

Niagara Catholic District School Board

**Mary Ward Catholic
Elementary School**

Catholic School Council

**By-Laws
2023 - 2024**

We are a Christ-centered Catholic faith community that celebrates diversity and fosters spiritual growth, inspiring all to reach their full potential in mind, body and spirit.

Everything that follows in these Bylaws for the Mary Ward Elementary Catholic School Council must be in keeping with Ministry Regulation 612; and Board Policy (800.1).

1 Name of Council (See Board Guideline section 2)

The name of this advisory body is “**Mary Ward, Catholic School Council**”

2 Mandate/Purpose of Council (See Regulation 612, section 2.1 & 2.2; and Board Guideline sections 2)

1. The purpose of the Catholic School Council, through active participation of its members is: To build strong Catholic identity and community to nurture the distinctiveness of Catholic Education; To advance student achievement and well-being for all students in their school community; and To enhance the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians.
2. A Catholic School Council’s primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations to the Principal of the school and/or the Board.
3. Recommendations made to the Principal of the school and/or the Board on any matters that the Catholic School Council identifies as priorities will represent the general views of the school community and the best interests of all students in the school. Recommendations shall be in keeping with the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, along with the distinctive character, philosophy and goals of Catholic education, and respectful of the faith and traditions of the Catholic Church.

3 Membership (See Board Guideline section 3)

To be eligible for election/appointment to the Loretto Catholic, Catholic School Council, a person must:

- Be a parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school;
- Reside within the Board’s jurisdiction;
- Support the Mission of Catholic education, and the Mission, Vision and Values of the Niagara Catholic District School Board; and
- Fully participate in the annual Commissioning of the Catholic School Council members
- A majority of Parents / Guardians – **to a maximum of 15 members**
- Custodial parents/guardians of the students enrolled in the school (elected by parents and guardians) must reside within the boundaries of the school or have Board permission to attend the school.
- Parents/guardians of students, who have selected to continue with asynchronous/synchronous on-line learning from home and are enrolled at a Niagara Catholic school, are eligible to be members of a Catholic School Council.
- Parents/guardians who are home schooling their child/children, have withdrawn their students from the Board, and are not eligible to be members of a Catholic School Council.
- A parent/guardian who is employed by the Board is qualified to be elected/appointed to the Catholic School Council, and shall at the first meeting; notify the members of employment with the Board prior to the election.
- A person is not qualified to be a parent/guardian member of a Catholic School Council if the parent/guardian is employed at the school.

4. Composition of Catholic School Council

- The Principal of the school.
- One teacher who is employed at the school.
- One person who is employed at the school, other than the Principal/Vice-Principal or any other teacher (i.e. support staff).
- A Catholic School Council in an elementary school will include: one student enrolled in the school who is appointed by the Principal of the school, if the Principal determines, after consulting the other members of the Catholic School Council, that the council should include a student
- Community representative(s) appointed by the Catholic School Council who are not employed at the school, or as specified in the By-Laws of the Catholic School Council.

- One parent/guardian to represent the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE).
- A parish priest or representative from the local parish or a designate from the community representing the parish on the Catholic School Council.
- One parent/guardian representative of a student with special education needs within the school to advocate for students with special education needs.

5 Elections & Term of Office (See Regulation 612, Board Guideline section 4, School Councils - A Guide for Members page 7.2)

1. Elections will be held within the first 30 calendar days of the start of each school year.
2. The 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 results.
3. Parents/guardians shall form the majority of the council.
4. The term of office for CSC members is one year. Regulations do not restrict the number of times that a member can be re-elected.
5. In order to encourage increased parental involvement and leadership, it is recommended that a term for elected officer positions of a Catholic School Council will not exceed two consecutive years.
6. Names of council members will be published to the school community by the principal no later than 30 days following the election.
7. Names and addresses of elected members of the council shall be forwarded to the Director within 30 days of the election.
8. Members resigning prior to the completion of their term of office shall submit in writing a letter of resignation to the Secretary of the CSC.

6 Roles & Responsibilities of Catholic School Council Members (See Ministry Regulation 612 sec 23, Board Guideline Section 5)

1. Council Chair (**voting members**)
 - a. Set CSC meeting dates & times with the Principal
 - b. Plan the CSC meeting agenda with the principal
 - c. Chair the meetings
 - d. Ensure minutes of the meetings are recorded and maintained and submitted to the Principal for review
 - e. Submit CSC information to the Principal to be included in the existing school communications (e.g. newsletters, posters, web-site)
2. ALL elected CSC members (**voting members**) shall:
 - a. participate in meetings
 - b. in keeping with the mandate of CSCs (as stated in Regulation 612),
 - i) Parent/guardian members shall consult with parents of pupils & members of the community about matters under consideration by the CSC
 - ii) Staff members shall consult with other staff about matters under consideration and report back to CSC
 - c. participate in information and training sessions
 - d. observe the CSC's code of ethics and by-laws
 - e. maintain a school-wide focus on all issues
 - f. promote the best interests of the Catholic school community
 - g. respond to requests from the Board
3. School Principal (**non-voting member**)
 - a. set the CSC meeting dates & times with the Chair
 - b. set the CSC meeting agenda with the Chair
 - c. facilitate the operation of the CSC
 - d. shall attend every meeting of CSC

- e. seek CSC input in areas for which it is assigned advisory responsibility
- f. act as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies
- g. communicate with the Chair of the CSC
- h. act as the secretary/treasurer of the CSC
- i. ensure that the minutes of the meetings and financial statements are kept in the school and available to stakeholders
- j. approve / publish CSC information submitted by the Chair for existing school communications

