



## Parent/Guardian and Community Engagement Catholic School Community Councils

Policy Number PGCE-02

The Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board (the Board) recognizes that the purpose of school councils is, through the active participation of parents/guardians, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians. The primary means of achieving this purpose is by making recommendations in accordance with the regulation to the principal of the school and to the board. The Board adopts the name “Catholic School Community Council” as the name of choice when referring to School Councils established by the board. Each school of the board shall establish a Catholic School Community Council that will operate within the framework established by the Strategic Plan and the Policy Statements of the Board.

### **Procedural Guidelines Follow**

*Statement Number A 9-98-02 “Catholic School Community Councils”*

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# Procedural Guidelines Supporting Catholic School Community Councils

Policy Number PGCE-02

The purpose of the procedure is to provide the broader Catholic Community with clarity regarding the Board's expectations with respect to Catholic School Community Councils, their membership, and their role within the schools of the Board. All procedural guidelines must comply with the AODA to ensure accessibility for individuals with disabilities and uphold the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## 1.0 MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 Membership of the CATHOLIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCIL (heretofore known as the "COUNCIL") shall reflect the constituent groups of the community, encourage representation from various cultural, racial and socio-economic backgrounds to promote inclusivity.
  - 1.2.1 parents/guardians of students enrolled at the school (as the majority group) with efforts made to include parents/guardians from underrepresented communities
  - 1.2.2 the school principal
  - 1.2.3 a teacher who is employed at the school
  - 1.2.4 a non-teaching member of the school staff
  - 1.2.5 a student appointed by the student council or in the case of schools without student councils, elected by other students (obligatory at the secondary level; at the principal's discretion at the elementary level) with consideration for student diversity.
  - 1.2.6 a pastor or his designate
  - 1.2.7 a community representative appointed by the Council, ensuring representation from Diverse community groups.
  - 1.2.8 one person appointed by the Council to act as liaison with the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education, if the school is affiliated with the Association by virtue of school and/or Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board membership.
- 1.3 The majority of seats on Council must be held by Separate School supporters as defined in the Education Act.
- 1.4 A member of the Board cannot serve as a member of a Council.



1.5 Membership on a Council is voluntary. Members shall receive reimbursement for expenses incurred in the normal course of their duties as Council members in accordance with Board policy, but shall not receive any remuneration for serving as a Council member.

1.6 The maximum number of members on each Council is 18.

## **2.0 ELECTION OF PARENT/GUARDIAN MEMBERS**

2.1 A person is qualified to be a member of a Council if they are a parent/guardian of a pupil enrolled in the school.

2.2 Despite section 2.1, a person is not qualified to be a member of a Council if,

2.2.1 they are employed at the school; or

2.2.2 they are an employee of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board unless they take reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote in the election of members of that employment.

2.3 A person is qualified to vote in an election of members of a Council if they are a parent/guardian of a pupil who is enrolled in the school.

## **3.0 OTHER ELECTIONS**

3.1 A person is qualified to vote in an election of a teacher member of a school council, if they are a teacher, other than the principal or vice-principal, who is employed at the school.

3.2 A person is qualified to vote in an election of a non-teaching member of Council, if they are a person, other than the principal, vice-principal or any other teacher, who is employed at the school.

3.3 A person is qualified to vote in an election of a student member of Council if they are a pupil enrolled in the school.

## **4.0 PROCESSES: ELECTION, SELECTION, AND TERM OF OFFICE**

4.1 An election of members shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the chair or co-chairs of a Council after consulting with the principal of the school. The election process must encourage inclusivity and encourage participation from underrepresented groups within the school community.

4.2 Despite section 4.1, if a new school is established, the first election of members to the Council shall be held during the first 30 days of the school year on a date that is fixed by the Board.



- 4.3 The principal shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of members, on behalf of the Council, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent/guardian of a pupil who is enrolled in the school.
- 4.4 The election of members shall be by secret ballot.
- 4.5 The term of office for an elected or appointed Council member is one year, renewable by election or appointment, unless otherwise stipulated in the by-laws of the Council.
- 4.6 A vacancy in the membership of a Council shall be filled by election or appointment in accordance with the by-laws of the Council.
- 4.7 A vacancy in the membership of a school council does not prevent the council from fulfilling its mandate.
- 4.8 The Principal sits as a non-voting member designated by the Board and acts as resource and liaison between the Board and the Council.
- 4.9 The local pastor or a designate shall be the parish representative on Council.
- 4.10 At the first meeting of the newly-elected Council, the community representation will be appointed.

## **5.0 OFFICERS**

- 5.1 A Council shall have a chair, who is a member of the Council and elected, by the Council or, if the by-laws of the Council provide, two co-chairs. The chair, or co-chairs, shall be Separate School supporters as defined in the Education Act.
- 5.2 An employee of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board cannot serve as chair or co-chair of the Council.
- 5.3 A school council may have such other officers as are provided for in the by-laws of the council.
- 5.4 Vacancies in the office of chair, co-chair or any other officer shall be filled in accordance with the bylaws of the Council.

