

Manual for School Board Members





PREAMBLE

I have pleasure to introduce to you this new edition of the Manual for School Board Members. The manual supports the work that each of us undertakes to shape the work and mission of the Church in education. It is the culmination of the shared wisdom of many groups within our Church and educational communities and is a reflection of a more complex world view of governance and accountability than we have known in the past.

In particular, the manual provides guidance for the induction and ongoing formation of Board Members to maximise both the contribution of Members as well as the benefits you receive from your involvement with a School Board.

This manual forms the basis of ongoing reflection and development which grows out of lived experience. At the core of Catholic education is the principle of the common good and the challenge to work together to bring to fruition preferential options for the poor and marginalised within our community.

I commend the Manual for School Board Members to you as an opportunity to work together for the greater good of Catholic Education in South Australia.

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Archdiocese of Adelaide

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I. FOREWORD

Dear School Board Member

Welcome to the School Board.

Your membership on the Board is a sign that you have been entrusted with a significant position of leadership in the school community that your Board serves. Your service to the Board is an example of a positive response to the Vatican II call for people to participate energetically in the life of the Church, bringing problems and issues before the community for discussion and resolution (*Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*, n. 10). Because parents are the first educators of their children, the involvement of the broader community of parents and friends is to be fostered and held in high esteem (Canon 796, n. 2).

The Church has made it clear that the academic standards in Catholic schools must be at least as distinguished as that achieved in other schools in the region (Canon 806, n. 2). Your work on the School Board will therefore entail a detailed consideration of all manner of practical issues to ensure that the quality of education offered in your school achieves a high standard of excellence. A critical element of the stewardship that you will exercise is the responsible management of school resources. Schools are becoming increasingly complex organisations and have a demanding set of accountabilities in the governmental, financial, industrial and legal domains. You perform a valuable service to your school community by ensuring, as appropriate at Board level, that your school meets its obligations in each of these areas.

Pope John Paul II reminded all of us, however, that any decision-making or pastoral planning must be grounded in contemplation and prayer (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, n. 15). Although your meetings will no doubt be filled with many agenda items of considerable importance to your school community, it is impossible to overstate the importance of making space for prayer and reflection – both inside your meetings and beyond them. Any role of leadership in the Church demands a capacity to discern the signs of the times as they present themselves in the life of the community. The capacity to bring a spirit of prayer and reflection of the work that you undertake as a member of the School Board is therefore a matter of critical importance.

Pope John Paul II challenged us to develop a ‘spirituality of communion’ as we undertake our work of building up our families and communities (*Novo Millennio Ineunte*, m 43). A spirituality of communion begins when we contemplate the mystery of the Trinity that not only dwells within each of us, but also shines in the faces of the sisters and brothers who surround us.

Those who have embraced a spirituality of communion know how to find what is positive in others and to welcome it as a gift from God. They also know how to ‘make room’ in their hearts for each member of the community, bearing their burdens, thus resisting the temptations that lead to competition, distrust and jealousy. School Boards must be animated by a spirituality of communion if they are to function effectively on behalf of the school and the students who have been entrusted to its care.

Over and above the academic education that is provided to students, the primary objective of the Catholic school is to help its members adopt a Christian way of life. If this aim is to be realised, all members of the community – teachers, parents, pupils, administrative personnel – must work together for the common good to build up the Kingdom of God. ‘Cooperation of all, given in the spirit of the Gospel, is by its very nature a witness not only to Christ as a corner-stone of the community, but also as the light Who shines far beyond it’ (*Congregation for Catholic Education, The Catholic School*, n. 60).

Pray for us, as we pray for you, in your generous service to your school and Board.

+ Philip Wilson.

Most Rev. Philip Wilson DD JCL
Archbishop of Adelaide
for schools in the Archdiocese of Adelaide



+ Greg O'Kelly

Most Rev. Bishop Greg O'Kelly SJ AM DD
Bishop of the Diocese of Port Pirie
for schools in the Diocese of Port Pirie



2. SCHOOL ETHOS

From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith, and having its own unique characteristics. The [Vatican] Council summed this up by speaking of an environment permeated with the Gospel spirit of love and freedom.

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, n. 25.

Every decision that a Board makes and every policy that it formulates should be illumined by the light of faith and should be permeated with the Gospel spirit of love and freedom. Every member of a School Board plays an important role in nurturing and strengthening the Catholic culture of the school. The following excerpts from the statutes for the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools Inc (SACCS) provide signposts into the religious identity of your school.

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World calls us to solidarity with the whole human family, to stand for the dignity of every human person and to work for justice and peace in our global community. It teaches us to give priority to the poor of the earth. It calls us to engage with our culture, to learn from it and to contribute to it.

The Church's contribution to education and specifically to Catholic schools springs from its mission in the world. The Church has something of the utmost importance to say to the world. It points to the God of Jesus Christ as the centre and meaning of the universe. This message challenges all individualistic concepts of the human. It situates the person as always inter-related with other persons, as always inter-connected in a community of creation and as always existing from and in the Trinitarian communion.

Preamble, South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools' Statutes

The SACCS Vision statement (Section 4 of this document) provides further points of reference for anyone wishing to sharpen their understanding of the religious dimension of their school. Catholic education seeks to provide an integral education – one that takes into account the student's intellectual, moral, spiritual religious, physical and social capacities. Students are invited into discipleship – friendship with Jesus – during their time in a Catholic school and the curriculum continually exposes them in various ways to riches drawn from Catholic beliefs, rituals and values. Catholic schools are places of celebration both formally in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, and also in the daily recognition of the presence of God in the web of relationships and events that are the fabric of school life. The pursuit of excellence in all areas of school life, including the academic dimension, is an unequivocal commitment of Catholic education. The development of a capacity for critical thinking, a commitment to a faith that does justice and an attending to the ecology of creation present further touchstones as the religious dimension of the school is explored and amplified.

Each Board Member is challenged to be aware of the joys and sorrows, the celebrations and struggles of the families served by the school. This involves listening to the details of everyday life in the school community.

Members of the School Board must work towards a vision where all people feel supported and valued and encourage each member to participate fully in the life of the school. Community-building takes place in ordinary events such as hospitality towards visitors, parents and members of the local community. It can also be evident in experiences where all participate, such as a school fête, an Open Day, a Family Day or other celebrations.

Formation is an invaluable tool in the life of a Board. Common elements of this may include times of prayer and reflection and celebration of the Eucharist, as well as opportunities for members to come together for social activities. As it goes about its work, the Board will determine the formation that is appropriate to its needs and circumstances.

In your school, many different cultural groups and family structures may be evident. Students may be rich within the Catholic tradition or may represent a variety of Christian denominations and religious traditions, while others have little or no connection with church. While the background of each member of the community must be respected, the mission of Catholic Education is to generate a clear synthesis between the Catholic faith and the life experiences and cultures of all members in the community of the school. Your School Board should be constructed so that the diversity of the school community is well represented and the religious mission of the school is well focused and executed.

Catholic schools must provide a comprehensive educational experience for all children while allowing individual differences and talents to flourish. To achieve this, schools need dedicated and competent teachers as well as modern facilities and resources. To enable this to happen effectively, the School Board requires a clear vision of education for its particular community, thus ensuring that all students receive a well-rounded education of high quality.

School Boards are required to discern and evaluate the extent to which the school is living up to its potential. This requires skills in maintenance, decision-making, planning and facilitation.



3. CANON LAW

One of the tasks from the Second Vatican Council was to translate the conciliar ecclesiological teaching into canonical terms. The laws of the Catholic Church were promulgated in a new Code in 1983 and this code provides the legal framework within the Catholic Church for the establishment and conduct of Catholic schools. A number of canons of the new Code are related to Catholic education. These include those dealing with the teaching role of the Bishop, the rights of Parish Priests, the nature of a juridical person and the section on Catholic education itself.

A full discussion of canon law lies beyond the scope of this manual, but the following two canons have particular relevance for School Board Members.

Canon 532

In all juridical matters, the Parish Priest acts in the person of the parish, in accordance with the law. He is to ensure that the parish goods are administered in accordance with Canons 1281-1288.

Canon 806

§ 1 The diocesan bishop has the right to watch over and inspect the Catholic schools situated in his territory, even those established or directed by members of religious institutes. He also has the right to issue directives concerning the general regulation of Catholic schools; these directives apply also to schools conducted by members of a religious institute, although they retain their autonomy in the internal management of their schools.

The President of the School Board is the parish or regional priest or parish administrator as determined by the bishop. See Section 9.5.2.1 for an elaboration of this important role on the School Board.

As President of the School Board, the Parish Priest or Parish Administrator has canonical responsibilities to ensure the integrity of the school as a Catholic school is maintained.

With the institution of the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools Inc and the development of a Catholic system of schools in the early 1970s, through agreement of the Parish Priests and the Archbishop of the Adelaide Archdiocese and the Bishop of Port Pirie for the Port Pirie Diocese, the administrative responsibility for diocesan Catholic schools came under the Archbishop and Bishop respectively.



4. VISION STATEMENT FOR SA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Catholic schools educate young people in all dimensions of life by:

... developing the whole person.

