



## School Advisory Council Guidelines

### Vision

As partners with parents in Catholic education and open to God's presence, St Patrick's Parish Primary School pursues fullness of life for all its students and the school community.

*The school ensures the care, safety, wellbeing and protection of its students in keeping with the Catholic tradition, which celebrates the sanctity and unique dignity of each person.*

### Mission

We journey towards this vision through:

- proclaiming and witnessing to the Good News of Jesus Christ
- ensuring quality learning that promotes excellence and fosters the authentic human development of all
- living justly in the world, in relationship with each other and in harmony with God's creation
- exploring, deepening and expressing our Catholic identity in diverse ways
- enabling each one of us to reflect more fully the image of God
- ensuring that the dignity of each person is a priority through effective stewardship of the school environment and its procedures and practices.

### Definitions

**Governing Authority:** Under Canon Law (Canon 591), the governing authority is the ordained minister (priest) designated by the bishop who is entrusted with the civil and canonical authority to govern the parish and schools.

**Parent:** any parent, legal guardian/carer of a child enrolled at the school

**Staff:** any person employed by St Patrick's Parish Primary School

### Role of School Advisory Council (SAC)

The SAC acts an advisory body to governing authority and those delegated by him in all matters. The St Patrick's Parish Primary SAC supports the governing authority and principal in the directions/policies of the school. It offers advice, to the governing authority and assists with planning for the present and the future operation of the school. This includes:

1. Supporting the ministry functions of schools through assisting with:

- promotion of the school's Catholic ethos and culture
- articulating and enacting the school's vision and mission
- promotion of faith development
- strengthening links between parish and school

2. Providing a stewardship role of the school through assisting with:

- present and future capital resource planning and maintenance
- disseminating information about the school- events/directions
- long-term viability of the school: enrolments/ resources/master planning
- appointment of principal and staff, if required

3. Providing advice and support to the Governing Authority and Principal through assisting with:

- development, implementation and ratification of policy, as required
- support of and communication on school and parish matters
- advice, as required, on issues arising such as from the School Development Plan, innovations and enrolment trends

4. Providing financial oversight of the school in assisting with:

- implementation of diocesan policies such as School Fee Collection
- sighting the annual school budget and its progressive implementation
- monitoring significant changes to school budgets and cash flow requirements
- monitoring capital borrowings and development

## Role of the Principal

As the designated leader, the principal is responsible for the effective operation of the school. The principal sets direction for the SAC but is not answerable to the SAC for the day-to-day operational decisions of the school. The professional area of curriculum development, teaching and internal management of the school remains the responsibility of the principal. The principal informs the SAC on key developments within the school as appropriate such as:

- briefing SAC members on significant events/directions/innovations
- providing updates on School Improvement- under the five key aspects of schooling
- engaging SAC members in policy development where appropriate
- providing the Annual Report to the Community
- briefing SAC members on financial data, accountability and compliance issues. The principal presents the annual school budget which the SAC recommends for approval to the governing authority

## SAC Membership

The members of the School Advisory Council consist of:

1. Ex-officio members: Governing Authority and Principal
2. Six parent representatives
3. Nominated members (if appropriate)
  - parish representatives
  - staff representatives
4. Co-opted Members
  - At any one time, the SAC may recommend to the Governing Authority the appointment of co-opted members to the SAC:
    - for a specific purpose
    - for a specified term

Parent representatives and nominated members will have a two-year term of service, staggered to allow for a turnover of half the membership.

Every two years, nominations are called for parent representatives. Parents can nominate themselves or be endorsed by another parent (with their permission). A discernment process may be undertaken and if required, an election is conducted.

In the event of an election, parents are provided with a voting form and given two weeks to submit their vote. Forms are returned to the school administration office. A staff member is nominated to count the votes. The successful candidates will need endorsement by the governing authority.

The staff member will be determined using school procedures such as leadership role and duties or through nomination, discernment and voting. The governing authority will endorse the staff member.

Casual vacancies may be filled following nomination of the SAC and endorsement of the governing authority.

In any given period of time, the membership can be modified such as availability of six parents for the SAC or having an additional staff member. This change would need to be endorsed by the governing authority.

The governing authority will commission new members at their first meeting.

On the advice of the SAC, the governing authority may remove any elected or invited member from the Council. Reasons for removal would include lack of commitment to the work of the SAC and the Catholic ethos of the school overall.

Members are required to:

- ensure they understand and can articulate the school's vision and mission
- be an ambassador for the school through promoting the school and encouraging the school community to engage in student learning
- make decisions that always have the welfare of the students as their primary basis and are in keeping with the school's vision and mission
- be truly representative of what is best for the whole school community
- respect the function and responsibilities of the principal and staff of the school
- give the necessary time, thought and attention to the work of the SAC
- respect matters of confidentiality and the recommendations of the SAC
- work with fellow SAC members in a spirit of harmony, cooperation and honesty
- support the decisions of the SAC regardless of personal opinion
- only act on behalf of the SAC when specifically authorised to do so by the SAC
- refer to the appropriate person any issues or concerns that are not the concern of the SAC
- take part in the SAC member induction program
- provide a current Working With Children's Check each year to the principal. If required, they may need also to provide a National Police Check.
- Attend at least 4 SAC meetings and sub-committee each year (unless exceptional circumstances)

***SAC Executive***

- Chair
- Deputy Chair
- Principal
- Minute Secretary

- Treasurer (if required)

The SAC will elect the chair, deputy chair, minute secretary (and treasurer if required) at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Elected and invited members are eligible for these positions.

