

**ST. EMILY CATHOLIC
SCHOOL COUNCIL
CONSTITUTION
&
BY-LAWS**

Approved April 8, 2025

ARTICLE 1: DEFINITIONS

Ad Hoc Committees/Sub Committee shall mean committees that are formed for a specified period of time to respond to a need or issue.

Board shall mean the Board of Trustees of the Ottawa Catholic School Board.

Board Policy shall mean the Ottawa Catholic School Board's Communications Policies and Procedures on Catholic School Councils, School Operations.

By Laws shall mean the standing rules of the Council for the regulation of its conduct and internal organization.

Catholic School Parents' Association (CSPA) shall mean the volunteer parent organization that represents parents and elected School Council members of the Ottawa Catholic School Board.

Community shall mean the attendance area of the school.

Eligible Council Members shall mean those parents elected or appointed to Council can vote when a vote is required.

Executive Officer shall mean a position of additional responsibility held by an elected or appointed Council parent member. An Executive Officer on the Council shall be the following positions: Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer.

In writing shall include written correspondences conducted via email.

Parent shall mean the parents or legal guardians of students enrolled at the school.

Quorum shall mean the number of members required for an official Council meeting is equal to 50% of the parent members of the Council + 1, and the Principal or designate.

St. Emily Catholic School Council shall mean a body elected and appointed members that serves in an advisory role to the School Principal and, on occasion, to the Board.

ARTICLE 2: SCHOOL COUNCIL NAME

- . The organization shall be known as the St. Emily Catholic School Council (Council).
- ii. The organization's place of business shall be at
St. Emily Catholic School,
500 Chapman Mills Drive
Nepean, Ontario, K2G 0J2.

ARTICLE 3: MISSION STATEMENT

- . St. Emily Catholic School Council, in partnership with the school, home and parish will strive to attain the highest quality education for each child.
- ii. St. Emily Catholic School Council encourages parents to participate in school life and to ensure that the teachings and values of Jesus Christ are integrated in all aspects of school life.
- iii. St. Emily Catholic School Council supports a nurturing, welcoming, and safe learning environment that celebrates the education of the whole child: spiritual, intellectual, physical, social and emotional.

ARTICLE 4: OBJECTIVES

Council shall serve as a vehicle for empowering the St. Emily community, to that end, it shall:

- . Build and maintain a positive relationship between home, school, parish and community by providing and supporting a variety of educational and social activities; by recognizing that St Emily Catholic School is an extension of our home, parish, and community; and by striving to remain caring, flexible, and creative in all its decisions.
- ii. Provide information and gather feedback on issues affecting the school community; gather feedback on school programs, parent involvement, school policies and community issues; by building on the shared values of the community; and
- iii. Provide opportunities for parents to be more involved in the Catholic Education of their children; by fostering an atmosphere in which all parents feel encouraged to participate in the school.

ARTICLE 5: MANDATE

- . Council functions as an advisory body, to the School Principal and to the Board, on any matter, as outlined in the Board Policy.
- ii. In its advisory role, the views of the Council may be solicited by the Board, in the following instances:
 - a. The establishment or amendment of Board policies or guidelines;
 - a. The development of implementation plans that relate to pupil achievement;
 - a. The accountability of the education system to parents;
 - a. Any other issue as mandated by the *Education Act* and Regulations; or
 - a. The process, criteria, and preferred profile applicable to the selection and placement of Principals and Vice-Principals.

ARTICLE 6: MEMBERSHIP

- i. Council membership shall include the following members: Parent Members, Principal or designate and Teaching Staff Members.
- ii. The School Council elects the following officers from its parent membership on a yearly basis:
 - 1. Chair
 - 2. Vice-Chair
 - 3. Treasurer
 - 4. Assistant Treasurer
 - 5. Secretary
 - 6. CSPA Representative
 - 7. Parish Representative
 - 8. Fundraising Chair
 - 9. Events Chair
 - 10. Lunch Chair
 - 11. Member at Large
 - 12. Member at Large
 - 13. Member at Large
- iii. Council's Executive Committee shall consist of the following Executive Officers:
 - a. Chair
 - a. Vice-Chair
 - a. Treasurer

Parent Members

- Parent members of the Council will constitute the majority of the members. Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled in a Catholic School will be eligible to be a parent member of the Council as determined by the regulations.

