Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

School Advisory Council Manual

For all MACS schools



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Foreword by Archbishop Peter

A Catholic education is a distinctive way of schooling that is infused with a Catholic vision and is imbued with all that our Catholic intellectual tradition offers. It provides students with an understanding of the deep meaning and value of our humanity, which has been a sustaining good for Australian society for 200 years.

With this great legacy in mind, and in a spirit of collegiality and goodwill, I called parish priests together at the end of 2019 to begin a process of developing new governance arrangements for schools belonging to the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

After extensive consultation, Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) was created as a company limited by guarantee to govern and operate schools that were previously governed by parishes or the Archdiocese. Through its *Statement of Mission*, MACS ensures that those schools 'provide the young with the best kind of education possible' in an environment that 'is actively embedded in the life of the faith communities of the local Church, which in turn is tangibly manifest in the life of each school'.

This focus on local context aims to ensure that our schools have a eucharistic character that builds communities gathered around a shared life of faith and worship, which provides an opportunity for personal transformation for students and their families.

The establishment of School Advisory Councils underscores that commitment. It reflects our conviction that Catholic education needs parish priests, parents and school leaders working together in mission.

This *School Advisory Council Manual* is written for the people in each community who have agreed to work together to accomplish that shared conviction. The School Advisory Council is entrusted with a role that is founded on Christ's model of servanthood to others.

In this proud history, and in the work ahead, we build school communities in which the Holy Spirit breathes life and wisdom liberally, and in which that same Spirit inspires new energy for learning the art of wisdom and growing in knowledge and understanding. I commend this Manual to the 1,500 volunteers who make up the School Advisory Councils across nearly 300 schools.



Most Rev. Peter A Comensoli
Archbishop of Melbourne

Preface

School Advisory Councils are an essential component of governing and operating Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. They provide a forum for consultation and participation for parish and school communities, ensuring that schools are accountable for the decisions they make.

Each council is designed for, and works within, the context of its specific school. As such, School Advisory Councils are a living expression of the principle of subsidiarity in action, representing MACS' commitment to ensuring that responsibility is taken as prudence and necessity dictate, and local agency is preserved for school communities as appropriate.

At the same time, each council must be structured to ensure it can properly exercise its role in the important matters in which it will have input, such as school improvement, master plans, representation on the principal appointment panel and knowledge about the annual budget.

MACS has produced a range of supporting materials to ensure School Advisory Councils can meet these goals. These documents include the *Working Together in Mission* charter – developed in partnership with stakeholders, the MACS Terms of Reference for School Advisory Councils templates and now this *School Advisory Council Manual*. Various resources are accessible via links from this publication to keep council members up to date on MACS policy and ensure they are able to undertake their role with confidence. Templates have been provided to support the development of structures and processes across the system.

In reading this Manual, I hope you will take away a sense of how a School Advisory Council works: its purpose, structures and guiding principles, which illustrate how its work both fits within the life of each school and supports MACS' governance role.



Dr Edward Simons
Executive Director
Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

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Introduction

Through service on a School Advisory Council, members of the parish[1] and school communities will be making an important contribution to their school's strategic, educational, financial and spiritual development.

Because of these important responsibilities, it is essential that School Advisory Council members understand what the councils will do and what their role will be.

This *School Advisory Council Manual* supports the aims of the MACS Terms of Reference for School Advisory Councils which, contextualised for each individual school, provides the foundation for the operation of a School Advisory Council.

The Manual delivers an overview of Catholic schools and the context in which they operate, before detailing the principles that inform the role that councils will play to support MACS schools. There is also a comprehensive overview of how School Advisory Councils will work.

Finally, the Manual links to the important supporting documentation and policies that council members will need to understand as part of their role.

If you are considering joining a School Advisory Council or are a current member of one, you will find this Manual's content to be an invaluable aid to the contribution you are making to your school.

[1]The term 'parish' is used interchangeably with 'parishes' depending upon context.

Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne

Canon 803 of the *Code of Canon Law* states that:

> A catholic school is understood to be one which is under the control of the competent ecclesiastical authority … No school, even if it is in fact catholic, may bear the title 'catholic school' except by the consent of the competent ecclesiastical authority.

The 'competent authority' in the Archdiocese of Melbourne is the Archbishop of Melbourne who, as chief pastor and teacher, is responsible for Catholic schools within his jurisdiction. The Archbishop has an obligation to watch over and inspect Catholic schools situated in his territory, even those established or directed by members of religious institutes.

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) was established by Archbishop Peter A Comensoli to be responsible for the governance and operation of 292 parish primary schools and regional and archdiocesan secondary colleges in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. School Advisory Councils have been established in these schools to support and advise the principal. The principal promotes the school's Catholic identity and is the educational leader of the school who has been assigned its operational management and, in collaboration with the parish priest as custodian of mission, is mandated to lead the school in drawing young people and their families into the knowledge and understanding of Jesus of the gospel.



For ease of use throughout, reference to 'parish priest' will include priest moderator, parochial administrator, member of an association of canonical administrators or Archbishop's nominee, including their role as custodian of mission. When used in this document, and all School Advisory Council support documents, 'custodian of mission' designates their specific role in relation to schools and their title in reference to their ex-officio duties on a School Advisory Council.

Together the principal as educational leader and the parish priest as custodian of mission, through their collaborative work with the School Advisory Council, will ensure that, at the local level, Catholic schools remain 'actively embedded in the life of the faith communities of the local Church, which in turn is tangibly manifest in the life of each school'.

MACS governs and supports Catholic schools in the Archdiocese to continue the mission of Catholic education to proclaim the Good News and equip young people with the knowledge, skills and hope to live meaningful lives and enrich the world around them.

This is reflected in the *Statement of Mission* contained in the MACS Constitution. The constitution captures the purpose of MACS and places students at the centre of the mission. The intent is to continue the rich history of delivering a high-quality Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

MACS serves and leads *all* Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, including the religious institute and ministerial public juridic person schools, providing a range of services to support nearly 23,000 teaching and non-teaching staff in 334 Catholic schools serving more than 154,000 students (August 2023 figures). As the religious institute and ministerial public juridic person schools are not governed by MACS, this Manual does not apply to the operation of any council or board in these schools.

What are Catholic schools about?

Catholic schools are:

- accountable for working together with parents in the education of their children
- committed to working together with the Church in faith education
- community providers of a public service
- committed to the achievement of the national goal of promoting 'equity and excellence'[2]
- significant service providers delivering a cost-effective service to the community
- welcoming communities that promote quality interpersonal relationships
- inclusive and safe, and foster a strong sense of wellbeing
- accountable for the proper expenditure of government funds and parent fees
- accountable to parents and governments for student learning.

Catholic schools:

- practise and celebrate Christian values
- offer an outstanding education as schools of first choice for Catholic parents
- provide religious education and opportunities for faith development in communities where prayer and sacramental celebrations are integral
- educate for engagement in civic and public life, involving community service and issues of social justice
- provide high-quality academic, social and vocational education
- build environments focused on achievement, challenge, creativity and enjoyment
- include highly qualified and caring teachers committed to the ethos of Catholic education.

What are School Advisory Councils?

