



**ST. MARTHA CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
COUNCIL CONSTITUTION**

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**Article 1. NAME AND MISSION STATEMENT**

**1.01 Name**

St. Martha Catholic School Council hereafter referred to as the Council.

**1.02 Mission Statement**

Each member of the St. Martha Catholic School Council (here in after referred to as Council) shall commit to the mission statement of the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board.

Our Mission Statement is:

“Our mission as a Catholic School Council, as parents, guardians, staff, and community members is to support fully the spiritual, educational, and personal development of each student on their journey of Catholic formation from childhood through adolescence to young adulthood. We will strive to enhance the channels of communication and involvement within our school community.”

**1.03 Code of Ethics**

All School Council members shall adhere to the Code of Ethics found in Appendix A.

**Article 2. PURPOSE**

**2.01** The general purpose of the Council is to contribute to the Catholic education of the children. Further, the purpose of School Council is to improve student achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. This will be achieved in the following manner:

- (a) The Council shall serve as an advisory body to provide ideas, opinions, and recommendations to assist the Principal, and where appropriate, School Board Trustees in their decision-making on any educational matter;
- (b) Seek input of the school’s community on the operation of the school and the programs and services it provides which affect students’ education;
- (c) Actively support students, staff, and parents/guardians in programs, school events, and parish and community events;
- (d) Promote interests of all students and actively support the school in meeting their needs;
- (e) Be a voice for Catholic education. We are often requested by the Board of Education, the local municipality, or the Provincial Government, to provide a perspective viewpoint to a piece of legislation or policy. Council can provide reaction prior to final approval;
- (f) Approve spending of all monies raised through council fundraising.

**2.02** The Council must operate within the legislation of the Ministry of Education (Regulation 612/00 and 613/00) and Board Policies and Procedures.

**Article 3. MEMBERSHIP**

**3.01** Membership shall include:

- (a) Parent(s)/guardian(s) of students enrolled at the school;
- (b) One teacher employed in the school, other than the principal or vice-principal;
- (c) One non-teaching employee of the school;
- (d) The school principal and vice-principal;
- (e) One parish representative if available
- (f) One or more community representatives appointed by the elected council, if available;
- (g) A student attending the school (optional); and
- (h) One person appointed by an association that is a member of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education, or Parents Partenaires en Education, if the association is represented at the school.

**3.02** Parents and guardians must form the majority of members on the council.

**3.03** The Chair of the Council shall be a member who is either a Catholic parent or guardian of a student in the school and must not be employed by the board. The Chair shall be elected from the parent/guardian members of the Council by the Council.

**3.05** The Vice Chair or Co-Chair of the Council shall be elected from the parent/guardian members of the Council by the Council.

**3.06** The Secretary of the Council shall be elected from the parent/guardian members of the Council by the Council.

**3.07** The Treasurer of the Council shall be elected from the parent/guardian members of the Council by the Council.

**3.08** The Council shall appoint the community representative.

**3.09** The appropriate pastor(s) shall appoint the parish representative.

**3.10** The school principal shall be a designated member appointed by the school board.

**3.11** The members of the teaching staff shall elect the teacher representative.

**3.12** Members of the non-teaching staff shall elect the non-teaching staff representative.

- 3.13** A person is not qualified to be a parent member of a School Council if: (a) he or she is employed at the school, or (b) he or she is not employed at the school but is employed elsewhere by the board, unless he or she takes reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent members of that employment.
- 3.14** Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations or the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education representative must be appointed by their organization, if the association is represented at the school.

**Article 4. TERM OF OFFICE**

- 4.01** Term of office will be one school council year (Sept.- Sept.) for elected and appointed positions (see Appendix 3, 5.1).
- 4.02** Members may serve more than one term, if re-elected or re-appointed.
- 4.03** If a vacancy occurs during a term a new representative shall, through appointment or election, complete the original term of the vacating member.

**Article 5. ELECTIONS**

- 5.01** The Council's election process has been developed in accordance with Ontario Regulation 612/00 and Regulation 613/00.
- 5.02** Nominations and elections are to be held annually within the first 30 days of the start of the school year. Election date will be assigned during the last council meeting of the previous year by the Chair of the Council in consultation with the principal.
- 5.03** Any parent/guardian of a pupil who is enrolled at the school may put forth names, including their own, for nomination.
- 5.04** Elections if necessary will be carried out by secret ballot in September. The principal shall give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every pupil enrolled at the school at least 14 days before the date of the election.
- 5.05** Elections if necessary will be conducted in the school on a designated day in September, 8:00 a.m. – 7:30 p.m., and will be supervised by the Principal and a designated parent.
- 5.06** Parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school must come to the school to obtain a ballot, cast their vote and deposit ballot in box.