Board Employees and Trustees

- A Board employee who works at the school his or her child attends is not eligible to serve as a parent member on the Council. They may however, be elected as either the teaching or non-teaching staff representative. Board employees who do not work at the school their children attend may be elected as parent members as long as they notify other parents of their employment with the School Board prior to their election. An employee of the Board cannot serve as the Chair, or Vice-Chair of the Council.

School Staff Representatives

- The School Principal, as appointed by the Board. Any teacher in the school is eligible. Teaching staff may choose to share or alternate this position during the school year. The teacher position cannot be filled by the Principal or Vice-Principal. Any member of the non-teaching staff in the school is eligible for this position. Non-teaching staff includes anyone employed at the school who does not have teaching duties, including parents working in this capacity.

ARTICLE 7 - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All Council members will:

- . Regularly attend and participate in Council meetings. If a member cannot attend a scheduled meeting, s/he should inform the Chair or Principal in advance.
- . Participate in information and training programs.
 - . Act as a link between the Council and the community and encourage the participation of parents from all groups, and of other people within the school community.
 - . Vote on issues as required.
 - . Be committed to the improvement of the school.
 - . Provide training, education and assistance to their successor as required.

- . Will abide by the Ministry of Education Code of Ethics for School Council members (see **Appendix A**).
- **Appendix B** provides full details on each position's roles and responsibilities

ARTICLE 8 – ELECTION PROCESS

This whole section needs review

- . Elections for Council positions must be held during the first 30 calendar days of every school year. The first official meeting of the new Council is to be held within the first 35 calendar days of the school year.
- ii. The Principal of the school shall, on behalf of the Council, give written notice to every parent/guardian, that Council elections are to be held, inviting them to put their name forward. This notification must be sent at least 14 days before the date of the election and must include the date, time and location of the election. The notification can be sent via the school newsletter, e-mail, voicemail, and/or school website.
- iii. Each parent/guardian seeking election can be nominated or self-nominated in writing in advance of election or in person at the election, must have a child registered at the school, and must declare if he or she is employed by the School Board.
- iv. Election night, Council shall strike an election committee to help with the gathering of the nominations and the running of the election. The election committee shall include the Principal and Vice Principal and if needed, a parent or teacher representative. No one standing for election, or the spouse of anyone standing for election, shall be a member of the election committee.
- v. The election committee shall:
 - a. Conduct the election by counting full hand votes for each position;
 - a. If multiple candidates are nominated for a position, secret ballots will be written and counted;
 - a. Notify all candidates of the results; and
 - a. Keep all results and related information confidential.
- vi. Only the names of the successful candidates shall be made public.

- vii. All individuals standing for election shall be notified of the results before the results are released to the school community.
- viii. If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates shall be acclaimed.
- ix. In case of appeals related to the Council election process or the results, the Principal and the Chair of the outgoing Council shall review the matter and jointly make a ruling.
- x. The Principal will make necessary arrangements for the appointment of teaching and non-teaching staff members.
- . The Principal shall ensure that the names of the newly elected Council are publicized to the school community within 30 days of the election.

ARTICLE 9 - OPERATING PROCEDURES

- . The first meeting of the Council will occur within the first thirty-five (35) calendar days of the school year.
- ii. There must be a minimum of four (4) meetings a year. The Chair and the Principal may call special meetings as deemed necessary.
- iii. The dates, times and locations of the regular meetings will be established at the first meeting of the year, and will be communicated to all parents/guardians as soon as possible.
- iv. The agenda for Council meetings should be set in consultation with the school Principal prior to the meeting date.
- v. Items brought forward at a meeting will be added to the agenda and addressed if there is sufficient time remaining at the end of the meeting. Otherwise they will be placed on a future agenda.
- vi. All meetings are chaired by the Chair or Vice-Chair.

