

ST. PETER CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

1. MISSION STATEMENT:

Each member of the St. Peter Catholic School Council (hereafter referred to as the council) shall commit to the mission statement of the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board. (BP 1)

The mission statement is:

“ Based on the teachings of Jesus, the mission statement of the St. Peter Catholic School Community is to show by example and instruction that we can and should live and work in harmony with others. We aim to provide quality Catholic education in a secure, caring environment that encourages the development of self-esteem, confidence, and talents.”

2. NAME:

The official name of the council shall be the “St. Peter Catholic School Council”.

3. OBJECTIVES:

- a) The objective of the Council as an advisory body will be to provide ideas, opinions, and recommendations to assist the Principal and, where appropriate, School Board trustees in their decision-making on educational issues. (refer to Appendix “A”) (R 2.2) (BP 1)
- b) The advice should be based through a consultative approach, on the general views of the school community, and in the best interest of students throughout the school. (R 2.1, 2.3) (BP 1)
- c) The Council must operate within the legislation of the Ministry of Education & Training and Board policies and procedures. (R 2.2) (BP 1)
- d) The Council will endeavour to enhance the learning environment and opportunities available to the students. (R 2.1)
- e) The council will promote positive relations within the school, community, and parish. (R 2.1)
- f) Each member of the Council shall commit to the mission statement of the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board and also the mission statement of St. Peter Catholic School.
- g) Council may engage in fundraising activities conducted in accordance with Board policies. (R 22.1, 22.2, 22.3)

4. **CODE OF ETHICS:**

1. A member shall consider the best interest of all students.
2. A member shall be guided by the school's and the school board's mission statement.
3. A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council, as identified by the school's operating guidelines, the school board, and the Ontario Ministry of Education.
4. A member shall become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
5. A member shall maintain the highest standards of integrity.
6. A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
7. A member shall treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
8. A member shall encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
9. A member shall acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council.
10. A member shall respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council.
11. A member shall not disclose confidential information.
12. A member shall limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
13. A member shall use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
14. A members shall promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
15. A member shall declare any conflict of interest.
16. A member shall not accept any payment or benefit financially through school council involvement.

5. MEMBERSHIP:

- i) Members of the Council shall reflect the diversity of the school community. (BP 2.3)
- ii) Members of the Council shall include:
 - a. School Principal (R 3.1.2)
 - b. One Teacher (R 3.1.3)
 - c. One Non-Teaching Staff member (R 3.1.4)
 - d. One Community Representative (R 3.1.7)
 - e. Parents/guardians of students enrolled at the school (R 3.1.1)
 - f. One Parish Representative (R 3.1.8)

5.1 A person who is employed by the Board that established a Council cannot be appointed as a community representative on the Council unless: (R 3.2.5) (BP 2.5)

- a) He or She is not employed at the school; and
- b) The other members of the Council are informed of the person's employment before the appointment.

5.2 Community representatives cannot be employed at the school (BP 2.5)

5.3 Catholics will make up the majority on the Council. (BP 2.5)

5.4 Parent/Guardians shall form the majority of the Council and be Catholic rate payers. (BP 2.2)

5.5 A member of the School Board cannot be a member of Council. (R 3.2.6) (BP 2.6)

6. ELECTION OF PARENT/GUARDIAN MEMBERS:

6.1 A person is qualified to be a parent/guardian member of the Council if he or she is a parent/guardian of a student who is enrolled in the school. (R 4.1) (BP 3.1)

6.2 Despite section (5.1), a person is not qualified to be a parent/guardian member of 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 that established the Council, unless he or she takes reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent/guardian members, of his/her employment. (R 4.2) (BP 3.2)

6.3 The Chair of the Council shall be a member who is both a parent/guardian of a student in the school and a Catholic rate payer. The Chair shall be elected by the parent/guardian(s) who are members of the Council. The Chair cannot be employed by the Board. (BP 3.3)

6.4 Parent/Guardian Representatives shall be elected by the parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school. (R 4.3) (BP 3.4)

7. ELECTION PROCESS:

7.1 An election of parent/guardian members of a Council shall be held during the first 30 calendar days of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the Chair of the Council and the Principal. (R 4.4) (BP 3.5)

7.2 The notice required by section (5.6) may be given by:

- a. Giving the notice to the parent/guardians in the first newsletter, making all aware of the positions that are up for nomination.
- b. Posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents/guardians.

