



St. Christopher
Catholic School Council
By-Laws

Established January 2014



NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

*“The Niagara Catholic District School Board,
through the charisms of faith, social justice, support and leadership,
nurtures an enriching Catholic learning community
for all to reach their full potential and become living witnesses of Christ.”*

This document is based on the “Template for Catholic School Council By-Laws 2013-2014” which was recommended by Senior Administration for all Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) Catholic School Councils to use as the basis for their By-Laws.

Everything that follows in these By-Laws must be in keeping with:

- Ontario Regulation 330/10 ‘School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees’*
- Ministry of Education: ‘School Councils, A Guide for Members’ www.edu.gov.on.ca*
- NCDSB Catholic School Council Policy No. 800.1*
- NCDSB Complaint Resolution Policy No. 800.3*

By Legislation these By-Laws must be in place within 60 days of the start of each school year and are to be reviewed annually.

1. NAME

The name of this advisory body is “St. Christopher Catholic School Council”

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the St. Christopher Catholic School Council, as an advisory body, through the active participation of Parents and Guardians is to:

- Advocate and strengthen Catholic Education
- Provide recommendations to the NCDSB and/or Principal to improve student achievement and the well-being of all students,
- Enhance the accountability of the education system to Parents and Guardians,
- Support the Mission Statement, Vision Statements, Strategic Directions and Enabling Strategies from the NCDSB Vision 2020 Strategic Plan.

3. COMPOSITION (see Board Guideline section 3)

The Parents and Guardians of students who are enrolled at St. Christopher School shall form the majority of the St. Christopher Catholic School Council.

The membership shall be comprised of:

- Parents and / or Guardians of a student enrolled at St. Christopher School who support the Mission, Vision and Values of the NCDSB.
- A person is not qualified to be a Parent / Guardian member of the Council if,
 - he/she is employed at St. Christopher School; or
 - he/she is employed elsewhere by the NCDSB and fails to take reasonable steps to inform persons qualified to vote of that employment.
- The Principal of St. Christopher School,
- 1 St. Christopher Teacher who is employed by the NCDSB,
- 1 Non-teaching St. Christopher Staff member who is employed by the NCDSB,
- A Parish Representative from St. Thomas Aquinas Church,
- By legislation, the Council may also choose to have:
 - 1 Community Representative,
 - 1 Parent/Guardian Representative of a Special Needs child attending St. Christopher School,
 - 1 Student Representative.

4. ELECTIONS & TERM OF OFFICE

- Elections shall be held within the first 30 calendar days of the start of the school year.
- The Principal shall give written notice at least 14 calendar days before the election of the date, time, and location as well as the availability of election forms to every Parent and Guardian who has a student enrolled at St. Christopher School.
- Self-nominations are acceptable.
- Elections will be organized by the Principal and any outgoing Council members to: review and finalize nominations, confirm names on ballots, run the election, and communicate the results.
- The election of Chairperson and Co-chair shall be by secret ballot.
- To encourage increased parent involvement and leadership, the NCDSB recommends that Chairperson and Co-chair terms not exceed 2 consecutive years.
- Names, addresses, and contact information of the Chairperson and Co-chair shall be forwarded to the NCDSB Director of Education within 30 calendar days of their election.
- Names of Council members will be published to the St. Christopher School community by the Principal no later than 30 calendar days following the election.
- Members of Council will not receive an honorarium or payment for general expenses.

5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

St. Christopher Catholic School Council members fulfill roles with associated responsibilities.

Chairperson, (voting member) shall:

- Call Council meetings in consultation with the Principal.
- Plan the meeting agenda with the Principal.
- Chair the Council meetings.
- Ensure minutes of meetings are recorded, maintained & published by the Principal.
- Participate as ex-officio members of all committees established by Council.
- Ensure that views they share represent the position of St. Christopher Catholic School Council.
- Act as Liaison to the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE).
- Solicit views of other Parents, Guardians & members of the community to share with Council.
- Participate in information and training sessions.
- Respond to requests from the NCDSB.
- Observe the Council's By-Laws, including *Code of Ethics* and *Resolution of Conflicts* sections.
- Maintain a school-wide focus on all issues.

