



St. Mary's Primary School Donald

School Advisory Council Guidelines

Drafted: 2017 Revised: May 2018 Reviewed: March 2020
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Vision Statement:

St Mary's community, with Jesus as our inspiration, aims to educate and nurture the development of the whole child.

Mission Statements:

As part of St. Mary's Parish, and inspired by our Catholic faith, we care for all people and creation. (Catholic Culture)

Work in close partnership with families, parish and the Donald Community to enhance faith, student learning and wellbeing. (Community Engagement)

Provide opportunities for each student to achieve their academic potential in an engaging, contemporary educational environment. (Learning and Teaching)

Ensure a child safe, respectful and inclusive environment that celebrates achievement, promotes dignity and resiliency. (Wellbeing)

Be educators, with a clear sense of purpose and direction, who collaboratively work to deliver quality outcomes for all students. (Leadership and Stewardship)

These guidelines set out the purpose, composition, roles and functions of St. Mary's Primary School Donald School Advisory Council.

Context:

The school fulfils its educational and legal responsibilities in accordance with:

- Canon Law
- Government Legislation
- Industrial Awards and Agreements

and takes into account the policies and advice of Catholic Education System Authorities

The school also acts with full regard of the *Awakenings Religious Education Curriculum*, as mandated by the Bishop for use in the schools of the Diocese.

The Advisory Council must have regard for the role and authority of the Canonical Administrator. Under Canon Law, the Canonical Administrator is the legitimate authority in a Parish and the Council acts as an advisory body to him and those delegated by him in all matters.

Purpose of the Council:

The Advisory Council brings together the families, students, staff to bring St. Mary's Vision and Mission statements to life. The work of Advisory Council Members is a ministry of the Church.

- Provide informed advice to the school's Canonical Administrator and School's principal on matters related to developing and sustaining an effective school
- Assist with overall school improvement including the maintenance of the school's facilities and buildings.
- Enable school community have a representative body to share its views and shared wisdom

Composition of the School Advisory Council

Membership of the Council

- Council members are drawn from the school community
- Council membership comprises ex-officio and elected members and may include appointed members:

Ex-officio members:

- Canonical Administrator (or nominee)
- Principal or Leading Teacher of the school.

Elected members:

- Minimum number of 3 parents. Additional members at the discretion of the Canonical Administrator.

Appointed members:

- not more than one person at any one time by appointment of the Council for a specified period and a specified purpose
- The membership term for elected members is two years with a maximum of two successive terms
- **Office bearers are elected by the Council:**
 - Chair
 - Deputy Chair
 - Minutes Secretary
 - Maintenance Organiser

Role of the Chair includes:

- Working with and participating in consultations with the Canonical Administrator and Principal regarding issues related to school as required
- working with the principal in setting an agenda for each School Advisory Council meeting
- chairing the meetings of the School Advisory Council Meeting
- ensuring all members have the opportunity to contribute to the deliberations of the School Advisory Council
- ensuring that members of the School Advisory Council avoid conflicts of interest
- assisting the principal with the induction/renewal of School Advisory Council members

Role of the Deputy Chair:

- chairing meetings of the School Advisory Council in the Chair person's absence.
- Provide support to the Chairperson as required.

Minute Secretary:

- Take accurate minutes at meetings and distribute to the members prior to the meetings.

Maintenance Organiser:

- To work in consultation with the Principal in overseeing the maintenance of St. Mary's School.
 - organising parent working bees.
 - Overseeing working bees and supporting the Principal in following the Occupational Health and Safety policy of the school.
- Any elected or School Advisory appointed member may be removed from office by the School's Canonical Administrator or a formal resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the School Advisory Council if the member has breached the School's Code of Conduct or School Advisory Council Guidelines.