Prior to the transfer to a corporate entity responsible for the governance and operation of the schools, Catholic schools already had a tradition of advisory parish education boards and college boards under various names in the Archdiocese. The 'new' – post-2021 – mandated School Advisory Councils are grounded both in this strong local foundation of what has already existed and functioned effectively in Catholic education in the Archdiocese, and as part of our wider Catholic tradition that sees advice given in the framework of mutual respect, right relationship and hope: a foundation of our trinitarian faith.

While the MACS board has fiduciary responsibility for strategic direction and oversight of the management of MACS' operations, a range of powers and functions is delegated to the executive director who in turn determines the appropriate operating model within the company for the delegation to be exercised.

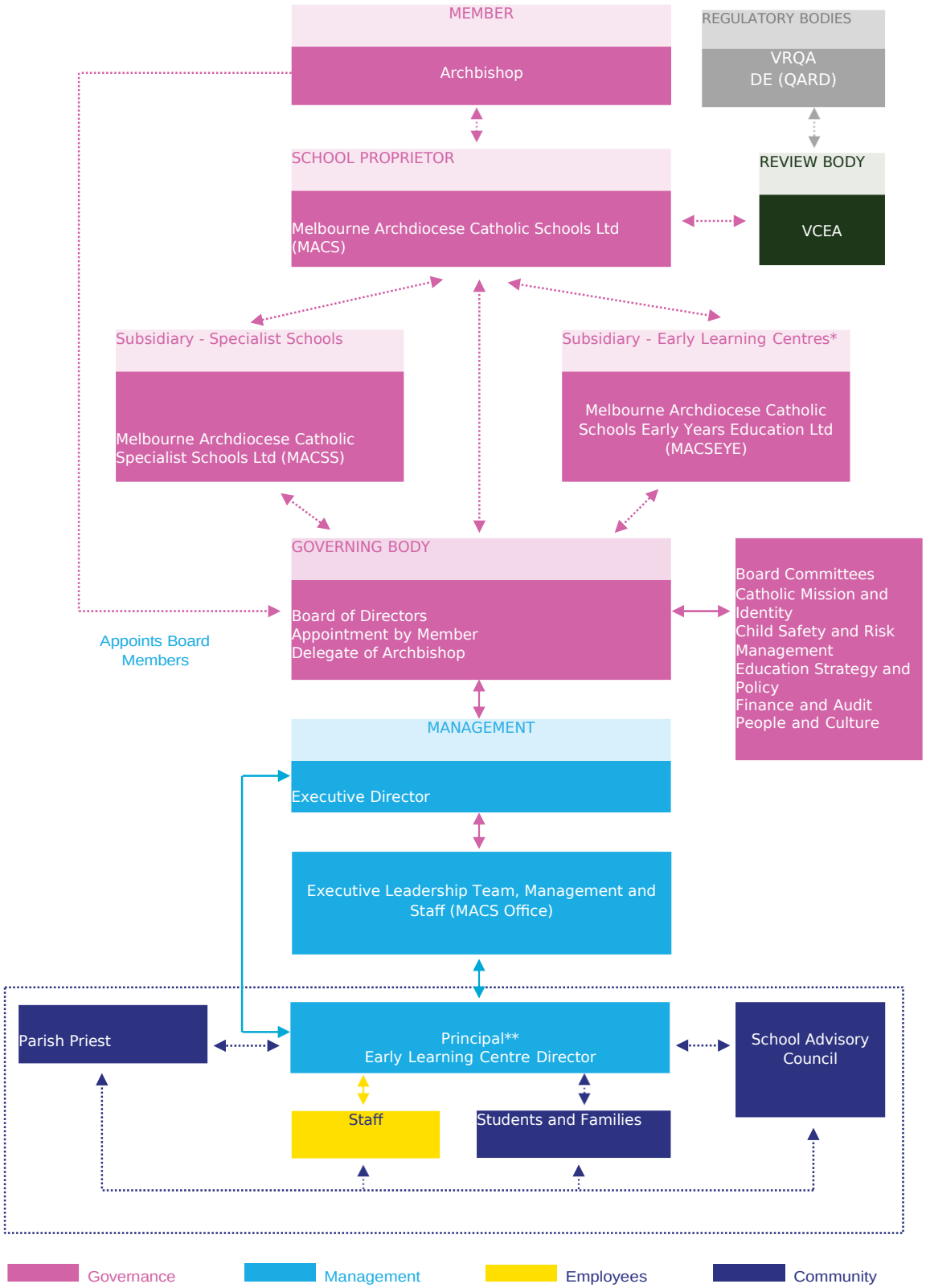
The MACS board, as the governing body of all MACS schools, is responsible for making any decision about the establishment of a School Advisory Council and its arrangements.

Clear lines of authority, reporting and delegation have been established which assign the operational management of the school to the principal and particular advisory responsibilities to the School Advisory Council. Similarly, in relation to the operational management of the School Advisory Council, the principal acts on delegation by the MACS Executive Director who in turn acts on delegations from the MACS board.

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[2]Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*, MCEETYA, Melbourne, 2008, p. 7.

What are School Advisory Councils? (continued)



* governance arrangements for operation of early learning centres are currently being considered
** principal executive officer (PEO) for Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS), chief executive officer (CEO) for registered training organisation (RTO) and PEO for student exchange organisation (SEO)

The relationships in the parish (or parishes) that the school (or college) belongs to

The particular advisory responsibilities of the School Advisory Council and the principal's authority in relation to the operational management of the School Advisory Council have been detailed through the provision of:

- *Working Together in Mission* – a charter for parishes and schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne
- MACS Terms of Reference for School Advisory Councils – templates for each school to modify for local context to establish and operationalise their council.

Below is a summary of key statements from those documents.

Advisory in nature

School Advisory Councils are advisory bodies which form an important expression of the educational partnership that exists between parents, schools, parishes and the wider community to support all students. This partnership is reflected in the ex-officio membership of both the principal and the parish priest on the council. What the council does is directed by the MACS board through the Terms of Reference for School Advisory Councils.

The School Advisory Council provides a forum for discussion and discernment, where parent voice and community perspective are available to influence and support the decisions made by the principal and parish priest for the good of school and parish where students' wellbeing and outcomes are paramount.

Enhance relationship between parish and school

At the heart of our Catholic tradition lies relationship. The relationship between the parish and the school in the provision of Catholic education is crucial to the faith development and learning outcomes of students, the enlivening of parish life and the development of community. It is important that schools and councils:

- recognise, develop and maintain fruitful relationships within the parish
- recognise the role of the school in the overall mission of the parish
- recognise the contribution of parish to school
- support the relationship between school and parish
- play an active role in the life of the parish.

The *Working Together in Mission* charter acknowledges that the School Advisory Council plays a role in supporting the parish priest and principal relationship as a means of building the parish and school community. There are clear expectations that monthly, if not fortnightly, meetings between the parish priest and principal in turn provide a firm foundation for the work of the council. Investment of time and resources in life-giving relationships between the parish priest, principal and families breathes life into the Catholic school community.

Processes and strategies to further cultivate an environment of support and encouragement through induction and formation of School Advisory Council members will be developed by the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne and MACS through the combined efforts of the Episcopal Vicar for Catholic Schools and the School Advisory Councils Secretariat.

Articulate and supportive

Through ongoing discussion and reporting, the relationship between the School Advisory Council, parish priest and principal provides evidence that supports the school's published clear statement of its philosophy and enables it to 'demonstrate how the school's philosophy is enacted' per Schedule 4 clause 16 in the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* (Vic.).

