

**ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
SECTION D: STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

CATHOLIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY COUNCILS	POLICY
EFFECTIVE: 2000 12 01 / 2001 06 12 / 2001 08 28/ 2002 05 28 / 2006 11 21 / 2013 03 05	

POLICY STATEMENT:

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board is committed to supporting partnerships that involve meaningful dialogue among the home, school and parish, which is the foundational triad on which Catholic education is built. The Catholic School Community Council is the voice of parents and guardians in this partnership, as together we walk in Christ's light to build an inclusive Catholic learning community and to serve as partners in the formation of our students to be lifelong learners.

POLICY GOAL:

This policy is intended to help build confidence in publicly funded Catholic education by defining the role of parents and soliciting the opinions and views of parents through the Catholic School Community Council as an advisory body.

The policy delineates the responsibilities and roles of the Catholic School Community Council as a representative body on issues that impact the entire school community. Further, it seeks to be unequivocal regarding the role of the Principal in his/her capacity, as both the educational and organizational leader of the school.

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ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

1.0 Responsibilities:

Duties of the Catholic School Community Council

1.1 The Catholic School Community Council shall:

- a) support and promote the vision, mission and comply with the policies of the St. Clair Catholic District School Board
- b) meet at least four times during the school year
- c) ensure that all regular meetings are open to the public and held at a location that is accessible to the public
- d) ensure that a meeting of a Catholic School Community Council is only held if a majority of the current members of the Council are present and a majority of the members of the Council who are present at the meeting are parent members
- e) advertise its meeting dates in the school community and encourage participation
- f) ensure that minutes of its meetings and motions are kept and that the register of the minutes is available to community members
- g) implement a faith committee to enhance Catholic spirituality in the school and to link the community with the parish and the broader church community
- h) promote the best interests of the school community
- i) establish and publish its goals and priorities
- j) communicate regularly with parents and other members of the community to seek their views and preferences with regard to matters being addressed by the Council and to report on the activities of the Catholic School Community Council to the school community
- k) provide annually the name and address of Catholic School Community Council members to the Director of Education
- l) attend information and training sessions provided by the Board to enable members of the Catholic School Community Council to develop their skills as Council members
- m) supervise the election procedure for Catholic School Community Councils
- n) annually review the effectiveness of the Catholic School Community Council activities
- o) maintain and review Council's Constitution to reflect changes in provincial legislation and board policy
- p) establish by-laws governing:
 - i. election procedures and the filling of vacancies in the membership of the Catholic School Community Council
 - ii. conflict of interest rules for members on the Catholic School Community Council
 - iii. conflict resolution process for internal Catholic School Community Council disputes
- q) not be incorporated

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1.2 The chairperson, shall be elected by the Catholic School Community Council and shall:

- a) support and promote the vision, mission and comply with the policies of the St. Clair Catholic District School Board
- b) liaise with the school principal
- c) call the Catholic School Community Council meetings (except for the first inaugural meeting)
- d) prepare the agenda for each meeting in co-operation with the school principal
- e) send the agenda to all members at least one week prior to the meeting
- f) chair the Catholic School Community Council meetings
- g) ensure that minutes and records of financial transactions are kept and retained for a minimum of four years
- h) ensure that a copy of the minutes is sent to each member
- i) ensure that the Catholic School Community Council regularly consults with the school community
- j) as appropriate, initiate a follow-up of decisions made by the Catholic School Community Council
- k) consult, if needed, the administration and trustees of the Board
- l) be the spokesperson for the Catholic School Community Council
- m) represent or ensure that a designate represents the Catholic School Community Council at all
- n) St. Clair Catholic District Board Advisory Council meetings
- o) participate in information and training sessions offered by the Board
- p) ensure that the Catholic School Community Council establishes aims and objectives and that they are reviewed and updated as needed
- q) submit an annual written and financial report of the Catholic School Community Council activities at the end of each school year to the school principal, parents and to the St. Clair Catholic District School Board

1.3 Members of the Catholic School Community Council shall:

- a) support and promote the vision, mission and comply with the policies of the St. Clair Catholic District School Board take part in the meetings
- b) take part in the meetings
- c) make decisions within the Catholic spiritual and ethical framework
- d) participate in consensus decision-making
- e) liaise between the Catholic School Community Council and the community and the local parish
- f) encourage parent participation as well as the participation of other people belonging to the community served by the school
- g) offer pertinent advice to the school principal on all questions pertaining to student spiritual development and learning and to the successful operation of the school
- h) consider agenda items from the perspective of the school
- i) represent the Catholic School Community Council when designated by the Council Chair
- j) be entitled to one vote in votes taken by the Council

1.4 The school principal shall:

- a) initiate and facilitate the establishment of the Catholic School Community Council
- b) participate in Catholic School Community Council meetings
- c) maintain the authority of the principal's position according to legislation, the regulations and statutes