7.3 The Principal of the school shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent/guardian members, on behalf of the Council, give written notice of the date, time, and location of the election to all parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school. (R 4.6) (BP 3.7)

7.4 Voting shall be carried out only if there is more than 1 candidate running for a position. If a vote is required, it will be done using secret ballot. The results of the election shall be supervised and announced by the Principal, however, the actual vote counts shall not be disclosed. Voters must appear in person to exercise this right. (R 4.8) (BP 3.9, 3.11)

7.5 The Chair of the Council and the majority of the parent/guardian members of the Council must be Catholic. (BP 2.3, 3.3)

7.6 Where the slate of the candidates for parent/guardian representation is not comprised of a majority of Catholic parents/guardians(s) and that circumstance 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. (BP 3.10)

7.7 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 of the Council for the remainder of the term. (BP 3.12)

- a) The Community Representative shall be appointed by the Council. (BP 4.1)
- b) The Parish Representative shall be appointed by the appropriate Parish Pastor (recommendation can be made by the Council).
- c) The Principal shall be a designated member appointed by the School board. (BP 4.3)
- d) The Teacher Representative shall be elected by the members of the teaching staff at the school. (R 5.2) (BP 4.4, 4.7)
- e) The Non-Teaching Staff Representative shall be elected by the members of the non-teaching staff at the school. (R 5.3) (BP 4.4, 4.7)
- f) School Board Trustees are eligible for election to the Council as parent representatives in the school which their child/children attend.
- g) Positions on Council shall be voted upon by all members on Council, using the secret ballot process.

8. TERM OF OFFICE:

8.1 Elected and appointed positions shall serve a term not to exceed one (1) school year. (R 6.1) (BP 5.1, 5.11, 5.12)

8.2 Members may serve more than one term consecutively. (R 6.2) (BP 5.2)

9. VACANCIES:

9.1 If a vacancy occurs for any representative during a term, a new representative shall through appointment or elections, complete but not exceed the original term of office of the vacating member. (R 7.1) (BP 6.1)

9.2 If an election is held to fill a vacancy in the membership of a Council, the provisions of sections 5 and 6, as the case may be, apply with necessary modifications, to the election. (R 7.2) (P 6.2)

9.3 A vacancy in the membership does not prevent the Council from exercising its authority. (R 7.3) (BP 6.3)

10. OFFICERS:

10.1 Councils shall have a Chair in accordance with the by-laws. (R 8.1) (BP 7.1)

10.2 The Chair must be a Catholic parent member and elected by the members. (R 8.2) (BP 7.2)

10.3 The Chair must not be an employee of the Board. (R 8.3) (BP 7.3)

10.4 Other officers are provided for in the by-laws of the Council (R 8.4) (BP 7.4)

11. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COUNCIL MEMBERS:

11.1 The members of the Council shall:

- a. Ensure that emphasis is placed on our Catholic identity and focus.
- b. Attend and participate at Council meetings.
- c. Participate in information and training programs.
- d. Encourage the participation of all parent/guardian(s) and of other people within the school community.

11.2 CHAIR

The Chair of the Council is responsible for the operation of the Council and shall: (BP 13.3)

- a) Ensure that emphasis is placed on our Catholic identity and focus.
- b) Call Council meetings.
- c) Prepare the agenda for the meetings along with the Principal, and ensure the agenda is circulated to Council members before the meeting. The Chair in consultation with the Principal can modify or change the agenda if it is in the best interest of the Council.
- d) Chair the meetings.
- e) Ensure that the minutes of the meetings are recorded, maintained, and accessible to parent/guardian(s). The minutes must be maintained for a minimum of four years at the school.
- f) Participate in information and training programs.
- g) Communicate with the school Principal.
- h) Consult with the Principal prior to the release of all communications to the community. Board staff and trustees. (Note: Such communication shall normally be sent at the request and with the concurrence of the Council)
- i) Ensure that there is regular communication with the school community.
- j) Consult with senior Board staff and trustees, as required.
- k) Implement temporary or standing committees as needed.
- l) Handle all correspondence for the Council and present it at all meetings.

11.3 VICE-CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL

The Vice-Chair shall:

- a) Assume the duties held by the Chair upon his/her absence.
- b) Assist the Chair in his/her duties at all times.
- c) Attend to other matters and issues as designated by the Chair.
- d) Assume other duties as assigned.

11.4 TREASURER

The Treasurer shall:

- a) Develop budget proposals necessary for the operation of the Council.
- b) Be entrusted with the receipt, care and distribution of funds.
- c) Maintain accurate financial records of the Council.
- d) Receive all monies of the Council and deposit them to the credit of the Council in a bank approved by the Council.
- e) Present statements of accounts at every meeting.
- f) Pay all expenses authorized by the Council.
- g) Issue all cheques pertaining to the Council and ensure two authorized signatures. One school administrator and either Council Chair or Treasurer must sign the cheques.
- h) Assume other duties and responsibilities as assigned.
- i) Adhere to Board policy re: non-Board funds.
- j) Keep available all financial records for four (4) years.