ARTICLE 10 a: VOTING PROCEDURES DURING COUNCIL MEETINGS

- . Meeting quorum is majority (50% + 1) of the current Council voting members as defined by Board policy.

- ii. The majority of the members of the Council who are present at the meeting must be parent members.
- iii. The Principal or designate must also be in attendance in order for the meeting to occur. Attendance must be maintained until the meeting is adjourned.
- iii. Voting at Council meetings will be by show of hands; with the vote carried by a simple majority (50% +1) of the current Council voting members present at the meeting.
- v. Council members must be present at the meeting in order to vote, and cannot proxy their votes.
- vi. Principals or designates do not have a vote on Council.
- vii. Any amendments made to the Council By-laws must be voted on at a Council meeting, and may only occur with the approval of 2/3rds of all the current Council voting members.
- viii. The preferred decision-making process at all meetings is by way of consensus. Consensus can be determined on the basis of surveys of the school community, in consideration of Ad hoc committee/sub-committee reports, and through discussion at meetings. If, in the judgment of the Chair, consensus is unclear, or if any member of the school community attending requests a recorded vote, a formal process should be used, based on the following principles:
 - a. One item at a time;
 - a. Justice, respect and courtesy to all;
 - a. The right of the majority to carry a decision; and
 - a. The right of the minority to be heard.
- ix. Only eligible Council members will vote when a vote is required. They must be present at the meeting and cannot proxy their votes.
- x. When consensus is not achieved, the Council will decide whether to hold a vote to be decided by the majority of the Executive, or to appoint a facilitator to help with the decision making process. In case of a tie vote on a motion, it will be considered not to have passed.
- xi. Each member of the Council is entitled to one vote.

ARTICLE 10 b: OUT-OF-MEETING VOTING PROCEDURE

We should bring this section into the current decade

- . Occasionally, the situation may arise outside of scheduled Council meetings where the Council will need to make a decision or take action that requires the support of the majority of Council members.
- iii. When a Council decision is required between meetings, a vote may be taken by email to all Council voting members.

ARTICLE 11: RECORD KEEPING AND REPORTING

- . Minutes of Council meetings and Council financial records (or bank balances) must be kept for four (4) years, and must be accessible by the school community.
- ii. An Annual Report outlining the Council's activities (including a financial statement), must be prepared at the end of the school year and submitted to the Board.
- iii. Discussions at Council meetings should not have inappropriate references to individual parents, students, Board personnel, Trustees or individual Council members.
- iv. All Council meetings should be limited to two hours.

ARTICLE 12: FINANCES

- . All monies shall be deposited in a bank/trust company approved by the Council.
- ii. All expenditures over \$100.00 shall be made by resolution of the Council.
- iii. In the course of activities associated with the Council, council members may expense a total of up to \$100.00 without prior approval of the Council.
- iv. All expenditures, regardless of the amount, shall be reported at the next Council meeting by the Council member who made the expenditure, and shall be reflected in the minutes of the Council meetings.

- v. The Council's accounting books can be requested by any member of the school community and shall be maintained by the Treasurer.
- vi. A minimum of two (2) and a maximum of four (4) Council parent members will be assigned signing authority for the Council chequing account. One of these members must be the Treasurer.
- vii. All cheques must be signed by two Council parent members with signing authority.
- viii. A financial report approved by the Council shall be presented at each meeting.
- ix. The June financial statement shall be approved by at least two Council members, and included in the Council annual report for distribution to the school community.
- x. Each outgoing Council shall leave in the treasury a sum equal to the unpaid bills or obligations for which it is responsible and a minimum balance of \$1000.00.