School Advisory Councils provide a structure and a process for shared voices leading to consensus that supports 'the effective development of the strategic direction of the school' per Schedule 4 clause 15(1)(a) in the Education and Training Reform Regulations. School Advisory Councils give opportunity for dialogue where members listen to each other in a way that creates positive connections and builds good relationships, enabling the council to explore ideas and proposals with greater consistency over time.

What they are

School Advisory Councils:

- form part of the broader governance framework of MACS (ToR)
- are a consultative, review and advisory body
- are found in all MACS schools, both primary and secondary levels (WTiM)
- are guided in their actions by the MACS Statement of Mission, and an understanding of the history of the parish, founders and school (ToR)
- are a forum for parents to share their wisdom with, and offer support to, the principal and the strategic interests of the school (ToR; WTiM)
- are a sounding board for all stakeholders that provides feedback to the principal and parish priest
- are an important point of liaison with parish pastoral councils (WTiM)
- are avenues for parents to contribute to their children's school and build up one another (WTiM)
- will fit the pastoral model of each particular parish or association of parishes (WTiM)
- are a form of Church lay ministry (ToR)
- are a means of engagement with parents that enables a fruitful participation in consultation on matters affecting the education of students (WTiM).

What they do

The following are some examples of ways the School Advisory Council may support the school and the principal:

- ensuring that, at the local level, Catholic schools remain 'actively embedded in the life of the faith communities of the local Church, which in turn is tangibly manifest in the life of each school'
- articulating and enacting the school's mission and vision, and promoting the school's Catholic ethos and culture by promoting faith formation and development
- encouraging the partnership and participation of the school, parish and wider community in the life of the school and parish
- providing advice to the principal on school improvement, school reviews, the annual school budget and other financial matters, the school master plan, capital resource planning and maintenance
- contributing to the selection process for the school principal via membership of the selection panel
  as per MACS and Victorian Catholic Education Authority Ltd (VCEA) policies and guidelines
- contributing to the panel that guides the process of principal appraisal as per MACS and VCEA policies and guidelines
- receiving reports from the principal to be informed as per requirements in various MACS and VCEA policies and guidelines
- having a process of discernment that provides the foundation for the induction of council members
- developing processes of consultation and providing a forum for discussion and discernment, where parent voice and perspective are available to inform and support the decisions made by the principal
  and the parish priest for the good of school and parish where students' wellbeing and outcomes are paramount
- understanding and acknowledging that any initiative that materially affects the school's land and buildings or other areas of parish property must be approved by the parish priest, who represents their parish as the beneficial owner of the school's land and buildings
- acting within the parameters of the MACS Terms of Reference for School Advisory Councils
- producing a School Advisory Council Annual Report that acknowledges the activities, achievements and challenges of the council over the past year, and indicates goals and focus for the following year
- undertaking an annual evaluation to reflect upon its performance and areas for improvement.

School Advisory Councils:

- are not the governing body of a school
- do not have a decision-making authority (WTiM)
- do not have a legal identity
- do not become involved in the day-to-day management of the school
- are not a forum for parent advocacy or special interest representation
- are not a parents and friends association
- are not a fundraising forum or fete-organising committee.

List of delegated and other responsibilities

The principal should inform the School Advisory Council on the following items:[3]

- School Bank Accounts and Banking Matters
  - Opening and closing of school bank accounts
- Budgets
  - Annual Operational/Capital Budgets and Cashflow
  - Secondary: when budget is in surplus or deficit
- Purchasing
  - Preferred suppliers list <$100,000

  For all the following when ≥$100,000 for primary schools or ≥$300,000 for secondary schools:

  - Tenders for Operational Projects per tender
  - Tenders for Building Projects per tender
  - Tenders for IT Projects per tender
  - Purchase orders for Operational Projects, Capital Building Projects and Capital IT Projects per purchase order



- Fee Management
  - Any setting or variation of fees, compulsory tuition charges, excursions, levies which result in an increase on prior year
  - Write-offs, discounts, rebates (exemptions of recurrent and capital fees, compulsory tuition charges, excursions, levies)
- Asset Management
  - Share School Master Plan
  - Sale of school fixed assets ≥$10,000 per asset (purchase price)
  - Sale of school property (land/buildings)

Note: This is an information stage that has no impact on the decision-making. It will be used for informing a stakeholder of specific actions they may wish to be informed about.

A representative of the School Advisory Council will be involved in the following items as determined by the appropriate MACS and VCEA policy:

- school review
- master planning
- principal appointment
- principal review.

[3] Delegations Register on CEVN

Multiple schools with a single parish priest

The MACS board has determined that each school must have its own School Advisory Council with the parish priest as ex-officio member of the council.

In a one-school, one-parish situation, it is straightforward that there will be a single School Advisory Council with the parish priest and principal as ex-officio members of the council.

However, in a situation where more than one school is located within a single parish community, an overarching advisory council covering all of the schools may be advisable in order to support the individual councils at each school. The parish priest and principals will need to discern the various differences and needs of each school within the one-parish context before deciding on a model.
This discernment should also give consideration to the number of meetings required annually for the overarching School Advisory Council and for each individual school, and the number of meetings the parish priest will be required to attend. The parish priest is an ex-officio member of each council and the MACS Terms of Reference for School Advisory Councils does not allow for any permanent delegation.

It is suggested that the overarching council addresses matters such as Catholic identity, mission, religious instruction and connectedness to parish, whereas each school will have its own local council to address matters such as school improvement, master plans, representation on the principal appointment panel, etc.

However, another model is that there is no overarching School Advisory Council, but the parish priest meets with the principals collectively from time to time, maintaining their ex-officio status and avoiding any permanent delegation. Another possible example that focuses on ensuring communication is prioritised between the parish and school involves the arrangement of opportunities for the parish priest to attend quarterly 'pastoral gatherings' with the school principals (or their delegates) to discuss parish initiatives, staff wellbeing, families in need and local social justice projects.

It is important to keep in mind that, with the evolving reorganisation of parish structures within the Archdiocese, local circumstances and structures will be changed to respond to the signs of the times, acknowledging the 'challenges, wounds and disruptions of recent years, coupled with the life-changing reality of the COVID pandemic'.[4]

As outlined in Archbishop Peter A Comensoli's 2021 Pentecost Pastoral Letter, because parishes remain at the heart of the gathering of God's people locally, 'we need to adapt the way we resource our local communities' and 'walk together towards a more energised purpose for our local Church' (p. 2). In light of the Archdiocese's pastoral plan of reimagining our local churches as mission communities, it is envisioned that the parish priest will be responsible for the pastoral care of an increasing number of parishes and their schools. This may mean that the instances of multiple schools within single or multiple parish communities could increasingly become our lived reality. Therefore, as the Archdiocese embraces mission communities comprising a family of local faith communities, or whose priest administers multiple parishes, additional structures will need to be put in place to support both the priest's obligation as the ex-officio member of each School Advisory Council and the individual councils at each school with their various differences and needs.

Whichever model is selected, building on the spirit of the recommendations of the *Working Together in Mission* charter, it is an expectation that the parish priest and the principal meet at least on a monthly basis, if not fortnightly, in the pursuit of maintaining the catholicity of the school and connectedness to parish, and providing what is best in enhancing educational opportunities for the students and their families. In
this way, both principal and parish priest cultivate an environment of support and encouragement.