11.5 SECRETARY

The Secretary shall:

- a) Keep accurate minutes of all Council meetings and provide copies to each member of the council and post a draft copy in the school; copies of minutes must be maintained for a minimum of four years at the school. (R 16.1, 16.2, 16.3)
- b) Respond to all correspondence received by the Council, i.e. phone numbers, addresses.
- c) Assume other duties and responsibilities as assigned.

11.6 PARENT/GUARDIAN(S) OF THE COUNCIL

Parent/Guardian(s) of the Council shall:

- a) Participate in Council meetings.
- b) Participate in information and training programs.
- c) Act as a link between the council and community.
- d) Encourage the participation of all parent/guardians and of other people within the school community.
- e) Supervise and organize Council activities.
- f) Represent other parent/guardians(s) at all Council meetings.
- g) Assume other duties and responsibilities as assigned.

11.7 PRINCIPAL

The Principal of the school shall:

- a) Attend all meetings of Council.
- b) Ensure that emphasis is placed on our Catholic identity and focus.
- c) Facilitate the establishment of the Council and assist in its operations.
- d) Support and promote the Council's activities.
- e) Seek input from the Council in areas of which it has been assigned advisory responsibilities.
- f) Act as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies and collective agreements.
- g) Obtain and provide information required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions.
- h) Communicate with the Chair on Council, as required.
- i) Encourage the participation of all parent/guardian(s) and other people within the school community.
- j) Ensure that copies of the minutes of the Council's meetings are kept at the school and are accessible to parent/guardian(s).
- k) Assist the Council in communication with the school community concerning Council matters.
- l) Act as liaison between the Council and the Board Administration.
- m) Provide the Chair of the Council with access to the Board Policy Manual concerning Council matters.
- n) Consult with the Chair prior to the release of communication to the community concerning Council matters.
- o) Maintain his/her authority, responsibility and rights as mandated by Board Policy and the Education Act and Regulations of the Province of Ontario.
- p) Provide, from the school's budget, funds to support the work of the Council. Disbursement of those funds will be at the Council's discretion.
- q) Delegate any of his or her powers or duties as a member of Council to a Vice-Principal when deemed necessary by the Principal. (R 18.1)

11.8 **TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE**

The Teacher Representative shall:

- a) Act as liaison between teachers and Council.
- b) Participate in Council meetings.
- c) Participate in information and training programs.

11.9 **NON-TEACHING REPRESENTATIVE**

The Non-Teaching Representative shall:

- a) Act as liaison between non-teaching staff and Council.
- b) Participate in Council meetings.
- c) Participate in information and training programs.

11.10 **PARISH REPRESENTATIVE**

The Parish Representative shall:

- a) Act as liaison between the Parish and the Council.
- b) Participate in Council meetings.

11.11 **COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE**

The Community Representative shall:

- a) Act as liaison between the community and the Council.
- b) Participate in Council meetings.

12. **MEETINGS:**

12.1 A school Council shall meet at least four times during the school year. (R 12.1) (BP 15.1)

12.2 Council shall meet within the first 35 days of the school year. The election process must be completed as per sections 5 and 6. (R 12.2) (BP 15.2)

12.3 All meetings shall be open to members of the school community. The dates of the meetings shall be publicized. (R 12.4) (BP 11.4, 15.1, 15.4)

12.4 The Council and their appointed committees are entitled to hold their meetings at the school. (R 12.5) (BP 11.4)

12.5 A meeting of a school Council cannot be held unless: (R 12.3) (BP 15.3)

- a) A majority of the current members of the Council are present at the meetings; and
- b) A majority of the members of the Council who are present at the meeting are parent/guardian members.

12.6 Council members are to maintain their focus on what is considered the best interest of all students and the school community. Council meetings are not a forum for discussion about individual parents/guardians, students, staff, trustees or other Council members. (BP 9.3.1)

- 12.7 Council meetings should normally not exceed 120 minutes.
- 12.8 Meetings shall open with a prayer and Council members shall conduct themselves in a Christian manner.
- 12.9 Non-members of the Council who would like to make a presentation may do so provided the Chair has been notified and has scheduled this request in the agenda.
- 12.10 All members of the Council must be able to understand and express themselves in the operating language of the school.

