

St. Mary of the Angels Catholic School Council Constitution and Operating Procedures

-- November 2012 --

ARTICLE 1: Name

The school council shall be named the St. Mary of the Angels Catholic School Council, in the Region of York, Diocese of Toronto, and Province of Ontario. It shall herein after be referred to as the Catholic School Council.

ARTICLE 2: Goals

Catholic School Councils are deemed to have an advisory role and their purpose is to improve student achievement, positively influence the Catholic educational experience of every child and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.

St. Mary of the Angels Catholic School Council is committed to:

- a) Supporting the school in providing a caring, co-operative and safe learning environment built on mutual respect and Christian values.
- b) Providing a forum for community input and participation in the life of the school.
- c) Encouraging participation and growth in the community in partnership with the school, community and church.
- d) Supporting the school in providing opportunities, which promote pride in self, school and community.
- e) Ensure that funds raised by or through Council are used in accordance with applicable policies established by the board.
- f) Keep well informed about school and board policies and procedures

ARTICLE 3: Roles and Responsibilities of the Catholic School Councils

School Councils are advisory bodies within the parameters of the Education Act, Board Policies and Collective Agreements, and other pertinent legislation. Therefore, in order to realize the goals outlined, the Council will, as an advisory body, provide input and advice on such matters as:

- Fostering and increasing parental contact and participation in their children's education.

- Supporting the faith development of the school community.
- Assisting in identifying local conditions that need to be addressed in the school's efforts to educate its students.
- Advising in the allocation of school level resources and parent-generated parent resources.
- Preparation of the school development plan where a site-based plan has not been developed.
- Advocating for the school in the community.
- Advising on opportunities for parent education.
- Linkages with community resources.
- Support school board code of conduct.
- Responses of the school or school board to achievement in provincial and board assessment programs.
- Providing input for criteria to assist the Board in the appointment of the principal.
- Methods of reporting to parents and community.
- Support extracurricular activities in the school.
- School-based services and community partnerships related to social, health and recreational programs.
- Community use of school facilities.
- Development, implementation and review of board policies at the local level.
- Learning partnerships.

Council members are to maintain a school-wide focus on all issues. Council meetings are not a forum of discussion about individual parents, students, staff, trustees or other council members.

ARTICLE 4: Membership

All members on the Council are equal partners. The elected parent/guardian members shall form the majority of the School Council.

Membership on the School Council shall consist of:

- Minimum of 9 maximum of 25 parent/guardian representatives who are separate school ratepayers and have children enrolled in the school, not employed by the

school (can be employed elsewhere within the school board but must declare this) elected by parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school, the chair of the council must be a parent. If there is more than 25 parents interested in being a voting member, it shall move to an election at the Annual General Meeting. Parents shall introduce themselves and talk for 2 mins. about how they can add value to council. Parents can vote for themselves and anyone else they think will contribute the most to council.

- One teacher representative of the school elected by the teaching staff; this position cannot be filled by the Principal or Vice-Principal.
- One non-teaching school staff elected by non-teaching staff.
- The school principal/vice-principal.
- The Pastor or member of the Pastoral Team. (appointed by the parish)
- One community representative (not a board employee) appointed by Council members.
- Student representative elected by the student body; this position is optional at the elementary level.
- The chairperson or co-chair of a school council must be a parent member of the council; School Board employees are not eligible.

ARTICLE 5: Executive Officers

- As per Ministry of Education guidelines, School Council elections shall be held yearly within the first 30 days of the school year. At the first Council meeting each September, the parents/guardians shall elect the following Executive Officers:
 - Chairperson
 - Vice-Chairperson
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
- The Executive Officers must be parent representatives.
- The Principal is a designated member of the Executive.
- For appointed positions, it is desirable that membership be determined by consensus of the body they represent.
- The election of the Executive Committee, if required, will take place by secret ballot and be conducted by the Principal of the school.
- Executive members may be elected for more than one term. One term constitutes one school year.

- In order to address the need for continuity and ensure history, experience and expertise of previous councils, it is required that in order to fill an executive position of council, one would have had to serve at least one term at any capacity on the CSC at this school.

ARTICLE 6: Roles and Responsibilities of Officers of Council

Chairperson (parent/guardian of student enrolled in the school)

The Chairperson, in consultation with the Principal, shall:

- Call school Council meetings.
- Prepare in concert with the principal the agenda for school council meetings.
- Chair school council meetings.
- Ensure that the minutes of the school council meetings are recorded and maintained.
- Participate in information and training programs.
- Communicate with the school principal as required.
- Act as a liaison and facilitate communication with the school community and Council members.
- Represent the council in school/board activities as required and consult with senior Board staff and trustees, as required.

The Vice-Chairperson shall:

- Conduct meetings in the absence of, and upon request of, the chairperson.
- Assist the Chair in his/her duties.

The Secretary shall:

- Keep a record of the proceedings of Council meetings.
- Prepare any correspondence necessary with respect to Council matters.
- Ensure that annual records are kept at school.

The minutes of the previous Council meeting should be sent to all Council members and be made available to the School Community no less than 5 days prior to the next meeting.