Catholic schools take into account the student's intellectual, moral, spiritual, religious, physical and social capacities. They are committed to join wholeheartedly with all educators in the search for new methods and more effective ways of passing on the collective wisdom of humankind to subsequent generations.

All students are to be prepared for life in the world, including the rapidly changing world of technology.

... encouraging a life-long searching for the truth.

Catholic schools initiate students into the wisdom of the Church and into the collective wisdom of humankind. This is intended to lead to a thirst for wisdom that continues throughout life.

... challenging students to servant leadership.

Students in Catholic schools are the future leaders in the world and in the Church. In imitation of Jesus, such leadership is understood as service.

Catholic schools invite young people to join in the Church's mission by:

... inviting them to journey to personal Christian faith.

People in Catholic schools are called to follow Jesus, in today's world. Children's capacity for faith grows with age, as St Luke said of the child 'Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and people' (Luke 2:52).

... embodying the Church's wisdom about education.

Catholic schools explicitly intend to hand on the tradition, the deposit of faith, and the accumulated wisdom of the Catholic Church.

... reflecting on and applying current theological insights.

Students and teachers are called to reflect on and apply the renewal of theology promoted by the Second Vatican Council. The experience of people in Australian Catholic schools and the insights of theologians are to be kept in constant dialogue.

... drawing inspiration from the values of the Gospel.

The virtues Jesus inspired in the people of first century Palestine are to be reflected in Catholic schools today. Schools provide for students in areas in which families alone cannot provide all the educational resources needed for preparation for life in the world.

Catholic schools welcome students to a Christian Learning Community by:

... inviting them to grow in responsibility and freedom.

The Catholic school's ideal is one of responsibility and self-determination, lived out in a community context.

... recognising the unique presence of God in all people.

Children in Catholic schools are members of the Catholic faith or have parents who enrolled their children in Catholic schools on the understanding they will participate in the total life of the school as the Second Vatican Council forcibly reminds us that God loves all people. (*Church in the Modern World*, No 29).

... *encouraging the pursuit of excellence.*

Catholic schools are unequivocally committed to the pursuit of excellence in all areas of school life. This includes striving for academic achievement and the building up of community, both civil and religious.

... *being places of celebration.*

The celebration of God's love in Christian sacraments, especially the Eucharist, is at the heart of the Catholic school life. The human and divine gifts of humour, creativity, tolerance, joy, accomplishment and peace are to be prized and celebrated in many ways.

Catholic schools prepare young people for life by:

... *giving Christian witness in the world today.*

Catholic schools participate in the mission of the Church and are privileged places where the values and practices of Catholic Christianity are lived and taught to students as an integral part of life.

... *being aware of all the dimensions of creation.*

For Catholics, a complete ecological view incorporates a Christian understanding of God's overall love for every created reality. (*Genesis 1:1*). This view informs school curriculum and school management.

... *developing an open and critical attitude to the world today.*

Jesus both loved the world and was fiercely critical of abuses in the world. Students need to be educated to develop the capacity for critical thinking, for the ability to discern what is truly good in Australian culture. Students are to be educated to think and act on the basis of personal reflection.

... *promoting mutual relationships and partnerships.*

Students are to be prepared to live and work in a world that increasingly values equality and solidarity among people.



5. THE NATURE OF THE MANUAL

This manual situates the School Board within the Catholic ethos of the school. The Board is an integral part of the faith community, keeping in mind its call to share in the mission of the Church. When using this manual, it is important to follow the *spirit* of the policy and to read particular details within this broader faith context.

Each Catholic school has a particular identity shaped by its history and local community. Due regard must be given to the nature of the community that the Board will serve and its relationship with key groups and associations in the school and parish family. This unique spirituality and charism of a school is further explored by the National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) in its *Catholic School Governance*¹ document when it says:

‘All Catholic schools, regardless of the recency or circumstances of their establishment, have a special spirituality. This is the unique ongoing spiritual story of the school, itself flowing from the fundamental Christian story, which must be told, re-told and celebrated. To say that a school has its own ‘special spirituality’ is merely to recognise that the school, as a continuous human community, naturally develops a distinctive manner and style of giving expression to a common faith.

Where a school has been founded or administered by a religious institute, this special spirituality will be profoundly influenced by the special spirituality of the institute concerned. It is recognised that the spirituality and traditions of different institutes are rich and diverse. Naturally, further development and enrichment of the expression of that special spirituality will occur over time. Just as schools whose history and traditions are based significantly in the work of a religious institute have a right to partake of the special spirituality of that institute, so there exists a right in religious institutes to nurture their special spirituality within such schools.’ (p5).

This manual is intended to assist Board Members to act in a spirit of collaboration and mutuality. It is designed as the basis of on-going reflection and development that grows out of the lived experience of the Board and its particular community, challenging Members to a notion of community and servant leadership. The particular vision of the Archdiocese of Adelaide and the Diocese of Port Pirie should be the framework in which each School Board operates.

¹ National Catholic Education Commission, *Catholic Schools Governance*, May 2002



6. STRUCTURE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

6.1 Catholic Education

The Archbishop of Adelaide, with the Bishop of Port Pirie and congregational leaders associated with Catholic schools in this State, have responsibility for Catholic education in South Australia.

This responsibility is exercised, in agreed areas, through the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools (SACCS), through Diocesan structures and responsibilities and, as appropriate, through the Diocesan Directors of Catholic Education, Principals and School Boards.

6.2 South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools

The South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools is managed by a committee comprising the Archbishop of Adelaide, the Bishop of Port Pirie, the Diocesan Directors of Education of the Archdiocese and Diocese, two nominees of the Congregational Orders and eight members, as well as a chairperson, from the Catholic community. The eight members and chairperson are appointed jointly by the Archbishop, the Bishop and the two Congregational Leader representatives from a list of names submitted by people in the two dioceses.

In accordance with Canon 113 #2, the rights and obligations of SACCS are to:

- make and review policy in those matters relating to Catholic schools which require coordination and rationalisation throughout the State of South Australia; and
- be concerned with education in all Catholic schools and with matters relating to the participation of parents in the education of their children in Catholic schools.

SACCS determines the overall policies that guide all Catholic schools. It is the authorised body for contracts and agreements with the Commonwealth and State Governments in matters of funding and the establishment and development of schools.

SACCS has Standing Committees that are representative bodies of the key partners in Catholic education in South Australia. These committees play an important part in the development of the policies and positions that are approved by SACCS.



6.3 Types of Schools

Catholic schools in South Australia are either diocesan-accountable schools or congregational/order-accountable schools. Responsibility for and governance of diocesan schools by the Archdiocese or Diocese is through the Catholic Education Office in each diocese. Responsibility for and governance of congregational schools is through the Congregation and its appointed Board.

All schools, whether diocesan or congregational, have a Board, Council or governing body. These will have varying degrees of responsibility or authority according to their circumstances and Constitutions.

Diocesan School Boards play an important role in the development of school policy and are responsible for ensuring that the financial affairs of the school are in accordance with SACCS and diocesan policies and guidelines.

6.4 Funding

Most Catholic schools in South Australia, diocesan and congregational, receive their funding through SACCS. This is known as systemic funding. The others receive their funding directly from the Commonwealth and State Governments.

In the case of systemically funded schools, the government grants are administered by the Catholic Education Office in Adelaide and distributed to schools on the basis of policy and formulas on a preferential option for the poor and determined by SACCS. These formulas take into account the socio-economic status of the schools. Some of the grants are used for Catholic schooling as a whole, for example, through the establishment of new schools.

6.5 Catholic Education Offices

The Catholic Education Offices in South Australia (Adelaide and Port Pirie) implement the policies and decisions of SACCS. The Offices also facilitate the offering of a wide range of services to the Catholic schools in this State.

These services are provided generally through Commonwealth recurrent or targeted funds, or through levies contributed by all Catholic schools. The services cover a range of areas including faith formation, school leadership, professional development, curriculum, accreditation, legal and industrial matters, finance, planning and general educational support.

The Catholic Education Offices are the contact points for a range of state and national government and education agencies.

6.6 School Leaders

The Diocesan Directors of Catholic Education appoint the Principals of diocesan schools on behalf of their Bishop. Principals of congregational schools are appointed by the Congregation, the governing authority or through a dual appointment with the Order and the Diocesan Director of Catholic Education.

7. THE PLACE OF SCHOOL BOARDS IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Catholic schools participate in the mission of the Church. The work of the School Board takes place within the context of the work of the Catholic Church educating its young people in the Christian faith and for full participation in society.

The School Board is responsible to the Archbishop/Bishop through the relevant Diocesan Director.

7.1 Subsidiarity

The Second Vatican Council affirmed the principle of subsidiarity in the decision-making process of the Catholic Church. This principle ensures that wherever appropriate, decisions are made at the local level. The principle of subsidiarity recognises the dignity of each individual person in the Church and encourages them to accept the responsibility they each have in the conduct and welfare of the community.

7.2 Partnership

School boards enable a spirit of partnership to be developed within the school community. They are constituted in a way that allows the various bodies within the school to be represented and to provide advice in regard to the development of the school and its management. Board meetings are times when the parish, parent body, staff, local community and the wider Catholic education community meet and work together for the holistic development of students, taking into consideration both their educational and spiritual welfare.

