



# St. Gregory Catholic School

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## COUNCIL CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

February 2017

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## 1.0 Purpose of Parent Council

The purpose of the St. Gregory Catholic School Council (Council) is, through active participation of parents/guardians, to contribute to the Catholic education of the children of St. Gregory’s Catholic School and to improve student achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians. This will be achieved through:

- 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 greater school 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;
- f. Approve spending on all monies raised through Council fundraising.

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.

The Council must operate within the legislation of the Ministry of Education (O. Reg. 612/00 and O. Reg. 613/00) and ALCDSB Policies and Procedures.

### 1.1 Algonquin Lakeshore Catholic District School Board (ALCDSB) Mission Statement

The ALCDSB mission statement is:

*‘We are a Catholic school system, called to work in partnership with home, parish and community, on our journey to understand and live the way of Jesus Christ. We are committed to excellence in Catholic education and to lifelong learning, so that those with whom we journey may become caring and contributing citizens in a world of constant challenge.’*

### 1.2 St. Gregory Catholic School Mission Statement

The St. Gregory Catholic School mission statement is:

*'We are a Catholic school community which embraces its responsibility for the education and development of faithful, hopeful and socially responsible persons who will demonstrate the values, knowledge and skills that enable them to lead fulfilling lives.'*

## **2.0 Membership**

The membership shall include, but is not limited to:

1. Parents/guardians of students enrolled at the school;
2. One teacher employed in the school; other than the Principal or Vice-Principal;
3. One non-teaching employee of the school;
4. The school Principal;
5. One parish representative (if available).

### **2.1 Guidelines for Membership**

Below are guidelines for considering membership in the Council:

- a. Parents and guardians must form the majority of members on the Council;
- b. The Chair of the Council shall be a member who is both a parent/guardian of a student in the school and a Catholic. He/she must not be employed by the school or ALCDSB unless he/she takes reasonable steps to inform those qualified to vote in the election of his/her employment. The Chair shall be elected from the parent/guardian members of the Council by the Council;
- c. Executive members must not be employed by the school or the ALCDSB unless he/she takes reasonable steps to inform those qualified to vote in the election of his/her employment.
- d. Executive positions (Chair, Co-Chair/Vice-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer) of the Council shall be elected from the parent/guardian members of the Council;
- e. The Pastor shall appoint the parish representative or may choose to serve as the parish representative;
- f. The school Principal shall be a designated member appointed by the ALCDSB;
- g. The members of the teaching staff shall elect the teacher representative;
- h. The members of the non-teaching staff shall elect the non-teaching staff representative;
- i. The members of the Council must adhere to the Code of Ethics (see Appendix A for Code of Ethics).

### **2.2 Term of Office**

The term of office will be one school council year (September – September) for elected and appointed positions. Executive members may serve more than one term if re-elected.

If a vacancy occurs during a term, a new representative shall, through appointment or election, complete the original term of vacating member.

## 2.3 Elections

The Council's election process has been developed in accordance with O. Reg. 612/00 and O. Reg. 613/00 (see Appendix B for sample timeline for election process).

The Principal and/or a teacher representative will facilitate the election of executive members.

The election date will be assigned during the last council meeting of the previous school year by the Chair in consultation with the Principal. This date, time and location will be communicated to every pupil enrolled at the school via the September school newsletter and will also be communicated through the school website or other available communication tools at least 14 calendar days prior to the election.

Nominations and elections are to be held annually within the first 30 days of the start of the school year. Elections, if necessary, will be carried out by secret ballot, one at a time, beginning with Chair, Vice-Chair/Co-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. The election of a position must be completed before nominations are accepted for the next position. A member of Council should hold only one executive position.

Any parent/guardian of a pupil who is enrolled at the school may put forth names, including their own, for nomination for executive positions (see Appendix C for Nomination Form).

The Principal and a designated parent (not running for an executive position) will count all ballots and after a declaration of a successful candidate destroy all ballots.

If 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 school community. Willing individuals may be appointed by majority vote to the Council for the remainder of the term.

Should an executive member be unable to fulfill their responsibilities, their position shall be deemed vacant and shall be filled by elections or appointed from within the parent/guardian school community.