Co-Chair, (voting member) shall:

- In the absence of the Chairperson, perform the duties of Chairperson.
- Attend and participate in meetings.
- Solicit views of other Parents, Guardians & members of the community to share with Council.
- Participate in information and training sessions.
- Respond to requests from the NCDSB.
- Observe the Council's By-Laws, including *Code of Ethics* and *Resolution of Conflicts* sections.
- Maintain a school-wide focus on all issues.

Parent / Guardian Representatives (voting members) shall:

- Attend and participate in meetings.
- Solicit views of other Parents, Guardians & members of the community to share with Council.
- Participate in information and training sessions.
- Respond to requests from the Board.
- Observe the Council's By-Laws, including *Code of Ethics* and *Resolution of Conflicts* sections.
- Maintain a school-wide focus on all issues.

Principal (non-voting member) shall:

- Facilitate the operation of the Council.
- Attend every meeting or direct a designate.
- Plan the agenda and communicate with the Council Chairperson.
- Support and promote the Council.
- Seek input from the Council.
- Act as a resource on Ministry laws & regulations, NCDSB policies and collective agreements.
- Act as the Secretary / Treasurer of the Council.
- Report at each Council meeting and provide financial statements for Council events.
- Ensure that approved Council meeting minutes are maintained, available & posted.
- Participate in information and training sessions.
- Respond to requests from the NCDSB.
- Observe the Council's By-Laws, including *Code of Ethics* and *Resolution of Conflicts* sections.
- Maintain a school-wide focus on all issues.

Parish Representative, Staff Representatives, Community Representatives, Special Needs Representative, Student Representative (voting members) shall:

- Contribute to the discussions of the Council.
- Solicit views and make reports, where applicable, at each Council meeting.
- Participate in information and training sessions.
- Respond to requests from the NCDSB.
- Observe the Council's By-Laws, including *Code of Ethics* and *Resolution of Conflicts* sections.
- Maintain a school-wide focus on all issues.

6. MEETING PROCEDURES

- Meetings will open and close with a prayer.
- At the first meeting of the new school year, the Council shall elect 1 Parent or Guardian to serve as Chairperson.
- At the first meeting of the new school year, the Council shall elect 1 Parent or Guardian to serve as Co-chair.
- The Council shall meet a minimum of 4 times per school year.
- 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 / Guardians at the meeting AND the Principal and / or his or her designate.
- The Principal shall publish in the monthly St. Christopher School newsletter and post on the school website the dates, times and location of the meetings of the Council.
- Meetings will commence on time and not last more than 2 hours, unless the Council members agree to a longer meeting.
- All meetings shall be held at St. Christopher School and are open to ALL members of the school community.
- Substitutes or proxies are not permitted.
- The Principal will make every effort to distribute the agenda to members in advance.
- Minutes of Council meetings are to be recorded and maintained at St. Christopher School, posted on the school website, and made available at the school office.
- The Council may establish committees to carry out specific functions. These committees will be chaired by an active Parent / Guardian member of Council.
- Consensus shall be the usual method for developing recommendations and plans. If voting becomes necessary, a simple majority will be sufficient for a vote on any issue.

7. MEMBER ABSENCES AND ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

St. Christopher Catholic School Council members are expected to attend all Council meetings and all committee meetings which they chair, either physically or through electronic means.

- A member who is unable to attend a scheduled Council meeting must request to be excused by contacting the Principal / Chairperson and they will then be listed under “regrets” in the meeting minutes.
- Members, who, prior to the adjournment of a meeting, have excused themselves or depart at any time during a meeting for the remainder of the meeting, will have the time of departure noted in the minutes of the meeting.
- Members, who are not excused from attendance at a Catholic School Council meeting or fail to notify the Principal / Chairperson if unable to attend a meeting, will be marked as “absent” in the minutes of the meeting.
- A member of Council may lose their position for being absent without authorization for 3 consecutive meetings.