Through partnership, and by the coming together of various people with a range of gifts and talents, the school will become a stronger community and be more effective in its religious dimension, individual identity and educational charter.

7.3 Service

By virtue of our baptism, we are called into service. The process of Christian initiation draws individuals and communities into a lifelong process of conversion – transforming humanity from within and making it new. Those who become disciples of Jesus Christ are called to love and serve their neighbours by using the gifts they have received. Christian service finds expression not only in individual actions, but also in the way that people are with each other, the way they live together and bear witness to the gospel life.

8. THE ROLE AND STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

School Boards undertake roles as determined by their instituting authority. Common terms used to describe these roles include *management, representative, advisory and governing*. Diocesan School Boards are responsible to their governing authority, that is, the Archbishop or Bishop, for prescribed delegated responsibilities as outlined in this manual. Congregational governed schools may have Boards or Councils that have similar roles or structures to diocesan school Boards or they may undertake different roles. Some diocesan schools are part of a broader community structure that includes services in addition to education and consequently operate under a Community Council and/or Board. This manual would also serve as a guide in these circumstances.

Planning and directions can only be set in accordance with SACCS' and diocesan policies and guidelines. Special attention should be paid to those guidelines and directions where the protection of children or the health, welfare and safety of employees and students are concerned.

8.1 Role of the Board

Each diocesan School Board has delegated responsibility from the Archbishop/Bishop for the overall well-being of its school, within SACCS' and diocesan policies and guidelines. In practice, this means that in a spirit of partnership, Boards act to:

- develop policies that nurture the religious dimension and guide the direction of the school;
- develop the relationship between the school and the local Church;
- promote educational excellence within the school;
- support the administration of the school;
- foster harmonious and positive collaboration within the school community;
- protect children;
- monitor buildings and grounds development and maintenance;
- exercise financial stewardship of the school; and
- ensure compliance with legal obligations.



8.2 Structure of the Board

School Boards are important as they bring together, in a formal setting, the significant parties concerned with the provision of education of young people in a particular school. This includes the Parish Priest (or nominated Parish Priest in the case of regional schools) as the President of the Board, the school Principal as the Executive Officer of the Board, parents/legal guardians as elected members, staff and parent organisations and other appropriate experts.

The School Board provides the occasion for the community to consider the needs and well-being of their school through:

- discernment and a spirit of cooperation to arrive at decisions;
- mutual respect and trust to achieve the common good; and
- Board Members cooperating, valuing others, listening to the community, having a clear sense of the purpose of Catholic schools and a commitment to building the Kingdom of God.

The School Board should be a clear sign of the partnership between parish and school, parents and staff, the school and Catholic education as a whole, and between the school community and the broader Church community and society.



9. MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

Members of the School Board show the value they place on Catholic ethos by the way they support the school's vision and aims. They are called to respond to the Christian community, focused as it is upon the person of Jesus Christ and to reflect genuine concern for students' formation as Christian men and women.

To fulfil their role, Members are expected to participate in formation. In this way, they can explore the richness of the Catholic tradition as it is being reformulated to meet contemporary challenges and opportunities. Such formation is essential if the Board is to appreciate fully its role in supporting the education of young people for participation in family and the Church and world communities today.

School Board Members are protected from liability, to the extent that this is possible by law, and appropriate insurance policies held by the Governing Authority.

It is imperative that members act honestly, diligently and carefully in relation to all Board matters. It is not possible to indemnify Board Members, through insurance or otherwise, for conduct involving lack of good faith or in criminal matters.

Board Members must be aware constantly that, on any particular issue, they must act and be seen to act clearly in the best interests of the Board and its operations and the best interests of the school. Board Members must exercise their decision accordingly, even though it may not suit their personal interests or the interests of the group by whom they were elected or nominated.

9.1 Criteria

Potential Members of a School Board should:

- possess an enthusiasm for and willingness to promote the mission of Catholic schools;
- bring to the Board their gifts and skills;
- desire to give service to their school community;
- have an ability to work cooperatively and constructively with all Members of the Board
- be prepared to undertake formation;
- have an ability and desire to uphold confidentiality in Board matters;
- have sufficient time to devote to Board duties; and
- have a current police check clearance through the Archdiocesan Police Check Unit.

Board Members must not, at any time, be in contravention of the Associations' Incorporations Act (1985) which states that they must not:

- be bankrupt;
- have been convicted in the previous five years of an offence involving fraud or dishonesty;
- have been convicted in the previous five years of a serious criminal offence;
- commit an act with intent to deceive or defraud;
- make improper use of information to gain material advantage either personally or for another person so as to cause detriment to the Board;
- conceal, destroy or falsify records of the Board;
- commit fraud or false pretences; and
- refuse or fail to allow an auditor to perform his or her duties or hinder, obstruct or delay an auditor.

9.2 Board Membership

Membership of the Board will be for a period of two years for elected, nominated and appointed members. Members (other than Ex-Officio Members) should not serve more than six consecutive years.

Membership of the Board, where possible, will reflect the diversity of the school community. The inclusion of different voices, experiences and perspectives that support the Catholic ethos of the school will enable the Good News to be proclaimed and lived with freshness. A wide representation is required in order that all groups found in the school community are represented on the Board. At the same time cognisance needs to be given to the Board being able to carry out its delegated responsibilities. Categories of membership of the School Board include:

9.2.1 Ex-Officio Members

Ex-Officio Members are those by right of their position within the community.

The following members are Ex-officio:

The President of the School Board who shall be the Parish Priest or nominated priest from the region;

The Executive Officer of the School Board who shall be the school Principal.

9.2.2 Special Provisions

Usually, the parish or regional priest is a member of the School Board. Where a pastoral associate or parish assistant has been appointed to the parish or region in the absence of a priest, the Archbishop or Bishop from the relevant diocese will determine the relationship between this appointment and the role of the President of the Board.

9.2.3 Elected Members

Those eligible for election to the School Board are parents/legal guardians of students currently enrolled who have signed the enrolment form, members of the local parish community or friends of the school. The majority of elected Members are, however, to be enrolling parents/legal guardians of children attending the school.

Election to membership of the Board is for a period of two years, and should be organised so that half the elected Members retire annually.

Normally there should be six elected Board Members. However, smaller schools may choose to have fewer elected Members. In such cases a recommendation should be put to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) by the Board regarding the proposed number.

9.2.4 Appointed Members

The Diocesan Director of Catholic Education, after consultation with the President, Chairperson and school Principal, may appoint a nominee to the Board. This generally occurs for new schools, changes in the structures of existing schools or when special circumstances warrant.

9.2.5 Co-opted Members

The Ex-Officio Members and Chairperson may jointly, after consultation with the other Board Members, co-opt additional Members as necessary and/or appropriate. Co-opted Members act in an advisory capacity and do not have voting rights. At the Board's discretion, they may attend all or part of such meetings.

The Board, through the Principal, may invite school personnel to be present at meetings for a particular purpose.

The attendance of co-opted Members is to be recorded in the minutes.

9.2.6 Nominated Members

Nominated Members are those from groups within the community or region with specific responsibilities related to the work of the local parish/regional school. Nominated Members will see themselves as representative of the school community and work for its development.

The following groups will each nominate a person to membership of the Board for a period of two years:

- Parish Pastoral Council (or Councils, if the school is regional);
- Parents' community; and
- School staff.

9.2.7 Employees/Employees' Spouse on Board

With the exception of the Principal and the nominated staff representative, no person employed by the school, or their spouse, is eligible for nomination, election or appointment to the Board except at the discretion of the Diocesan Director of Catholic Education.

9.3 Elections of Community Members and Office Bearers

The School Board lies at the heart of a Christian community where all share in rights, dignities and responsibilities. The Board works towards this vision of community, striving to build a place where all people feel supported and valued.

Vacant positions are declared at the last Board meeting before the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the school community. Consequently, elections are held at the AGM.

Vacant positions are detailed in the school newsletter by the Principal and Chairperson of the School Board. Eligibility regarding membership and responsibilities should at this point be explained clearly.

At the first Board meeting following the AGM, the Board Members elect the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Chair of the Finance Committee.

9.4 Re-election, Resignation and Removal of Members

9.4.1 Any retiring Member may be re-elected provided they have not served for *more than six consecutive years* in one term of office. Such persons may be re-elected after a break from membership.

9.4.2 Any Member may resign from membership.

9.4.3 Any elected or nominated Member may be removed from office by a resolution passed at a meeting of the Board provided that:

- a written notice of motion of such a resolution is given to all Members of the Board *at least three days* before the meeting;
- the resolution must be dealt with at a meeting of the Board in accordance with the requirements of clauses 10.1.10, 10.1.13 and 12;
- *at least two-thirds* of all Members are present at the meeting;
- *four-fifths* of those voting vote in favour of such removal;
- subsequent *approval* has been sought from, and given in writing by, the relevant Diocesan Director of Education; and
- existing Members are notified of such approval.

