

St. Catherine Catholic School Council

Working Constitution

ARTICLE 1 - NAME

1. The organization shall be called the St. Catherine Catholic School Council, hereinafter referred to as the Council. The guiding documents for the creation of this Constitution come from the Ontario Ministry of Education and Peterborough, Victoria, Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board. Where there are any discrepancies between this Constitution and the above mentioned sources, the above mentioned sources will dictate decisions.

ARTICLE 2 - PURPOSE

1. The objectives of the Council are:
 - to develop a strong relationship amongst home, school and the wider community, by engaging in regular communication;
 - to raise funds, as governed by Peterborough, Victoria, Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board Policies, for the purchase of items for the classrooms, library, gymnasium and school grounds;
 - to seek the views and opinions of the school's community on the operation of the school and the programs and services provided;
 - to provide advice to the principal and, as appropriate, to the Board of Education and/or its Senior Staff, on the development and implementation of policies, programs and services affecting the school;
 - to be an effective voice for promoting the interests of the school and social and recreational needs of students;
 - to promote and support quality education and healthy and enthusiastic learning environment.

Council discussions shall maintain a school-wide focus on all issues. Council meetings are not a forum for discussion about individual parents, students, staff or other Council members. Under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (1989), Councils cannot access information on individual students and staff. Individual members of the school community shall deal directly with the staff members and/or the principal to resolve specific concerns.

ARTICLE 3 - ACCOUNTABILITY

The Council shall:

- Maintain a constitution that meets the needs of the school and community;
- Establish its goals, priorities and procedures;
- Organize information and training sessions to enable members of the Council to develop their skills as Council members;

- Communicate regularly with parents and other members of the community to seek their views and preferences with regard to matters being addressed by the Council and to report on the activities of the Council to the community;
- Work within existing policies and procedures of the Board;
- Annually review goals, priorities, procedures and the Constitution;
- Ensure that all meetings are open to members of the school community.

ARTICLE 4 - MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership in the Council is automatically granted to all parents/guardians with children enrolled in the school, all faculty and staff and one appointed community representative.
2. There is no fee for membership on the Council.

ARTICLE 5 - EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

1. The Council will be administered by an Executive which will include, but not be limited to, the following positions:
 - Chair
 - Vice-Chair
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
2. The Executive will assign duties as listed above in ARTICLE 2. It shall be assumed that all members of the Executive will support and facilitate the activities of all other Executive members.
3. All Executive members shall comply with the provisions of this Constitution and adhere to Board and Provincial policies and procedures for School Councils. Any conflict amongst member(s) of the Executive will be addressed following Board guidelines.
4. An Executive member who does not adhere to the principles contained herein or who cannot comply with their assigned responsibilities may resign or be removed from the Executive. In order to remove a member from Council Executive, written notice of intent from the Principal and/or Chair must be given to all Executive members and a special Executive meeting be convened. Two weeks notice must be given for such a meeting and voting by secret ballot must take place. A two-thirds majority will be required for the removal of the Executive member.

ARTICLE 6 - OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. The Executive members will elect other Council members according to the Ministry of Education Guidelines for School Councils and Peterborough, Victoria, Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board policies and procedures.
2. Sixteen to twenty parent representatives (excluding Executive Members) will be elected to the School council. Parent Representatives can assume committee leadership roles and responsibilities.
3. School Administration will determine and organize Teacher and Administrative Staff representation at Council meetings. The absence of Teachers and/or Administrative Staff will not affect Council meetings.

ARTICLE 7 - ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

The Ministry of Education's established "Election Procedures for School Council Elections" will be followed for all elections and appointments. Some of the key rules are as follows:

1. All elected positions will be for a term of one year.
2. Elections shall occur within the first 30 days of the start of each School Year.
3. Parents/guardians wishing to seek a term on the Council will be invited to complete the standard application form when applying for each term of office.
4. If the number of declared candidates received is fewer than the number of elected positions to be filled, then those candidates shall be acclaimed and no election shall be held. Acclaimed candidates shall have the same standing as elected candidates.
5. A "Meet the Candidates Night" will be held should there be sufficient interest and at the discretion of the school Principal and the Ad Hoc Election Committee which will oversee the elections.
6. Elections for School Councils will be conducted by secret ballot. Neither proxy nor absentee voting is permitted. Voters must be present at the school to vote.
7. If all elected positions have not been filled at the end of the election process, the Council shall appoint the necessary number of eligible persons to serve for the balance of the term of office. If appointments fail to fill all positions, the Council shall proceed to operate as long as a parent majority exists.

ARTICLE 8 - MEETINGS

1. The Council will hold a minimum of 4 regular meetings at the school. All meetings are open to the public.
2. Council meetings will include review of minutes of previous meeting, presentation of financial statements and other business as required.
3. Special meetings of the Executive may be held at the call of the Chair or on the request of other Executive members or Principal.
4. The agenda for each meeting shall be distributed before each meeting to all Council members and meeting overview/highlights will be included in the School's newsletter.
5. Minutes of all meetings will be distributed to members of the Council and a copy posted in prominent locations in the school shortly after each meeting.
6. While voting is the responsibility of the elected and appointed members, all members of the school community at large may voice their own ideas and opinions at any meeting. For issues of major concern, the Chair should be approached and asked for these concerns to be added to the agenda. The time allocated for these issues will be at the discretion of the Chair.
7. At meetings, the speaker shall ask permission to speak through the Chair. The time allowed is 3 minutes on an issue if speakers have had prior access to the meeting's agenda; 5 to 7 minutes will be allowed if speakers have not had prior access to the meeting's agenda. Each speaker is allowed 2 chances to speak to/on the same issue thus allowing others to speak and bring closure to the issue unless the Council agrees to extend the discussion.
8. Meetings will end no later than 8:30 p.m. unless the Council agrees to extend the time.

