

**St Anne Catholic
School Council**

**Constitution
&
By-Laws**

October 18, 2022

DEFINITIONS

- “Ad Hoc Committee/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.
- “Catholic School Council (Council)” shall mean a body of elected and appointed members that serves in an advisory role to the school Principal and, on occasion, to the board. This includes parents/guardians and representatives of the parish, community, and the school itself.
- “Community” shall mean the attendance area of the school.
- “Community Representative” shall refer to the businesses, community organizations and/or local government agencies geographically located near the school.
- “Constitution/By Laws” shall mean the standing rules of the Council for the regulation of its conduct and internal organization. The two terms are interchangeable since some school councils use one term, while the remainder use the other.
- “In writing” shall include written correspondences conducted via email.
- “Ministry” shall mean the Ontario Provincial Ministry of Education.
- “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.
- “Regulation 612/00 and 613/00” shall mean the provincial law governing all aspects of School Councils.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The Constitution & By-Laws are made in accordance with all Ontario Ministry Guidelines and Ottawa Catholic School Board Policies and Procedures.

Any changes to said regulations and policies will supersede this Constitution.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAW(S) OF St Anne Catholic School Council

Revised October 18, 2022

Article I: Name and Affiliation

- a. The organization will be known as St Anne Catholic School Council
- b. The organization's location shall be at St Anne School, 500 Stonehaven Drive, Kanata, ON K2M 2V6.

Article II: Mission Statement

- a. St Anne Catholic School Council plays a vital role in the education of the students of St Anne Catholic School.
- b. The Council provides a forum through which all parents/guardians and other members of the school community can contribute to improving student achievement and school performance, which reflect the Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Article III: Purpose and Objectives

- a. To build and maintain a positive relationship between home, school, parish and community by providing and supporting a variety of educational, well-being and social activities.
- b. To provide information and gather feedback on issues affecting the school community; gather feedback on school programs, parent involvement, school policies and community issues.
- c. Provide opportunities for parents to be more involved in the Catholic Education of their children.
- d. The Council shall serve as a vehicle for empowering the St Anne community. To do that, it shall:
 - i. Recognize that St Anne Catholic School is an extension of our home, parish, and community. Strive to remain caring, flexible, and creative in all its decisions
 - ii. Build on the shared values of the community and always strive for consensus
 - iii. Foster an atmosphere in which all parents feel encouraged to participate in the school.

Article IV: Procedures and Operating Guidelines

- a. The St Anne Catholic School Council functions as an advisory body to the Principal and to the School Board on any matter as outlined in the Board Policy on School Councils.
- b. The Principal and Board are required to seek advice from each Council in accordance with the appropriate legislation and regulations. The Council may make recommendations to the Principal or the Board on any matter provided that they comply with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, and Human Rights legislation.

Article V: Norms of Behaviour and Practice

- a. The School Council shall develop norms of behaviour at meetings on an annual basis through discussion, activity, and consensus.
 - i. Agenda set by members and circulated in advance
 - ii. Meetings begin and end on time
 - iii. Consensus decision-making

- iv. All speakers and opinions are respected
- v. Individual students, parents, and staff are not discussed
- vi. Be open-minded and objective
- vii. Refer parent or student issues to the teacher or Principal.

Article VI: Membership

- a. Membership of the Council is mandated by:
 - i. Ontario Ministry of Education, Regulation 612/00
 - ii. Ottawa Catholic School Board policy on Catholic School Councils
- b. The majority of members of the Council shall be parents of students enrolled at the school in the year in which they are members
- c. School board trustees are not eligible to be members of councils of schools.
- d. Parent Representatives
 - i. A parent representative shall not be employed by the Board at the school
 - ii. A parent representative may be employed by the Board at another location providing the parent discloses such employment on declaring interest in joining the Council
 - iii. The School Council Catholic School Parents' Association (CSPA) Representative or Alternate may also serve as Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary or Treasurer and must be a parent/guardian with a child in the school.
- e. Teacher Representatives
 - i. The teacher representative; must be employed at the school, selected by the teaching staff of the school in accordance with school board policy and procedures
 - ii. This position may be shared by more than one teacher on a rotating basis.
- f. Support Staff Representatives
 - i. The support staff representative; must be employed at the school, selected by the support staff of the school in accordance with school board policy and procedure
 - ii. This position may be shared by more than one support staff on a rotating basis.
- g. Ottawa Catholic School Parents' Association (CSPA) Representative
 - i. CSPA Representative must be a parent/guardian with a child in the school.
 - ii. CSPA Representative is appointed/elected by the other members of the Council.
- h. Parish Representative appointed by the School Council as determined by the local constitution/by-laws.
- i. Community Representative appointed/elected by the other members of the Council.
- j. Principal of the school (non-voting)

Article VII: Elections & Voting

Election Notice

- a. Public notice of the annual elections and nomination forms shall be given to the school community by the Principal at least fourteen (14) days before the date of the election
- b. Notice of the annual election shall include date, time, and location of the election
- c. Written notice (paper and/or electronic) shall be given to all parents/guardians of registered students at the school.