7 Meeting Procedures (See Regulation 612, Board Guideline section 6, School Councils: A Guide for Members page 8.8)

1. Meetings will open with a prayer.
2. All meetings shall be held at the school and are open to ALL members of the school community.
3. Meetings will commence on time and not last more than two hours, unless the council agrees to a longer meeting.
4. Council meetings shall not proceed unless there is a quorum and Principal is in attendance. A quorum is 50% + 1 of members, however the majority of members present must be parents/guardians.
5. Substitutes or proxies will NOT be permitted.
6. The Principal will make every effort to distribute the agenda to members in advance.
7. Mary Ward CSC may establish committees to carry out specific functions and to seek greater community participation.
8. Mary Ward CSC shall strive to use consensus as the usual method for developing recommendations to the Principal.

8 Vacancies (See Board guideline sec. 7)

1. The expectation of the **Mary Ward CSC** is that members attend council meetings regularly. The Chair and Principal shall address incidents of member's irregular attendance to determine the member's intent or ability to continue serving on CSC.
2. There will be no discretionary removal of a duly elected or appointed CSC member before the end of his or her term.
3. If a vacancy of a parent member occurs and this vacancy unbalances the simple majority of parents, the position will be filled by a volunteer parent
4. If a vacancy of a community representative occurs, the council will fill the position by advertising the position in the school newsletter, or choose not to fill the position.
5. If a staff or student representative vacancy occurs, the Principal shall arrange for a replacement, where possible.
6. Individuals filling a vacated position shall hold the position until the term for that position expires.
7. A vacancy in the membership of CSC does not prevent the council from fulfilling its mandate.

9 Code of Ethics (adapted from School Council – A Guide for Members) (see Board guide sec. 8 & MOE document School Council - A Guide For Members revised 2002, p5.5)

1. A member shall:
 - Consider the best interests of all students.
 - Be guided by the school's and the board's mission statements.
 - Become familiar with and act according to school & board guidelines, and Ministry of Education regulations.
 - Maintain the highest standards of integrity, recognizing and respecting the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
 - Treat all other CSC 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 school business, respect the limitations this places on the operation of CSC, and not disclose confidential information.
- Focus discussions at CSC meetings to those items that fall within the mandate of CSCs.
- Use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- Promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
- Not accept any payment for their CSC involvement.
- Refrain from making any negative statements about any individuals or groups.
- Declare any conflict of interest.

2. **Conflict of Interest:** Any time the CSC council recommends a business transaction with the potential for monetary gain/loss for any person, agency, or company, and a member of CSC has a vested interest in any way with that particular person, agency, or company, that member shall declare a conflict of interest and shall not be present to discuss or recommend actions relating to the matter. A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential (see School Councils – A Guide for Members page 7.12 for definitions)

10 Review of Bylaws (see Board guideline sec. 9)

1. As part of the review of their effectiveness, at the last meeting of the year the outgoing CSC shall formulate recommendations regarding amendments to the CSC Bylaws to forward to the incoming Council for their consideration.
2. Mary Ward CSC shall review its Bylaws annually, at their inaugural meeting, to familiarize the new CSC members with them, to ensure compliance with Ministry Regulations and Board Policies & Guidelines, and to consider the amendments recommended by the preceding CSC.
3. All Bylaw amendments shall be approved by a majority vote of CSC.

11 Delegations (see Board guideline sec. 10)

1. Individuals may approach the chair or the principal to be placed on the agenda. The Chair, in consultation with the Principal, may approve or reject such requests. This request must be made with ample time prior to the meeting to consult and prepare.
2. Delegations will be limited to ten minutes.

12 Resolutions of Conflicts (see Board guideline sec. 11)

1. If, in the opinion of the Principal, after discussion with the CSC Chair, and after addressing the issue with CSC, the process and advisement of the CSC contravene the mandate of the Board and/or the Principal, and special interest groups seem to be controlling the agenda of CSC, the Principal or Chair may approach the Family of Schools Superintendent to discuss the matter.
2. The decision of the Family of Schools Superintendent may be appealed to the Director of Education.
3. The decision of the Director of Education is final.

Conflict Resolution Process (adapted from School Councils – A Guide for Members)

1. If a member becomes disruptive during a meeting, the chair shall ask for order.
2. If all efforts to restore order fail or the unbecoming behaviour continues, the chair may direct the individual council member to leave the meeting, citing reasons for the request.
3. The removal of a member for one meeting does not prevent the member from participating in future meetings of CSC.

4. The incident shall be recorded and submitted to the Superintendent of Schools by the Principal within one week of the meeting.
5. It is recommended that parties involved in the conflict follow the Board's complaint process.
6. 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.
7. Such a meeting shall be a private meeting and not construed as a meeting of CSC.
8. Any resolution reached at the meeting to resolve the conflict shall be signed and respected in full by all parties to the agreement.

13 Fundraising (see Board guideline sec. 12)

1. Any school based activities that act as fundraising shall be conducted in accordance with Board policies and guidelines.
2. Any profits realized by CSC activities and initiatives are deemed to be "school-generated funds" and legally belong to the board.
3. School generated funds are to be used for a purpose recommended by the CSC and approved by the Principal (and the Board, when appropriate).
4. Any assets purchased with school generated funds belong, legally, to the Board.
5. All activities promoted by CSC that generate a profit or loss must be included in the annual report to the Board and community, prepared by the CSC.