ARTICLE 9 - VOTING

1. Motions will be passed based on 50% + 1 of the voting members who are present at a meeting. At the beginning of each meeting, the Chair or acting representative will announce the number of votes required to pass a motion for that particular meeting. This number will be based on the number of voting members who are present at the beginning of the meeting.
2. Only elected Council members (Executive and Parent Representatives) can vote at Council meetings.
3. The Chairperson can exercise one additional vote to break a tie if necessary.
4. Proxy voting is not permitted.

5. On occasion, it is in the best interest of the School Community that a decision is made in a timeframe that prohibits calling a full meeting. At such times, authority may be assigned by Council to the Executive to act on behalf of Council. A report of the activity will be made to Council at the earliest opportunity.

ARTICLE 10 - COMMITTEES

1. From time to time, the Council may establish permanent Standing Committees, Ad Hoc or Special Purpose Committees. The Executive shall approve the Chair of any such committee.
2. Committees will be established as require, such as fundraising, educational issues, parent information sessions, etc.
3. It is not necessary to be an elected member of Council to chair these committees, however effort will be made to effectively use the time and talent of Council Parent Representatives.
4. The Council is to encourage volunteers from the school community to participate on committees.
5. Committee members will report to the School Council.

ARTICLE 11 - FINANCIAL CONTROL

1. The Financial statements of the Council will be presented at the meetings. An operating budget will be presented to Council for approval within 90 days of the start of each School Year.
2. The Principal shall make the accounting books and bank statements available for review upon request of the Treasurer and/or Chair.
3. Standing Committees responsible for generating Council funds will work with the Treasurer to maintain consistency in reporting.
4. Fundraising proceeds shall be counted in the presence of at least two other persons and delivered promptly to the school Secretary (or designate) for deposit. All Council funds will be deposited and dispersed through the established bank account(s).

ARTICLE 12 - CONFLICT OF INTEREST

1. Members of the Council shall declare a conflict of interest in matters that they, members of their families, or business entities in which they may have an interest, stand to benefit either directly or indirectly by decisions of the Council.

2. A member shall exclude him or herself from discussions in which:
 - ✓ A conflict of interest is likely to result; or
 - ✓ The member's ability to carry out his or her duties and responsibilities as a member of the School Council may be jeopardized
3. A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

ARTICLE 13 - CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. 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.
2. Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
3. Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption for a reasonable period of time identified by the Chair.
4. 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.
5. If no common ground can be identified, the Chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
6. If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the Chair shall request the intervention of a Superintendent or other Senior Administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.

ARTICLE 14 - ROLE OF SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. **Chairperson: The role of the Chairperson shall include but not be limited to:**
 - ▶ Prepare the agenda for Council Meetings and obtain Principal's approval;
 - ▶ Ensure the agenda is distributed to Council members in advance of the meetings;
 - ▶ Chair Council meetings and Executive meetings;
 - ▶ Ensure recording and maintenance of minutes;
 - ▶ Participate in information and training sessions;
 - ▶ Maintain on-going communication with the school Principal and other school officials;
 - ▶ Follow Board Policies and Administrative Regulations;
 - ▶ Encourage community representation;
 - ▶ Approve and sign cheque requisitions;
 - ▶ Appoint committees as required.

2. Vice-Chair: The role of the Vice-Chair shall include but not be limited to:

- ▶ Assist the Chair as required;
- ▶ Chair Council meetings in the absence of the Chair;
- ▶ Manage School Council's e-mail and mail box;
- ▶ Prepare Council's monthly contribution to the School's newsletter;
- ▶ Organize and maintain School Council bulletin board;
- ▶ Assist and participate in all Executive activities.

3. Treasurer: The role of the Treasurer shall include but not be limited to:

- ▶ Provide a current statement or receipts and disbursements including current bank balances;
- ▶ In the absence of the Chair's signature, approve and sign cheque requisitions;
- ▶ Prepare the year end financial statements and operating budgets;
- ▶ Assist and participate in all Executive activities;

4. Secretary: The role of the Secretary shall include but not be limited to:

- ▶ Record and distribute meeting minutes to an established e-mail distribution list;
- ▶ Post meeting minutes on Council's bulletin board or another prominent area in the school;
- ▶ Assist and participate in all Executive activities.

5. Principal: The role of the Principal shall include but not be limited to:

- ▶ facilitate and assist in the operation of the Council;
- ▶ Assist, advise, co-operate and consult with the Council as it works towards achieving its purpose and objectives;
- ▶ Support and promote the Council's activities;
- ▶ Seek input from the Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibility;
- ▶ Obtain and provide information required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions;
- ▶ Communicate with the Chair of the Council on a regular basis;
- ▶ Assist the Council in communicating with the school community.

6. Parent Representatives: The role of the Parent Representatives shall include but not be limited to:

- ▶ Attend Council meetings on a regular basis;
- ▶ Vote on Council motions;
- ▶ Participate in information and training programs;
- ▶ Act as a link between the Council and the community.

ARTICLE 15 - AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this Constitution require:

- ✓ a 75% representation of elected and appointed members present at the meeting **and** a 75% majority vote in favour of the amendment.