

Holy Spirit Catholic School Advisory Council Constitution

Mission Statement

The purpose of our Holy Spirit Catholic School Advisory Council is to encourage a Catholic school community that promotes life-long spiritual, social, and physical wellness in a respectful and nurturing environment.

Code of Ethics

- A member shall consider the best interests of all students
- A member shall be guided by the school's and the Catholic school board's Mission statements
- A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council, as identified by the school council constitution, the Waterloo Catholic District School Board, 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
- 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 school council
- A member shall not disclose confidential information
- A member shall limit discussions at a school council meeting 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 council involvement

Adapted from Waterloo Catholic District School Board, "School Councils - A Guide for Members" developed by the Ministry of Ontario

Article I – Name

The name of this association shall be the Holy Spirit Catholic School Advisory Council in the Waterloo Catholic District School Board in the city of CAMBRIDGE, Diocese of Hamilton in the Province of Ontario.

Article II – Purpose and Objectives

The Holy Spirit Catholic School Advisory Council is an advisory body of parents/guardians, teachers, principal, staff, community and parish representatives who work together to promote Catholic faith and values and to enhance student learning.

The objectives of our Holy Spirit Catholic School Advisory Council shall be:

- To recognize that our school is an extension of our homes
- To join the spiritual and educational personnel of the home, school and church in a program that is most beneficial to the child.
- To continue to work together in building school/community spirit through open lines of communication among all partners, recognizing their diversity.
- To encourage the highest ideals of family life and to increase parent/guardian involvement in the education of their children.
- To encourage and support school based activities and programs
- To recognize that our school is governed by the Ontario Ministry of Education and the Waterloo Catholic School Board
- Financial responsibility

Article III – Membership, Duties and Responsibilities and Election

Membership

The membership of the Holy Spirit Catholic School Advisory Council shall be:

- Up to 13 parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school
- A community representative(s) appointed by council
- A parish representative (where possible)
- One teacher employed by the school
- One non-teaching staff member employed by the school
- The school principal and vice principal

A person is qualified to be a parent/guardian member if he or she is a parent/guardian of a pupil enrolled at the school unless

- he or she is employed at the school; or
- 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 members of that employment

Election of Members

The election of parent members to the Holy Spirit Catholic School Advisory Council shall be subject to the following:

- An election of parent members of a school council shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the Principal/Vice Principal of the school.
- Parent/guardians who are qualified to serve on the Catholic School Council will be invited to submit a '*Statement of Intent/Self Nomination*' if they wish to serve on the Catholic School Council by the date established by the Principal/Vice Principal.
- If more than the maximum number of parent/guardian members for the Catholic School Council wish to serve on the council, then an election will be held at the discretion of the Principal/Vice Principal. If not, then those who submitted a Statement of Intent/Self Nomination shall be acclaimed to the Catholic School Council
- The principal of a school shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent members, on behalf of the school council, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school.
- The required notice may be given by,
 - giving the notice to the parent's child for delivery to his or her parent: and
 - posting the notice in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.
- The election of parent members shall be by secret ballot.

Duties and Responsibilities

The members of the Holy Spirit Catholic School Advisory Council shall:

- Participate in council meetings
- Participate in information and training programs
- Act as a link between the Catholic School Advisory Council, the school community, and the community at large
- Encourage the participation of all parents/guardians and of other people within the school community
- Set priorities ourselves for the enrichment of the lives of the students at Holy Spirit Catholic School.
- Arrive at decisions with consensus when possible if a decision cannot be reached using consensus and a vote is deemed necessary
- Submit annual activity and financial reports to the Principal and the Board.
- **Must attend 50% of all council meetings**

Article IV – Decision Making

Whenever possible, the Holy Spirit Catholic School Advisory Council shall use consensus decision-making procedures. If and when a vote is required to make a decision, there must be quorum. Quorum requirements for a meeting are one half plus one of the Holy Spirit Catholic School Advisory Council with the majority being parents/guardians.

Article V – The Executive, Terms of Office, Responsibilities and Procedures for their Elections

The Executive of the Holy Spirit Catholic School Advisory Council consists of the Principal/Vice Principal and the elected positions of Chair, Co-Chair, and Secretary.

Executive Election Procedures

- The Principal/Vice Principal will chair the first two Catholic School Advisory Council meetings of the school year by the elected/acclaimed members of the Council.
- The Executive is chosen during the first Catholic School Advisory Council meeting of the school year.
- The Chairs of the Council shall be a parent/guardian members who are nominated by a member of the Council and elected by the members of the Catholic School Advisory Council
- The positions of Secretary shall be nominated by a member of the Council and elected by the members of the Catholic School Advisory Council.

Terms of Office

The term of office for the elected officers of the Executive shall be one year. If they are unable to complete their mandate, the vacant position shall be filled through another election. They may run for re-election in subsequent years.