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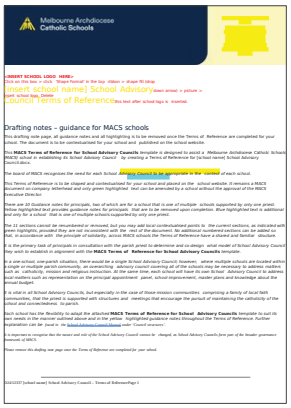
[4]PA Comensoli, *Take the Way of the Gospel: Re-imagining our local Church as mission communities*, Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, East Melbourne, 2021, p. 1.

Council structures

Guide to MACS School Advisory Council Terms of Reference

Each school has the flexibility to adapt the MACS School Advisory Council Terms of Reference template to suit its own particular needs. A single template allows for different contexts:

1. schools in a single parish
2. secondary schools
3. schools belonging to a mission community comprising a family of local faith communities, or whose priest administers multiple parishes.


Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

Drafting notes - guidance for MACS schools

The template is to be shaped and contextualised for each school, and placed on the school website. It remains a MACS document on company letterhead.

It is the primary task of principals in consultation with the parish priest to work through the yellow highlighted guidance notes to determine and co-design the key elements of the School Advisory Council in alignment with the MACS School Advisory Council Terms of Reference template. This co-design can be achieved through a shared discernment process, which is ongoing and will need to occur each time a new principal or new parish priest is appointed to the school or parish. The renewal will ensure there is common ground as a basis for them working together in mission.

Please read the MACS School Advisory Council Terms of Reference template. It is designed to provide a MACS school with the structure for its School Advisory Council. The handout, Tailoring of the Terms of Reference, works through the ten areas that asks principals and parish priests to provide local input.

Membership

The principle of solidarity means that, across all MACS schools, the School Advisory Council is to comprise a minimum of six members, including the ex-officio members of principal and parish priest.

For those secondary schools where an association of canonical administrators is present, a representative of the association, most likely the president, will be an ex-officio member of the council acting as the custodian of mission. More details on the role of an association of canonical administrators can be found on the MACS website. For those secondary schools that previously had an association of delegated canonical administrators, an Archbishop's nominee will be appointed as an ex-officio member of the council acting as the custodian of mission.

As per the *Working Together in Mission* charter, there is an expectation that there be mutual understanding and trust between the principal and the parish priest as custodian of mission as they work together to confirm the principal's appointment of members onto the School Advisory Council.

Section 4 of a MACS school's Terms of Reference for their School Advisory Council outlines that appointment to the council occurs following an expression of interest and discernment process that seeks to arrive at a decision about appointment. Both the expression of interest and discernment process are locally determined by each MACS school, and detailed in the contextualised version of the MACS Terms of Reference for School Advisory Councils on each school's website.

An expression of interest does not mean automatic appointment to the School Advisory Council. When appointments are being made, the needs of the council will be given priority in terms of ensuring a balance of gender, cultural diversity and skill sets. While inclusion of any person who wishes to be a member of the School Advisory Council is paramount, consideration will be given to members with particular skills and experience that meet the needs of the council.

The parishioner on the School Advisory Council is a person known to be active in the parish. In order to maintain the connection between parish and school, it is envisaged that the parishioner who is a member of the School Advisory Council will liaise with, or may have membership of, the Parish Pastoral Council to maintain communication between school and parish.

In the process of appointing council members, the principal will consult with the parish priest following a process of discernment. When appointments are being made, it is important to keep in mind the following key considerations (as outlined in Section 4 of the Terms of Reference), as well as the need for a balance of gender, cultural diversity and skill sets in forming the council:

- Child Safe Standards
- MACS Code of Conduct for School Advisory Council members
- conflict of interest
- diversity.

The principal and the parish priest may choose to be supported by others in the appointment process. The principal has the power of appointment, in consultation with the parish priest, and arranges the letters of appointment.

The principle of subsidiarity allows the principal and parish priest to appoint additional members up to the recommended maximum of 10, according to local need.

As stated below, membership must be composed of people who meet high standards of community, group and individual behaviour, and appreciate, value and share the educational mission and ethos of the Catholic Church.

The principal may, following consultation with the parish priest, remove a council member (except the parish priest) if the principal is of the view that the member is not complying with the expectations of the role of a council member, or is engaged in conduct unbecoming of a council member or prejudicial to the interests of the school.

Expectations of members

As the School Advisory Council is not a governing body and has no canon/civil law or corporate status, its appointed members do not need to prove their
status as a 'responsible person' as defined in the *Education and Training Reform Regulations*, and thus do not need to undertake the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) fit and proper person declaration or the National Police Check.

However, council membership must be fit for purpose and composed of people who meet high standards of community, group and individual behaviour, and appreciate, value and share the educational mission and ethos of the Catholic Church.

In this light and as stated in the MACS Terms of Reference for School Advisory Councils, each member of the council will receive a letter of appointment that will require them to:

- sign the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct (available from the school)
- undertake a Working with Children Check as per the *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic.)
- accept the MACS Code of Conduct for School Advisory Council members.

The school's Child Safety Code of Conduct affirms the educational mission and ethos of the Catholic Church by helping protect children from sexual and physical harm, and making sure that people who work with or care for children undergo a thorough checking process. It also sets up, from page 1, the baseline expectation that, like all members of the school
community, council members 'are expected to actively contribute to a school culture by respecting the dignity of its members, affirming the gospel values of love, care for others, compassion and justice'.

This baseline standard is expanded and made explicit in the MACS Code of Conduct for School Advisory Council members. The objective of this Code of Conduct is to ensure that high standards of community, group and individual behaviour are observed by the members in the context of their roles as members of any School Advisory Council of a MACS school.

Further details on the expectations, qualities and skills needed by a council member are outlined clearly in Section 5 of each school's Terms of Reference for their School Advisory Council. Similarly, any coopted members of committees of the School Advisory Council who are not council members will be held to the same expectations as those of a council member, as outlined in Section 5.

Legal status of members

School Advisory Council members are volunteers working collaboratively with the principal in the stewardship of the school within the context of MACS.

MACS will ensure that under applicable insurance, members of a School Advisory Council, committee or working party are covered by professional indemnity insurance for work undertaken in good faith in the course of discharging their duties. Public liability policy covers injury suffered by people who are not employees, i.e. volunteers.

Furthermore, in relation to injury or damage caused by volunteers, volunteers are protected by section 37 of the *Wrongs Act 1958* (Vic.) which effectively provides that the organisation is liable for anything done, or not done, in good faith by a volunteer while performing activities on behalf of the organisation.

Parent voice

School Advisory Councils provide a structure and a process for shared voices leading to consensus that supports 'the effective development of the strategic direction of the school',[5] and give opportunity for parent voice and community perspective to be available to the principal and the parish priest for the good of school and parish where students' wellbeing and outcomes are paramount.

Parent engagement can be challenging in some schools, and principals are encouraged to use the local school resources as much as possible in order to engage with a wide audience of parents. Other recommendations include:

- using the person responsible for family partnerships to assist in leading the process of engaging with people from multicultural backgrounds
- engaging with leaders of the various cultural groups in the school to hold focus groups for people of different backgrounds
- having the same people translate documentation where possible
- using the parent letter to introduce the idea of a School Advisory Council.