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- d) communicate with the Catholic School Community Council chairperson and take part in the setting of the agenda of the meetings
- e) ensure that the register of minutes of meetings is kept at the school and accessible to members of the school community
- f) encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community
- g) provide for the prompt distribution to each member of the Catholic School Community Council of any materials received by the principal from the Ministry or School Board and post such material in the school in a location that is accessible to parents
- h) meet the requirements of the yearly election process
- i) attend every meeting of the Catholic School Community Council, unless unable to do so by reason of illness or other cause beyond control
- j) act as a resource person to the Catholic School Community Council and assist the Council in obtaining information relevant to the functions of the Council, including information relating to relevant legislation, regulations and policies to allow the Council to provide sound advice
- k) consider each recommendation made to the principal by the Catholic School Community Council and advise the Council of the response to the recommendation
- l) on behalf of the Catholic School Community Council, give written notice of the dates, times and locations of the meetings of the Council to every parent of a student who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school
- m) not be entitled to vote in votes taken by the Catholic School Community Council or by a committee of the Catholic School Community Council
- n) solicit the views of the Catholic School Community Council regarding matters under its mandate including, but not limited to:
 - i. the establishment, implementation and review of school guidelines that relate to student achievement or to the accountability of the education system to parents, including a local code of conduct and appropriate dress for students
 - ii. school action plans for improvement, based on the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) reports on the results of tests of students and the communication of those plans to the public

1.5 The Board shall:

- a) provide liability insurance coverage for all Catholic School Community Council members while they are performing their duties and responsibilities as outlined in this policy and administrative procedures
- b) consult with the Catholic School Community Councils on matters such as but not limited to:
 - i. enhancement of the Catholicity of the whole system and of each school within the system
 - ii. code of conduct and appropriate dress for students
 - iii. process and criteria for the selection and placement of principals and vice-principals
 - iv. allocation of funding for Catholic School Community Councils
 - v. fundraising policy
 - vi. conflict resolution policies
 - vii. reimbursement of expenses for Catholic School Community Council members
 - viii. school board action plans for student improvement based on test results from the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO)

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- c) consider recommendations and advise the Council of the action taken in response to the recommendations (*Appendix A* provides the template for submitting recommendations to the Board.)

2.0 Membership

2.1 The membership of the Catholic School Community Council shall include:

- a) parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school
- b) the principal and/or vice-principal
- c) a community representative
- d) a Parish Priest or his designate from the Parish Council
- e) a student(s) (mandatory in secondary schools; recommended, but at the discretion of the principal, in elementary schools)
- f) a teacher(s) from the school staff
- g) a non-teaching employee(s) from the school staff

Parents/guardians shall form the majority of the Catholic School Community Council and will remain eligible to be a representative as long as their children are students in the school. Staff members, who have children in the school where they work, shall not be a parent representative on the Catholic School Community Council where their children attend. A member of the School Board cannot be a member of a Catholic School Community Council established by the School Board.

2.2 The Election or Appointment of Members

Membership of the Catholic School Community Council shall be determined in the following manner.

- a) Parents/guardians shall be elected by parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school.
- b) The school principal/vice-principal shall be appointed by the School Board.
- c) In the case of a school with one or more secondary grades, one student enrolled in the school shall be appointed by the student council or elected if the school does not have a student council.
- d) In the case of a school with no secondary grades, one student enrolled in the school may be appointed by the principal, if the principal determines, after consultation with the other members of the Catholic School Community Council, that such an appointment is appropriate.
- e) The teacher representative shall be elected by members of the teaching staff.
- f) The non-teaching employee representative shall be elected by non-teaching staff.
- g) The Catholic School Community Council shall appoint a community representative. If necessary, a parent may serve as a community representative.
- h) The Chair of the Catholic School Community Council shall be elected by the Catholic School Community Council.

2.3 Election Criteria

- a) Teacher: must work at least 50% of the time at the school and must be a Catholic, separate school supporter.
- b) Non-teacher: must work at the school

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- c) Student: must be Catholic, enrolled at the school and take 50% of his/her subjects at that school.
 - d) Parent/Guardian of students enrolled in the school: must be over 18 years old, a separate school supporter (if elementary school), not employed at the school in which the Council is established. If the person is employed elsewhere by the Board, he/she must inform other members of the employment before the election.
 - e) Community representative: must be over 18 years old, a Catholic, separate school supporter, not employed at the school in which the Council is established. If the person is employed elsewhere by the Board, the other members must be informed of the employment, before the appointment is made.
 - f) Executive members: must be parents/guardians who are separate school supporters (if elementary school) and not employed by the Board.
- 2.4 The term of office for elected or appointed positions on the Catholic School Community Council shall be one year. Elected or appointed members may seek additional terms as outlined in each Catholic School Community Council's Constitution. The Catholic School Community Council has the right to replace any executive member prior to the end of their term for non-compliance. The procedure will be outlined in each Catholic School Community Council's Constitution. The Catholic School Community Council has the right to replace any member who misses, without a valid reason, 50% or more of the Catholic School Community Council meetings.

