Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

School Advisory Councils Policy – MACS Schools

1. Introduction

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Ltd (**MACS**) is a company limited by guarantee established in 2021 by the Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne to assume the governance and operation of MACS schools across the Archdiocese of Melbourne. MACS subsequently established Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Specialist Schools Ltd (**MACSS**) to provide educational services to children with diverse needs and Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools Early Years Education (**MACSEYE**) to provide early years care and education services.

The Statement of Mission in the MACS Constitution, and the constitutions of its subsidiaries, MACSS and MACSEYE, sets out the Archbishop's expectations of Catholic schooling in the Archdiocese and provides an important context and grounding for the company and the direction which the MACS Board must always observe in the pursuit of the company's objects.

The Board must ensure that all policies and procedures concerning the operations of MACS, and its subsidiaries are consistent with the Statement of Mission and company objects, as well as any directions issued by the Archbishop from time to time.

2. Purpose

This policy and accompanying procedures ensure that each MACS School has established and operates a School Advisory Council.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all MACS schools including specialist schools operated by MACSS (**MACS schools**).

4. Principles

In keeping with the objects in the MACS Constitution and the *Working Together in Mission* Charter, school advisory councils are established in each MACS school to:

- provide an important connection to each parish or association of parishes
- ensure education remains a co-responsible task
- be a crucial point of connection between the wider school community and school leaders
- consider and advise on important school matters to support the principal and the strategic interest of the school.

5. Requirements for School Advisory Councils

All MACS Schools are required to have a school advisory council.

A MACS principal is not permitted to be the chair of a school advisory council in any MACS school.

5.1. School Advisory Council Terms of Reference

To ensure that each school is responsive to its context, each school must have School Advisory Council Terms of Reference (**ToR**). The ToR frames the operation of the school advisory council, ensuring it is designed for, and works within, the context of its specific school environment.

The School Advisory Council ToR template provides the procedure for the establishment and operation of each council.

5.2. School Advisory Council Webpage

Each MACS school is required to ensure a dedicated School Advisory Council webpage is published on the school's website which contains up-to-date versions of:

- this policy
- School Advisory Council Terms of Reference
- School Advisory Council Manual
- School Advisory Council Members Commitment Statement
- School Advisory Council Annual Report
- list of council members and key roles
- list of committees and membership.

5.3. School Advisory Council Annual Report

School advisory council activity, as seen in its annual report, is a key piece of evidence that demonstrates how each MACS school takes reasonable steps to engage with the school community and meet one of MACS' constitutional objectives, 'that the school's philosophy is enacted with parents and parishes' (Statement of Mission). The Report must:

- be drafted using the approved template
- be prepared by the Chair, in conjunction with the principal
- acknowledge the activities, achievements and challenges of the council and committees over the past year
- reference the council's self-evaluation, and indicate goals and focus for the following year
- use these goals as a basis for the evaluation undertaken by the council in the following year
- have its final version approved by the council
- be submitted to the principal and shared with the school community.

The School Advisory Council Annual Report may also inform the principal's Annual Report to the School Community which is published on the school website.

5.4. Record keeping

As a minimum, the principal must ensure the following council documents and records are kept:

- School Advisory Council Terms of Reference and the terms of reference of any committee or working group established by the council
- agendas and minutes of school advisory council, committee and working group meetings
- copies of each School Advisory Council Annual Report
- a register of the current members of the council, committees and working groups, and any council members holding key roles
- a register of conflicts of interest disclosed by council, committee and working group members
- the school advisory council correspondence file.

6. Roles and reporting responsibilities

Role	Responsibility	Reporting requirement
Principal	Establish terms of reference Provide dedicated webpage Appropriate record keeping	Publish on webpage
Priest*	Establish terms of reference in conjunction with the principal	
Chair	Prepare school advisory council annual report	Approved by the council, submitted to the principal and
Role	Responsibility	Reporting requirement

		shared with the school community.

*For parish primary schools, the 'priest' is the parish priest of the school's parish and for regional colleges, the 'priest' is a parish priest who is a member of the college's association of canonical administrators.

7. Procedures

Procedures for the establishment and operation of school advisory councils are defined by the School Advisory Council Terms of Reference. Further procedures and advice for the everyday operation of the school advisory councils can be found in the School Advisory Council Manual.

All of the above plus templates for letters, suggested models for meeting procedures, PowerPoint presentations to support procedures can be found on the MACS School Advisory Council webpage.

8. Definitions

Definitions of standard terms used in this Policy can be found in the Glossary of Terms.

9. Related policies and documents

Supporting documents

School Advisory Councils - Terms of Reference
School Advisory Council Manual
School Advisory Council Members Commitment Statement

Related MACS policies and documents

Working Together in Mission charter

Code of Conduct for MACS Staff

10. Legislation and standards

The Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) minimum standards require a school to 'publish a clear statement of its philosophy and be able to demonstrate how the school's philosophy is enacted' per Schedule 4 clause 16 in the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* (Vic.).

As a part of this legislated statement of philosophy, the MACS Statement of Mission (MACS Constitution, clause 3.2) makes the claim that the school's philosophy and mission is enacted "With parents and parishes."

School Advisory Council activity, as seen in its Annual Report, is a key piece of evidence that demonstrates how MACS takes reasonable steps to engaging with the school community and meeting one of the objectives of the Statement of Mission.

11. Policy information

Sponsoring executive	Director, Catholic Mission and Identity
Policy owner	Director, Catholic Mission and Identity
Approving authority	Executive Director
Assigned board committee	Catholic Mission and Identity
Approval date	29 October 2025
Risk rating	Moderate
Review by	October 2029
Publication	MACS website, CEVN, Gabriel, school website
POLICY DATABASE INFORMATION	
Assigned framework	Governance
Supporting documents	See list of supporting documents and related policies above

Superseded documents	New