

**OUR LADY OF FATIMA (GRIMSBY)
CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL**

CONSTITUTION

Article 1.0 **Name**

The name of the organization shall be: “Our Lady of Fatima (Grimsby) Catholic School Council” (hereinafter referred to as “the Council”).

Article 2.0 **Purpose of the Organization**

The Council is an advisory body. The advice provided by the Council shall be in keeping with the Mission Statement of the Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) (hereinafter referred to as “the Board”) and the School. This advice shall be supportive and in concurrence with the distinctive character, philosophy and goals of Catholic Education and respective of the Faith and Traditions of the Catholic Church.

Article 2.1 **Mandate**

The mandate of the Council is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. The Council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations in accordance with the Regulations to the principal of the school and the Board. As an advisory body, the Catholic School Council may provide advice to the school board and/or principal on any matters that council identifies as priorities. Advice provided to the school principal or Board will be based on the general views of the school community and the best interests of all students in the school.

Article 3.0 **Membership on the Catholic School Council**

- 3 (a) The Council shall endeavor to be composed of:
- i) Twenty (20) parents or guardians of students enrolled in the school at the time of the member’s term, which shall form the majority on the Council. The word “guardian” can be substituted for “parent” wherever it is found in this document. Where appropriate, the Council may set aside one position for a parent representative of a special needs child from within the school;
 - ii) One (1) or two (2) community representatives;

- iii) The Pastor of St. Joseph's Church Grimsby or his designate;
 - iv) The school Principal, who is a non-voting member;
 - v) One (1) teacher employed at the school;
 - vi) One (1) non-teaching staff member employed at the school.
- 3 (b) In the event that one or more vacancies exist, the Council will attempt to fill the vacancy within thirty (30) days.
- 3 (c) Provided that the Council periodically attempts to fill a vacancy which remains after thirty (30) days, a quorum of the Council members serving as defined in Article 10 (f) shall be sufficient to conduct the business of the organization.

Article 4.0 Placement/Election to the Catholic School Council

Elections to Council shall occur within the first thirty calendar days of the start of each school year. Election forms will be made available. The Principal with the assistance of any outgoing council member(s) and/or teacher(s) at the school shall coordinate and assume responsibility for the calling of elections, the counting of ballots, and the publication of the election results. Wherever there is a requirement to elect a parent, teacher, or non-teaching staff member in Article 4, that election will be conducted by secret ballot.

4 (a) Parent members:

- (i) In September of each year, vacancies resulting from the end of parent members' terms will be filled by election from amongst the parents within the school community. A call for nominations will be made by the Principal. Each nominee may be named by another parent, or self-nominated, in writing, and the nominee must indicate his or her willingness to the Principal to stand for election.
- (ii) The election will be by way of balloting. Each parent of a student enrolled in the school shall be entitled to one vote for each vacant parent membership position on the council. Voters must be present at the school on the election day(s) during the preset hours for voting.
- (iii) The Election Day proceedings shall be supervised by the Principal or by his/her designate with the assistance of an Election Committee, if required, comprised of retired Council members.

- (iv) If the number of candidates nominated is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates shall be acclaimed.
- (v) Vacancies occurring during the year, such as resignation or removal, will be attempted to be filled within thirty (30) days by application to the existing Council who may, on the nomination of another parent, vote, and on majority approval, appoint the parent to the Council until the next call for nominations in accordance with Article 4(a)(i).

4 (b) Community Representative(s):

- (i) The Council may advise the principal to include other members as deemed appropriate to reflect the community of the school.

4 (c) Pastor of St. Joseph's Church in Grimsby or his Designate:

- (i) In September of each year, the Council will inquire whether the Pastor will attend the upcoming school year himself or whether he will designate a pastoral representative.

4 (d) Teacher Representative:

- (i) In September of each year, under the direction of the Principal, the teachers on staff will elect a representative from amongst those who have been nominated. In early September of each year, the teachers on staff shall nominate or self-nominate possible candidates by informing the Principal in confidence. The Principal will then privately approach the nominees to determine whether any or all wish to stand for election.
- (ii) In the event that this position becomes vacant prior to the end of the position's term, the Principal will attempt to fill the vacancy within thirty (30) days in the same manner as found in Article 4(d)(i).
- (iii) At the discretion of the Principal the Teacher Representative position may be designated as rotating so that more than one teacher may fill the position throughout the year.

