

Niagara Catholic District School Board

CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCILS

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ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1
- The purpose of the Catholic School Council, as an advisory body, through the active participation of parents is: to advocate and strengthen Catholic Education
 - to improve student achievement and the well-being of students
 - to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents
 - to support the Mission Statement, Vision 2020 Statements, Strategic Directions and Enabling Strategies from the Vision 2020 Strategic Plan.

- 1.2 The Catholic School Council may provide recommendations to the Board and/or Principal on any matters that the Catholic School Council identifies as priorities and shall consult with parents about matters being considered by the Catholic School Council.

Recommendations provided to the Board and/or Principal will represent the general views of the school community and the best interests of all students in the school.

The Board and/or Principal shall consider each recommendation and shall advise the Catholic School Council of the action taken in response to the recommendation.

- 1.3 The Catholic School Council shall have an understanding of current Board policies and the By-Laws of the Catholic School Council to allow members to make meaningful contributions.
- 1.4 The Board will retain all the powers and duties as specified in the Education Act and its related Regulations.
- 1.5 Each Catholic School Council will bear the name “(School Name) Catholic School Council”.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 Catholic School Councils shall be consulted by the Board and/or Principal for

recommendations on new and revised policies and guidelines with respect to:

- the student achievement of all students
- the accountability of the education system to parents
- the code of conduct (provincial and local)
- the appropriate dress code for students (provincial and local)
- the allocation of funding to the Catholic School Council
- the fundraising activities by Catholic School Council members
- the resolution of internal Catholic School Council disputes
- the reimbursement of expenses of the Catholic School Council
- the Board and school's action plans for improvement based on EQAO results and the communication of the plans to parents/guardians
- the criteria and process for selection and placement of Principals and Vice-Principals
- any new educational initiatives at the Board and school levels
- the development of a plan for providing co-instructional activities

2.2 In addition, Catholic School Councils, , may provide advice to the Board and/or Principal on any matters that the Catholic School Council identifies as priorities such as:

- the Catholic character of the school and/or the system
- the preparation of the school year calendar
- the development, implementation and review of all Board policies at the local level
- the involvement with the Parish and liturgical celebrations and sacraments
- Board and/or school policies regarding field trips for students
- school budget priorities
- the community use of school facilities
- fundraising activities
- participation in the Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (NCPIC)
- information and training sessions: curriculum , program goals and priorities
- the school mission statement, and
- other issues deemed appropriate by the Board

3. COMPOSITION

The composition of the Catholic School Council will reflect the diversity of the school community.

3.1 Parents/guardians shall form the majority of the Catholic School Council as specified in the By-Laws of the Catholic School Council. A parent, in respect of a Catholic School Council is a parent of a student who is enrolled in the school and includes a guardian as defined in section 1 of the Education Act. In

the case of a Catholic School Council in a school that is for adult students, students enrolled in the school may act as “parents” on a Catholic School Council.

- 3.2 A person is not qualified to be a parent member of the Catholic School Council if,
 - i) he/she is employed at the school; or
 - ii) he/she is employed elsewhere by the Board and fails to take reasonable steps to inform persons qualified to vote of that employment
- 3.3 The Catholic School Council may choose to include other members as deemed appropriate to reflect the community of the school.
- 3.4 The Catholic School Council may appoint two or more Community representatives as specified in the By-Laws of the Catholic School Council.
- 3.5 A parish priest or representative from the local parish or a designate from the community will represent the parish on the Catholic School Council.
- 3.6 One Secondary student representative enrolled in the school, who is appointed by the student council, or in an elementary school one student enrolled in the school, who is appointed by the Principal, after consulting with the Catholic School Council.
- 3.7 The Principal and/or Vice-Principal of the school.
- 3.8 One teacher who is employed at the school elected by teachers.
- 3.9 One non-teaching staff member who is employed at the school elected by non-teaching staff
- 3.10 Where appropriate, one parent/guardian representative of a special needs child within the school may be appointed as a special needs advocate.