ARTICLE 13: AD HOC COMMITTEES

- i. Committees may be appointed by the Council for the furtherance of the work of the Council.
- ii. Council should appoint the Chair of an Ad Hoc committee or subcommittee.
- iii. The Chair of the Ad Hoc committee or subcommittee does not have to be a Council member.
- iv. Ad Hoc committees or subcommittees may include non-members of the Council.
- v. Committees shall submit reports and recommendations to the Council and shall follow directions from the Council.

ARTICLE 14: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- i. A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential.
- ii. Members of the Council shall declare a conflict of interest in matters that they, members of their families, or business entities in which they may have an interest, stand to benefit either directly or indirectly by decisions of the council.

- iii. A member shall exclude him- or herself from any discussions of, or any vote on, a resolution in which:
 - a. a conflict of interest is likely to result;
 - b. the member's ability to carry out his or her duties and responsibilities as a member of the Council may be jeopardized;
 - c. the Council member, his or her relatives, or a business entity in which the member may have an interest, may gain or benefit either directly or indirectly as a result of actions that may be taken by the Principal or Board in response to advice that the Council provides to the Principal or to the Board.
- iv. A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

ARTICLE 15: FUNDRAISING

- . Council may engage in fundraising activities.
- ii. Council will not engage in fundraising activities unless:
 - a. the activities are conducted in accordance with any applicable Board policies; and
 - b. the activities are to raise funds for a purpose approved by the Board or authorized by any applicable Board policies.
- iii. All monies can be collected by any Council member and given to the Treasurer or the Assistant Treasurer to be directly deposited into the authorized council account.
- iv. The parent community will be made aware of the fundraising goals in advance of fundraising events.

ARTICLE 16: REMUNERATION

- . School council members will not be paid for their work on Council.
- ii. Members of the Council shall be reimbursed according to board policies for expenses incurred as Council members.

ARTICLE 17: CONFLICT RESOLUTION BY-LAWS

- . Council members are elected to serve the school community and will demonstrate respect for their colleagues on council at all times.

- ii. Every school council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her concern or opinion about the issue at dispute and how the dispute has affected him or her.
- iii. Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
- iv. Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
- v. The Chair's responsibility is to clarify the statements made by all speakers, to identify common ground among the points of view raised, and to set out the joint interests of all members.
- vi. If no common ground can be identified, the Chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
- vii. If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the Chair and/or Principal shall request the intervention of a superintendent or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict, in accordance with the progressive steps outlined in the Board's Policy.

ARTICLE 18: COMMUNICATIONS

- i. Council will provide information and gather feedback from parents/guardians of students enrolled in the School on issues affecting the school community.
- ii. Communication will include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - a. Council providing the parents/guardians with information concerning matters under consideration by Council by means of:
 - Newsletters, reviewed by Principal/Vice Principal, and emailed to parents/guardians
 - Posting newsletters and approved Council minutes on the School website.
 - b. Council opening up the floor of Council and Committee meetings in order to receive input from the assembled parents/guardians on any matters under consideration by Council.

- c. Council inviting parents/guardians to participate on Council Committees.

ARTICLE 19: BOARD/COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL

- . Council communications shall be conducted in accordance with the Board's policies and guidelines.
- ii. All written communications sent on behalf of the Council shall be reviewed, approved, and signed by the Chair, with the exception of notices sent to the parent community in the course of conducting Council activities.
- iii. All written communications sent on behalf of the Council, to both the school parent community and to external recipients, shall be reviewed by the Principal before being issued.