9.4.4 Any elected or nominated Member who is absent for *three consecutive meetings* of the Board *without sufficient reason* may be deemed to have vacated their place. The Board will notify such Members of its decision in writing.

9.4.5 Should a position of *elected* Member of the Board become vacant, the Ex-Officio Members and Chairperson of the Board, in consultation with the School Board, shall have the power to appoint a replacement until the next School Board election.

9.4.6 Should a position of *nominated* Member of the Board become vacant, the nominating body shall nominate a replacement until the next School Board AGM.

9.4.7 No employee of the school shall hold the office of Chairperson of the Board or Chairperson of any Board Standing Committee (apart from an acting or temporary situation).

9.5 Roles and Responsibilities of Board Members

9.5.1 Individual Board Members

Being a Member of a School Board involves many kinds of responsibilities and relationships. The information that is shared demands protocols that need to be understood and observed by all. Board Members must know how to handle confidences, the action to take if matters are referred to them and how they should relate to the school community.

Members should be representative of the interests of all the partners in the school. The primary obligation to the Board is greater than any other obligation to a particular interest group by which that Member has been appointed to the Board.

In accepting a position on the Board, Members indicate they believe in its ethos, have a genuine interest in the school and wish to give something in return for the benefits they might have received as a student, parent or care giver. In practice, this requires them to:

- acknowledge that schools are a significant expression of the mission of the Catholic Church;
- become more knowledgeable about the mission of Catholic education, as expressed in the school, and promote it sincerely to the various groups with whom they have contact;
- familiarise themselves with school/SACCS/Catholic Education Office/ Diocesan policies in relation to school operations;
- recognise the need for and participate in formation and continuing education about School Board responsibilities;
- develop an understanding of the school's financial management, including a capacity to interpret the school's financial documentation;
- understand that they do not represent the Board without *explicit* authorisation of the Board;
- give the necessary time, thought and study to the work of the School Board in order to provide an effective service to the community;
- complete tasks necessary for committees and reports for each School Board meeting;
- support the Principal in authorised functions and refrain from intruding in administrative details;
- base personal decisions upon all available facts in each situation and act with honest conviction;



- abide by and uphold the final decision of the Board regardless of the personal stand taken on any issue;
- keep in confidence all Board material and the discussions and business of the Board meetings;
- understand that statements and documents pertaining to Board matters are subject to laws relating to defamation, privacy and confidentiality;
- bring to the attention of the Board any direct or indirect financial or personal interest in a contract or decision being made by the Board and disqualify themselves from discussion and voting on such an issue;
- work with other Board Members in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during discussion; and
- know and respect appropriate processes relating to Board business.

9.5.2 Office Bearers

The roles and responsibilities for office bearers are detailed below.

9.5.2.1 President

The President is the parish or regional priest or parish administrator as determined by the Archbishop or Bishop. He or she will receive regular reports from the Principal. The President is required to act in accordance with the tenets of the Catholic Church; and

- attend and participate in Board meetings;
- ensure that the Catholicity and integrity of the Catholic school is upheld;
- support the Principal; and
- support the pastoral care and spirituality of the school staff, students and parents in collaboration with the Principal.

9.5.2.2 Chairperson of the School Board

The Chairperson of the School Board is required to:

- work with the Principal in supporting the vision of the school and be accessible to the Principal and Board Members;
- conduct all meetings in accordance with normal meeting protocols and demonstrate that understanding by firm but fair control of agendas;
- allow time for each Board Member to be heard;
- liaise with the Principal in the preparation of the agenda and reports;
- ensure the minutes of the previous meeting are accepted and signed;
- monitor tasks undertaken by the Board;
- be a spokesperson for the School Board at any functions as required;
- ensure the Board's understanding and agreement of the financial performance of the school through close liaison with the Chairperson of the Finance Committee; and
- report to the school community through the newsletter or as appropriate.

9.5.2.3 Executive Officer (Principal)

The Principal is the Executive Officer of the Board and is required to:

- inform the School Board about matters affecting pedagogy, curriculum development, finances, capital development, maintenance and OHSW policies and procedures of the school and any other matters that relate to the role of the Board;
- be a spokesperson and representative of the School Board at any functions as required;
- provide the Board with reports, relevant material and research to assist in planning;
- provide information and make recommendations to assist in discussion and decision-making;
- be the avenue of official communication between the Board and staff; and
- provide formation of Board Members regarding educational trends and directions.

9.5.2.4 Chairperson of the Finance Committee

The Chairperson of the Finance Committee is required to:

- ensure proper financial management systems are in place in accordance with the *Finance Manual for South Australian Catholic Schools*, including the school's five-year financial plan and with diocesan policies and guidelines within the diocese;
- oversee, on behalf of the Board, the preparation of the provisional budget of income and expenditure for the coming calendar year;
- ensure that spending is in line with the budget;
- ensure financial reports, including monthly reports and audit reports, are presented to the Board;
- ensure the Board understands such reports, is aware of the school's true financial position and deals with necessary issues; and
- ensure that the Board appoints an auditor in accordance with the guidelines in the *Finance Manual for South Australian Catholic Schools*.

The Chairperson of the Finance Committee does not assume the complete responsibility associated with financial management of the school. A detailed description of the roles of those involved in the financial management is to be found in the *Finance Manual for South Australian Catholic Schools*. The Chairperson of the Finance Committee must not be an employee of the school.

9.5.3 The Secretariat

An appropriate person as determined by the Principal will carry out the following duties for the Board:

- take accurate minutes of Board meetings and the AGM;
- check for accuracy with the Principal before circulating the minutes for approval by Board Members;
- ensure the minutes and the agendas are distributed to Board Members in advance of meetings;
- ensure the minutes are marked 'CONFIDENTIAL' to the Board Members;
- ensure that a copy of all minutes is kept on file; and
- undertake any correspondence for the Board as appropriate.

This person is not a Member of the Board and can only provide advice or comment with the invitation of the Board. The School secretary may assist with carrying out these duties, if appropriate.

9.6 Liability



Diocesan Boards are not separately incorporated. Boards operate under the authority of the Archbishop and Bishop, as well as of SACCS, and ultimately under the legal entity which is Catholic Church Endowment Society Incorporated for the Archdiocese of Adelaide and The Catholic Diocese of Port Pirie Incorporated for the Diocese of Port Pirie. Both of these legal entities are incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act 1985 (*“the Act”*). Diocesan school Boards are accountable for their decisions and operations through their respective Catholic Education Office either to Catholic Church Endowment Society Incorporated or to the Diocese of Port Pirie Incorporated, as appropriate. Their Members are protected from personal liability by the incorporated status of Catholic Church Endowment Society Incorporated and of the Diocese of Port Pirie Incorporated to the extent that this is possible under the Act.

Persons occupying Board positions are required to abide by the provisions of the Act and ensure that they act honestly and with reasonable care and diligence in the exercise of their powers and the discharge of their duties. They must not make improper use of information or improper use of their positions so as to gain, directly or indirectly, any pecuniary benefit or material advantage for themselves or for any other person or so as to cause a detriment to the school.

All Board Members are covered by the school's insurance cover in relation to public liability and professional indemnity insurance.

Catholic Church Endowment Society Incorporated and the Catholic Diocese of Port Pirie Incorporated are prevented by law from indemnifying office holders who are guilty of negligence, default or breach of duty or breach of trust.

Members of non-diocesan school Boards should clarify the insurance arrangements with the school.

10. SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

The effectiveness of a School Board Meeting is determined by the degree of organisation and planning by the Principal and Chairperson of the School Board prior to the meeting.

10.1 Procedures

The Board may make rules and procedural regulations to conduct its affairs. These must be in accordance with the general principles laid down in this manual and with the Rules for the Board as detailed in Chapter 8. The following procedures enable the Board to accomplish its business in a considered manner. The Chairperson has a key role in managing the agenda and should ensure the following points are addressed at each meeting:

10.1.1 Quorum

A quorum of 50% plus one of voting Members is required to start the meeting.



10.1.2 Agenda and Prioritising Items

Time allocations should be made for agenda items. Members are invited to indicate items requiring discussion and to list other matters for Board consultation.

10.1.3 Welcome, Prayer and Formation

Members are welcomed and the meeting begins with prayer. Meetings should also incorporate a period of spiritual formation of Members. Each School Board will need to determine how this takes place. Formation might include prayer, an exploration of the role of the School Board, investigation of one aspect of the Christian tradition, discussion about the goals of the Catholic school or the acquisition of particular skills. An extended time to explore sections of this manual would also be appropriate.

10.1.4 Apologies

Apologies and attendance are noted and recorded, including co-opted Members.

10.1.5 Minutes

Minutes of the previous meeting should be circulated with the agenda and reports prior to the meeting.

The minutes of the meeting should be a summary record of the issues discussed and any resulting recommendations. They should not be a word-for-word account of the meeting.

Minutes and Board documents, although confidential, are subject to laws relating to defamation, privacy and confidentiality and need to be written accordingly.

10.1.6 Moving of Minutes

Minutes are evaluated for accurate reporting, then a person who attended the previous meeting should move that the minutes as printed be confirmed. The motion should be seconded and put to a vote. If passed, the Chairperson signs the copy of the minutes to remain on file.