13. VOTING:

- 13.1 Each member of a Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by Council. (R 14.1) (BP 12.1)
- 13.2 A majority of Council members will be considered a quorum. Parent/Guardians must represent a majority of members present. A minimum of 50% plus one vote shall be considered a majority vote. (R 3.2.4)
- 13.3 Each member of committee of a Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the committee. (R 14.2) (BP 12.2)
- 13.4 The Principal of the school is not entitled to vote in either Council or committee votes. (R 14.3) (BP 12.3)

14. COMMITTEES:

- 14.1 Council may establish committees to make recommendations to Council. Committee recommendations must be approved by Council before being implemented.
- 14.2 Every committee must include at least one parent/guardian member of Council. eg. Graduation (R 13.2) (BP 11.2)
- 14.3 A committee may include non-members of Council. (R 13.3) (BP 11.3)

15. COUNCIL PROCEDURES:

- 15.1 At the first meeting of the new Council, members shall elect a chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer. (BP 9.1)
- 15.2 The minutes of the Council meetings will be recorded and made available to anyone upon request. (R 16.1) (BP 10.1, 10.2)
- 15.3 Council will operate in a manner that is non-judgmental, is based on no fault discussion and uses consensus and compromise as the usual method of developing recommendations and plans. (BP 9.4)
- 15.4 Once a motion has been passed, a two-thirds majority vote is required to re-open the discussion considering said motion.
- 15.5 A person serving as a Council member shall not receive remuneration, but shall be reimbursed for expenses incurred as a member of Council. Expenses must be approved by Council prior to the expenditure being made. (R 11.1, 11.2)

16. CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

- 16.1 Any member of Council must declare a conflict of interest if the business being considered will result in a financial gain for that member.
- 16.2 Where a “conflict of interest” is made known, the Council member must refrain from discussion and voting on the issue.

17. CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

- 17.1 In order to avoid unnecessary conflict, Council shall: (BP 16.1)
- a) Adhere to defined roles and responsibilities.
 - b) Refrain from discussion of students, parent/guardians, staff members, trustees, or other Council members (as per Freedom of Information Legislation).
 - c) Have no involvement in selection of teaching and non-teaching staff.
- 17.2 In the situation that an unresolvable conflict inhibits the activity of the Council, the following process will be followed: (BP 16.2)
- a) The Chair and/or Principal will contact the Superintendent of the school, in writing. A copy of this correspondence will be forwarded to the Chair or the Principal.
 - b) The Superintendent will meet with the Chair and the Principal to mediate. The Superintendent may request to meet with the whole Council or with appropriate individuals, as deemed necessary.
 - 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.

18. INCORPORATION:

The Council shall not be incorporated. (R 17) (BP 9.5)

19. ANNUAL REPORT:

- 19.1 Council shall annually submit a written report on its activities to the Principal of the school and to the Board. (R 24)
- 19.2 If Council engages in fundraising activities, the annual report shall include a report on those activities. (R 24.2)
- 19.3 The Principal shall, on behalf of the Council, give a copy of the report to every parent/guardian of a pupil who, on the date the copy is given, is enrolled in the school (R 24.3, 24.4)
- 19.4 The report shall be written and distributed by the end of June.

20. **AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS:**

Amendments to the constitution shall be put forth to the Council for review at least one meeting prior to being voted upon. A 75% vote of membership shall constitute a change.

21. **CONSTITUTION:**

This constitution has been developed in accordance with regulation 612 under the Education Act and the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board Policy statement and has been forwarded to the Board's Director of Education.

21.1 This constitution shall be reviewed every three (3) years.

APPENDIX A

A Council is an advisory body and will provide advice to the Principal and, where appropriate, to the Board on any matters listed below which the Council identified as priorities in addition to any other matter: (R 20) (BP 13.1)

- The spiritual life of the school.
- Local school year calendar.
- School Code of Student Behaviour.
- Curriculum and program goals and priorities.
- The responses of the school or school Board to achievement in provincial and Board Assessment programs.
- Preparation of the school profile.
- Selection of Principals by providing to the Board report on school/community needs and special characteristics required of the Principal.
- School budget priorities, including local capital improvement plans.
- School-community communication strategies.
- Methods of reporting to parents/guardians and to the community.
- Extracurricular activities in the school.
- School-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreation, and nutrition programs.
- Local coordination of services for children and youth.
- Development, implementation, and review of Board policies at the local level.

In addition to its advisory responsibilities, the Council shall: (R 612) (BP 13.2)

- Promote the best interests of Catholic education locally and provincially.
- Establish goals, priorities, and procedures.
- Organize information and training sessions to enable members of the Council to develop their skills as Council members.
- Attend training sessions provided by the Board and the Ministry of Education and Training.
- Hold a minimum of four meetings per year (all meetings shall be open to members of the school community).
- Communicate regularly with parents/guardians and other members of the community to seek their views and preferences with regards to matters being addressed by the Council, and to report on the activities of the Council to the school community.
- Fundraise according to Board Policy; ensuring that the funds raised are used in accordance with any applicable policies established by the Board. Prepare a report of its activities for the current calendar year to be given to the Secretary of the Board. The report may also contain advice to the Board regarding its role in supporting the effective operation of Councils.
- Establish subcommittees as appropriate, which could include any existing parent-school organization. Voluntary organizations independent of the Council may continue to exist.
- With the Principal, serve as a link between the school and the community.