ARTICLE 20: PROCEDURE FOR REMOVAL OF A COUNCIL MEMBER

- . Accepting the role of Council member carries with it certain responsibilities. Council will have the authority to remove an elected or appointed member from office if the member fails to live up to those responsibilities. All members should be prepared to make a commitment to conduct the Council's business in a professional manner. Examples of possible reasons for removal of a member could include:
 - a. Two consecutive absences from meetings, especially when these absences leave the council without quorum.
 - b. Failure by the member to fulfil the responsibilities of their office.
 - c. Acting in a manner that is counter-productive to the Council's efforts to achieve its goals.
- ii. The process for removal of a Council member will be as follows:
 - a. Any Council member who believes that the removal of another Council member may be warranted shall meet with the Principal and/or Chair to express their concerns.
 - b. The Principal shall convene a meeting with the Chair or Vice-Chair, the Council member whose status is in question, and the Council member who formally requested the removal. At this meeting they will discuss the issues raised

concerning Council.

- iii. If a resolution to the issue cannot be achieved, then at the next scheduled Council meeting, the Principal will request that a vote be taken on whether to remove the member in question from office.
- iv. Any member of the Council may be removed as a member only with the approval of at least two-thirds of all the current Council voting members at a meeting of the Council, provided that such Council member shall be granted the opportunity to be heard at such meeting.

ARTICLE 21: TERM OF OFFICE

- . The term of office for each Council member shall be one year; from the date elected or appointed until the date of the first meeting of the Council and after the elections in the next school year.
- ii. A member of a Council may be re-elected or re-appointed in any given year. However, the Chair and Vice-Chair may not serve more than 2 consecutive years.

ARTICLE 22: VACANCIES

- . If any Council positions become vacant because of resignation, inability of a member to fulfill his or her roles and responsibilities, or other cause, the Council shall have the power to appoint a person to fill the same office for the remainder of the term.
- ii. Should an elected parent/guardian Council position become vacant before the next election, the Council shall fill the vacancy by appointment from the non-elected candidates from the previous election.
- iii. If none of the previous candidates remain interested in becoming a Council member, the Council may request that interested parents/guardians from the school community submit their names for consideration. The Council shall then appoint one of those who indicate an interest.
- iv. Vacant positions, other than for parent representatives, may be filled by appointment of the Council for the remaining term of office, from among members of the school community who meet the requirements set for the vacant positions.

- v. If the vacancy cannot be filled, the remaining members shall constitute the Council, unless the parent/guardian majority is not maintained.
- vi. If a vacancy occurs and parents no longer represent the majority on the Council, the Council shall instruct the election committee to send nomination forms home with the students to seek nominations for the vacant parent's position(s) for the purpose of holding an election to fill the vacancy or vacancies.
- vii. When a vacant spot on Council is filled, the new member's term shall expire at the time of the next election.
- viii. Should a Council member resign or withdraw from a position before the term is finished, the position shall be filled until the next election as follows:
 - a. Chair by the Vice-Chair
 - a. All remaining positions shall be appointed by the Council.

ARTICLE 23: COUNCIL LIABILITY

- . Council members participating in school-related activities endorsed by the Principal and/or Board will be covered by the respective liability insurance policy of the Board.
- ii. Councils will consider the acquisition of additional liability insurance as appropriate.

ARTICLE 24 - AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS

- . Any changes to the St. Emily School Council By-Laws must comply with the Board's By-Laws Guidelines and Board Policies and Procedures.
- ii. The By-Laws may be changed with the proposed amendments being submitted to the Council at any regular meeting of the Council provided that:
 - a. The amendment must be published and distributed to the members of the Council prior to voting.
 - a. Voting on the amendment will take place at a subsequent Council meeting.
 - a. The amendment must secure a 2/3 vote of the full Council.
- iii. Any amendments made to the By-laws must be filed with the Board, and a copy must be available in the school for public access.