Further information about School Advisory Councils and other ways in which school communities can be authentic in engaging parent voice can be found at the following MACS links:

- School Advisory Councils
- Parents as Partners
- Family and Community Engagement.

Background information about MACS can be found on the following webpages:

- About us
- Who we are.

Succession planning

Succession planning is critical to the council's development. It is the responsibility of each council member to enhance the profile of the council in the parish and school communities, and bring potential council members to the attention of the council executive. The inclusion of non-council members on committees and working parties is a useful tool in succession planning. The council should be conscious of the need to prepare current council members for taking the role of office bearers. One way to do this is by introducing a suitable person to the position of deputy chair 12 months before the chair is due to step down. This arrangement provides an opportunity for the deputy chair to understudy the chair with a view to taking over the following year. The deputy chair could also relieve the chair of some duties during the chair's final year.

[5] Education and Training Reform Regulations, Schedule 4 clause 15(1)(a).

Council activities

Guide to conducting meetings

Council meetings will be structured to demonstrate that the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people are a central and fundamental responsibility of our schools.

Council members will:

- contribute in such a way that school council advice will be based on all available facts, will normally be reached by consensus and will be free of personal bias
- accept the final position of the council regardless of their personal position on any issue
- invest the necessary time, thought and study into the council's work between and at meetings
- refer day-to-day administrative and operational matters or problems to the principal.

Council structures will reflect an understanding and acknowledgment of the Catholic tradition through the council's engagement with prayer and the relational nature of its dealings.

Prayer

Prayer in School Advisory Council meetings should be reflective of our Catholic tradition and allow for reference to the school charism, mission and signs of the times where appropriate.

Prayers at a meeting can be a contradiction in terms. Allowing time to discover the most important relationship there is – our relationship with God – seems at odds with the purpose of the gathering: the urgent need of the items of business.

Yet prayer gives us an opportunity to align these two purposes to see the work of the meeting as an expression of our relationship with God.

Sometimes brief prayers will be apt, but at other times the council members may want to spend time on a more extended prayer, particularly if there has been something happening in their school community. Some schools have a school prayer or prayer associated with a founder or patron that should be encouraged for use on occasion.

The seasons of the liturgical year – Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter – as well as the gospel reading of the day or the previous Sunday are rich sources of inspiration within our tradition. Daily Prayer on the MACS Religious Education website RESource is a portal into a rich source of prayer resources. This format models prayer structures that can be used in their entirety or adapted to meet the needs of the audience and local context as required.

Councils are encouraged to use these prayer resources if needed, but to consider that prayer is always authentic when developed in context.
There is also a resource on commissioning and blessing ceremonies that play an important role in acknowledging that 'serving on the School Advisory Council of a Catholic school is a form of Church lay ministry'.[6]

Agendas and minutes

Agendas are advance notices of a meeting that set out what business will be considered in the meeting. They need to be circulated at least a week prior to the meeting, with any important proposal having been highlighted and any relevant documentation also having been circulated.

A properly structured agenda will assist the School Advisory Council to make the most of its meetings, and enable the members to make informed contributions on the basis of sound advice and constructive debate.
A suggested model and further information via a handout are available on the MACS website.

The minutes of School Advisory Council meetings must be consistently formatted with clear item headings, regular spacing and highlighted moments of agreement by consensus.

Well-presented minutes make it easy for users to locate items of interest, and identify the results of deliberations and consensus. Their structure follows

[6]MACS Terms of Reference for School Advisory Councils, Section 3.

the order of the agenda. Minutes should be maintained in an appropriate archive system at the school.
A suggested model and further information via a handout are available on the MACS website.

Consensus

In the conduct of School Advisory Council meetings, it is important that conversations are encouraged. Good, healthy dialogue where members listen to each other creates positive connections and builds good relationships, enabling the council to explore ideas and proposals.

Equally important is that members enter the meeting well-prepared for the discussions that will take place.
An agenda will have been circulated prior to the meeting, with any important proposal having been highlighted and any relevant documentation having been circulated. This will provide an opportunity for informed dialogue to take place rather than 'off the cuff' thinking.

It is hoped that a well-informed discussion where each person has had a chance to speak, has been listened to intently and feels their ideas have been respected will lead to proposals and ideas being agreed to by consensus. At the heart of an agreement by consensus is the ongoing welfare of the group and good relationships of the members appropriate to a Catholic School Advisory Council.

Induction and formation

The induction and formation processes offered through both MACS and the school aim to ensure the promotion of a Catholic skill set for council members and their role as leaders in the parish and school community.

Induction is the formal, structured and supportive method of introducing council members to the School Advisory Council and MACS. MACS provides a basis for induction through the provision of key documents, support resources and annual induction sessions across the Archdiocese. Each school is responsible for an induction program that is customised to ensure council members understand their role and the role of the council within the context of the school and the wider Church.

Through their reading of the key documents and engagement with the school process, it is expected that each member will understand the purpose of a School Advisory Council and each person's role in pursuing that purpose.

Offered by MACS personnel	Offered by the school
• Group induction: – principals and parish priests – chairs – annually – members – annually to celebrate new appointments – parents – annually to explore expressions of interest • Individual online training – members and chairs • Regional networks of chairs • Visits to School Advisory Council meetings	• Pre-appointment discernment • Information packs with access to key foundation documents • Chances for potential nominees to discuss the role of the council • Distribution of letters of appointment with access to all documents listed in the letter • Exploration of the call to strategically share skills and talents for the betterment of the school • Commissioning and blessing ceremonies • Follow-up briefings after the first council meeting • Mentoring and buddy systems

Council activities (continued)

By the school

A breakdown of the possible activities is recommended to form part of any member's induction program as well as the purpose behind them. These activities can be listed in Section 4 of the Terms of Reference through guidance notes 5, 6 and 8, which allow schools to demonstrate how they support new council members in being inducted to the mission of MACS and the school, and the business and processes of the council. These meetings do not need to take place separately – they could all be part of the one meeting with the council, leadership team, parish priest, mentors, etc. or in any combination deemed appropriate in the local context.

Activity	Purpose
Pre-appointment discernment process	• Provide an information pack with access to: – MACS *Statement of Mission* – school vision and mission – *Working Together in Mission* – Terms of Reference – MACS Code of Conduct for School Advisory Council members • Provide a chance for potential nominees to discuss the role of the council and the expectations of a council member with the principal, chair or parish priest
Letter of appointment	• Outline expectations • Provide access to all documents listed in the letter
Meeting with the chair	• Explain the School Advisory Council's purpose • Discuss the role of a member on the School Advisory Council • Outline the specific expectations of the council, as per letter of appointment
Site visit to school to meet with the principal	• Overview the role of the principal in MACS governance framework • Overview the school's strategic direction and key initiatives • Introduce key members of the leadership team
First meeting with the parish priest and full council	• Gain awareness of the connection between parish and school • Introduce other members and discuss their roles on the School Advisory Council • Discuss current members' experiences and impressions of the position and its responsibilities • Attend question and answer session
Introductory School Advisory Council course	• Undertake professional development with MACS to understand the practical implications of the role (for experienced members, this might be a 'refresher' course)
Meeting with allocated 'mentor' member(s)	• Discuss approach to the School Advisory Council's process and involvement • Conduct ongoing discussions on 'how' to be a member • Answer general questions • Provide a debrief of the first meeting
Commissioning and blessing ceremony	• Acknowledge that 'serving on the School Advisory Council of a Catholic school is a form of Church lay ministry'. (Ceremony may be a liturgy, Mass or paraliturgical service that takes place in either the parish or school)
Ongoing sessions	• Explore the shared understanding that membership on the council is a call to strategically share skills and talents for the betterment of the school and the quality of education being provided for all the students

Formation is the process of ongoing learning and understanding of the ethos and spirit of a Catholic school, and the collective and individual role each member plays in the development of the School Advisory Council.