10.1.7 Business Arising

Business arising from the minutes is discussed. Some matters may be dealt with under Reports or Correspondence.

10.1.8 Correspondence

Outward correspondence is tabled and approved by motion.

Inward correspondence can be listed and available for perusal before or after the meeting.

10.1.9 Reports

Where reports are required, they should be written and attached to the agenda. Reports from the:

- Principal;
- Chairperson of the Finance Committee;
- Representative of the School Parent Community;
- Staff Representative;
- Parish Representative;
- Occupational Health and Safety Committee or Responsible Officer; and
- Sub-committees

will be presented in advance and dispatched to all Board Members for reading prior to the meeting.

Where it is not possible for any of the above to meet this requirement, copies must be tabled to all Members on the night of the Board meeting. The Chairperson of the School Board will allow additional reading time.

Decisions related to tabled papers may be deferred to subsequent meetings.

The Chairperson of the Finance Committee should give a full report of the school's current and projected financial situation.

10.1.10 General Business

Each item is considered in turn. In decision-making, a discernment process leading to consensus is preferable. If a more formal process is necessary, the process of moving and seconding motions and/or amendment is followed. Where the discernment process needs to move to a voting process, the majority of votes will carry the vote.

10.1.11 Meeting Closure

Meeting closure should be recorded and the date of the next meeting clarified.



10.1.12 Time Structure

The suggested time structure for meetings is two hours,

Meeting times may be extended for a brief period if the Chairperson and/or Principal believes the number of items listed will require additional time.

10.1.13 Decision-making

Consensus is the preferred decision-making mode for School Boards.

In extraordinary situations, where a School Board cannot reach consensus on a particular matter, then it can be deferred and discussed and voted on at a subsequent meeting of the Board. If the matter is still unresolved, the Chairperson may choose to exercise a casting vote. If the Chairperson does not wish to exercise a casting vote then the matter may lapse.

However, if the Chairperson, Principal or Parish Priest decides that the matter is critical to the development of the school and needs to be resolved, the Diocesan Director of Catholic Education can be approached and direction sought.

10.2 Annual General Meeting

10.2.1 Outline of Meeting

An AGM of the School Board will be held at either the end or the beginning of the school year as deemed appropriate. Parents of children attending the school and members of the local or regional church communities should be encouraged to attend.

The meeting will include the presentation of:

- the President's report;
- the Chairperson's report on School Board operations for the current year including a summary of the work of the sub-committees;
- the Principal's report;
- other reports that are considered appropriate for the occasion;
- the previous year's financial activity; and
- the ensuing year's draft budget.

10.2.2 Election of the Board

The election of parent representatives for the ensuing year is conducted at the AGM by the Principal. The Board calls for nominations in writing before the meeting and the list of candidates is presented.

In order to be eligible for nomination as a parent representative, the parent must be an enrolling parent of a student enrolled at the school. This includes:

- a person who enrolls the student and has legal responsibility or legal guardianship of the student; and
- a person standing in loco parentis to the student and who enrolls the student

but does not include a parent of a student where a court order specifies that another parent or person has sole parental responsibility or sole guardianship of the student to the exclusion of that parent.

Voting is by secret ballot by the enrolling parents/legal guardians of students enrolled at the school at the time of the nomination and present at the meeting. *No proxy votes are permitted at the meeting.*

Candidates should have received prior information as to the role, function and responsibilities of the School Board.

10.3 Extra-ordinary Meetings

The President, Executive Officer or Chairperson of the School Board or the relevant Diocesan Director of Catholic Education may call an extra-ordinary School Board meeting from time to time. Members must be provided with a minimum of two days' notice.



II. COMMITTEES

Committees may be either *permanent* or *ad hoc* committees.

A *permanent* committee refers to a 'specific focus-ongoing' committee. These committees are the core of an effective School Board and usually cover the following key areas:

- Catholic identity of the school and Pastoral Care;
- Education;
- Buildings and Grounds, Development and Maintenance (see Finance Manual for SA Catholic Schools); and
- Finance (see Finance Manual for SA Catholic Schools).

A *permanent* committee generally considers only the matters that have been referred to it and reports the findings or makes recommendations to the School Board. A committee may be formed when members of a school community are appointed to take care of investigating, implementing or developing certain tasks connected with the operation of the School Board.

Such committees will have an *advisory* function only and will present recommendations that may require implementation to the Board for consideration and action.

From time to time, it may be necessary to form a 'specific focus-short time' committee of the School Board to oversee the development or implementation of a special project or policy on behalf of the Board. These committees are referred to as *ad hoc* committees. Examples of areas for an *ad hoc* committees might be:

- ... school review and development;
- ... specific curriculum initiative;
- ... parent education; and
- ... review of school uniform.

It is the responsibility of the School Board to develop the following elements for each committee:

- terms of reference;
- membership;
- responsibilities;
- timeline;
- decision making process; and
- reporting and communication mechanism to the School Board.

11.1 The School Parent Community

The school parent community has representation on the School Board. The parent community and the Board have their own responsibilities while working closely together to further the well-being of the school through facilitating the partnership between the school, the parish and the home.

In relation to any fundraising role that the parent community may undertake for the school, the School Board, the parents and Principal work towards shared decisions in relation to the needs of the school and how funds raised by the parents could best meet the needs of the school.

11.2 Auxiliary Committees

There are committees in the school that would be considered auxiliary committees. Examples of these include the canteen and the uniform shop committees. These, if needed come under the umbrella of the School Board and must be established by the Board.

Auxiliary committees should have *clear and known terms of reference* which define their relationship with and responsibilities to the School Board. Generally the link between the auxiliary committee and the Board is the Principal. The School Board is responsible to the Archbishop/Bishop through their respective Directors and to the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools for any financial and legal arrangements and should ensure that there are clear accountability processes in place for auxiliary committees.

11.3 Out-of-School-Hours Care

Where an Out-of-School-Hours Care program is established by the school, the School Board is responsible for its overall well-being and financial management and the Principal is responsible for its operation. More detail regarding these responsibilities is available from the Catholic Education Office.



12. DECISION MAKING

12.1 Process for Decision-Making at School Board Meetings

The Board needs to conduct itself in an atmosphere of acceptance, trust and goodwill to facilitate effective decision-making. Members should promote a spirit of openness, seek opportunities for personal growth, show care and concern for human difficulties and problems, and demonstrate a willingness to accept the expertise of professional educators and administrative staff.

Members of the Board should keep in mind that Catholic schools aim to provide a caring and supportive environment for students, families and staff. In particular, the Board will strive to act justly and to reach out with compassion to the *most vulnerable* members of the school community.

Discussion and decision-making should be guided by a commitment to reach a position where there is *consensus*. Group Members are asked to:

- consider the place of prayer in the decision-making process;
- reflect on the vision statement for the school community;
- remember that the Board acts *on behalf of the school community* rather than for sectional or personal interests; and
- ensure decisions taken are consistent with the values espoused by the group and the community it serves.

The Chairperson, Principal and Parish Priest have key roles of leadership to exercise during the process of discussion and discernment. In particular, the Chairperson must ensure that all opinions are heard and respected and that the decision-making process reflects the values of the community.

It is not necessary for all School Board Members to agree with a *particular decision*. Once a decision is made, however, it is one that is *binding on all Members*, irrespective of whether or not they voted in its favour. It would be inappropriate for any Member to voice, outside of Board meetings, opposition to a decision of the Board.

12.2 Grievance Procedures

The School Board works towards a vision of community which is striving to build a place where all people feel supported and valued.

In matters that clearly relate to their function, Boards have an obligation to be open to members of the school community raising concerns or issues.

In making known its openness, the Board should also make explicit an appropriate procedure for grievances. This would generally be that matters should be conveyed verbally or in writing to the Chairperson of the Board. The Chairperson would consult as necessary with the Principal to determine the most appropriate course of action.

Board Members themselves may raise matters of general concern, but only after discussion and reference to the Chairperson and Principal prior to the meeting.

If the Chairperson or Board Member is contacted about a matter concerning the operations of the school, then the person making the contact should be referred to the Principal. If this is difficult for some reason, the Board Member may convey the concern to the Principal. It is important to note that the Principal is the appropriate and responsible person to be informed of any issues that arise from the operations and administration of the school. Instances may include student behaviour, wearing of uniform, teaching programs, behaviour management, determination of classes and teacher assignment, teacher performance and school rules.

If the issue persists, the Principal may call upon the Chairperson of the Board, or the President of the Board, to facilitate a resolution of the matter. It is not, however, the responsibility of the Chairperson or the President to engage in an investigative inquiry. Care needs to be taken to ensure that matters are resolved in ways that reflect a *negotiated and conciliatory approach*.

If the matter is not resolved and further action is necessary, the person should be invited to direct their concerns in writing to the Diocesan Directors of Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Adelaide and the Diocese of Port Pirie, as appropriate.

These Directors are responsible for the administration and operation of diocesan schools in their diocese. Matters relating to the competence and performance of staff in fulfilling their duties are the province of Principals. The competence and performance of diocesan Principals is the province of the Director of Catholic Education for the relevant diocese. Principals of Congregational or non-diocesan schools are responsible to the governing body which appointed them.