## **6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF CATHOLIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCILS**

Each Council Shall:

- 6.1 Be a positive voice for Catholic education in the community, encouraging that all communications and activities are inclusive and accessible, adhering to accessibility standards.
- 6.2 Foster positive relationships among families, staff, parish and the community with a focus on promoting diversity, equity and inclusion.



- 6.3 Develop by-laws governing the conduct of its affairs regarding:
  - 6.3.1 election procedures and the filling of vacancies, encourage equitable representation from diverse community groups.
  - 6.3.2 the establishment of rules respecting participation in council proceedings in cases of conflict of interest.
  - 6.3.3 the establishment of a conflict resolution process for internal school council disputes in accordance with any applicable policies established by the Board.
- 6.4 Organize and participate in information and training sessions.
- 6.5 Consult with parents/guardians of pupils enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the Council and inform parents/guardians and other members of the community regarding matters being considered by the Council.
- 6.6 If necessary, establish committees to make recommendations to the Council. Such committees to include at least one member of the Council and to be governed by the Council by-laws.
- 6.7 Establish, within its advisory role, priorities and annual goals and evaluate its success in achieving them.
- 6.8 Submit on an annual basis, a written report on its activities, including fundraising, to the principal and to the Board.
- 6.9 Not engage in fundraising activities unless:
  - 6.9.1 the activities are conducted in accordance with Board policy.
  - 6.9.2 the activities are to raise funds for a purpose approved by the Board through the school principal.
  - 6.9.3 the funds are used in accordance with board policy.
- 6.10 Hold a minimum of 4 meetings per year which shall be accessible and open to the public, the first meeting to be held within the first 35 days of the school year after elections on a date fixed by the principal.
- 6.11 Ensure that for each meeting to establish a quorum:
  - 6.11.1 a majority of Council members are present,
  - 6.11.2 a majority of the members present are parent/guardian members.



- 6.12 Subject to section 4.8, recognize the entitlement of one vote for each member of the Council in votes taken by the Council and one vote for each member of a committee of the Council in votes taken by the committee.
- 6.13 Keep minutes and records of all meetings and financial transactions for a minimum of 4 years, and make these available at the school for examination, without charge, by any person.
- 6.14 Not be incorporated.

## **7.0 COUNCIL PROCEDURES**

The Council shall:

- 7.1 At its first meeting of the school year following the elections, nominate and elect a chair or two co chairs.
- 7.2 At its first meeting of the school year following the elections, nominate and elect the other members of its executive from the remaining members of Council.
- 7.3 Establish and publicize a meeting schedule with a minimum of four (4) meetings per school year.
- 7.4 Hold meetings that are open to the public.
- 7.5 Prepare and/or review operational by-laws in accordance with Board policies and procedures.
- 7.6 Record and maintain minutes of Council or committee meetings.
- 7.7 Establish positive working relationships with committees and groups within the school.
- 7.8 Maintain a perspective that fosters the active participation of parents/guardians to improve pupil achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians.
- 7.9 Seek widespread participation on any committees established by the Council.
- 7.10 Choose to operate by consensus or by voting procedures as outlined in the Council by-laws.

## **8.0 COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 Recommendations from the Council that are specifically related to the school are to be referred to the school principal.
- 8.2 Recommendations which are broader in scope than the local school should be referred to the school principal for direction to the appropriate board official or board committee.



- 8.3 Mechanisms to ensure on-going communications with the Councils will be established by the Board.

## **9.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS**

Each member should:

- 9.1 Promote the values of the Catholic faith, while encouraging that all activities and communications are inclusive and respectful of diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.
- 9.2 Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues.
- 9.3 Represent the interests of all the members of his or her constituent group.
- 9.4 Participate in regular Council meetings.
- 9.5 Participate in such information and training sessions as organized by the Board, the principal or the Council.
- 9.6 Encourage the participation and involvement of all members of the school community.
- 9.7 Abstain from all situations where conflict of interest might occur.

## **10.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIR**

The chair shall:

- 10.1 Provide Catholic leadership to the Council members.
- 10.2 Chair Council meetings and be the Council's official spokesperson.
- 10.3 Prepare a written agenda in co-operation with the principal and distribute it to all Council members.
- 10.4 Communicate on an ongoing basis with the principal to discuss agenda and Council activities.
- 10.5 Monitor the implementation of Council recommendations and activities.
- 10.6 Ensure that the recommendations of the Council are directed appropriately.
- 10.7 Ensure that the minutes of the Council meetings and records of all financial transactions are kept.
- 10.8 Ensure that an annual report on Council activities including fundraising be submitted to the principal and the Board.