MACS will provide appropriate ongoing professional and spiritual formation material, and opportunities for School Advisory Council members including the principal and the parish priest, around the core principles underpinning Catholic education.

Each school is responsible for a formation program for its council that is focused on the vision and mission of the school, its particular founders and patrons through their charism, and the school's connection to the wider Church through parish and diocese.

Each member brings to the formation process a willingness and openness reflective of their commitment to Catholic education in the parish and school. Formation aims to develop and enhance the qualities and skills needed by a council member, as outlined in Section 5 of the Terms of Reference.

Offered by MACS personnel	Offered by the school
• Exploration of: – MACS *Statement of Mission* – *Working Together in Mission* • 'How to navigate' workshops on: – Terms of Reference – *School Advisory Council Manual* • Renewal of School Advisory Council workshops • Annual visits to individual schools • Annual Archdiocesan School Advisory Council Mass • Visits to School Advisory Council meetings	• Reflection on the mission of MACS • Participation in accreditation programs on the school charism • Working through the council's evaluation process • A day of reflection or annual retreat, if possible • Succession planning • Exploration of Catholic social teaching, including the preferential option for the poor as an expression of mission as lived out in the wider Church and its importance to Catholic schools

Parents and friends associations

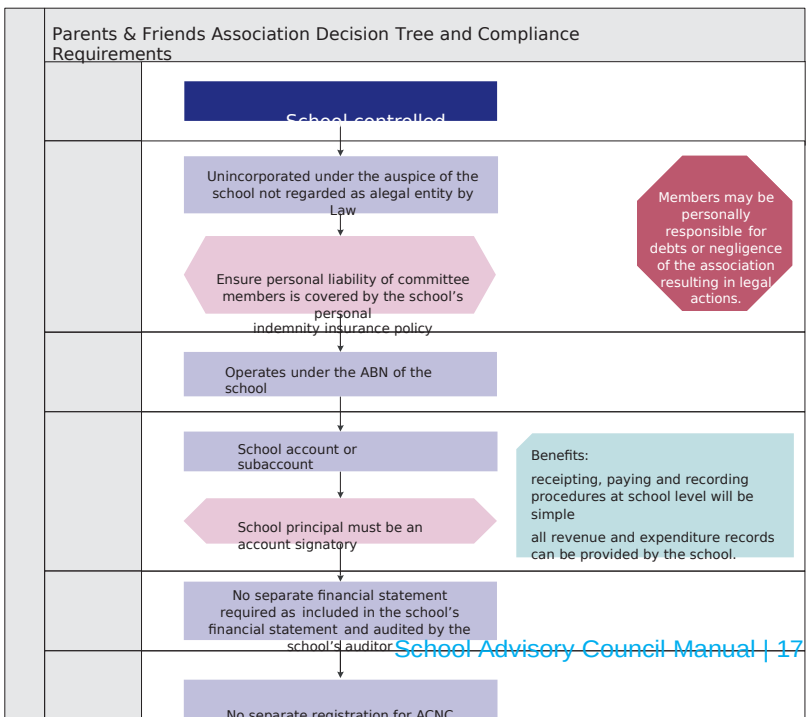
The role and operation of parents and friends associations within MACS schools is outlined in the MACS Parents and Friends Policy.

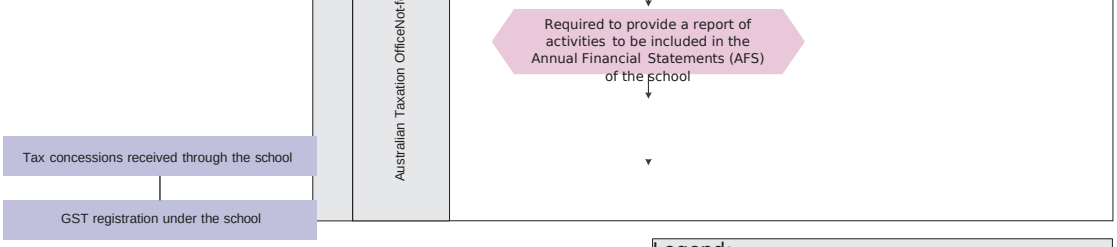
'The Parents & Friends (P&F) exist for the benefit and general good of the school'.[7] A parents and friends association recognises and values the role that parents play in the education of their children and aims to strengthen the partnership between family, school, parish and the wider community. They generally support the school by bringing the community together through organising fun activities for the children and families, while at the same time raising funds for the school through fetes, raffles, etc.

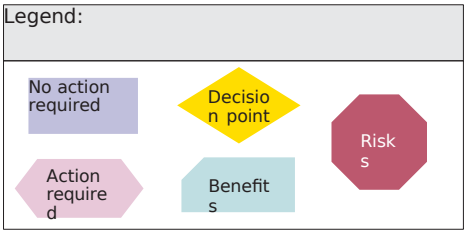
On the other hand, School Advisory Councils are advisory bodies established in schools as part of the MACS governance framework, working towards the strategy, vision and educational aims of the school. Therefore, it can be seen that a parents and friends association is not the same as a School Advisory Council, nor can it be a committee of

2a – Financial and compliance obligations for school controlled PFAs









the council, as each has a very different purpose.

MACS Parents and Friends Policy outlines the structure of a parents and friends association, financial procedures and is to be used in conjunction with the VCEA *Financial Compliance Obligations Guide* which captures the key financial compliance obligations applicable to parents and friends associations based on the structure of the specific association. MACS schools only operate school-controlled associations, so the financial and compliance requirements provided in the VCEA guide fall under model 2a. Thus, in MACS schools, the parents and friends financials must form part of the school's Annual Financial Statements, which are audited annually.

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[7]MACS Parents and Friends Policy on CEVN

Support documentation

The school is required to ensure that a dedicated School Advisory Council page on the school's website contains up-to-date versions of:

- the Terms of Reference
- the *School Advisory Council Manual*
- MACS Code of Conduct for School Advisory Council members
- the School Advisory Council Annual Report
- a list of council members and key roles
- a list of committees and membership.

To support a system-wide approach that encourages both solidarity and subsidiarity, the following documents provide a common approach to issues around establishment, membership and processes of School Advisory Councils.

Templates

As per other MACS templates, the documents below are to be contextualised for each school. Only highlighted text can be amended by a MACS school without the approval of the MACS Executive Director. Guidance notes and highlighted text are to be removed in the final version of the document.