The Treasurer shall:

- Ensure an accurate and up-to-date accounting of all monies raised and dispensed.
- Request payment of bills to the school secretary.
- Prepare all sub-ledgers with the signature of two appointed officers of the School Council and principal.
- Present a statement of accounts, at every general council meeting as determined by School Council.

The Principal shall:

- Facilitate the establishment of the Catholic School Council and assist in its operation.
- Assist the Chair in developing the agendas.
- Support and promote the School Council's activities that are consistent with the board's policy statement dealing with Catholic School Councils.
- Seek input from the School Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibilities.
- 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.
- Communicate with the Chairperson as required and keep School Council members informed of school activities and planning.
- Assist the council in communicating with the school community.
- Ensure that copies of minutes of the School Council meetings and financial reports are kept at the school.
- Encourage the participation of all parents/guardians and of other people within the community.

The Staff shall:

- Assist the principal in communicating the activities of the School Council to staff.
- Act as a link between the Council and staff.

All members of the Catholic School Council shall:

- Provide informed advice to the school principal on matters related to student learning and school improvement.
- Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues.
- Participate in council meetings.
- Participate in information and training programs.
- Act as a link between the Catholic School Council and the community.
- Encourage the participation of all parents / guardians and of other people within the community.

In the event a Council member is not in regular attendance (2 consecutive Council meetings or 3 non-consecutive meetings for the academic calendar year) without prior contact with the Chairperson or School Principal with valid reason, Council reserves the right to request resignation of said Council member.

ARTICLE 7: Meeting Dates

At the beginning of each school year Council will set a schedule of meetings of the Catholic School Council for that year. A minimum of four meetings must be held per year.

Dates of the meetings will be publicized to the parent community with the assistance of the school office (*i.e. school newsletters, community bulletins, CSC newsletter, website, etc.*).

Hold general meetings in school or a location accessible to the public.

ARTICLE 8: Quorum -

- To ensure consistency on voting issues, only those members who were elected as voting members are eligible to table a motion and vote. In order for a motion to be tabled and voted upon, the amount of voting members present must be 50% plus 1. The Principal and a teacher representative shall constitute a quorum for School Council meetings.
- Decision-making may be by consensus or majority vote as determined by the Council (consensus being the preferred method). In the event of a tie, the tie-breaking vote shall come from the Chair (or Co-Chairs). Decision-making of a current issue may be allowed via email should an issue arise between general meetings. If a new topic arises between a general meeting, it's up to the Chair (or Co-Chairs) to inform everyone via email and move forward as necessary.

ARTICLE 9: Meeting Operating Procedures

- During the absence or inability of the Principal, Vice-Principal or designate shall exercise the duties and powers of the same.
- During the absence or inability of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson shall exercise the duties and powers of the same.
- In the absence of both the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, the meetings may be chaired by another member of the school council appointed by members of the Council so present.
- General meetings will be held in the school or a location accessible to the public.
- Council members need to represent the views of the whole school community.
- Council members present shall vote to determine the decision of the majority.
- Formal voting can not take place as meetings advertised as “informal meetings.”
- Requests for presentations and/or items to be put on the agenda must be forwarded to the Chairperson and Principal for consideration at least one week prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE 10: Ad Hoc/Sub-Committees

- Ad Hoc or Sub-Committees may be established, which can include members of the parent community at-large, to organize events, fund-raising activities, or to review and/or respond to Board/School requests, initiatives, reports, etc.

- Such Committees will have a `Team Lead` from Council and are responsible for developing their action plan and presenting this plan to council at the appropriate time.
- Communicate regularly with the Chair of the School Council and make general reports to the Council as deemed necessary by the Executive.
- A motion for the approval of funds for the team is required prior to any spending.
- The Team Lead is expected to manage the funds as assigned to their team and must provide expense reports to council.
- The Team Lead is expected to document all of the activities of the team. This documentation is to be placed within the council binder for future reference.
- The Chair/Co-Chair and Principal shall be ex-officio members of all such committees.

ARTICLE 11: Conflict of Interest

- Each school council member shall avoid situations that could result in an inconsistency between 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.
- Should an issue or agenda item arise during a council meeting where a council member is in a conflict of interest, they shall declare conflict of interest immediately and decline from the discussion and resolution.

ARTICLE 12: Conflict Resolution Procedures

- Every school council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her concern or opinion about the issue at dispute and how the dispute has affected him or her.
- Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times and be allowed to speak without interruption.
- The chair's responsibility is to clarify the statements made by all speakers, to identify common ground among the points of view raised, and to set out the joint interests of all members.
- If no common ground can be identified, the chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
- If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the chair shall request the intervention of a senior administrator or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.

ARTICLE 13: Finances

The Council accepts fiscal responsibility for handling the community funds they collect. This includes all the proper recording of receipts and expenditures, the retention of all receipts and backup, and the analysis and reporting of the activities in a timely manner.

