on an on-going basis.
  - In consultation with the Principal, call School Council meetings and prepare the agenda for School Council meetings at least one week prior to meeting date.

- Chair School Council meetings.
- Designate an alternate elected Council member to chair a School Council meeting, if the need arises.
- Ensure that the minutes of the School Council meetings are recorded and maintained.
- Ensure that the school community is kept informed on the School Council proceedings and activities.
- Act as a spokesperson for the School Council and represent the Council at special functions.
- Participate in information and training programs.
- Monitor implementation of Council decisions.
- As required, consult with the Board.
- Ensure that Council reviews the constitution at the beginning of each school year and those changes, resulting from the review or amendments otherwise made during the year, are reflected, if warranted and approved, in a revised constitution.

## b) Role of Vice-Chair

- Assist the Chair as required.
- Fill in during any absence of the Chair.
- Other (to be included at a later date).

## c) Role of The Treasurer

- Communicate with Chair on an on-going basis.
- In consultation with school secretary and chair, prepare and present independent financial accounts at each meeting.
- Maintain independent financial records of school council accounts to correspond with school records.
- After fundraising events, prepare cash and/or cheques for school secretary to bank.
- During meetings, complete Requisition Forms for Chair/Principal to countersign for funds approved for spending or donating to school groups.

## d) Role of The Secretary

- Communicate with Chair and committee members on a regular basis.
- Email committee members two weeks prior to meeting date to confirm date and request items for the Agenda.
- One week prior to meeting, ensure Agenda is prepared and forwarded to all members and any invited guest speakers.
- At meeting, take minutes using an agreed format.
- Following the meeting but within one week of the meeting taking place, prepare the minutes using the agreed format and forward via email to committee members only for them to use as a working document.
- At the subsequent meeting when the previous minutes are approved, forward minutes, with any amendments included, to the web master to be added to the school website.

#### e) Role of School Council Members

- Participate in Council meetings.
- Participate in information and training programs.
- Act as a link between the Council and community.
- Encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community.

#### f) Role of The Principal

- Communicate with the Chair/Co-chairs of the School Council.
- Assist, advise and consult with the School Council to ensure that it achieves its goals and purposes. Consider each recommendation made to the principal by the School Council and advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation.
- Support and promote the council's activities and assist the Council in communicating with the school community.
- Provide administrative assistance and support for Council activities, including prompt distribution to each member of the School Council regarding any materials received from the Ministry of Education due to the Council. In addition, the principal shall post such material in a location that is accessible to parents.
- Attend meetings of the Council and publicize its activities in the school newsletter and other correspondence. Encourage the participation of parents' from all groups and of other people within the school community.

- Seek input from the School Council in areas for which the Council has been assigned advisory responsibility.
- Act as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies and collective agreements. Obtain and provide information required by the council to enable it to make informed decisions.

## 1) SUB-COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

- a) Council may establish sub-committees to carry out specific functions on behalf of Council in accordance with the purpose and general guidelines as set by Council at the time of sub-committee establishment. In general, sub-committees endeavour to investigate and research an issue, make recommendations to Council for decision and, as necessary, carry out the decision of Council.
- b) Sub-committee membership must include at least one Council member and may include persons who are not members of the School Council.
- c) Notification and location of sub-committee meetings will follow similar requirements as subsection E. point 1 of this Constitution with appropriate modifications.
- d) Based on the purpose and general guidelines as set by Council, the sub-committee must prepare a written statement to include, at a minimum, its membership, objective (or mandate), deliverables (itemized) and timetable (item by item). The sub-committee must present and obtain Council approval of this statement at the earliest School Council meeting.
- e) Except as may be included and approved in the above-mentioned sub-committee statement, a sub-committee has no authority to hold funds separate from Council funds, to spend Council funds or to allocate Council funds for expenditure.
- f) Sub-committees must prepare minutes of all sub-committee meetings. Minutes must include, at a minimum, the date and location of the meeting, the attendees, decisions reached (with relevant supporting rationale), issues to be resolved (with relevant points of interest), and future commitments (with dates and primes). Sub-committee minutes must be provided to Council chair in a timely manner in order to be attached to agendas of upcoming School Council meetings. Sub-committees must provide an update on their activities at each School Council meeting.

## 2) FUNDRAISING

- a) All fundraising activities undertaken by the School Council and the funds raised by it shall be conducted/used in accordance with applicable policies established by the Board.

### **3) CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- a) Each School Council member shall avoid situations that could result in an inconsistency between the overall goals and vision of the school council and a personal or vested interest, that arise in connection with his or her duties as a school council member.
- b) Should an issue or agenda item arise during a council meeting where a Council member is in a conflict of interest situation, s/he shall declare conflict of interest immediately and decline from the discussion and resolution.

### **4) CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

- a) Council members are elected to serve the school community and will demonstrate respect for their colleagues on council at all times. Unbecoming behaviour (i.e. harassment, bullying, etc.) by a member of School Council will not be tolerated.
- b) Should a dispute arise between School Council members, the Chair/Co-chairs will request a private meeting with such members to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute.
- c) All disputes/incidents of misconduct will be recorded by the Chair, Vice Chair or Co-Chair in writing and a copy of such report will be provided to the Board.
- d) In the case of multiple breaches of conduct, the Chair, Vice Chair or Co-Chair will seek advice from other Council members and gain consensus as to the appropriate course of action to be taken. As part of this process, the Council member in question will be given an opportunity to be heard (i.e. an opportunity to discuss the issues with Council members at a special meeting).
- e) The Chair/Co-chairs will act on the School Council's recommendations. Such resolution must reflect the views of the majority of the Council and be based on justice and courtesy to all. Recommendations from Council may include the removal of a Council member from Council.
- f) The Chair/Co-chairs may request the intervention of an independent third party or seek the advice of the Board and/or the Ministry of Education to assist in achieving a resolution to the dispute.

**5) MISCELLANEOUS**

- a) The Chair, Vice Chair or Co-Chair, in consultation with the principal, will be allowed to approve the expenditure of Council funds up to a maximum of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) to purchase materials required for the operation of the School or Council purposes/functions, especially those of a time sensitive nature.