MACS Terms of Reference for School Advisory Councils

This document provides the structure and scope of work for School Advisory Councils in all MACS schools. Arising from consultation during the establishment of MACS, it was affirmed that the presence of a School Advisory Council in each school is a living expression of the principle of subsidiarity in action and reflects the consultative nature of Catholic education. This is made explicit in the MACS School Advisory Council Terms of Reference, as defined by the MACS board and adapted to each school's local context. A template is provided for adaption to different contexts.

Appointment letter template

The letter of appointment details the expectations of council members and outlines the conditions of appointment, including:

- signing the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct
- undertaking a Working with Children Check as per the Worker Screening Act
- accepting the MACS Code of Conduct for School Advisory Council members
- attending induction and ongoing formation programs
- attending all School Advisory Council meetings.

Annual report template

The council's annual report is an important communication document and is to be drafted using the MACS-approved template.

Annual evaluation template

The School Advisory Council must undertake an annual evaluation to reflect upon its performance and areas for improvement using the MACS-approved template. While essentially an internal improvement process, for transparency's sake, a summary of the evaluation will be included in the School Advisory Council Annual Report submitted to the principal.

Committee terms of reference template

If a committee or working party is seen as desirable, the MACS-approved Terms of Reference for Committees template is to be used to establish clearly articulated expectations of the committee or working group. This template provides the structures that need to be adopted.

Suggested models

The following documents are models provided for principals to use during the transition period to support the establishment of School Advisory Councils in all MACS schools. They are not templates, but suggested models for communication.

Parent letter – transitioning to new councils

Suggested model letter to the parent community outlining the establishment of a new School Advisory Council.

Expression of interest

Suggested model request for members of the community to express interest in being part of the School Advisory Council.

Agenda and minutes

Suggested model meeting agenda and minutes with a focus on providing clear structures to support the work of the council.

Information handouts

These standalone documents can be used for both induction and formation to increase members' knowledge on various topics. They can also be shared with a wider audience. Rather than providing the information directly in the Manual, the handouts were designed to be accessed via links to keep the focus tight, save room and make them easily accessible.

School Advisory Council discernment process

This handout outlines the process for the parish priest and the principal to work collaboratively to ensure that the relationship between parish and school remains central to providing the religious leadership necessary for the success of the mission.

Establishing a School Advisory Council

This handout provides an outline of the suggested process from discernment to completing the Terms of Reference and establishing an online presence.

Agenda

Background information about the essential role of an agenda.

Minutes

Background information and guidance on how to best capture in the minutes the activities and advice determined through council discussion and agreement by consensus.

Different governance arrangements, shared mission

Not all Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne are MACS schools. This handout explains the difference between MACS schools and religious institute and ministerial public juridic person schools.

Role of the association of canonical administrators

The role of an association of canonical administrators associated with secondary schools has shifted from governance, but retains its primary pastoral role. This handout explains the important role and its connection with schools.



Policies and documentation

Foundational documents

These documents give shape and purpose to the work of School Advisory Councils.

School Governance Steering Committee Position Paper

The principal subject of this Position Paper was to determine the governance arrangements for the 292 schools owned by the Archdiocese, its parishes or associations of parishes. Included in its recommendations were the formation of MACS, the commissioning of *Working Together in Mission*, and the establishment of a School Advisory Council for each school to provide a forum for the realisation of transparency, accountability, consultation and participation.

MACS Constitution

The constitution details key aspects of the company's objectives, relationships, roles and responsibilities. Section 3: Objects includes the MACS Statement of Mission (see below). The constitution details the member's rights and reserve powers, and outlines the role of the board of directors to take responsibility for the fiduciary and strategic aspects of the company.
It also defines the role of the executive director. The constitution creates checks and balances in the relationships between the layers of the company: from the member to the board and to management through the executive director.

MACS Statement of Mission

A key feature of the constitution, particularly in relation to School Advisory Councils, is the Statement of Mission that expresses the company's mission and
purpose, and is designed to protect the catholicity of the company and the schools it governs.

Working Together in Mission

This charter outlines the roles and responsibilities of those who lead the shared work and mission of Catholic parishes and schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, especially principals, parish priests and School Advisory Councils. It is agreed to and endorsed by the Archbishop of Melbourne and the board of MACS.

Policies

The following policies apply in MACS school and are published on school websites. In each school, the policy available on the website may be contextualised by the school to outline school-based practices and processes used to implement the policy.

Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy – Schools

This policy demonstrates that MACS schools hold the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of our schools. MACS' commitment is drawn from and inherent to the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the gospel. The policy is contextualised by each school.

Child Safety Code of Conduct

The Child Safety Code of Conduct is one of the key strategies to promote child safety in MACS schools by fostering respectful and caring relationships among all members of the school community. It recognises the critical role that each member of the school community (including principals, employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy) plays in protecting and caring for children. The Code is an open and transparent acknowledgment of the shared values required to observe child-safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children.

Complaints Handling Policy – Schools

The Complaints Handling Policy arises from MACS' commitment to building school communities that feature positive and respectful relationships.
Within each school, this policy celebrates that relationships are founded in the gospel values of justice, compassion, reconciliation and kindness. Such relationships support the learning and development of students and value the innate dignity of each person. It is important that each member of the community, including staff, parents and students, contributes to the building of the school community. The policy is contextualised by each school.

Enrolment Policy for MACS Schools

There is an agreed order of priority for enrolment in MACS schools, which must be followed in the enrolment policy and procedures. The first priority of Catholic schools is the provision of a Catholic education for Catholic children. While the majority of priorities remain the same, the order of priority alters slightly between primary and secondary schools to accommodate residents of designated priority parishes and other factors that impact on secondary education. Sacramental progress of children and liturgical attendance will always be significant when considering applications for enrolment. Please check the individual school's website for its enrolment policy.

Code of Conduct for School Advisory Council members

Acceptance of the MACS Code of Conduct for School Advisory Council members is a condition of appointment as outlined in the letter of appointment to any MACS school's School Advisory Council. The objective of this Code of Conduct is to ensure that high standards of community, group and individual behaviour are observed by members in the context of their roles as members of any School Advisory Council of a MACS school.

This Code builds upon the baseline expectation expressed in the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct that, like all members of the school community, council members 'are expected to actively contribute to a school culture by respecting the dignity of its members, affirming the gospel values of love, care for others, compassion and justice'.

MACS Conflict of Interest Policy

The purpose of this policy is to inform all involved with MACS of their obligations to disclose conflicts of interest in order to protect the integrity of MACS and manage risk. Principals are also aware that the management of related party transactions is covered under the MACS Related Party Transactions Policy included within the Financial Framework.

MACS Code of Conduct

This system wide policy reflecting MACS' commitment to a safe and nurturing environment for all MACS employees.

Our vision at MACS revolves around the transformative goal of 'forming lives to enrich the world'. This acknowledges that our work, actions and behaviours not only shape our immediate workplace, but also have a profound impact on the lives of individuals within our broader education community.

This Code of Conduct reflects our commitment to upholding the principles of faith, compassion and integrity that lie at the heart of our Catholic community. As stewards of this environment, it will serve to guide us as we navigate the complexities and challenges of our roles.

MACS support structures

MACS office support

As an expression of the principle of solidarity across the system, MACS provides support to School Advisory Councils, including policy guidance and templates for the work of the council. The MACS office assists schools by providing services which include:

- provision of print and online material
- assistance with the formation of new councils
- professional development for new chairs of councils
- advice and support to principals and parish priests as custodians of mission in relation to the role of the School Advisory Council in their particular setting
- advice and support to newly appointed principals in relation to the role of the School Advisory Council in their particular setting
- support for network and cluster activities.