- All monies raised by the St. Mary of the Angels Catholic School Council shall be used at the discretion of the Catholic School Council and for the benefit of the school/students and to meet the expenses of the Council.
- Records need to be kept for 6 years plus current at the school.
- The normal course of business for expenditures is that budgets will be set and pre-approved by council. In the event of unusual or unplanned situations, approval from at least one executive member is needed for any funds to be expended up to \$100.00 and any amount over \$100.00 must be brought back to council for approval.
- All monies shall be deposited by the school in a board account.
- Three signing officers must be chosen (Treasurer, Chair and Principal - any two individuals are authorized to sign cheque requisitions, one of which should be the Principal).
- Treasurer is responsible for the deposit of funds, retention of accurate receipts and acute of all sub-ledgers of all depts & credits.

ARTICLE 14: Annual Report

The Executive Council will prepare a report at the beginning of the school year highlighting its activities, goals and achievements of the previous school term. This report should be completed 2 weeks into the new school term. This report will be broadly distributed using school resources, such as the CSC newsletter and school website.

ARTICLE 15: Election Procedures

General elections for school council will be held every year within the first 30 days of the new School year.

- Election date to be announced at least 14 days before the election; notice will be sent home.
- A voting process notice will be sent home informing parents of the date and time of the election to be held at the school.
- The Candidate Declaration forms shall be filed with the Principal.
- The principal or designate and at least one parent member not running for any position on council shall be present at counting the ballots.

- The results of the election will be published using school newsletter & website.
- If nominations received by the due date are fewer than the maximum established vacancies, then the nominees shall be acclaimed to the position of Catholic School Council.
- Candidate(s) will be responsible for being present during elections. If they cannot attend, said Candidate(s) shall contact the School Principal. The nominated Candidate(s) must prepare a written statement that shall be read to the parent community on their behalf. If nominated Candidate(s) do not contact School Principal with valid reason(s), said Candidate(s) shall be eliminated from the ballot for this particular term.
- In the event that a vacancy occurs (within the executive team) during the council term of one year, the Chair of the Catholic School Council or the Principal shall send a written notice seeking nominations to fill the vacancy to the parents via the youngest child. The vacancy shall be filled by majority vote of the parent members of the St. Mary of the Angels Catholic School Council. If there is only one nomination for the vacancy, the Chair of the Catholic School Council may elect or appoint that Candidate by acclamation.

ARTICLE 16: Amendments to Constitution and By-Laws

Proposed amendments shall be sent to the Chair and Secretary for inclusion as a 'Notice of Motion' at the Annual General Meeting, for distribution only and not discussion.

All written amendment(s) shall be submitted to the Chair and Secretary of Council at least 7 days before the Annual General Meeting. Copies of all proposed amendments shall be distributed to the members of the School Community at least 10 days prior to the following Meeting. At the next subsequent Meeting, each Notice of Motion, being the said amendment(s), will be discussed and brought to a vote and resolution.

Amendments must be approved by a majority of the council members constituting a quorum.

Amendments that do not receive approval may not be tabled again before one year has elapsed.

ARTICLE 17: Dissolution of Council

Council shall be dissolved if and when the school ceases to operate. In the event of dissolution of Council, the disposal of funds in the Treasury shall be voted upon at the final General Meeting of Council, provided notice in writing containing the amount of the funds in the Treasury and the proposal to dispose of the funds shall have been sent to the members of the Community together with the notice of the date and time of the final General Meeting.

Code of Ethics

- ***A member shall*** consider the best interests of all students.
- ***A member shall*** be guided by the school's and the school board's mission statements.
- ***A member shall*** act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council, as identified by the school's operating guidelines, the school board, and the Ontario Ministry of Education.
- ***A member shall*** become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- ***A member shall*** maintain the highest standards of integrity.
- ***A member shall*** recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- ***A member shall*** treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
- ***A member shall*** encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- ***A member shall*** acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council.
- ***A member shall*** respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council.
- ***A member shall*** not disclose confidential information.
- ***A member shall*** limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- ***A member shall*** use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- ***A member shall*** promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
- ***A member shall*** declare any conflict of interest.
- ***A member shall*** not accept any payment or benefit financially through school council involvement.

Email Etiquette

Email should be used to:

- Follow-up on council discussions
- Share general information about the school or community
- Review written content and event materials such as flyers, posters, newsletter articles/blurbs, etc.
- Recruit volunteers
- Remind parents of special dates and event
- Decision making or voting of a current issue via email (see ARTICLE 8)

Email should not be used to:

- Introduce new topic or issue (if possible, wait until our general meeting)
- Initiate discussion around a new topic or issue
- Dispute an issue
- Handle conflict

Constitution and Bi-Laws Binding

- All members of the Council shall abide by Ontario Regulation 612-00, this Constitution and its accompanying By-Laws, in both spirit and letter.
- The Constitution and By-Laws of the Council shall be in force and effect from the date that they are passed by the Council, after notice in writing to the School Community.

This Constitution and its accompanying By-Laws are accepted and authorized by St. Mary of the Angels Catholic School Council on the ____ day of _____, 2012.

Signed by all executive members of the St. Mary of the Angels Catholic School Council and the Principal.

Adel Martini

Date

Francesca Sirizzotti

Date

Julia Di Virgilio

Date

Rita Iannaco

Date

Elena Naccarato

Date