Election Procedure for Parent Representatives

- a. Elections take place within the first thirty (30) days of the school year
- b. Each parent/guardian seeking election must be nominated or self-nominated in writing, must have a child registered at the school, and must declare if he or she is employed by the school board.
- c. If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates shall be acclaimed.
- d. All elections, when required, may be by secret ballot.
- e. The school council shall help the Principal ensure that the names of new members are publicized to the school community within thirty days of the election.
- f. In case of appeals related to the school council election process or the results, the school Principal and the chair of the outgoing Council shall review the matter and jointly make a ruling.
- g. Term of Office
 - i. The term of an elected or appointed member of the Council is one year.
 - ii. A member of a school council may be re-elected or re-appointed in any given year.
- h. Vacancies
 - i. Should an elected parent/guardian Council position become vacant before the next election, the Council shall fill the vacancy by appointment within the current council or from the non-elected candidates from the previous election.
 - ii. When a vacant spot on Council is filled, the new member's term shall expire at the time of the next election.
 - iii. A vacancy in the membership of a school council does not prevent the Council from exercising its authority.
- i. Remuneration
 - i. School council members will not be paid for their work on a school council.
 - ii. Members of the Council shall be reimbursed according board policies for expenses incurred as members or officers of the Council.

Article VIII: Members

All members of the Council are accountable to the school community they represent and shall:

- a. Participate in information sharing and training programs
- b. Provide training, education and assistance to their successor as required
- c. Conduct themselves in accordance with the mandate of the Council, Board Policy, and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.
- d. Abide by the Ministry of Education Code of Ethics for School Council members and
 - i. Encourage the participation of parents and other people in the school community
 - ii. Advocate for the principles of Catholic Education and for equity and dignity for all students.
 - iii. Maintain a school wide perspective on issues
 - iv. Be committed to the improvement of the school
 - v. Attend and participate in all Council meetings and all meetings of the subcommittees of which they are members, either physically or through electronic means.

- vi. Vote on issues as required
- vii. Assist with tasks of the Council as required
- e. If a member cannot attend a scheduled meeting, s/he should inform the Chair or Principal in advance.
- f. Act as a communication link between Council and the community.

Article IX Executive/Officers

- a. Eligibility
 - i. All officers must be drawn from parent representatives of the Council
 - 1. Executive (Table) Officers elected by the Council, from the parent/guardian membership, will include:
 - i. Chair or two (2) Co-Chairs
 - ii. Vice-Chair (not applicable where two Co-Chairs are elected)
 - iii. Catholic School Parents' Association (CSPA) representative (may be one of the above)
 - iv. Treasurer
 - v. Secretary
- Note: Where there are insufficient numbers, a Council member may hold more than one position; however there must be three signing officers (at least one of whom must be a parent/guardian).
- b. Chair/Co-Chair Responsibilities:
 - i. Communicates on an on-going basis with the school Principal
 - ii. In consultation with the Principal:
 - 1. Sets the dates and times of meetings
 - 2. Establishes the meeting agenda
 - iii. Chair school council meetings
 - iv. Ensures minutes of meetings are recorded and maintained for a minimum of 4 years
 - v. Ensures that the school community is kept informed on Council proceedings and activities
 - vi. Represents the Council at special functions
 - vii. Acts as a spokesperson for the Council
 - viii. Consults with senior board staff and trustees, as required
 - ix. Ensures follow-up on items raised by Council members
 - x. Ensures Council members are familiar with the local constitution/by-laws
 - xi. Determines when the conflict resolution process is required and ensures that the process is followed
 - xii. May be one of the signing officers authorized by the Council
- c. Vice-Chair Responsibilities:
 - i. Assists the Chair in his/her duties at all times
 - ii. Conducts meeting and accept the Chair's responsibilities in the absence of and upon request of the Chair
- d. Treasurer Responsibilities:

- i. Maintains a record of Council funds and financial activities as required by Board policy, and in keeping with generally accepted accounting practices
 - ii. Shall provide at regular meetings of the Council a written account of all transactions of the Council, including the financial position.
 - iii. May be one of the signing officers authorized by the Council
 - iv. Prepares cheques for payment of goods and services
 - v. Prepares an annual, written financial statement for review and approval of the Council
 - vi. Prepares Annual Financial Report to the Board after the fiscal year end.
 - vii. Ensures that a copy of the Council financial records is provided to the school for access by the school community
- e. Secretary Responsibilities:
 - i. Records, distributes and maintains records of Council meetings and correspondence
 - ii. Ensures that a copy of the records is provided to the school for access by the school community
- f. Catholic School Council Parents' Association (CSPA) Representative:
 - i. Reports and consults with the Council on issues referred by the Board and/or by CSPA
 - ii. Represents opinions of parents in their school community
 - iii. Represents and expresses the majority view of the Council
 - iv. Attends and reports on monthly CSPA meetings
 - v. The CSPA Rep. may also serve as Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary or Treasurer and must be a parent/guardian with a child in the school.
- g. Parish Representative:
 - i. Brings the concerns of the parish regarding Catholic Education to the Council
 - ii. Serves to disseminate the suggestions, orientations, activities and concerns of the Council to the wider parish communities
 - iii. Assists in maintaining the Catholic dimension in the total school community
- h. Teacher Representative:
 - i. Brings the perspective of the educator, with respect to curriculum, the Education Act, and collective agreement
 - ii. 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
- i. Support Staff Representative:
 - i. Represents support staff within the school team at Council meetings
 - ii. Reflects the support staff perspective on issues presented to the Council
 - iii. Assists in identifying the impact on support staff in terms of the collective agreement, time and resources, of the undertakings and decisions being considered by the school councils
- j. Community Representative:
 - i. Reflects the views of the local community
 - ii. Liaise between the community and the Council, and provide feedback in both directions
- k. Principal:

- i. Is a non-voting member of the School Council
- ii. Ensures that the mandate of the Council is reviewed in accordance with current legislation and/or regulations
- iii. Develops and maintains a collaborative partnership and open communication with the Chair(s) and Council members
- iv. Facilitates the establishment of the Council and assists in its operation
- v. Seeks input from the Council in areas of assigned responsibilities
- vi. Acts as a resource to the Council in areas such as Acts, Regulations, Collective Agreements, etc.
- vii. Supports and promotes Council activities as deemed appropriate
- viii. Seeks input from the Council in the identified consultative areas
- ix. Ensures availability of copies of the Council minutes at the school
- x. Assists the Council with communications in the school community and parish(es)
- xi. Encourages parent/guardian and school community participation within the Council
- xii. 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
- xiii. Provides prompt distribution to each member of the Council of any materials received from the Ministry
- xiv. Posts in a place accessible to parents any materials distributed to the members of the Council
- xv. Shall attend every meeting of the school council, or send a designate.
- xvi. Shall consider each recommendation made to the Principal by the Council and shall advise the Council of the action taken in response to the recommendation.

Article X: Sub-Committees

- a. Establishment
 - i. Sub-Committees may be formed to conduct more detailed or in-depth work than is possible during Council meetings, to make recommendations to Council and to keep Council informed of issues and developments in particular areas.
 - ii. Committee meetings are to follow the same principles and requirements of Council meetings.
- b. Sub-Committee Membership
 - i. Every committee of the School Council should include at least one parent member of the Council.
 - ii. A committee of the School Council may include persons who are not members of the Council.
- c. Reports from Sub-Committee
 - i. Committees will provide the Council secretary with a brief year-end report of their activities.
 - ii. All reports should be submitted within one month of the end of the activity and prior to the end of the school year
- d. Fundraising for Sub-Committees

- i. Any fundraising conducted by a Sub-Committee must be approved and monitored by the Council.