The purpose of the School Advisory Councils Secretariat is to support principals and parish priests in their responsibilities related to strengthening the parish–school community. The service provides them with resources and advice in working with existing School Advisory Councils and establishing new councils.

The specific formation requirements of individual councils are the responsibility of the relevant principal and parish priest as leaders of the parish–school community. To support formation within schools, a series of stakeholder group inductions will be offered by MACS personnel:

- principals and parish priests
- chairs – annually
- parents – annually to explore expressions of interest
- regional networks of chairs.

MACS personnel will also support schools through:

- visits to individual schools
- annual School Advisory Council Mass, commissioning and blessing resources.



Resources

These documents establish, support and maintain the work of the Terms of Reference and the Manual. They may be helpful to readers in engaging with the purpose of the School Advisory Council.

Related MACS policies

- School Advisory Council Policy (MACS website)
- Child Safety Code of Conduct (available from the school)
- Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy – Schools (available from the school)
- Complaints Handling Policy – Schools (available from the school)
- Enrolment Policy for MACS schools (available from the school)
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Parents and Friends Policy
- Related Parties Policy
- Responsible Persons Policy

Legal and regulatory citations

- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* (Vic.), Schedule 4 clause 16
- Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) minimum standards
- *Worker Screening Act 2020* (Vic.), Chapter 3
- *Wrongs Act 1958* (Vic.), section 37

Legacy documents

- *Horizons of Hope Foundation Statement: Families as partners in Catholic school communities*
- School Governance Steering Committee Position Paper

Foundation documents

- Constitution – Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd
- *Statement of Mission* – MACS Constitution, clause 3.2
- *Working Together in Mission* charter

Terms of Reference

This template is to be shaped and contextualised for each school, and placed on the school website.

- Handout – Tailoring of the Terms of Reference

MACS templates

- Template – Committee Terms of Reference
- Template – School Advisory Council Annual Report
- Template – School Advisory Council Appointment Letter
- Template – School Advisory Council Evaluation

Suggested models

- Suggested model – Letter to Parents for New School Advisory Council
- Suggested model – School Advisory Council Agenda
- Suggested model – School Advisory Council Expression of Interest
- Suggested model – School Advisory Council Minutes

Support documents and information handouts

- Handout – 10 Stages
- Handout – Agenda
- Handout – Commissioning and Blessing Ceremonies
- Handout – Discernment Process for School Advisory Councils
- Handout – Establishing a School Advisory Council
- Handout – Minutes
- Handout – Prayer at School Advisory Council Meetings
- Handout – Religious Institute and Ministerial Public Juridic Person Schools
- Handout – Role of an Association of Canonical Administrators
- MACS Code of Conduct for School Advisory Council members
- Working Together in Mission – Summary of Roles
- School Advisory Council Manual

Shortened forms

DE (QARD): Department of Education (Quality Assessment and Regulation Division).

MACS: Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd.

ToR: Terms of Reference, specifically the MACS School Advisory Council Terms of Reference, to be adapted for each MACS school's local context. The template contains guidance notes for principals.

VCEA: Victorian Catholic Education Authority Ltd.

VRQA: Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority.

WTiM: *Working Together in Mission*: Charter for parishes and schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Glossary

Agenda: Advance notice of items listed in order for discussion at a meeting.

Association of canonical administrators: A private juridic person in accordance with Canon 116, set up by a decree of the Archbishop and governed by a clearly defined set of statutes. The members are the parish priests, duly appointed to administer the member parishes as outlined in the statutes.

Canonical administrator: A priest who is assigned to administer a parish. Taken in the context of Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, canonical administrators are the parish priests who collectively have the beneficial ownership of the land on which regional colleges operate.

Code of Canon Law: The system of laws and principles made and enforced by the hierarchical authorities of the Catholic Church to regulate its organisation.

Custodian of mission: A parish priest, priest moderator, parochial administrator, member of an association of canonical administrators or Archbishop's nominee who acts as custodian of the mission and patrimony of a MACS school. They have a duty to serve their school or college community by providing pastoral outreach to its families and students. For ease of use, custodian of mission will be referred to as 'parish priest' throughout.

Ecclesiastical authority: The authority which the Church has been given by Jesus to be exercised in his name in carrying out the mission entrusted to it.

Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic.): Regulations made under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (Vic.) that prescribe matters relating to education, specifically registration of education and training organisations (including minimum standards for senior secondary courses and criteria for registration).

Ex officio: A member who is appointed by virtue of their position.

Executive Director: The Executive Director is appointed by the MACS board to manage the operation of the schools in accordance with the strategic plan developed under the board's direction.

Fiduciary: Responsibility of all for the duty of care, duty of loyalty and duty of obedience to the organisation and its members.

Formation: The process of ongoing learning and understanding of the ethos and spirit of a Catholic school, and the collective and individual role each member plays in the development of the School Advisory Council.

Induction: The formal, structured and supportive method of introducing council members to the School Advisory Council and MACS. Through their reading of the key documents, it is expected that members will understand the purpose of a School Advisory Council and each person's role in pursuing that purpose.

MACS board: Body responsible for the governance and operation of the 293 schools.

Manual: The *School Advisory Council Manual* is written as a guide for the people in each community who have agreed to work together to accomplish the shared conviction that all need to be working together in mission.

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd: MACS is a reference to Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd, and/or its subsidiaries, MACSS and/or MACSEYE (as the context requires).

Minutes: A record of discussion and agreement by consensus at a meeting and the follow-up required.

Mission: 'As Christians we are all involved in varying ways in the one mission: to bring about the fullness of life for all peoples in all places and times as Jesus ardently desired'. The MACS Statement of Mission is
an expression of this mission within the framework of a Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

Parent voice: A platform provided to parents to enable them to speak on behalf of their children's quality of education.

Parish priest: For ease of use throughout, reference to 'parish priest' will include priest moderator, parochial administrator, member of an association of canonical administrators or Archbishop's nominee, including their role as custodian of mission.

Position Paper: The 2020 document presenting the argument for the transfer of governance of the schools to MACS.

Solidarity: Unity of action between people who have a common interest or goal.

Statement of Mission: Foundational statement about the missionary aspect of a Catholic school within the Archdiocese of Melbourne: 'Catholic schooling seeks to provide the young with the best kind of education possible, one that fosters a formation of the whole person that is deeply and enduringly humanising.'

Steering Committee: The committee established by the Archbishop to transfer the governance of the schools to MACS by 1 January 2021.

Subsidiarity: Principle indicating that a central authority should perform only those tasks which cannot be performed at a more local level.

Succession planning: A strategy for the preparation and passing on of leadership roles.

Terms of Reference: The document which articulates the scope of work for School Advisory Councils and how the members will work together.

Victorian Catholic Education Authority Ltd: The overarching strategic planning and policy-making body for Catholic schools in Victoria.

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority: The Victorian Government's education and training regulator that ensures quality in education and training.

Working Together in Mission: The document that outlines the roles and responsibilities of those who lead the shared work and mission of Catholic parishes and schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne, especially principals, parish priests and School Advisory Councils.

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Catholic Schools

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