It is recommended that the size of the Catholic School Community Council not exceed 18.

2.5 Remuneration

A person shall not receive any remuneration for serving as a member or officer of a Catholic School Community Council.

2.6 Scope

Catholic School Community Councils are advisory bodies. The Catholic School Community Council may advise the school principal and, where appropriate, the School Board, on matters such as but not limited to:

- a) initiatives to build and maintain a vibrant Catholic community in the school
- b) the local school calendar
- c) the school's Code of Conduct
- d) aims and priorities of the curriculum and programs
- e) responses of the school and Board to student achievement on Board, provincial, national and international assessments
- f) the preparation of the school community and principal profile
- g) the identification of the criteria which may be considered in the selection of the school principal
- h) priorities of the school budget, including projects on local capital-improvement plans
- i) communication strategies between the school and the community
- j) methods of reporting to parents and the community
- k) school related extracurricular activities
- l) services offered by the school in partnership with the community regarding social, recreational, health and nutritional programs
- m) the use of school facilities by the community

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- n) the co-ordination of local services offered to children and youth groups
- o) the development, implementation and review of Board policies at the local level
- p) programs and services related to sacramental preparation and Catholic youth activities provided by the parish

The Ministry of Education regulates decision-making on many subjects. The school principal will inform the Catholic School Community Council of relevant Ministry regulations and Board policy to be followed.

3.0 Limitations

- a) Members of the Catholic School Community Council must consider all issues from the school's perspective in the best interests of the school community and the students it serves.
- b) The Catholic School Community Council is advisory in nature and is not a forum for individuals to voice complaints. Complaints should be addressed to the school principal or superintendent.
- c) The Catholic School Community Council must work within the framework of federal, provincial, and municipal legislation, including the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- d) The Catholic School Community Council may appropriately recognize student or staff achievements. However, due to privacy legislation, members of the Catholic School Community Council are not entitled to comment on or study any matter regarding an individual student or student's family and cannot be involved in issues relating to the performance of individual staff members.
- e) Any member of the Catholic School Community Council in a conflict of interest regarding a particular matter (according to the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act), must inform the Catholic School Community Council and be excluded from discussion and any vote on the matter.
- f) Recommendations of the Catholic School Community Council relating directly to the school must be submitted to the school principal.
- g) Recommendations of the Catholic School Community Council, which extend beyond the mandate of the school, must be submitted to the school principal prior to forwarding them to the Board.

4.0 Yearly Election Process for Catholic School Community Councils

- a) The Catholic School Community Council will determine the number of positions to be filled and will inform the community served by the school.
- b) The election of parent members shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the chair or co-chairs of the Catholic School Community Council after consulting with the principal of the school.
- c) Candidates shall submit a written notification of their candidacy to the principal. A person is qualified to be a parent member of a Catholic School Community Council if he or she is a parent of a student who is enrolled in the school.

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- d) The principal of the school on behalf of the Catholic School Community Council shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent members, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election, to every parent of a student who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school.
- e) The notice may be delivered by students to the parents of each student enrolled in the school on the date of the notice and/or posted in the school in a location that is accessible to parents.
- f) The election of parent members shall be by secret ballot.
- g) A person is qualified to vote in an election of parent members of a Catholic School Community Council if he or she is a parent of a student who is enrolled in the school.
- h) Electors have the right to vote once to fill each of the vacant positions. If a person votes for a number of candidates higher than the number allowed, the ballot will be declared void.
- i) If two candidates receive an equal number of votes for a position on the Catholic School Community Council, the successful candidate is selected by lot.
- j) The school shall not use its human or material resources or those of the Board, to support a candidate or a group of candidates.
- k) If all elected positions are not filled after the elections, the newly formed Catholic School Community Council shall appoint the number of persons required to sit on the Catholic School Community Council during the balance of the mandate. The Catholic School Community Council can operate, even if there are posts to be filled, as long as a majority of members are made up of parents/guardians.
- l) The school principal must call the first Catholic School Community Council meeting within the first thirty-five (35) days of the school year.

5.0 Additional Information

5.1 The St. Clair Catholic District School Board is committed to the principles of equity and inclusive education, consistent with our Catholic teachings, which value and promote human rights and social justice in all Board policies, programs, guidelines, operations and practices.

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APPENDIX A

ST.CLAIR CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD

School: _____

Topic: _____

Recommendation:

Rationale:

School Council Chair: _____ Date: _____

School Principal: _____ Date: _____

BOARD RESPONSE

Chair of the Board: _____ Date: _____