4.ELECTIONS AND TERM OF OFFICE

- 4.1 Elections shall be held within the first 30 calendar days of the start of the school year, on a date that has been selected by the current Chairperson/Co-Chairperson of the Catholic School Council in consultation with the Principal of the school.
- 4.2 The Principal shall at least 14 days before the date of the election give written notice of the date, time, and location and availability of election forms to every parent who has a student enrolled at the school. This notification may be given by giving the notice to the students for delivery to parents and by posting the notice in the school that is accessible to parents.
- 4.3 self-nominations are acceptable.
- 4.4 The elections must be organized by the school Principal and any retiring Catholic School Council members, if applicable, in a way that will ensure that all parents and staff have the opportunity to vote for their representatives. The election of parent members shall be by secret ballot.
- 4.5 Principals, with the assistance of the Catholic School Council election committee, are to review and finalize nominations, confirm names on ballots, run the election, and communicate the results.
- 4.6 The term of office for elected positions will be a one-year term, in order to

encourage increased parent involvement and leadership. It is recommended that every Catholic School Council will include a statement in their By-Laws such as “that a term for elected officer positions of the Catholic School Council will not exceed two consecutive years”.

- 4.7 Students, staff and non-teaching staff will be elected for a one-year term.
- 4.8 A member of a Catholic School Council may be re-elected or reappointed, unless otherwise provided by the By-Laws of the Catholic School Council.
- 4.9 Names and addresses, and contact information of the Chairperson of the Catholic School Council shall be forwarded to the Director of Education within 30 days of the election.
- 4.10 Names of Catholic School Council members will be published to the school community by the Principal no later than 30 days following the election.
- 4.11 For election purposes, each Catholic School Council may determine the maximum number of parent members to be elected as stated in the By-Laws of the Catholic School Council.
- 4.12 Members of the Catholic School Council will not receive an honorarium or payment for general expenses.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

The role of a Catholic School Council member carries with it certain responsibilities. The Catholic School Council may define the roles and responsibilities of its members in its own operating By-Laws in addition to the following responsibilities:

- 5.1 Catholic School Council Chairperson/Co-Chairperson (voting members) shall:
 - Call Catholic School Council Meetings in consultation with the Principal.
 - Cooperatively plan the agenda with the Principal.
 - Chair the meetings.
 - Ensure the minutes of the meetings are recorded, maintained, and posted on the school website.
 - Participate as ex-officio members of all committees established by the Catholic School Council.
 - Ensure that any views presented in the capacity of Chairperson represent the position of the Catholic School Council.

- 5.2 Parent Representatives (voting members) shall:
 - Attend and participate in Catholic School Council meetings.
 - Solicit views of other parents and members of the community to share with the Catholic School Council.
 - Participate in information and training sessions.
 - Respond to requests from the Board.
 - Observe the Catholic School Council's Code of Ethics and established By-Laws.
 - Maintain a school focus on all issues. Meetings are not a forum for discussion about individual students, staff, Catholic School Council

- members or Trustees.
- Promote the best interests of the Catholic school community.

5.3 School Principal (non-voting member) shall:

- Facilitate the operation of the Catholic School Council,
- Attend every meeting of the Catholic School Council, or direct a designate.
- Support and promote the Catholic School Council.
- Seek input from the Catholic School Council, i
- Act as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies and collective agreements.
- Communicate with the Chairperson of the Catholic School Council as required.
- Act as the secretary/treasurer of the Catholic School Council.
- Prepare and present a Principal's Report at each Catholic School Council meeting including a financial statement of the Catholic School Council.
- Ensure that copies of the minutes of the meetings are kept at the school and posted on the school website.
- Assist the Catholic School Council in encouraging participation of all groups within the school community.
- Cooperatively plan the agenda with the Catholic School Council Chairperson and forward to all Catholic School Council members a minimum of three calendar days before the meeting date.
- Maintain a full and accurate account of the proceedings and transactions of each Catholic School Council meeting.

5.4 School Staff, Community, Student, Special Needs, and Parish Priest Representatives (voting members) shall:

- Contribute to the discussions of the Catholic School Council.
- Solicit views and report where applicable at each Catholic School Council meeting.
- Communicate information back to their representative groups.

6. MEETING PROCEDURES

6.1 Meetings will open and close with a prayer.

6.2 The Catholic School Council shall meet a minimum of four times during the school year.

6.3 Meetings will commence on time and not last more than two hours, unless the Catholic School Council agrees to a longer meeting as determined by the By-Laws.

6.4 All meetings of the Catholic School Council shall be held at the school and are open to members of the school community.

6.5 Catholic School Council meetings shall not proceed unless there is a quorum in attendance. A quorum is fifty percent plus one (50% + 1) of members, but at all times there must be a majority of parents at the meeting as well as the Principal and/or his or her designate.