## 2.4 Roles and Responsibilities

### 2.4.1 *Role of the Chair*

The Chair of the Council shall:

- a. Ensure that emphasis is placed on our Catholic identity and focus;
- b. Call Council meetings;
- c. Prepare the agenda for Council meetings with the Principal at least 48 hours prior to the meeting and distribute to the school community;
- d. Chair and provide leadership for Council meetings;
- e. Review and report on information directed to the Council;
- f. Participate on training and information programs;
- g. Communicate with the 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 Council;
- j. Consult with the Principal prior to the release of communication to the community, Board staff, trustees, or the Board itself.

#### ***2.4.2 Role of the Vice-Chair/Co-Chair***

The Vice-Chair/Co-Chair of the Council shall:

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

#### ***2.4.3 Role of the Treasurer***

The Treasurer of the Council shall:

- a. Be entrusted with the receipt and care of funds;
- b. Maintain accurate financial records of the Council;
- c. Present statements of accounts at every meeting;
- d. Complete a cheque requisition to initiate the issuing of a cheque from Council funds in the school bank account;
- e. Ensure original receipts or invoices are attached to requisition above.
- f. Assist the school secretary with any financial needs related to the Council.

#### ***2.4.4 Role of the Secretary***

The Secretary of the Council shall:

- a. Ensure the meeting minutes are sent to the Chair one week following the meeting for distribution to Council;
- b. Maintain a full and accurate account of all meetings;
- c. Prepare correspondence as required;
- d. Ensure the safekeeping of Council records for four years;
- e. Arrange for a mass card in the event of the death of an immediate family member (spouse, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, sibling) of a school staff member.

#### ***2.4.5 Role of the Council Members:***

The members of the Council 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. Give full attention and participate respectively in Council meetings and, if willing, sub-committees (as required);
- e. Send appropriate completed forms (disbursements/deposit forms) to the Treasurer for approval (as required);

#### **2.4.6 *Role of the Parish Representative***

The Parish Representative shall liaise with the Council and parish.

#### **2.4.7 *Role of the Principal***

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 on school budgets and share information on school generated funds;
- g. Ensure copies of the agenda and minutes of the Council's meetings are available to members of the school community;
- h. Post copies of approved agenda and minutes to the school website;
- i. Communicate with the Chair of the Council;
- j. Assist the Council in communicating with the school community;
- k. 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 Council.

### **2.5 *Conflict of Interest***

Each School Council member shall avoid situations that could result in an inconsistency between the overall goals and mission of the Council and a personal or vested interest, that arise in connection with his/her duties as a Council member.

Should an issue or agenda item arise during a Council meeting where a member is in a conflict of interest situation, he/she must declare conflict of interest immediately and decline from the discussion and resolution.

A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

## **3.0 *Liability***

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.

The Council must operate collectively and individually within its mandate to be covered under the ALCDSB liabilities insurance.

## **4.0 Meetings**

Regular meetings will be held a minimum of four times in the school year with the dates to be published. All meetings are open and accessible to the public. The agenda will be structured in such a way that the meeting should be conducted in 60 minutes or less; they will not be permitted to go beyond 90 minutes.

A meeting of the Council cannot be held unless:

- At least one executive member and a minimum of three current members of Council (could include other executive members) are present;
- A majority of the members of the Council who are present at the meeting are parent members;
- The Principal or Principal designate is present.

At the first meeting of the new Council, members shall elect a Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. A Co-Chair (or Vice Chair) or other executive members (e.g. Media/Communication) may be selected as well, based on interest and need of the Council.

### **4.1 Decision Making Process**

The school Council's decision-making process is decision by majority vote after discussion. The Chair votes only in case of a tie.

Only parent/guardian members in attendance at the meeting have voting rights. As the Council is an advisory body, the Principal is not entitled to vote in either Council or Committee votes.

Once a motion has been passed, a 2/3 majority is required to reopen the decision concerning the said motion.

In cases where decisions must be made prior to the next Council meeting, the Chair may send out an electronic motion via email or through a post on the group's Facebook page. Council members should be provided a minimum of 24 hours to respond or provide suggestions on the phrasing of the motion. Once voting opens, 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.

### **4.2 Meeting Procedures**

The following rules of order will be applied to Council meetings:

- a. An individual must be recognized by the Chair before obtaining the floor to make a motion;



- b. 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;
- c. 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";
- d. Once a motion is made and seconded, the Chair states the motion so everyone is clear on what is being proposed. From this point, all discussion must focus on the motion;
- e. The Chair will open discussion on the motion. Each member may speak to the motion twice, but no one may speak a second time until everyone has had an opportunity to speak once;
- f. After discussion the motion will be put to a majority vote.