- 5.07** The principal and a designated parent will count all ballots. All ballots will be destroyed immediately following the vote count and declaration of successful candidates.
- 5.08** A list of successful candidates will be published in alphabetical order, not showing the number of votes.
- 5.09** Where the slate of candidates for parent or guardian representation is not comprised of a majority of Catholic parents or guardians and that circumstances cannot be readily corrected, the Principal shall alert the Director of Education. At the discretion of the Director of Education, the nomination process may be reopened.
- 5.10** If all the elected positions are not filled through the election process, the council shall proceed, however, the council should seek members to fill the vacant positions through outreach into the community. Willing individuals may be appointed by majority vote to the council for the remainder of the term.
- 5.11** In the event that a parent/guardian member is unable to fulfill their responsibilities or is absent for a period longer than ninety (90) days, their position shall be deemed vacant and such positions shall be filled by elections or appointed from within the parent/guardian community.
- 5.12** If an executive position is deemed vacant the position must be filled from within the current council.

## **Article 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **6.01 The Chair of the Council shall:**

- (a) Call Council meetings;
- (b) Prepare the agenda for Council meetings with the principal at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the meeting;
- (c) Chair and provide leadership for Council meetings;
- (d) Review and report on information directed to the Council;
- (e) Ensure minutes of the Council meetings are recorded and maintained;
- (f) Participate in information and training programs;
- (g) Communicate with school principal;
- (h) Ensure that there is open communication with the school community concerning Council matters;
- (i) Consult with senior Board staff and trustees, as required, on approval of the School Council;
- (k) Prepare and distribute meeting agendas to school community one week in advance; and
- (l) Consult with the Principal prior to the release of communication to the community, Board staff, Trustees or the Board itself.

**6.02 The Vice-Chair or Co-Chair of the Council shall:**

- (a) Preside at meetings of the Council as agreed with the Chair; and
- (b) Assist the Chair in any of his/her other roles and responsibilities as may be delegated.

**6.03 The Treasurer shall:**

- (a) Be entrusted with the receipt, care and distribution of funds;
- (b) Maintain accurate financial records of the Council;
- (c) Maintain one bank account established at the school for all school generated funds, including any funds raised by Council
- (d) Present statements of accounts at every meeting
- (e) Complete a School Council cheque requisition in order to initiate the issuing of a cheque from School Council funds in the school bank account. This completed form will be authorized by the School Council Treasurer or by a member of the Council Executive and school principal and be submitted to the school secretary for cheque processing from the school council funds. Original receipts or invoices must be attached to the requisition
- (f) Assist the school secretary with any financial needs

**6.04 The Secretary shall:**

- (a) Ensure that previous meeting minutes are sent to Council members, and upon approval are posted to the school website;
- (b) Maintain full and accurate account of all Council meetings;
- (c) Prepare correspondence as required;
- (d) Ensure safe keeping of Council records for four years; and
- (e) Provide a copy of the minutes to the Chair one week after the meeting.

**6.05 The Council Members shall:**

- (a) Ensure that emphasis is placed on our Catholic identity and focus
- (b) Maintain a school wide focus on all issues;
- (c) Encourage the participation of parents/guardians from all groups and of other people in the school community;
- (d) Participate in Council meetings;
- (e) Participate in information and training programs; and
- (f) Take an active role in one or more sub-committees.

**6.06 The Parish Representative shall:**

Liaise with the School Council and parish.

**6.07 The Community Representative shall:**

Liaise with the community at large.

**6.08 The Principal shall:**

- (a) Ensure that emphasis is placed on our Catholic identity and focus;
- (b) Facilitate the establishment of the Council and assist in its operation;
- (c) Support and promote the Council's activities;
- (d) Seek input from the Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibility;
- (e) Act as a resource on laws, regulations, board policies, and collective agreements;
- (f) Provide information of school budgets and share information on school generated funds;
- (g) Communicate with the chair of the Council;
- (h) Ensure copies of the agenda and minutes of the Councils meetings are available to members of the school community;
- (i) Assist the Council in communicating with the school community; and
- (j) Encourage the participation of parents/guardians from all groups and people within the school community, in the life of the school and the activities of the school's Council.

**6.09 The Student Council Representative shall:**

- (a) Maintain a school wide focus on all issues;
- (b) Participate in Council meetings; and
- (c) Ensure the views, ideas, and opinions of the students are represented.

**Article 7. LIABILITY OF MEMBERS**

**7.01** The mandate of the Council is clearly stated both at the Ministry and Board level as "Advisory" in nature with a focus on school based or Board wide issues.

**7.02** The Council must operate collectively and individually within its mandate in order to be covered under the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board liabilities insurance.

**Article 8. MEETINGS**

**8.01** Regular meetings will be held a minimum of six times in the school year with the dates to be published. All meetings are open and accessible to the public.

**8.02** A meeting of the Council cannot be held unless:

- (a) A majority of the current members of the council are present at the meeting; and
- (b) A majority of the members of the council who are present at the meeting are parent members.
- (c) The Principal or Principal designate is present



- 8.03 At the first meeting of the new Council, members shall elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.
- 8.04 The Principal and/or a teacher representative will facilitate the election of officers.
- 8.05 Officers will be elected, by secret ballot, one at a time beginning with Chair, Vice Chair or Co-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary.
- 8.06 A member may be nominated by a member of Council or may nominate him/herself.
- 8.07 The election of a position must be completed before nominations are accepted for the next position.
- 8.08 A member of Council may hold only one executive position.