4 (e) Non-Teaching Staff Representative:

- (i) In September of each year, the non-teaching staff, consisting of the support and maintenance staff will elect their representative from amongst those who have been nominated. In early September of each year, the non-teaching personnel on staff shall nominate or self-nominate possible candidates by informing the Principal in confidence. The Principal will then privately approach the nominees to determine whether any or all wish to stand for election.

- (ii) In the event that this position becomes vacant prior to the end of the position's term, the Principal will attempt to fill the vacancy within thirty (30) days in the same manner as found in Article 4(e)(i).
- (iii) At the discretion of the Principal the Non-Teaching Staff Representative position may be designated as rotating so that more than one non-teaching staff member may fill the position throughout the year.

Article 5 **Terms of Office**

- 5(a) All parent representatives will have a term of one (1) school year.
- 5(b) The community representative will have a term of one (1) school year.
- 5(c) The Principal then on staff at the school is automatically a member of the Council.
- 5(f) The teacher representative will have a term of one (1) school year.
- 5(g) The non-teaching staff member will have a term of one (1) school year.

Article 5.1 **Term Limits**

- 5.1(a) The term of a member of the Council automatically ceases when they cease to be eligible for membership in accordance with Article 3.
- 5.1(b) There are no restrictions on the number of times that a member can be re-elected.

Article 6 **Officers of the Catholic School Council**

- 6(a) The Council's officers will endeavour to consist of:
 - i) A Chairperson or two (2) Co-Chairpersons, known as the "Chairperson(s)"
 - ii) A Financial Liaison
 - iii) A Recorder

Election:

- 6(b) (i) The officers will be elected by the Council at their first meeting, following the elections and appointments in September of each year.
- 6(b) (ii) Only parent members are eligible to be elected to the Chairperson(s), or Vice-Chairperson positions.

Term:

6(c) (i) The officers will serve for one (1) school year.

Resignation:

6(d) (i) A member who wishes to resign should notify the Chairperson(s) in writing at the earliest opportunity.

6(d) (ii) If a member fails to attend three (3) consecutive regular meetings of the Council without explanation, they will be deemed to have resigned.

Removal:

6(e) An Officer is automatically removed when they cease to be eligible for membership on the Council in accordance with Article 3.

Term Limit:

6(f)(i) With the intent to increase parental involvement and leadership, the Chairperson(s) position shall not be held by the same member for more than two consecutive years.

Article 7

Duties of Officers

7(a) The Chairperson(s) will:

(i) Set the CSC meeting dates and times with the principal.

(ii) Cooperatively plan the agenda with the principal.

(iii) Chair the meetings of the CSC

(iv) Ensure that Council reports to the school community at least twice during the school year regarding its business.

(v) Ensure that the minutes of the Council meetings are recorded and maintained.

(vi) Ensure that all correspondence of the Council have been approved by the Principal prior to publication.

(vii) Participate in information and training programs.

(vii) Communicate with the Principal.

(viii) Consult with senior NCDSB staff and Trustees, as required.

7(b) The Financial Liaison will:

- (i) Liaise with the Principal and designated staff on all financial matters relating to the Council.
- (ii) Coordinate the preparation of an annual budget to be approved by the principal and the CSC each year.
- (iii) Provide a monthly report to the Council of the accounts for its review based on the financial records maintained by designated School staff.

7(d) The Recorder will:

- (i) Keep accurate records of the meetings which will serve as Minutes and which shall include the members' attendance, the motions voted upon, the duties undertaken, a brief description of the correspondence received, and the written reports submitted. A verbatim transcript of the proceedings is not required.
- (ii) Maintain a location, in consultation with the Principal and/or designated staff, where Council may deposit material such as correspondence, information resources, and past minutes for safekeeping and future reference.
- (iii) At the discretion of Council, the position of Recorder may be designated as rotating so that more than one member may fulfill the duties of Recorder throughout the year.