8. VACANCIES

- The expectation of St. Christopher Catholic School Council is for members to attend meetings regularly. The Chairperson and Principal shall address incidents of member’s irregular attendance to determine the member’s intent or ability to continue serving on Council.
- There will be no discretionary removal of a Council member before the end of his or her term.
- If a vacancy of a Parent / Guardian position occurs, and only if this vacancy changes the simple Parents / Guardian majority on Council, notification will be given to all families for interested Parents / Guardians to submit their names to the Principal for consideration.
- Where a Parent / Guardian member submits a letter of resignation or is absent from 3 consecutive Council meetings, the Council may appoint a replacement to serve until the next Council election.
- If a Teacher, Non-teaching, Special Needs, or Student Representative vacancy occurs, the Principal shall arrange for a replacement, where possible.
- If a vacancy of a Community Representative occurs, the Council may request that the Community agency appoint another member, the Council may choose a different Community organization, or the Council may choose not to fill the position.
- Individuals filling a vacated position shall hold the position until that current term expires.
- A vacancy in membership does not prevent the Council from exercising its authority to fill the position.

9. CODE OF ETHICS

A member shall:

- Consider the best interest of all students.
- Be guided by the Mission Statements of the NCDSB and St. Christopher School.
- Become familiar with the Education Act (facilitated by the Principal)
- Act according to School and NCDSB guidelines, and Ministry of Education Regulations.
- Maintain the highest standards of integrity, recognizing and respecting the personal integrity of each member of the St. Christopher School community.
- Treat all other St. Christopher Catholic School Council members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared, without interruption.
- Create a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- Acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the Council for recommendation to the Principal.
- Respect the confidential nature of some St. Christopher School business, respect the limitations this places on the operation of the Council, and not disclose confidential information.
- Focus discussions at Council meetings to those items that fall within the mandate of Council.
- Use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- Promote high standards of ethical practice within the St. Christopher School community.
- Not accept any payment for their Council involvement.
- Refrain from making any negative statements about any individual or groups.
- Declare any conflict of interest.

10. DELEGATIONS

- Individuals may approach the Principal / Chairperson to be placed on the agenda. This request must be in writing and received at least 2 weeks before the meeting.
- The Principal / Chairperson, in consultation, may approve or deny such requests.
- Delegations will be limited to 10 minutes.

11. RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS

If the Principal, after consultation with the Council Chairperson, determines that the Council or any of its members have contravened Regulation 330/10 or Board Policy 800.1, the Principal or Chairperson, will discuss the matter with the Family of Schools' Superintendent of Education. Please see the NCDSB Complaint Resolution Policy No. 800.3.

Conflict Resolution Process

(adapted from Ontario Ministry of Education document *School Councils - A Guide for Members*)

- If a member becomes disruptive during a meeting, the Chairperson, shall ask for order.
- If all efforts to restore order fail or the unbecoming behaviour continues, the Chairperson, may direct the individual Council member to leave the meeting, citing reasons for the request.
- The removal of a member for 1 meeting does not prevent the member from participating in future meetings of the Council.
- The incident shall be recorded and submitted to the appointed Superintendent of Education by the Principal within 1 week of the meeting.
- It is recommended that parties involved in the conflict follow the NCDSB Complaint Resolution Policy No. 800.3.
- Upon removal of a member, a special meeting shall be called, the purpose of which will be to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute.
- Such a meeting shall be a private meeting and not construed as a meeting of the St. Christopher Catholic School Council.
- Any resolution reached at the meeting to resolve the conflict shall be signed and respected in full by all parties to the agreement.

12. FUNDRAISING

- Council activities may generate funds as long as the activities are in accordance with NCDSB policies and guidelines.
- Funds generated from Council activities must be used for the stated purpose, recommended by the St. Christopher Catholic School Council, and approved by the NCDSB and / or Principal.
- Any funds generated or assets purchased from Council activities are the property of the NCDSB.
- All Council activities that generate funds must be included in the St. Christopher Catholic School Council Annual Report.

13. ANNUAL REPORT

The St. Christopher Catholic School Council shall submit an Annual Report of its activities to the NCDSB and post the report for the St. Christopher School community, as per NCDSB timelines.