### 4.3 Committees

The Council may establish sub-committees to carry out specific functions related to the operation of the Council and shall seek widespread participation in school and Council activities. Every sub-committee must include at least one parent council member and may include non-council members. All parents of the school are welcome to attend sub-committee meetings.

### 4.4 Conflict Resolution

In order to avoid unnecessary conflict, Council shall:

- Adhere to defined roles and responsibilities as per ALCDSB Policy statement 13;
- Refrain from discussion of students, parents/guardians, staff members, trustees, or other Council members (as per Freedom of Information, Protection of Privacy Information);
- Have no involvement in selection or evaluation of teaching and non-teaching staff.

In the situation that an irresolvable conflict inhibits the activity of the Council, the following process will be followed:

- 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;
- 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;
- 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.

## 5.1 Finances

The practices below are to be followed to ensure accountability of funds:

- a. All Council funds, incoming to the school, will be locked securely in the school safe;
- b. Council fundraising initiatives, where appropriate, will request payment by cheque, thus limiting the amount of cash in the school;

- c. Receipts must support reimbursement for all expenses;
- d. All expenditures over \$50.00 must have prior Council approval;
- e. There will be no honorarium paid to members of the School Council;
- f. All records are to be kept for four years.

## **5.1 Fundraising**

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

## APPENDIX A

### Code of Ethics

The following is the Code of Ethics that will guide members in their code of conduct while a member of the Council:

- A member shall consider the best interests of all students;
- A member shall be guided by the school's and the School Board's mission statements;
- A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of the Council, as identified by the school's operating guidelines, the ALCDSB and the Ontario Ministry of Education;
- A member shall become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them;
- A member shall maintain the highest standards of integrity;
- A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community;
- A member shall treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption;
- A member shall encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued;
- A member shall acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the Council;
- A member shall respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the Council;
- A member shall limit discussions at Council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole;
- A member shall use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise;
- A member shall promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community;
- A member shall declare any conflict of interest;
- A member shall not accept any payment or benefit financially through school involvement.

## APPENDIX B

### Sample Timeline to Prepare for Elections

#### **May/June:**

A committee is established to deal with the school council election of parent members.

#### **Early to mid-June:**

A plan is put in place to deal with how the school council election will occur. By the last council meeting of the school year, the date, time, and location of the election are determined, as well as how the election will be advertised in the fall. A nomination form is also developed. School council chairs must have the necessary information for the election to the Principal well in advance of the election.

#### **Mid-August:**

In the welcome-back-to-school mailing, the principal includes parent-candidate nomination forms and information about the date by which nominations must be received at the school, who is eligible to stand for election, the date of the election, and other information about the election. This package must be in parents' hands at least fourteen days prior to the election.

#### **Early September :**

The Principal posts school council election information in an area of the school that is easily accessible to parents. Good venues would be the bulletin board and the school website. Parents return nomination forms to the school.

#### **Early to Mid-September:**

A list of parent nominees with brief biographies is sent home or mailed out, with a mid-September reminder of the election date and information on the election process.

#### **Mid to Late September to Early October:**

The first meeting of the new school council takes place, and meeting dates, times, and locations for the upcoming year may be determined at this meeting (the first meeting of the new school council must take place within thirty-five days of the start of school.) The names of the new school council members are publicized to the school community within thirty days of the election, as are the dates, times, and locations of future meetings.

## APPENDIX C

### St. Gregory Catholic School Council Self Nomination Form

St. Gregory Catholic School Council elections will be held on September \_\_\_\_\_, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at the school.

I wish to declare my candidacy for an elected executive position on the St. Gregory Catholic School Council – circle one below:

Chair

Treasurer

Secretary

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

I am the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, who is currently registered at St. Gregory Catholic School.

I am an employee of the ALCDSB:

Yes

No

Brief Biography:

## APPENDIX D

### Regulations & Procedures

Ontario Regulation 612/00: School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees:

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/000612>

Ontario Regulation 613/00: Operation of Schools - General:

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r00613>

Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board – Administrative Procedures – Catholic School Councils:

<http://www.alcddb.on.ca/community/Documents/ALCDSB%20Catholic%20School%20Council%20Administrative%20Procedures.pdf>