Article XI: Meetings

- a. Council will conduct itself in a manner reflecting Gospel values and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.
- b. Each Council meeting will start with a Land Acknowledgement and a Prayer.
- c. The first official meeting of the new Catholic school council for any school year must be held within the first 35 calendar days of the school year on a date that is fixed by the chair/co-chairs of the Council after consulting with the Principal of the school.
- d. There must be a minimum of four (4) meeting a year.
- e. The Chair and the Principal may call special meetings as deemed necessary.
- f. The dates of meetings will be established at the beginning of the academic year by the Council and will be communicated to all parents/guardians as soon as possible.
- g. All Council meetings are open to the entire school community, who are encouraged to attend and provide input.
- h. Council meetings are generally held on school property in a location accessible to the public.
- i. All meetings are chaired by the Chair or Vice-Chair.
- j. A meeting of the Council can only occur with the Principal or designate in attendance.
- k. Meetings of the Council will be of an informal nature, but with a predetermined agenda.
- l. The agenda for Council meetings should be set in consultation with the school Principal prior to the meeting date. Items for the agenda should be communicated to the Chair as soon as possible, before the agenda is set.
- m. New items brought forward at a meeting will only be considered with the agreement of Council and if time permits; otherwise they will be placed on a future agenda.
- n. Roberts Rules of Order will be used to conduct meetings when formality is required.
- o. Discussion at meetings will not include inappropriate references to individual parents, students, Board personnel, Trustees or individual Council members.
- p. Quorum
 - i. A meeting will have a quorum if a majority of Council members are present (50% +1), and the majority of those present are parents.
 - ii. If there is no quorum at a Council meeting, then at the discretion of the Chair, the meeting may proceed, so long as no binding decisions are made and any recommendations made at the meeting are referred by the Chair to the next Council meeting.
- q. Decision-Making
 - i. The preferred method of decision-making is through consensus, a collective opinion or general agreement by all Council Members.
 - ii. When consensus is not achieved, the Council will decide whether to hold a simple vote by way of a show of hands with a 51% majority carrying the vote. Alternatively, the Council may choose to defer the issue for further consideration or to appoint a facilitator to help with the decision making process.

- iii. Only eligible Council members (elected or appointed) will vote when a vote is required. They must be present at the meeting (in person or via electronic means) and cannot proxy their votes.
- iv. The Principal is not allowed to vote at Council or Council committee/subcommittee meetings.
- v. In case of a tie vote on a motion, it will be considered not to have passed.
- vi. If any member of the school community attending requests a recorded vote, a formal process should be used, based on the following principles:
 - 1. One item at a time
 - 2. Justice, respect and courtesy to all
 - 3. The right of the majority to carry a decision
 - 4. The right of the minority to be heard
- vii. Between-Meetings Voting Procedure
 - 1. 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.
 - 2. Every effort will be made to avoid such situations.
 - 3. When a Council decision is required between meetings, a vote may be taken.
 - 4. The preferred method of contact for an out-of-meeting vote is via email; those Council voting members without access to email may be contacted by phone or receive written notice of the motion via a note sent from the school.
- r. 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:
 - 1. conflict of interest is likely to result;
 - 2. the member's ability to carry out his or her duties and responsibilities as a member of the school council may be jeopardized;
 - 3. 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 council member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.
- s. Conflict Resolution
 - i. Council members are elected to serve the school community and will demonstrate respect for their colleagues on Council at all times.
 - ii. The Council will undertake to resolve all internal conflict within its mandate in a timely manner

- iii. 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.
- iv. Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
- v. Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
- vi. 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.
- vii. If no common ground can be identified, the chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
- viii. If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the chair and/or Principal shall request the intervention of the school superintendent or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.

Article XII: Finances

- a. Fiscal Year
 - i. The fiscal year for the Council shall be from September 1 to August 31
- b. Banking and Signing Authority
 - i. All monies will be deposited in a bank/trust company approved by the Council and registered in the name of "St Anne Catholic School Council".
 - ii. At least three (3) members of Council are required for signing authority; at least one must be a parent.
 - iii. Those authorized to sign cheques may include at least two parents on the Executive of the Catholic School Council, usually the Treasurer or the Chair; other Council member(s) as approved by Council, and the school Principal or designate.
 - iv. Two (2) of the three (3) authorized co-signers will sign all completed cheques for payment of Council approved expenses/activities.
- c. Allocation (Budgeting)
 - i. General budget goals will be developed annually at the beginning of the school year for the raising and disbursement of funds.
 - ii. The annual budget should be prepared by the Council Executive in consultation with the Council and school community. It should be presented, reviewed and approved by a vote of Council.
 - iii. Any unforeseen changes to the annual budget should be presented for review and approval at the next scheduled Council meeting.
- d. Fundraising
 - i. Council may engage in fundraising activities in accordance with applicable Board policies.
 - ii. All monies should be collected by the treasurer in conjunction with the committee Chair for each event and directly deposited into the authorized Council account.
- e. Receipts
 - i. All funds should be handled, collected, counted and totalled and recorded in the presence of at least two (2) Council members or volunteers.
 - ii. Funds should be deposited promptly or stored in the school safe and recorded accurately.
- f. Disbursement (Expenses)
 - i. All expenses should be school related and at a reasonable cost.
 - ii. Any non-budgeted items require Council approval.
 - iii. All expenses incurred should be supported with original receipts.
 - iv. Profits from major fundraising activities will go towards school funding requirements, as agreed to by the Council and Principal.
 - v. Each outgoing Council will leave in the bank, a sum equal to all unpaid bills or obligations for which the Council is responsible.
 - vi. All outstanding obligations will be documented in the Treasurer's final report.
 - vii. Funds designated for ongoing or large projects may be invested, if they will not be used during the current school year.
- g. Financial Reporting