7(e) The Principal will:

- (i) Set the CSC meeting dates and times with the Chair.
- (ii) Shall attend every meeting of the CSC
- (iii) Assist in the operation of the Council.
- (iv) Support and promote the Council's activities.
- (v) Seek input from the Council in areas for which it has been advisory responsibility.
- (vi) Act as a resource on laws, regulations, board policies, and collective agreements as they affect the school.
- (vii) Approve/publish CSC information submitted by the Chair for existing school communications

- (viii) Obtain and provide information required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions.
- (ix) Communicate with the Chairperson(s) of the Council as required, including cooperation with the planning of the agenda.
- (x) Ensure that postings from the Council are displayed, and designate a secure area for the Council to store its records and, in the event of there being no Secretary or other volunteer, keep a full and accurate account to the proceedings in accordance with the requirements set out for the Secretary's position.
- (xi) Assist the Council in communicating with the school community.
- (xii) Encourage the participation of parents and others within the school community.

Article 8 **Duties of Members**

All members of the Council will:

- 8(a) Attend all of the regular meetings or communicate their regrets to the Chairperson(s), in advance of the meeting. In the event that the Chairperson(s) are unable to attend a meeting, they will endeavor to alert the Vice-Chairperson as soon as possible.
- 8(b) All elected parent members shall participate on at least one committee. The Chairperson(s) need not formally serve on any committee but will be regarded as ex officio members of all committees of the Council.
- 8(c) Participate in information and training programs.
- 8(d) Act as a link between the Council and the school community and encourage their participation.
- 8(e) Declare conflicts of interest.

Conflict of Interest:

- 8(f)(i) Any time the Council conducts business with the potential for monetary gain/loss with any person, agency, or company, and a member of the Council has a vested interest in any way with that particular person, agency, or company, that member shall declare a conflict of interest and shall excuse themselves from the meeting or not be present to discuss, recommend or vote on any actions relating to the matter.

8(f)(ii) The conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential.

Article 9 **Remuneration**

- 9(a) No remuneration for the member's or officer's time on Council business shall be permitted.
- 9(b) Reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for members or any person authorized to undertake an activity by the Council, if supported by receipts, may be considered by the Council.

Article 10 **Meetings**

- 10(a) The Council will endeavor to meet once each month during the school year, but in any case, will meet four (4) times during the school year. All meetings shall be open to all members of the school community.
- 10(b) Meetings are to be limited in duration to 2 hours. They may extend by a further 15 minutes at the end of the meeting by majority vote. Meetings will open with a prayer.
- 10(c) The Council will meet at the school after school hours and at a place designated by the Principal. The Council will endeavor to select a regular meeting evening to facilitate the opportunity for other members of the school community to observe the proceedings.
- 10(d) The Chairperson(s) and the Principal jointly shall have the authority to exclude a member of the Council or a member of the school community from attending a meeting if, in their opinion, the person is disrupting the meeting.
- 10(e) The Council members present at a meeting must vote to exclude all members of the school community at large for any discussion where, in their opinion, the privacy of a person might otherwise be compromised. These in-camera discussions are not recorded meetings, and no motions may be passed during them.
- 10(f) A quorum for the conducting of Council business at a meeting shall be 50% of the members of the current Council, rounded down, plus one. Example: a 15 member Council would require $7 + 1 = 8$ members present. Parent members must constitute a majority of those in attendance. Substitutes or proxies will not be permitted.

- 10(g) The Council shall schedule its meetings for the school year in September and advertise them to the school community at the earliest opportunity.
- 10(h) The agenda for each meeting, aside from a special meeting, shall contain an opportunity for the Principal to address the Council and for scheduled delegations from the school community to make presentations.
- 10(i) Motions must be moved and seconded prior to being voted upon. Prior to voting, a consensus shall be sought. A motion will be carried by a majority vote at a meeting where there is quorum. If requested by any Council member, their supportive or dissenting vote will be recorded.