**Article 9. DECISION MAKING PROCESS**

- 9.01 The school Council's decision-making process is decision by majority vote after discussion.
- 9.02 Only Council members have voting rights. As the Council is an advisory body, the principal of the school is not entitled to vote in either Council or Committee votes.
- 9.03 If a Council member is unable to attend a meeting but they wish to vote on an issue, they may send in their vote by proxy. This must be in writing and given to an executive member.
- 9.04 Once a motion has been passed, a 2/3 majority is required to reopen the decision concerning the said motion.
- 9.05 In cases where decisions must be made prior to the next School Council meeting, the Chair may send out an electronic motion. Council members should be provided a minimum of 24 hours to respond or provide suggestions. Electronic votes should be returned within a minimum of 48 hours but no later than 72 hours. The motion will be passed by majority vote. The Chair will maintain copies of all responses for auditing purposes.

**Article 10. PROCEDURE FOR AMENDMENTS**

- 10.01 This Constitution may be amended by approval of a motion, by 2/3 vote of members of Council present and voting, if required, at a meeting called for that purpose, provided that at least two weeks notice is given for such a motion and details of the proposed amendment are circulated to all members with that notice.

## **Article 11. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

- 11.01** An individual must be recognized by the Chair before obtaining the floor to make a motion.
- 11.02** The Chair of the meeting must announce it is your turn, before you can speak to the meeting and formally propose a course of action.
- 11.03** A formal proposal or motion must begin with the statement, "I move..." and another individual must second the motion by saying, "I second the motion."
- 11.04** Once a motion is made and seconded, the Chair states the question so everyone is clear on what is being proposed. From this point, all discussion must focus on the motion.
- 11.05** The Chair will open discussion on the motion. Each member may speak to the question twice, but no one may speak the second time until everyone has had an opportunity to speak once.
- 11.06** After discussion the motion will be put to a majority vote.
- 11.07** No council can be incorporated.

## **Article 12. FINANCES**

- 12.03** All Council funds, incoming to the school, will be locked securely in the school safe.
- 12.04** All Council fundraising initiatives will request payment by cheque, thus limiting the amount of cash in the school.
- 12.05** Receipts must support reimbursement for all expenses.
- 12.07** All expenditures over \$50.00 must have prior Council approval.
- 12.08** There will be no honorarium paid to members of the School Council.
- 12.11** All records are to be kept for four years.

## **Article 13 COMMITTEES**

- 13.01** The School Council may establish committees to carry out specific functions related to the operation of the School Council and shall seek widespread participation in school and Council activities.

- 13.02** Every committee must include at least one parent council member and may include non-council members.
- 13.03** All parents of the school are welcome to attend sub-committee meetings.

**Article 14. NON-PROFIT CLAUSE**

- 14.01** The Council shall be carried on without purpose of gain and any profits or other gains to the Council shall be used in promoting its objectives and purposes.

**Article 15. FUNDRAISING**

- 15.01** Fundraisers will be kept to a minimum and Council will work with the school to coordinate their fundraising events so as not to overlap.
- 15.02** Any fundraising event will have a letter sent home reinforcing voluntary participation, and amount of time the fundraiser will cover.
- 15.03** At the end of each school year Council will communicate to parents the results of fundraising events and monies spent.

**Article 16. CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

- 16.01** In order to avoid unnecessary conflict, Council shall:
- (a) Adhere to defined roles and responsibilities as per ALCDSB Policy statement 13;
  - (b) Refrain from discussion of students, parents/guardians, staff members, trustees, or other Council members (as per Freedom of Information, Protection of Privacy Information); and
  - (c) Have no involvement in selection or evaluation of teaching and non-teaching staff.
- 16.02** In the situation that an irresolvable conflict inhibits the activity of the Council, the following process will be followed:
- (a) The Chair and/or Principal will contact the Superintendent of the school, in writing. A copy of this correspondence will be directed to the Chair or the Principal;
  - (b) The Superintendent will meet with the Chair and the Principal, in a timely fashion to mediate. The Superintendent may request to meet with the whole Council or with appropriate staff, as deemed necessary; and
  - (c) If the matter cannot be resolved and the work of the Council is rendered impossible, the Superintendent may refer the matter to the Director of Education for mediation.

**Article 17. CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- 17.01** Each School Council member shall avoid situations that could result in an inconsistency between the overall goals and vision of the School Council and a personal or vested interest, that arise in connection with his or her duties as a School Council member.
- 17.02** Should an issue or agenda item arise during a Council meeting where a council member is in a conflict of interest situation, he or she shall declare conflict of interest immediately and decline from the discussion and resolution.
- 17.03** A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.