- i. A written financial report will be presented for approval at each Council meeting. This shall be recorded in the minutes.
- ii. The Council financial records must be kept for a minimum of four (4) years, and must be accessible by the school community.
- iii. The Council is required to prepare and submit an annual written report on the activities of The Council, including fundraising, to the Principal and the Board in accordance with Ministry guidelines
- iv. The Chair and the Principal should sign the financial update at the end of each Council meeting. Signatures only represent receipt of the information.

Article XIII: Agendas and Minutes

- a. Agendas shall be distributed to all Council members in advance of each meeting
- b. Agenda items should be submitted to the chair one week prior to the Council's next meeting.
- c. The chair will set the agenda with the Principal or Vice Principal prior to the meeting and it will be forwarded to Council
- d. Minutes
 - i. Minutes shall be made available for the school community.
 - ii. The minutes shall include motions, decisions and actions to be taken.

Article XIV: Communication with Parents/Guardians

- a. Council will provide information and gather feedback from parents/guardians of students enrolled in the School on issues affecting the school community.
- b. Communication may include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - i. Council providing the parents/guardians with information concerning matters under consideration by Council by means of:
 - 1. Newsletters sent home via paper and/or electronic communication
 - 2. Posting of newsletters and Council minutes in the school in an area accessible to parents/guardians, and/or posting newsletters and Council minutes on the Council and/or school website.
 - 3. Council inviting parents/guardians to participate on Council committees.
- b. Board/Community Communication Protocol
 - ii. The Principal will be the spokesperson for school-related issues.
 - iii. 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.
 - iv. At all times, the consultation process will be facilitated through a consensus-building partnership, at the school level by the Principal and the Council Chair.
 - v. The Council Chair, in consultation with the Principal, will facilitate the operation of the Council.

Article XV: Liability

- a. 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.
- b. Councils will consider the acquisition of additional liability insurance as appropriate.

Article XVI: Annual Report

- a. The School Council shall submit a written report on its achievements to the Principal of the school and to the Ottawa Catholic School Board following the established guidelines for such a report.
- b. A copy of this report shall be made available (via distribution, public display, or electronic posting) to all families with students enrolled in the school.

Article XVII: Constitutional Amendments

- a. The Constitution and By-Laws must comply with the Board's policies and procedures.
- b. The School Council shall review the constitution regularly and bring proposed amendments to the Council for approval.
- c. Amendments shall be presented to the Council as motions for approval at a regularly scheduled meeting.
- d. Notice will be given to the entire School Council membership in advance of such a vote.
- e. Constitutional amendments require a 2/3 majority to be passed.
- f. Amendments have to be filed with the Board and a copy available to the school.

CODE OF ETHICS

The following code of ethics, derived from Ministry guidelines, privacy and legal consultations, may be used by school councils in an attempt to outline expectations for members and as a guideline for behaviour.

- *A member shall consider the best interests of all students.*
- *A member shall be guided by the school and the Board's mission, vision and values.*
- *A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council, as identified in the Education Act, its regulations, and the applicable constitution and/or by-law(s) and procedures.*
- *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 community.*
- *A member shall conduct themselves in accordance with the Board's Equity and Inclusive Education policy and procedure.*
- *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 act in accordance with relevant laws, including Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), and relevant Board policies and procedures.*
- *A member shall advise the Principal immediately if the member believes that there may have been a privacy breach.*
- *A member shall abide by applicable laws and policies with respect to access, use or disclosure of Board data and information.*
- *A member shall limit discussions at school council meetings 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.*