Article 11 **Committees**

- 11(a) The Council may establish and dissolve committees from time to time. The Council shall define the mandate of each committee, including where appropriate, its budget, method of reporting to the Council, and whether it has the authority to bind the Council by its decisions.
- 11(b) The Chairperson(s) is/are ex officio members of all committees.
- 11(c) Membership on a committee is open to any member of the school community, including parents, volunteers from the community at large, staff, and students who present themselves at a meeting of the committee and are accepted by the Principal and Chairperson.
- 11(d) Each committee shall elect a Chairperson who will then receive a mandate from Council and report to it as the Council may require. The Committee Chairperson will assume the same duties regarding the committee as the Council Chairperson(s) has/have regarding the Council, with the exception of removing a person from a committee. A member can be removed from a committee only with the consent of the Principal and Council Chairperson(s).
- 11(e) The time and place of the meetings of the committees are at the discretion of the Principal. The Principal will endeavor to make the school available after school hours for the purpose of committee meetings.
- 11(f) Those committee members present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum. A majority of members present may carry a motion moved and seconded by a committee member, if the committee has been given the authority to bind Council by its decisions pursuant to Article 11(a). Otherwise, committees will forward their recommendations to Council for formal approval.

Article 12 Accountability to the School Community

- 12(a) The Council shall post or make available the minutes of all meetings at a place designated within the school by the Principal for all Council postings.
- 12(b) The Council shall advertise its meeting schedule, post a list of scheduled meetings, and endeavor to post meeting agendas as they become available.
- 12(c) The members of the Council may choose to have their phone numbers posted. The members will endeavor to accommodate requests for information or receive information from the school community for use in conducting Council business. Staff, or members, may choose to be contacted at the school.

Delegations

- 12(d)(i) Individuals may approach the Chairperson(s) or the Principal to be placed on the agenda. This request should be in writing and received at least two (2) weeks before the meeting. The Chairperson(s), in consultation with the Principal, may approve or reject such requests.
- 12(d)(ii) Delegations will be limited to ten (10) minutes.
- 12(d)(iii) Following a presentation, Council will decide whether to amend the agenda at that point, to refer it to a future meeting, or to take no action.
- 12(e) The Chairperson(s) will prepare a report by the end of June summarizing the business of the Council in the school year just ending with a view to promoting continuity and avoiding duplication of efforts in the upcoming year. This report will be posted in the school at the place designated for Council postings.

Article 13 Financial Policies and Procedures

- 13(a) The financial policies and procedures of the Council are defined by the NCDSB. (Refer to applicable NCDSB statements of policy and administrative guidelines for direction.)
- 13(b) All accounting records and financial information relating to Council are maintained by the School under the direction of the Principal.
- 13(c) Any funds raised by the Council and any assets purchased with those funds belong, legally, to the NCDSB.
- 13(d) All school generated funds are to be used for a purpose recommended by the Council and approved by the Principal (and the Board, when appropriate).

- 13(e) The scope and involvement of the School Council in fundraising for the school shall be limited in concert with NCDSB policy.
- 13(f) The financial records of the Council shall be accessible to members for review during their term of office.

Article 14 **Resolution of Conflicts**

- 14(a) If, in the opinion of the Principal, after discussion with the Council Chairperson(s), and after addressing the issue with the Council, the process and advisement of the Council contravene the mandate of the School Board and/or vision of the Principal and special interest groups seem to be controlling the agenda of the Council, the Principal or Chairperson(s) may approach the Family of Schools Superintendent to discuss the matter.
- 14(b) The decision of the Family of Schools Superintendent may be appealed to the Director of Education
- 14(c) The decision of the Director of Education will be final.

Article 15 **Amendment of the Constitution**

Council members may propose an amendment to be voted upon at a meeting of the Council. The proposed amendment shall be posted with the school in advance of the meeting. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the current Council must vote in favor of the amendment for it to carry. The By-Laws contained in the constitution should be reviewed annually by the Chairperson(s) of the Council, or designate and the Principal.

Article 16 **Code of Ethics**

All member of the Council will:

- (i) Consider the best interests of all students.
- (ii) Be guided by the school's and the board's mission statements.
- (iii) Become familiar with and act according to school & board guidelines, and Ministry of Education regulations.
- (iv) Maintain the highest standards of integrity, recognizing and respecting the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- (v) Treat all other Council members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared, without interruption.
- (vi) Create a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.

- (vii) Acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council for recommendation to the Principal.
- (viii) Respect the confidential nature of some school business, respect the limitations this places on the operation of Council, and not disclose confidential information.
- (ix) Focus discussions at Council meetings to those items that fall within the mandate of Council.
- (x) Use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- (xi) Promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
- (xii) Refrain from making any negative statements about any individuals or groups.