APPENDIX A

CODE OF ETHICS

A member of St. Emily School Council shall:

- consider the best interests of all students
- be guided by the school's and the school board's mission statements
- 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
- become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- maintain the highest standards of integrity.
- recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
- encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued
- acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council
- respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations that this may place on the operation of the school council
- not disclose confidential information
- limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole
- use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise
- promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community
- declare any conflict of interest
- not accept any payment or benefit financially through school council involvement

APPENDIX B

ST. EMILY CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Chairperson:

- Communicates on an on-going basis with the School Principal
- In consultation with the Principal:
 - Sets the dates and times of meetings
 - Establishes the meeting agenda
- Chairs school council meetings
- Ensures minutes of meetings are recorded and maintained
- Ensures that the school community is kept informed on Council proceedings and activities
- Represents the council at special functions
- Acts as a spokesperson for the Council
- Consults with senior board staff and trustees, as required
- Ensures follow-up on items raised by council members
- Ensures council members are familiar with the local constitution/by-laws
- Determines when the conflict resolution process is required and ensures that the process is followed
- May be a co-signing officer for the payment of all accounts authorized by Council

Vice-Chairperson:

- Assumes acting role in the absence of the chairperson
- Shares the duties of the chairperson as determined by the chairperson
- Ensures ongoing communications with the school community, including updates to social media and annual Council Report Card

Treasurer:

- Maintains a record of Council funds and financial activities as required by Board policy, and in keeping with generally accepted accounting practices
- Co-signs cheques for payment of goods and services
- Prepares an annual, written financial statement for review and approval of the Council
- Ensures access to Council financial records by the school community
- Ensures that a copy of the financial records is provided to the school for access by the school community
- Maintains a budget

Assistant-Treasurer

- Co-signs cheques for payment of goods and services

- Ensures all monies are deposited in a bank/trust company approved by the Council.

Secretary:

- Records, distributes and maintains records of Council meetings and correspondence
- Ensures that a copy of the records is provided to the school for access by the school community
- Ensures access to Council records by the school community

Catholic School Parent Association (CSPA) Representative:

- Reports and consults with Council on issues referred by the Board and/or by the Parent Association
- Represents opinions of parents in their school community
- Represents and expresses the majority view of the Council
- Attends the CSPA meetings
- May also serve as Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer and must be a parent/guardian with a child in the school.

Parish Representative:

- Brings the concerns of the parish regarding Catholic Education to Council
- Serves to disseminate the suggestions, orientations, activities and concerns of the Council to the parish
- Assists in promoting, aligning and coordinating the liturgical celebrations and other activities of the parishes and school, as required

Fundraising Chair

- Responsible for Chairing the Fundraising Committee
- Responsible for the coordination of all fundraising events

Events Chair

- Responsible for Chairing the Events Committee
- Responsible for the coordination of all council led school events that are not to raise funds

Lunch Chair

- Responsible for arranging and coordinating the weekly school lunches
- Responsible for the management of volunteers for the delivery of lunches

Principal:

- Will be a non-voting member of the School Council
- Ensures that the mandate of the Council is reviewed in accordance with current legislation and/or regulations
- Develops and maintains a collaborative partnership and open communication with the Chairperson and Council members

- Facilitates the establishment of the Council and assists in its operation
- Seeks input from the Council in areas of assigned responsibilities
- Acts as a resource to the Council in areas such as Acts, Regulations, Collective Agreements, etc.
- Supports and promotes Council activities as deemed appropriate
- Seeks input from the Council in the identified consultative areas
- Ensures availability of copies of the Council minutes at the school
- Assists the Council with communications in the school community and parish(es)
- Encourages parent/guardian and school community participation within the Council
- Assists in identifying the impact on all school staff in terms of workload, time and resources, of any undertaking and decisions being considered by the Council
- Provides prompt distribution to each member of the Council of any materials received from the Ministry
- Posts in a place accessible to parents any materials distributed to the members of Council

Teacher Representative:

- Brings the perspective of the educator, with respect to curriculum, child psychology, cultural impacts, the *Education Act*, and collective agreements
- Advocates sound pedagogy to assist in identifying the impact on teachers in terms of workload, time and resources, of any undertaking and decisions being considered by the Council
- Provides information to Council from a local, provincial, and national teacher perspective