The term of office is one year. A SAC member can hold the same position on the executive for no longer than two years. The governing authority can approve a position being held for longer than two years.

The SAC Executive will develop meeting times in advance of each SAC meeting or as required.

All committee members require a Working With Children Check and may be required to hold a current National Police Check

### ***Role of Chair***

- maintains regular communication with the governing authority and SAC members
- ensures an appropriate agenda (in consultation with the principal)
- conducts orderly meetings
- determines meeting duration and advise those present prior to the commencement of the meeting
- encourages contributions from all members
- follows up on SAC business
- is available to members and others
- prepares a brief report following each meeting for inclusion in the school newsletter
- prepares a report for the Annual General Meeting and the *Annual Report to the Community*

### ***Role of Deputy Chair***

- supports the Chair
- acts as Chair when Chair is not available

### ***Minute Secretary***

- records, distributes and files SAC minutes
- receives, present and files correspondence
- develops and sends correspondence out

### ***Treasurer (if required)***

- maintains and report on the financial records of the SAC and sub-committee
- ensures that all funds raised in a given year are transferred to the school in December of that year or transferred throughout the year as requested by the principal

## **SAC Meetings**

- The Annual General Meeting is held in Term 1
- At least ordinary five meetings are held throughout the year i.e. two meetings in Terms 2 and 3 and one in Term 4. Additional meetings can be held if appropriate.
- The meeting should be planned to go no longer than two hours.
- Sub-committee meetings can be held before or after the SAC meetings or at an additional time.

### ***Meeting Agenda***

The following is a suggested SAC meeting format:

- Prayer and Formation
- Attendance and Apologies
- Minutes of the last Meeting and Acceptance
- Correspondence: In and Out
- Governing Authority Report
- Principal Report including update on School Improvement Plan and Financial Statement
- Child Safety (required item: Child Safety Standards)
- Major Business- items to be listed
- Sub-Committee Reports
- General Business- items to be listed
- Prayer
- Confirmation of Date of Next Meeting and suggested Agenda Items

The principal normally prepares the meeting agenda, in consultation with the Chair and governing authority.

The agenda and minutes of the last meeting are circulated to SAC members prior to a meeting.

At the discretion of the chair, items without notice may be deferred to another meeting. Pressing matters may be included for immediate consideration.

### ***Decision-Making Processes***

Decision making within the SAC takes into account scripture, traditions, church teachings, liturgy and ritual. Decision-making processes draw on consensus and aim to enrich and improve student outcomes.

- All decisions of the SAC are advisory to the governing authority. Normally, such advice is determined by consensus.
- At the discretion of the chair/governing authority, a vote may be required from time to time. Voting rights are extended to all elected and invited members.

### ***Quorum***

- There is no minimum quorum for a meeting
- Items requiring a formal vote (as determined by the chair in consultation with the governing authority) will need a simple majority of the total number elected and appointed members of the SAC to be carried.

## **Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) in normal circumstances is to be held in Term 1.

### ***Order of Business for AGM*** (suspension of normal business):

- Commissioning of new SAC members by Governing Authority
- Annual reports to the community will be presented by:
  - Principal (to include the finance report)
  - Chair
  - Governing Authority or delegate
  - Sub-Committee Leaders
  - Other as required
- Election of the SAC Chair, Deputy Chair and Minute Secretary (and treasurer if required)
- Setting of general meetings dates and times
- Reviewing sub-committees and meeting dates and times

- Business-
  - This part of the meeting could be an open meeting whereby the school community is invited.
  - Items to be listed and could include an outline of the key directions for the school improvement plan and the key focus for the SAC for that year inviting input from school community

## SAC Sub-Committees

SAC members will be assigned to SAC sub-committees. The sub committees will usually consist of a: maintenance committee; social and fundraising committee and; community engagement. The nature, directions and number of sub-committees will be reviewed each year. Additional parents and staff will be part of a sub-committee according to the requirements of the sub-committee.

The SAC will develop for each sub-committee responsibilities, scope of focus and reporting processes. The SAC will consult with the sub-committee number and times of meeting.

Any funds raised through the activities of the SAC or a sub-committee must be accounted for and made available to the principal at the end of each year or as required according to the requirements of Catholic Education Office Ballarat. The principal determines how the funds are spent. A treasurer will need to be appointed to manage the financial transactions of the SAC and any subcommittee.

All sub-committee members require a Working With Children Check and may be required to hold a current National Police Check.

## SAC Induction

All new and returning members of the SAC take part in an induction programme prior to taking their place on the SAC. The induction will include developing an understanding of:

- the role and membership of the SAC and how it supports the Governing Authority
- the role and the delegated responsibility of the principal
- the Catholic school and sector
- the vision and mission of the school and school improvement
- key legislation such as the Disability Standards for Education 2005 and Child Safe Standards and requirements for the ongoing registration of schools
- school financial management and reporting
- operational matters of the SAC including any subcommittees
- key school policies and procedures

The chair and principal will collaborate on implementing an induction program.

## Learning and Development

All SAC members will have opportunities as required for further learning and development in their understanding of the role and function of the SAC such as:

- participation in information and discussions session on Catholic identity, school improvement and school governance
- participation and input into policy development
- discussion on legislation that impacts on the operations of the school

- role of the SAC in relation to school budgets

Learning and development will be provided within and outside of SAC meetings.

### Review of SAC Guidelines

The SAC Guidelines should be reviewed every four years though a review may not require any modifications. These Guidelines can be reviewed and modified for a specific reason outside of the review scheduled date after an endorsement at a SAC meeting and endorsed by the governing authority. This may occur in response to new or changes in diocesan, state or federal legislation