Duties of the Executive Officers

Chair:

The Chair of the Catholic School Advisory Council shall:

- Can call Catholic School Advisory Council meetings in conjunction with the Principal
- In conjunction with the Principal, prepare the agenda for the Catholic School Advisory Council meetings
- Chair the Catholic School Advisory Council meetings using consensus/collaborative decision making
- Ensure that the minutes of the Catholic School Advisory Council meetings are recorded and maintained
- Participate in information and training programs
- Communicate with the school Principal/Vice Principal
- Ensure there is regular communication with the school community
- **Must demonstrate strong organizational skills**
- **To be elected Chair – the chair must have experience in School Council with a minimum of two year membership**
- **The Chair is elected annually**
- **The Chair position should be offered to a new member every 2 years, ideally the Co-Chair based upon the election process**

Co-Chair:

The Co-Chair of the Catholic School Advisory Council shall:

- Represent the Chair in his/her absence
- With the chair, ensure that the minutes of the Catholic School Advisory Council meetings are recorded and maintained
- Participate in information and training programs
- Communicate with the school Principal/Vice Principal
- Ensure there is regular communication with the school community
- **The Co-Chair is elected annually**
- **Ideally the Co-Chair should follow in the Chair position; however this depends on the election process**

Secretary:

The Secretary shall:

- Keep a record of all proceedings of meetings of the Catholic School Advisory Council
- Attend to all official correspondence and communications, posting of notices and filing of records in conjunction with the Principal/Vice Principal, Chair and Co Chair

Treasurer:

The Treasurer shall:

- Work with the school Admin Assistant to present the financials of the council
- Keep records of funds set aside for various initiatives
- Note all financial recording keeping is the legal responsibility of the principal and the admin assistant see Expenditures
- The Treasurer and Secretary Position can be held by the same person

The Principal/Vice Principal:

The Principal/Vice Principal of Holy Spirit Catholic School shall:

- Facilitate the establishment of the Catholic School Council and assist in its operation
- Support and promote the operations of the Catholic School Advisory Council
- Seek advice from the Catholic School Advisory Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibility
- Act as a resource on Board policies and collective agreements and Ontario Ministry of Education policies
- Obtain and provide information required by the Catholic School Advisory Council to enable it to make informed decisions
- Communicate regularly with the Chair and Co-Chair of the Catholic School Advisory Council
- Ensure that copies of the minutes of the Catholic School Advisory Council's meetings are kept at the school
- Assist the Catholic School Advisory Council in communicating with the school community
- Encourage the participation of all parents/guardians and of other people within the school community

- Be a member of all sub-committees
 - On behalf of the Catholic School Advisory Council, the Principal/Vice Principal shall give a copy of the annual activity/financial report to every parent of a pupil who is enrolled at the school by posting the report in a location that is accessible to parents and/or including information in the school's June Newsletter.

Article VI – Sub-Committees

A sub-committee shall be formed whenever the need arises for more detailed discussion and planning of a particular event or policy than can be addressed during a regular meeting of the Catholic School Advisory Council.

- Each sub-committee shall consist of a Co-ordinator and any school community members who wish to participate
- Progress reports shall be made at all Catholic School Advisory Council meetings
- The Co-ordinator shall:
 - ↪ Consult with the Chair and/or Principal/Vice Principal whenever necessary
 - ↪ Delegate various responsibilities to other committee members
 - ↪ Keep a detailed record of pertinent information and budgetary matters
 - ↪ Present a final report containing recommendations and a financial statement at the next Catholic School Advisory Council meeting following the completion of the sub-committee's mandate/task. All relevant records are to be submitted to the Chair.

Article VII – Meetings

- The Holy Spirit Catholic School Council will meet 6 times during the school year. **With the first meeting being September or Early October of a school year, and the last meeting being May.**
- **The meeting dates will be set at the first council meeting.**
- The Principal/Vice Principal must be present
- Meetings shall be open to all members of the school community.
- Any member of the school community may bring item(s) to the Catholic School Advisory Council meeting but must give the item(s) in writing to the Chair and/or Principal at least seven days in advance of a meeting. Determination of when the item(s) will be presented to the Catholic School Council remains the discretion of the Chair and the Principal.

Article VII – Financial Procedures

Fundraising

The Catholic School Advisory Council may engage in fundraising activities to support the Objectives and Purposes outlined in Article II.

- All fundraising activities are to be conducted in accordance with any and all applicable policies established by the Board.
- Prior to engaging in an appropriate fundraising activity, the Catholic School Advisory Council will establish a specific goal or purchase that any monies raised are to be used for.

Expenditures

All expenditures will be made with the consensus approval of the Executive and recommended to the Principal. Signing authorities of the Catholic School Advisory Council account shall be the school's Administrative Assistant and the Principal.

Article IX – Constitutional Amendments

Any proposed change or addition to the Constitution of the Holy Spirit Catholic School Advisory Council must be submitted to the Chair or the Principal at least two weeks prior to the Council meeting and placed on the agenda, provided it meets Waterloo Catholic District School Board and The Ontario Ministry of Education Policies and at the discretion of the Chair, Co-Chair and the Principal. The change must be presented in motion form and passed by a quorum at a Council meeting. The Constitution will be reviewed at the first Advisory Council Meeting of the new council for each school year.

Appendix I – Consensus Decision Making

What is Consensus?:

Consensus is a collective agreement reached through active participation by all members, to which every member is committed. It requires all to express a viewpoint, to actively listen and to differ constructively. Consensus does not mean 100 % agreement but a decision about which all members can honestly say, "I can live with it". Discussion continues until the team reaches a decision that every member accepts and will implement even though some have reservations. Ideally the team capitalizes on diversity among members to reach a far better decision than they could produce independently. Consensus decision making takes time, and like any other skill, takes practice to become proficient.

- Process = 100% participation
- Members participate, listen, differ constructively
- Not 100% agreement but "I can live with it"
- All members commit

How to Recognize Consensus

The team has consensus when all members can answer 'yes' to 4 questions

- Have I honestly listened?
- Have I had the opportunity to be heard and understood?
- Will I support the decision?
- Will I say 'we' made the decision together?

Consensus Guidelines

- Contribute, don't defend
- Seek a win-win solution
- Actively listen to others views
- Find out the reasons for others positions
- Don't agree for the sake of agreement
- Avoid voting or averaging
- Confront your differences – politely