13. POLICY DEVELOPMENT

13.1 Nature of Policies for Board Consideration

Boards have responsibility for developing policies in areas that are part of their role and function, as listed in this manual, and that are consistent with the Constitution for School Boards as set out in the Appendix (Chapter 20) of this manual.

The Board develops policies that:

- guide the direction of the school, particularly in terms of its education, ethos and Catholic identity;
- are compliant with legal requirements;
- enable it to carry out its financial responsibilities;
- relate to strategic directions for the school;
- ensure the proper development and maintenance of the school's buildings and infrastructure;
- ensure sound OHSW practices within the school are met;
- promote positive relationships within the school community; and
- facilitate appropriate pastoral care of staff, students, parents and others involved with the school.

The Board's policies should not be concerned with the detail of the implementation, nor should the Board develop policies relating to the *day-to-day* administration of the school. Policies should reflect the values and principles that underpin Catholic education. A good policy is a *guide* for action and not the action itself.

13.2 Process for Developing Policies

Policies are written generally in response to an emerging need. In many instances, the Principal, as Executive Officer of the Board, will bring an issue to the Board for consideration and possible policy development. On other occasions, policies may arise out of the work of the Board, SACCS, Church, or other agencies.

The School Board has a responsibility to implement SACCS and diocesan policies and to ensure that the Board's policies or decisions are congruent with such policies including OHSW requirements. The Principal as Executive Officer of the Board must ensure that these policies and requirements are brought to the attention of the Board.

The essential characteristics of a good school policy are based on a clear statement of belief or purpose and arise from goals which have been adopted for the school. The policy should:

- contain a framework for achieving clearly stated purposes;
- provide a clear basis for the preparation and implementation of procedures;
- provide directions, but not prescribe methods for arriving at the end result;

- allow the flexibility to adjust for changing conditions, without making fundamental changes to the policy;
- be brief and concise; and
- be written in a style readily understood by all members of the school community.

There are various means of developing policies. One suggested way is to:

- identify the area for which a policy is deemed to be necessary;
- clarify and establish the process to be followed as well as the timeline;
- gather information relevant to this area. This may be done by the Principal or a committee established by the Board;
- share the wisdom of the Board by reflecting on the information, considering different options, seeking points of agreement, identifying implications and determining areas in which further information may be needed;
- draft a statement based upon understandings to this stage;
- consult with the school community as necessary;
- engage in further discernment to arrive at the best possible consensus position;
- formulate the policy statement;
- identify the resources required to implement the policy, as well as those with the responsibility of implementing it;
- consult further as necessary;
- finalise the policy and any evaluation process;
- formally accept the policy at the School Board; and
- publish and disseminate the policy.



14. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

14.1 Responsibilities of the Board

The School Board is responsible for oversight of the financial management of the school to its community, SACCS and the Diocesan Directors of Catholic Education or Congregational leaders for the financial management of the school.

In exercising this responsibility, the School Board is to have due regard for SACCS, Catholic Education Office and government policies, procedures and guidelines. In particular, School Boards are to follow the guidelines and requirements published in the *Finance Manual for South Australian Catholic Schools*.

The School Board is responsible for the efficient use of financial resources to ensure the best possible pastoral and educational outcomes for students. It is responsible for approving the annual budget of the school, including the setting and collection of fees.

14.2 Exercising the Responsibilities

Boards should, as part of their committee structure, establish a finance committee. A Board Member, preferably but not necessarily, with finance or accounting background, should be appointed Chairperson of the Finance Committee. This structure emphasises that the Board has responsibility for the oversight of the school finances, but not the administration of them. The Principal and School Bursar/Senior Finance Officer, or Business Manager, are to be Members of the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee should be aware that matters of finance must be considered within the Catholic principles of social justice. Care should be taken to ensure these principles are the basis for financial decision-making.

The Finance Committee will:

- oversee the monthly budget statements and present them to the Board for approval;
- make any necessary recommendations to the Board arising out of the monthly statements;
- make recommendations to the Board concerning fee levels, including discount options;
- establish a fees sub-committee (of which the Principal is either a member or is consulted regularly) that oversees fees discounts and collection of fees;
- ensure the preparation of the draft annual budget for recommendation to the School Board;
- consider for recommendation to the Board any financial offers from outside agencies;
- ensure that the guidelines and requirements in the *Finance Manual for South Australian Catholic Schools* are followed;
- recommend to the Board the appointment of an appropriate auditor for the school accounts; and
- ensure appropriate security measures are in place for school accounts, including canteen, bookroom and parent community accounts, so that personnel operating them are legally protected and informed about required protocols.

15. STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning is implicit in the overall policy roles of the School Board. This planning provides clarity and purpose to the processes involved in school renewal and development. Boards should seek to identify a preferred future and plan to achieve it over *a period of approximately five years*. A school's five-year plan should reflect the values and beliefs of the school's vision statement and incorporate policy development, curriculum, financial, building and community elements. The plan should clearly establish the links between these elements and how they will be achieved. The plan should be reviewed annually.

The Principal, as Executive Officer of the School Board, undertakes the development of a plan for school renewal in conjunction with the School Board and appropriate staff of the Catholic Education Office.

16. OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

The responsible officer for the school is the Principal upon delegation from the Director of Catholic Education SA. All policies and directions regarding OHSW must be implemented carefully and monitored as required. The Board should oversee policies and directions in this area to ensure the safety and well-being of all in their community.



17. DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

The School Board has responsibility for the development and maintenance of school buildings and grounds. It should ensure that the school has a Master Plan for its building development, in accordance with the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools' requirement for capital development (Refer to Section 15 of the *Finance Manual for South Australian Catholic Schools*). The Board, through the Principal, also has a responsibility to ensure that a regular program of maintenance is in place for existing buildings, facilities and grounds.

This responsibility is exercised through a Buildings and Grounds Committee, of which the Principal (or nominee) and the school Bursar/Finance Officer, or Business Manager, should be members.

18. SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF STAFF

18.1 Appointment of all Staff

All staff employed by the school must be appointed according to the SACCS' policies. Information regarding these policies and requirements is available from the Catholic Education Office.

18.2 Senior Leadership Positions

The Diocesan Director of Catholic Education in the Archdiocese of Adelaide and in the Diocese of Port Pirie, with the concurrence of the Archbishop and Bishop respectively, appoint the Principals and Deputy Principals of diocesan schools. They also approve the appointment of Religious Education Coordinators and Assistant Principals (Religious Identity and Mission).

The President and Chairperson of the School Board, or their nominees, are members of the selection panel for the Principal.

The President and Chairperson of the School Board, or their nominees, are members of the selection panel for the Deputy Principal.

18.3 Appointment of New Staff

Principals of diocesan schools have the responsibility for the appointment of all staff other than the Deputy Principal in accordance with the diocesan policies and guidelines regarding the employment of staff.

As part of its role, the School Board ensures there is a policy in place for the selection and appointment of staff, including appointments to promotion positions.

A policy for the selection and appointment of permanent staff, with the exception of Principals and Deputy Principals, would include evidence of:

- appropriate and timely advertising for any position;
- the existence of stated merit-based criteria for the position;
- a thorough reference checking process, including negotiating, with applicants, a referee check from the applicant's most recent previous employer;
- the composition of an interview panel, particularly ensuring appropriate gender balance;
- consultation with the President and Chairperson of the School Board before appointment of staff, consistent with the diocesan guidelines for selection of staff;
- due attention to proper procedures that are consistent with equal opportunity and industrial legislation; and
- the successful applicant receiving an appointment letter.

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20. APPENDIX

Constitution for Diocesan School Boards

The following sets out the Constitution for Diocesan School Boards. All Diocesan School Boards are to adopt this Constitution, unless approval has been previously given by the Archbishop, Bishop or their Director of Catholic Education, as appropriate, for an alternative Constitution.

The manual has developed the elements of the Constitution and the manual should be read in conjunction with the Constitution.

CONSTITUTION FOR THE STEWARDSHIP OF *(Insert School Name)*

This document sets out the administrative structure for the *(Insert School Name)* Board, the stewardship roles that the Archbishop of Adelaide and the Bishop of Port Pirie, together with the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools, delegates to the Board, the Constitution under which the Board is to undertake those stewardship roles and the Board's relationship with the Principal as Executive Officer of the Board.

1. NAME

The School/College will be conducted under the business name “_____ School/College”.

2. OBJECT

The sole object of the Board is to manage the resources of the School/College in accordance with the Constitution, the directives of the Archbishop/Bishop from time to time, and the tenets of the Catholic Church so as to provide, within the School/College, the highest standard of primary and/or secondary education.

3. INTERPRETATION

Act means the Associations Incorporations Act 1985 as amended.

Bursar/Business Manager/Finance Officer means the person who for the time being occupies the position of Bursar/Business Manager/Finance Officer at the School/College, including the acting Bursar/Business Manager/Finance Officer.

CCES means the Catholic Church Endowment Society Inc./”Diocese” means The Catholic Diocese of Port Pirie Inc.

Constitution means this Constitution

School/College means the CCES/Diocese trading as _____ School/College.