Role of Members

Members are asked to:

- ensure they understand and can articulate the school's vision and mission
- make decisions that always have the welfare of the students as their primary basis
- be mindful that the implementation of school policies and overall management of the school is the function of the principal and staff of the school
- give the necessary time, thought and study to the work of the Council
- work with fellow Council members in a spirit of harmony, co-operation and honesty
- make decisions on issues based on all available facts and consistent with the school's stated vision and mission
- abide by and uphold the final majority decision of the School Advisory Council
- only act on behalf of the Council when specifically authorised to do so
- refer to the appropriate person any issues or concerns that are not necessarily the concern of the School Advisory Council
- respect matters of confidentiality
- abide by the meeting procedures and standing orders of the Council's guidelines
- take part in the Advisory Council member induction/renewal programme
- in the event of a grievance between members of the school community, to be guided by the Complaints and Grievances Policy

Function of the Council

The work of the Council includes:

- assisting with articulating and enacting the school's vision and mission
- planning for the present and future operation of the school
- disseminating information about the School and about Catholic Education generally to the school and Parish Community and, where applicable, the wider local community
- formulating, ratifying and revising school policy
- overseeing the finances associated with the school
- respecting such confidences as determined by the School Advisory Council
- assisting the Canonical Administrator in the selection and appointment of the principal
- assisting the Canonical Administrator and the Principal in the selection and appointment of suitable staff

The professional area of curriculum development, teaching and internal management of the school are the responsibility of the Principal.

Operation of the Council

1. Meetings of the Council:

- Meetings of the Council follow the agreed procedures
- Meetings of the Council are held once per term during Week Two of the term. Meetings are held at school on a Wednesday at 7.00pm. Changes to date and time may occur in consultation with the Chairperson and members.
- A simple majority of elected members plus at least one ex-officio member constitutes a quorum. No meeting may be held without a quorum.
- Special or additional meetings of the Council may be called by the chair or the principal. The Canonical Administrator will be informed prior to the meeting.
- In the absence of the Chair or his/her deputy, members shall nominate a Chair to preside over the meeting.
- All elected members (including the Chair) shall have equal voting rights. In the case of a voting deadlock the motion will be considered to have been lost.
- Ordinarily, the minute secretary shall take minutes of all meetings of the board. Copies of minutes are to be circulated well in advance of the forthcoming meeting.
- The principal has the responsibility of inserting in the school files:
 - a copy of the minutes of all meetings
 - all relevant correspondence
 - any other documentation as deemed necessary by the Council
- All written communications from the Council shall be effected through the Chair

3. Financial Management:

- The Council assists with the formulation and ongoing review the school's annual budget
- The Principal or nominee will present a monthly statement of Income and Expenditure to the Board

- During Term Four of each year, the Principal, in consultation with the School Advisory Council , makes recommendation to the Canonical Administrator as to the rate of School Fees and Levies for the following year.
- An annual summary statement of the school's Income and Expenditure is made available to the school community.

4. Annual School Meeting

- Each year, the Council invites all members of the school community to attend an Annual General Meeting of the School Advisory Council.
- The Annual General Meeting of the School Advisory Council is held prior to the Term One Meeting. The term meeting will follow on the same evening.

5. Alteration To These Guidelines:

- Notice of any motion which proposes any alteration to these Guidelines must be in writing, and must be placed in the hands of the Chairperson no less than three weeks before the meeting of the Council at which it is proposed to be moved. The Chairperson shall notify all members of the Advisory Council of such proposed alterations to the Guidelines at least fourteen days before the meeting.
- These Guidelines may be altered by a motion passed by a majority of the voting members of the School Advisory Council.
- The amendment must be presented for ratification at the next Annual School Meeting of the School Advisory Council.
- Notice of any amendment being presented for ratification must be given to the school community in writing at least fourteen days before the Annual General Meeting of the School Advisory Council at which it is to be presented.
- All amendments must be passed at an ordinary meeting of the School Advisory Council before they can be presented at an Annual General Meeting of the School Advisory Council.
- These guidelines are to be reviewed every three years.

Appendix A: Meeting Procedure

1. Agenda Format



St Mary's Primary School, Donald

School Advisory Council Agenda

Meeting Date, Time and Venue:

Prayer: School Prayer

Attendees/Apologies:

Minutes from Previous Meeting:

1) Minutes of the previous meeting:

2) Business arising from the minutes:

3) Correspondence:

- i. In:
- ii. Out:

4) Reports:

- i. Chairperson
- ii. Parish Council
- iii. School
- iv. Finance & Auditor's Report
- v. Parents & Friends

5) General Business:

6) Board Members Issues –

7) Newsletter Report:

8) Closing Prayer: Fr. Eugene

- 2. Meetings should start on time.
- 3. All reports to be circulated with the agenda prior to the meeting so that they may be studied prior to the meeting and thoughts formulated.
- 4. **General Business is only to include those items listed on the Agenda.**
- 5. **It is proposed that nothing be discussed at a meeting that has not been listed on the agenda without the leave of the meeting to deal with an item of urgent business. This would require a motion to that effect.**

Appendix E: Annual School (General) Meeting

This appendix lists arrangements governing the Annual School (General) Meeting

1. The Annual School (General) Meeting is to be held on the second Tuesday of November each year unless the joint executives of the Council and Council Standing Committees deem sufficient reason exists to nominate another day/month.
2. The agenda of the Annual School (General) Meeting is to include the following:
 - a. the suspension of normal business of the Council and Council Standing Committees
 - b. a guest speaker, if deemed appropriate by the organising committee
 - c. annual reports of the principal, school chaplain, the Council Chair and the Chair of each Council Standing Committee
 - d. financial reports of all parties
 - e. election of parent representatives to the Board
 - f. the election of the executive of the Council if deemed appropriate by the Returning Officer
 - g. the election of committee and executive of the Council Standing Committees
 - h. open forum, without discussion, inviting members of the school community to make suggestions and to list issues for the parties to consider as part of their work over the coming year
3. The Annual School (General) Meeting is to be no longer than two hours in duration.

Ratified Reviewed Revised

Appendix F: Advisory Council Member Induction

All new and returning members of the Advisory Council are take part in the following induction programme prior to taking their place in the Board.

This programme is to be conducted by the principal assisted by experienced members of the Board.

The programme is to include discussion and review of the following:

- ☐ the role of the school in relation to the parish
- ☐ Advisory Council guidelines and Advisory Councilmember code of ethics
- ☐ School in relation to the Catholic Education System:
 - NCEC National Catholic Education Commission
 - CECV Catholic Education Commission of Victoria
 - BDSB Diocesan Schools Council(Ballarat)
 - CEO Catholic Education Offices: Ballarat, Horsham
- ☐ school vision and mission statements & school policy statements
- ☐ school financial management
- ☐ standing committees of the Council- permanent & ad hoc
- ☐ major business of the past year
- ☐ personal skills & talents
- ☐ names of other Councilmembers
- ☐ meeting dates, time and venue

Ratified Reviewed Revised

Appendix G:

Procedure For Settling Grievances

Ratified:
Reviewed:
Revised:

It is inappropriate to raise matters of grievance involving parents, students, staff and/or principal at an Advisory Council meeting. It is beyond the jurisdiction of the Council to arbitrate on such matters.

The following is a set of procedures for the settlement of such grievances which avoids using Council meetings for this purpose.

Grievance Procedure:

1. The Advisory Council should be aware of the difference between policy and operations and also be sensitive to the fact that it is the role of the Principal and Staff to select the means by which School policy is implemented.
2. The role of the Advisory Council is not to arbitrate over questions of grievance. However, positive recommendations may be channelled through a Councilmember to a meeting of the Board.
3. Where there is difficulty, dispute or grievance involving a student or parent with a teacher, the following procedures should be adopted:
 - 3.1 The issue should not be raised at a Council meeting.
 - 3.2 The parent should request an interview with the teacher.
 - 3.3 If no resolution, the parents should consult with the Principal.
 - 3.4 If no resolution, the parents should consult the Parish Priest.
 - 1.5 The Parish Priest may wish to involve the Chairperson of the Advisory Council
 - 1.6 Should the matter be still, the Catholic Education Office may become involved through the use of the Diocesan Complaints Handling Procedure
4. Where there is a difficulty, a dispute or grievance between the Principal and a student, parent, teacher and/or Councilmember, the following procedures will be adopted:
 - 4.1 The issue should not be raised at a Council meeting.
 - 4.2 In the case of an individual, the issue should be raised privately with the Principal.
 - 4.3 If the issue concerns one or more persons, resolution should be sought by consultation between the Parish Priest and the Principal.
 - 4.4 The Parish Priest may wish to involve the Chairperson of the Board
 - 4.5 Should the matter be still unresolved, the Catholic Education Office may become involved through the use of the Diocesan Complaints Handling Procedure.