- 6.6 Substitutes or proxies are not permitted.
- 6.7 The agenda for Catholic School Council meetings shall be distributed to all members a minimum of three days in advance of the meeting.
- 6.8 The Principal shall give written notice or post on the school website of the dates, times and location of the meetings of the Catholic School Council, to every parent of a student who, on the date the notice is given is enrolled in the school.
- 6.9 At the first meeting of the new school year, the Catholic School Council shall elect a parent/guardian to serve as Chairperson and may choose to elect a Co-Chairperson.
- 6.10 Minutes of the meetings are to be recorded and maintained at the school site, posted on the school website, and made available at the office of the school.
- 6.11 The Catholic School Council may establish committees to carry out specific functions and will seek widespread participation in these activities. Every committee of the Catholic School Council must include at least one parent member.
- 6.12 The Catholic School Council shall use consensus, where possible as the usual method for developing recommendations and plans. If voting becomes necessary, a simple majority will be sufficient for a vote on any issue.
- 6.12 The Catholic School Council, in consultation with the Principal of the school, shall inform the general school and parent communities of its activities, through the school website and school newsletters.

7. VACANCIES

- 7.1 The By-Laws of the Catholic School Council shall include the expectation that members attend Catholic School Council meetings regularly, and will include provisions for the Chairperson or Co-Chairperson to determine the intent of members to continue serving on the Catholic School Council if absenteeism occurs on a regular basis.
- 7.2 There will be no discretionary removal of a duly elected or appointed Catholic School Council member before the end of his or her term.
- 7.3 If a vacancy of a parent member occurs, and only if this vacancy changes the simple majority of parents, notification will be given to all families and interested parents will be asked to submit their names to the Principal by a designated date. The Catholic School Council will hold an election in accordance with the By-Laws of the Catholic School Council.
- 7.4 If a vacancy of a community representative occurs, the Catholic School Council may request that the agency appoint another member, may choose a different organization, or, choose not to fill the position.
- 7.5 If a student, teacher or non-teaching representative vacancy occurs, the Principal shall arrange for a replacement where possible.
- 7.6 Individuals filling a vacated position shall hold the position until the term for that position expires.
- 7.7 A vacancy in the membership of Catholic School Council does not prevent the Catholic School Council from exercising its authority to fill the position.

8. CODE OF ETHICS

Catholic School Councils shall establish a code of ethics that outlines expectations of

its members and guides their behaviour. The code of ethics shall address such matters as:

- roles and responsibilities of Catholic School Council members,
- conflict of interest and the management of conflict,
- manner in which members are expected to act, and
- the establishment of a process for resolving internal conflict disputes in accordance with Board policy.

9. ESTABLISHING BY-LAWS

9.1 Catholic School Councils must develop By-Laws within the first sixty days of the school year to address the following areas:

- Election procedures
- Filling vacancies
- Conflict of interest
- Conflict resolution procedures as per Board Policy No. 800.3

9.2 By-Laws governing other areas of operation may also be developed but must be in accordance with any applicable Board policies and Ontario Regulation 612/00.

9.3 By-Laws are to be reviewed annually by the Catholic School Council.

10. DELEGATIONS

10.1 Individuals may approach the Chairperson or the Principal to be placed on the agenda. This request must be in writing and received at least two weeks before the meeting. The Chairperson, in consultation with the Principal, may approve or deny such requests.

10.2 Delegations will be limited to ten minutes.

10.3 Following a presentation, the Catholic School Council will decide, whether to amend the agenda at that point, refer it to a future meeting, or take no action.

11. RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS

If, the Principal, after discussion with the Catholic School Council Chairperson, determines that the Catholic School Council or any of its members have contravened Regulation 612/00 or Board Policy 800.1, the Principal or Chairperson will discuss the matter with the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education. Please see the [**Complaint Resolution Policy No. 800.3**](#).

12. FUNDRAISING

12.1 Fundraising activities may be conducted as long as they are in accordance with Board policies and guidelines. Funds raised are to be used for a purpose approved by the Board and/or Principal.

12.2 Any funds and assets generated through fundraising activities assisted by the Catholic School Council are the property of the Board.

12.3 All fundraising activities conducted by the Catholic School Council must be included in the annual report prepared by the Catholic School Council.

13. ANNUAL REPORT

- 13.1 The Catholic School Council shall submit an annual written report on its activities to the Principal of the school and to the Board. [See Appendix A](#)
- 13.2 The Principal shall provide a copy of the report to every parent of a student enrolled in the school by giving the report to the parent's student for delivery or by posting the report in the school that is accessible to parents, or on the school website.