School/College Community means all parents, students and staff of the School/College, members of the local or regional church communities and all other persons who have a legitimate interest in or connection with the School/College.

Board means the _____ School/College Board.

Members are the Members of the Board.

Elected Member means a Board Member elected to office in accordance with Rule 10.

Executive Officer means the Principal and includes an Acting Principal.

Financial Year and **Year** means the year ending 31 December or as varied by administrative instruction of CCES/Diocese.

General Meeting means a public meeting of the School/College Community.

Parent means the enrolling parent(s) of a student enrolled at the School/College.

and includes;

- (a) a person who enrolls the student and has legal responsibility or legal guardianship of the student; and
- (b) a person standing in loco parentis to the student and who enrolls the student;

but does not include a parent of a student where a court order specifies that another parent or person has sole parental responsibility or sole guardianship of the student to the exclusion of that parent.

Principal means the person appointed from time to time by the Archbishop/Bishop as Principal of the School/College and includes an Acting Principal as so appointed with the approval of the Archbishop/Bishop.

SACCS means the South Australian Commission for Catholic Schools Incorporated.

Student is a person enrolled as a student of the School/College.

Unless a contrary intention appears in the Constitution, every reference to the masculine gender will be considered as including a reference to the feminine gender, and every clause in the singular number will be construed as including a reference to the plural number and vice versa.

4. DELEGATION

Subject to the Archbishop's/Bishop's overriding directions and in accordance with SACCS policies, the Board is delegated the following stewardship roles, whereby the Board, working with the Principal as its Executive Officer and the School/College operational leader, has high level care of the School/College in all its dimensions:

- i. To oversee the overall well-being of the School/College;
- ii. To plan and guide the direction of the School/College in accordance with SACCS, Archdiocesan/Diocesan and Board, policies and guidelines;
- iii. To nurture the religious dimension of the School/College;
- iv. To ensure the implementation within the School/College, of the Religious Education curriculum and guidelines, as determined by the Archbishop/Bishop;

- v. To develop the relationship between the School/College and the local Church;
- vi. To protect children;
- vii. To foster harmonious and positive collaboration with in the school community;
- viii. To develop a genuine partnership between the School/College and the parent community;
- ix. To support the Principal in the establishment of an appropriate organisational structure of the School/College to meet the curriculum and operational needs of the School/College;
- x. To support the Principal in the School's/College's pursuit of educational excellence;
- xi. To ensure that the financial affairs of the School/College are conducted in accordance with SACCS and Archdiocesan/Diocesan policies, procedures and guidelines;
- xii. To appoint an auditor to audit the School/College finances in accordance with SACCS and Archdiocesan/Diocesan policies and guidelines;
- xiii. To oversee the development and maintenance of buildings and grounds for the needs of the School/College;
- xiv. To support the administration of the School/College;
- xv. To ensure compliance by the School/College with legal obligations as they relate to the conduct and operation of the School/College;
- xvi. To the extent that they are consistent with SACCS or Archdiocesan/Diocesan policies and guidelines, and with cognition of the responsibilities of the Principal, as set out in Section 13 of this Constitution and elsewhere in the manual, to develop and oversee the implementation within the School/College of policies relating to the conduct of the School/College;
- xvii. To provide full and frank information to:
 - (a) the Archbishop/Bishop on any matter referred to the Board by the Archbishop/Bishop;
 - (b) the Director of Catholic Education on any matter referred to the Board by the Director; and
 - (c) the Principal on any matter referred to the Board by the Principal.
- xviii. To oversee the relationships between the School/College and organisations that support or are associated with the School/College or the School/College Community; and
- xix. To perform such other functions as the Archbishop/Bishop and SACCS may from time to time determine.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD

- 5.1 The Board will normally comprise 12 or 13 persons namely:
- (a) the Parish Priest as President of the Board;
 - (b) one person nominated, if determined, by the Director of Catholic Education after consultation with the President, Chairperson and Principal;
 - (c) one person nominated by the Parish Pastoral Council (or Councils if the School/College is regional);
 - (d) one person nominated by the School/College Parents' Community Committee;
 - (e) one person nominated by the School/College staff;
 - (f) six persons who are parents who have been elected in accordance with clause 10; and
 - (g) the Principal as Executive Officer.

(Note that in circumstances where the *normal* membership cannot be achieved, for example in cases of small schools, then the above membership can be varied on application to the respective Director.)

- 5.2 Board Members, other than the President and the Executive Officer who shall hold office *Ex Officio*, will hold office for two years, and be eligible for reappointment, provided they have not served more than six consecutive years in office.

- 5.3 Board Members will cease to hold office when the Member:
- (a) resigns in writing; or
 - (b) ceases to be an appointee or nominee under sub-clauses 5.1(a), 5.1(b), 5.1(c), 5.1(d), or 5.1(e); or
 - (c) is suffering physical or mental incapacity which precludes the Member from discharging the duties of the Member's office; or
 - (d) would be disqualified under Section 30 of the Act from being a member of a committee of an incorporated association under that Act; or
 - (e) if an elected Member or a nominated Member, is absent for three consecutive meetings without sufficient reason.

- 5.4 A casual vacancy in the membership of the Board shall be filled as soon as possible after the vacancy occurs.

If the vacancy occurs in an elected Member position, the President, Chairperson and the Executive Officer, in consultation with the Board, appoint a replacement Member, being a parent, for a term expiring on the same day as the expiration of the term of the then longest serving elected Member.

If the vacancy occurs in an appointed or nominated position, the same constituency which appointed or nominated the vacating Member shall appoint or nominate a new Member and that new Member will be a Member of the Board for the duration of the term of his or her predecessor.

The Archbishop/Bishop may dissolve the Board after consultation with the Chairperson of the Board.

6. OFFICE HOLDERS

6.1 Offices

The office holders of the Board will be:

- (a) the President;
- (b) the Chairperson;
- (c) the Vice-Chairperson;
- (d) the Executive Officer; and
- (e) the Chairperson of the Finance Committee.

6.2 Appointment

The Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson and the Chairperson of the Finance Committee must be elected by the Board at the first meeting of the Board in a financial year and each of whom will hold office for that financial year. The Principal will be the Executive Officer and the parish or regional priest or parish administrator will be the President. These two positions will be Ex Officio appointments.

6.3 The President

The President is the parish or regional priest or parish administrator as determined by the Archbishop/Bishop.

The President is to:

- (a) act in accordance with the tenets of the Catholic Church;
- (b) attend and participate in Board meetings;
- (c) ensure that the Catholicity and integrity of the School/College is upheld;
- (d) support the pastoral care and spirituality of the school staff, students and parents in collaboration with the Principal; and
- (e) support the Chairperson, Principal and the work of the Board.

6.4 The Chairperson

The Chairperson must:

- (a) chair the meetings of the Board and any general meetings; and
- (b) carry out the duties of a Chairperson as provided in Archdiocesan / Diocesan policies, procedures and guidelines.

6.5 Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson must at the request of the Chairperson from time to time assist the Chairperson in undertaking the Chairperson's duties and, if required by the Chairperson, deputise for the Chairperson at relevant functions.

If the Chairperson is absent or unable to chair a meeting of the Board, the Vice-Chairperson must chair.

6.6 The Executive Officer

The Principal will be the Executive Officer of the Board and will:

- (a) carry out the duties of an Executive Officer of a School Board as provided in Archdiocesan/Diocesan and SACCS policies, procedures and guidelines; and
- (b) chair that part of the Annual General Meeting that involves the election of office holders.

6.7 The Chairperson of the Finance Committee

The Chairperson of the Finance Committee must be the chairperson of, and must preside at, the meetings of the Finance Committee.

The Chairperson of the Finance Committee must not be a member of staff.

The Chairperson of the Finance Committee must carry out the duties of a Chairperson of Finance Committee as provided in Archdiocesan/Diocesan and SACCS policies, procedures and guidelines.

6.8 Removal from Office

The position of any office holder, except the Executive Officer and an appointed Member, absent for three consecutive Board meetings without sufficient reason automatically becomes vacant. Acceptance of an apology at the Board meeting will be deemed a sufficient reason.

7. BOARD SECRETARIAT

- 7.1 An appropriate person as determined by the Executive Officer will carry out the secretarial duties for the Board as provided in Archdiocesan/Diocesan and SACCS policies, procedures and guidelines.
- 7.2 This person will attend Board meetings for the purpose of providing secretarial services but is not a Member of the Board and can only by invitation of the Board, provide advice or comment.

8. PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD

- 8.1 The Board will meet as often as is necessary to exercise its stewardship obligations set out in the Constitution, and in any event not less than once during each school term.
- 8.2 Meetings of the Board will be convened at the request of the Chairperson, or the Vice-Chairperson or the Executive Officer, with at least three days' written notice being given to each Member, of the nature of the business to be dealt with at the meeting.
- 8.3 A quorum at any meeting of the Board will be 50% plus one of Members present and entitled to vote comprising a majority of appointed or nominated Members.
- 8.4 Consensus is the preferred decision-making mode for School Boards. In extraordinary situations where consensus cannot be achieved, should be deferred and voted upon at the next meeting.
- 8.5 Each Board Member will have one vote in respect of any resolution. Each resolution will be determined by simple majority. In the event of equality of votes in respect of any resolution, the Chairperson or the person acting in substitution for the Chairperson, may, in addition to the Chairperson's deliberative vote, choose to exercise a casting vote. If the Chairperson chooses not to exercise a casting vote, the matter may be deferred until the next meeting.
- 8.6 At the next meeting if there is again an equality of votes on the matter, the Chairperson or the person acting in substitution for the Chairperson will, in addition to the Chairperson's deliberative vote, exercise a casting vote which will be exercised in such a manner as to retain the status quo.
- 8.7 That part of the meetings that relates to the election of office holders must be chaired by the Executive Officer or the nominee of the Executive Officer.
- 8.8 In the absence of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson from a meeting of the Board, the Members present will elect an Acting Chairperson to chair the meeting.

9. MEETINGS

9.1 General Meetings

- 9.1.1 A general meeting of the School/College community must be held:
- (a) at least once annually (the Annual General Meeting) to present reports to the School/College Community in accordance with Archdiocesan/Diocesan and SACCS policies and guidelines; and
 - (b) for any other reason relating to the affairs, functions or membership of the Board, determined by agreement between the President, Chairperson and the Executive Officer.
- 9.1.2 At least 14 days' written notice of the Annual General Meeting must be given to the School/College community by the means generally used to communicate with the School/College community. The notice must specify the date, time and place of the meeting.
- 9.1.3 The period between each Annual General Meeting must not exceed 16 months.
- 9.1.4 All persons within the School/College community are eligible to attend general meetings of the School/College community and vote on any matters proposed for resolution.
- 9.1.5 No resolution passed at a general meeting shall bind CCES/Diocese, or the Board or be deemed to have any effect whatsoever other than as an expression of the opinion of the School/College community voting in favour thereof.

9.2 Extra-ordinary Meetings

The President, Executive Office or Chairperson or the relevant Diocesan Director of Catholic Education may call an extra-ordinary school Board meeting from time to time. Members must be provided with a minimum of two days' notice.

10. ELECTED MEMBERS

10.1 Calling for Nominations, Time for Nomination and Voting

- (a) In the second half each year, the Board must, if necessary, appoint a time (in these Rules referred to as the "time for nomination") within which nominations for elected Members' positions becoming vacant in the following year must be made to the Board in writing and appoint a closing time for the return of ballot papers for voting (in these Rules referred to as the "closing time") and call for nominations.
- (b) The Board will publicise such call for nominations, the time for nomination and the number of vacancies, to parents in the manner usually used for notifying parents by the School/College. The time for nomination must allow for an election to be conducted and concluded within any one year.

10.2 Nomination

- (a) Subject to sub-clauses 5.3(c) and 5.3(d), a parent (as defined in clause 3), who is not employed by the School/College in any capacity, is eligible to be nominated for election as an elected Member.
- (b) A retiring elected Member shall (subject to clause 5.2) be deemed to be duly nominated if that elected Member notifies the Executive Officer in writing of the Member's willingness to stand for re-election at any time prior to the time for nomination.
- (c) Other candidates for election as elected Members must, before the time for nomination, deliver to the Executive Officer a nomination in writing signed by two parents entitled to vote in elections of elected Members.
- (d) A nomination may be withdrawn by notice in writing, signed by the person nominated and delivered to the Executive Officer at any time before the ballot papers are distributed to parents.
- (e) The Board will reject nominations which do not satisfy the qualifying criteria.

10.3 Election

- (a) If more candidates are nominated than there are vacancies to be filled, there shall be an election to be conducted by secret ballot in such manner as the Board may determine.
- (b) If only the requisite number is duly nominated for the position of elected Members, the Executive Officer shall report accordingly to the Chairperson and the Chairperson shall then declare them duly elected.
- (c) If, before the ballot papers are distributed to parents, the number of candidates for any office is reduced by withdrawal or otherwise, to the number required to fill the vacancies in elected Members, the Executive Officer shall report accordingly to the Chairperson and the Chairperson shall declare the candidates or candidate remaining duly elected.
- (d) If insufficient candidates are nominated, the Executive Officer shall report accordingly to the Chairperson and the Chairperson shall declare those who are nominated to be elected and any vacancy shall be treated as a casual vacancy pursuant to Rule 5.4 (a).

10.4 Eligibility to Vote

Only those parents/legal guardians who are enrolling parents/legal guardians of a student enrolled at the school as at the nomination time and present at the Annual General Meeting shall be eligible to vote to elect an elected Member and each voter will have only one vote.

11. COMMITTEES

11.1 Committees

The Board may appoint committees, comprised of Members or both Members and non-Members, which will meet as directed by the Board, and report to the Board at subsequent Board meetings. Any committee must consist of at least three people and at least one of these must be a Member.

11.2 Terms of Reference

The Board must specify terms of reference for its committees.

11.3 Finance Committee

- (a) The Board must establish a Finance Committee to carry out the duties and functions of a Finance Committee as provided in Archdiocesan/Diocesan and SACCS policies and guidelines.
- (b) The membership of the Finance Committee must be determined by the Board and must include:
 - (i) the Chairperson of the Finance Committee;
 - (ii) the Principal or the Principal's nominee; and
 - (iii) the Bursar/Business Manager/Finance Officer.
- (c) The membership may include persons co-opted by the Board.

11.4 Buildings and Grounds Committee

- (a) The Board must establish a Buildings and Grounds Committee to carry out the duties and functions of a Buildings and Grounds Committee as provided in Archdiocesan/Diocesan and SACCS policies and guidelines.
- (b) The membership must be determined by the Board and must include:
 - (i) The Principal or his nominee; and
 - (ii) The Bursar/Business Manager/Finance Officer.

12. AUDIT

- 12.1 The Board must ensure that the School/College's financial accounts are audited at least once in every year, by an auditor approved in accordance with Archdiocesan/Diocesan and SACCS policies and guidelines, as soon as possible after the end of the financial year.
- 12.2 The audit of any accounts under the stewardship of the Board will be in accordance with the provisions of the Incorporations Associations Act, SACCS and Archdiocesan/Diocesan policies and guidelines.

13. THE PRINCIPAL

The Principal is responsible to the Board and to the Archbishop/Bishop for providing educational leadership in the School/College and the ongoing day-to-day management of the School/College in accordance with Archdiocesan/Diocesan, SACCS and Board policies and guidelines and without limiting the generality of the forgoing for:

- (a) Engagement, direction and dismissal of staff;
- (b) The acceptance for the internal organisation of the school and its day-to-day operation;
- (c) Recommending a Religious Education Coordinator or Assistant Principal (Religious Identity and Mission) for appointment and approval by the Director;
- (d) The acceptance of the delegated role of Responsible Officer in relation to Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare matters;
- (e) Allocating leadership positions;
- (f) Appraising all staff;
- (g) Undertaking human relations procedures;
- (h) Maintaining adequate administrative procedures incorporating current financial information and accountabilities to the State and Federal Governments, SACCS and the Archdiocese/Diocese; and
- (i) The acceptance, suspension and expulsion of students.

14. EXECUTION OF CONTRACTS

Subject to any authority expressly delegated to the Principal under Archdiocesan/Diocesan and SACCS policies and guidelines, the Archbishop/Bishop through CCES/Diocese will have sole authority to enter into contracts on behalf of the School/College.

15. MEMBERS' COMPLIANCE WITH ACT

- 15.1 Members must comply with the provisions of the Act to act honestly and with reasonable care and diligence in the exercise of their roles and the discharge of their duties.
- 15.2 Members must not make improper use of information or improper use of their position so as to gain, directly or indirectly, any pecuniary benefit or material advantage for themselves or for any other person or so as to cause detriment to the School/College.

16. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Members who have any direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a contract, or proposed contract, with the School/College:

- (a) must, as soon as they become aware of their interest, disclose the nature and extent of their interest to:
 - (i) The Board; and
 - (ii) CCES/Diocese.
- (b) must not take part in any decision of the Board with respect to that contract (but may, subject to complying with the provisions of this Rule as to disclosure, take part in any deliberations with respect to that contract).

17. PROPRIETORIAL INTEREST

The Board must ensure that the assets and income of the school will be applied solely in furtherance of its objects and Vision Statement, and no distribution shall be made to any Member save and except:

- 17.1 for reasonable remuneration for work done for or on behalf of the School/College; or
- 17.2 for any payments or dispositions that are incidental to the activities of the Board in accordance or consistently with its object.

18. INDEMNITY

- 18.1 CCES/Diocese of Port Pirie will indemnify Members from personal liability to the extent that it is possible by law which excludes CCES/Diocese of Port Pirie indemnifying Members from a Member's negligence, default or breach of duty or breach of trust.
- 18.2 CCES/Diocese of Port Pirie will ensure that the School/College's insurance cover extends to Members in relation to public liability and professional indemnity insurance as it applies to Members in the conduct of their role under these Rules.

19. SCHOOL/COLLEGE COMMUNITY ACCESS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Board must keep available for any inspection by any member of the School/College community a copy of the Constitution at the School/College during normal school hours.





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