## 11.0 ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRINCIPAL

The principal shall:

- 11.1 Assist the election committee in organizing the election of members to Council.
- 11.2 Within 30 days following the election of members, make the names of the members of the Council known to parents/guardians of pupils in the school and upon request promptly provide the names to a supporter of the Board or to the parent/guardian of a pupil enrolled in the school.
- 11.3 Support the Council in establishing its priorities and achieving its goals.
- 11.4 Provide assistance and support for Council activities and recommendations.
- 11.5 Give written notice of the dates, times and locations of Council meetings to every parent/guardian and attend every meeting of the Council, unless unable to do so by reason of illness or other cause beyond control.
- 11.6 Assist the Council in communicating effectively.
- 11.7 Collaborate with the chair in preparing the agenda for distribution to all Council members.
- 11.8 Serve as a resource on laws, regulations, policies and collective agreements to the Council in order to assist them in making recommendations.
- 11.9 Maintain on file a copy of the minutes of the Council meetings.
- 11.10 Maintain on file records of all financial transactions.
- 11.11 Provide for the prompt distribution to each member of the Council any materials received from the Ministry that are identified by the Ministry as being for distribution to Council members.
- 11.12 Post any materials distributed to members of the Council in a location that is accessible to all parents/guardians.
- 11.13 Consider each recommendation made by the Council and advise the Council of the action taken in response to the recommendation.
- 11.14 Provide a copy of the Council's Annual Report to every parent/guardian of a pupil who is enrolled in the school.
- 11.15 Solicit the views of the Council with respect to, but not limited to, the following:



11.15.1 The establishment or amendment of school policies and guidelines and the development of implementation plans that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians including,

- (i) a local code of conduct established under the Education Act governing the behaviour of all persons in the school, and
- (ii) school policies or guidelines related to the appropriate dress for pupils.

11.15.2 School action plans for improvement, based on the Education Quality and Accountability Office's reports on the results of tests of pupils, and the communication of those plans to the public.

## **12.0 CONSULTATION BY THE BOARD**

The Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board shall:

12.1 Consider each recommendation made to the Board by Catholic School Community Councils and shall advise such Councils of the action taken in response to the recommendation.

12.2 Solicit the views of Catholic School Community Councils with respect to, but not limited to, the following:

12.2.1 The establishment or amendment of Board policies and guidelines that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians, including,

- (i) policies and guidelines with respect to the conduct of persons in Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board schools.
- (ii) policies and guidelines respecting appropriate dress for pupils in Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board schools.
- (iii) policies and guidelines respecting the allocation of funding by the Board to Councils.
- (iv) policies and guidelines respecting the fundraising activities of Councils.
- (v) policies and guidelines respecting conflict resolution processes for internal Council disputes.
- (vi) policies and guidelines respecting reimbursement by the Board of expenses incurred by Council members.



- 12.2.2 The development of implementation plans for new education initiatives that relate to pupil achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians, including,
- (i) implementation plans for policies and guidelines with respect to the conduct of persons in schools.
  - (ii) implementation plans for policies and guidelines respecting appropriate dress for pupils.
- 12.2.3 Board action plans for improvement, based on the Education Quality and Accountability Office's reports on the results of tests of pupils and the communication of those plans to the public.
- 12.2.4 The process and criteria applicable to the selection and placement of principals and vice-principals. [Professional Standards Policy Number PS-07](#)

### **13.0 CATHOLIC VALUES**

The Catholic School Community councils are based on Catholic values and it is important to reference these values to ensure a clear and shared understanding.

### **14.0 DEFINITIONS**

Board - the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board (SMCDSB)

Catholic School Community Council - the body of duly elected members as defined in O. Reg. 612/00 who, in their advisory role, assist the principal in managing and setting priorities for the school.

Parent/Guardian - as defined in the section 1 of the Education Act (i.e.) a person who has lawful custody of a child.

Member - a member of the Catholic School Community Council who is elected to the council in accordance with Regulation 612/00, or who fills a vacancy created when a member ceases to hold office, and is an English Separate School Elector or the spouse of an English Separate School Elector.

Separate School Supporter - as defined by the Education Act, "means an English-language Roman Catholic board supporter or a French-language separate district school board supporter.



## REFERENCES

[Education Act-Section 1](#)

[Fundraising and School Generated Funds Policy PGCE-06](#)

[OAPCE By-Law and Constitution](#)

[Ontario Regulation 330/10 School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees](#)

[Ontario Regulation 612/00 School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees](#)

[Ontario Regulation 613/00 Operations of Schools - General](#)

[Parent and Community Engagement Policy \(PCE-02\)](#)

[Parent Engagement Ontario](#)

[Parents in Partnership...A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools](#)

[Professional Standards Policy Number PS-07](#)

[School Councils: A Guide for Members. Revised 2002](#)

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