

# St Joseph's Parish, Coleraine School Advisory Council Constitution



## Diocese of Ballarat Catholic Education



Revised: March 2017

# St Joseph's Parish, Coleraine School Advisory Council Constitution



## Introduction

The parish priest, upon consideration of local circumstances, including the functions of existing parish groups, is responsible for making any decision about the establishment of a council and its arrangements.

The preferred title of a council of a parish primary school is *School Advisory Council* (SAC).

Broadly, the key functions of the SAC may include:

- providing advice on education matters relating to whole of parish including the school or
- providing advice on education matters relating to the school (common title for this council is School Advisory Council).

The attached sample constitution provides the framework for a SAC where there is a single school in the parish.

**Clause 1** provides a profile of the parish and school including the history of the parish and school, the vision statement for the parish and the vision and mission statement for the school.

**Clause 2** lists the governing principles discussed and determined by the SAC that will guide their work and processes.

**Clause 3** acknowledges the role and authority of the Catholic Church, the Archbishop of Melbourne and the parish priest in Catholic education in the parish and parish primary school. The SAC has no responsibility for the internal management and administration of the school, which are the responsibility of the principal.

**Clause 4** provides definitions of terms used in the constitution.

**Clause 5** notes the ownership of the parish land and buildings.

## Purposes and responsibilities

**Clause 6** lists the purposes of the SAC in relation to education matters in the parish, whether pertaining only to the school or more broadly.

**Clause 7** lists the responsibilities of the SAC, which may pertain to broader education matters across the parish including the school or only to those concerning the school. The parish priest, upon consideration of local circumstances and the functions of any existing parish groups, is responsible for determining the extent of the SAC's responsibilities.

**Clause 7 (f) and (g)** may be retained or deleted depending on the decision of the parish priest as to the function of the SAC.

## Membership

**Clause 8.1** provides details of SAC membership. Membership under clause 8 (c) and (d) are not mutually exclusive. A single parish representative may be sufficient for a SAC fulfilling its function in dealing with education matters relating to the school.

## Meetings

**Clauses 8.2 to 8.5** provide details of meeting requirements.

### **Office Bearers**

**Clause 9** lists the office bearers. The SAC executive officer has responsibility for developing the agenda with the Executive Committee. For councils responsible for providing advice on education matters relating to the school, the role of Executive Officer is undertaken by the principal.

### **Executive Committee**

**Clause 10** notes the requirement that the SAC must have an Executive Committee and sets out its membership. Some members of the Executive may have dual roles (e.g. the parish priest may also be the chair; the principal may also be the Executive Officer).

### **Other Committees**

Other committees may be established under the constitution (clause **11.1**). Depending on the functions of the SAC as decided by the parish priest a SAC Faith Formation and Development Committee may be established (**clause 11.2**). A Fundraising Committee may be appropriate to local circumstances when a SAC is being established or when a school community wishes to incorporate the fundraising role in the functions of a SAC (**clause 11.4**).

### **Tenure**

**Clause 12** notes suggested terms of SAC members.

### **Handbook**

**Clause 13** requires the development and maintenance of a SAC Handbook. This is a document developed and approved by the SAC which outlines its role and structure and the responsibilities of its members. It also describes SAC procedures and protocols. It can be a useful tool in induction of new members and formation activities.

### **Changing the Constitution**

**Clause 14** provides for the process for changes to the constitution.

### **Confidentiality and Solidarity**

**Clause 15** recognises the requirement of confidentiality and solidarity in SAC matters from each SAC member.

The constitution must be ratified and signed by the parish priest.

# St Joseph's Parish, Coleraine School Advisory Council Constitution



67 Read Street, Coleraine, VIC, 3315  
Web: [www.sjcoleraine.catholic.edu.au](http://www.sjcoleraine.catholic.edu.au)

Phone: 5575 2131 Fax: 55 752770  
email: [principal@sjcoleraine.catholic.edu.au](mailto:principal@sjcoleraine.catholic.edu.au)

## 1. Profile of Our Parish and School

### History of the parish and school

- St Joseph's Primary School is located in Read Street, Coleraine, beside the original school and church. It was established in 1861 by Father O'Connell with 25 pupils and Miss Phelan as the teacher, but owing to a shortage of pupils and sometimes teachers the school closed and reopened many times through the years.
- In 1924 the Sisters of St. Joseph were approached to take over the school at Coleraine. 1924 saw the arrival of 2 sisters and they began the school with 99 pupils. In June 1934 two classrooms were opened on the present site in Read Street.
- 1975 saw the present school complex of 2 classrooms, a staffroom and an administration office erected, another classroom was added in 1978.
- The Sisters of St Joseph were replaced by a sister from the Mercy Order in 1984 who taught at St. Joseph's for 3 years when the first Lay Principal was appointed in 1987.
- Coleraine is a small rural community of approximately 1000 people, surrounded by rich pastoral and Blue Gum holdings.
- We offer the children a comprehensive curriculum with the Gospel values as our base. We provide a strong sense of community both within the school, parish and wider community.
- The staff are dedicated, caring and competent. The parents are supportive both within the classrooms and with the provision of fundraising for resources for the school.
- In 2002 the school received a Commonwealth Capital Grant to refurbish classrooms and build new toilets, administration areas and entrance.
- Term 1 2003 saw the building begin and was completed at the end of Term 2. The new building is distinctive with a pitched roof line to match existing buildings. The grounds have also been regenerated with the planting of trees along the fence line.
- In 2010 the school completed capital works using the "National School Pride" grant to refurbish and furnish the library and the "Building the Education Revolution" grant to completely resurrect the ailing school multipurpose hall. This work has resulted in a better, brighter learning environment and modern facilities available to support the Teaching and Learning program of the school.
- In 2015 the school underwent major capital works due to problems with the building structural integrity. The existing school building was replaced with a new modular facility, consisting of two classrooms, a conference room, administration area, toilet block, learning hub and staff room. The project was funded with assistance from the Capital Supplementary Fund and local contributions. The new school was officially opened in November of 2015 by Bishop Paul Bird.

### Vision Statement for the diocese

*We are the Catholic Church in the Ballarat Diocese.  
We gather in the name of Jesus from the Murray to the Sea  
In interwoven faith communities Spirit filled  
We celebrate and share our journey  
Reaching out to nurture all God's people.*

## St Joseph's Coleraine Vision and Mission Statement

**"I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full."**

**John (10:10)**

### **Vision Statement**

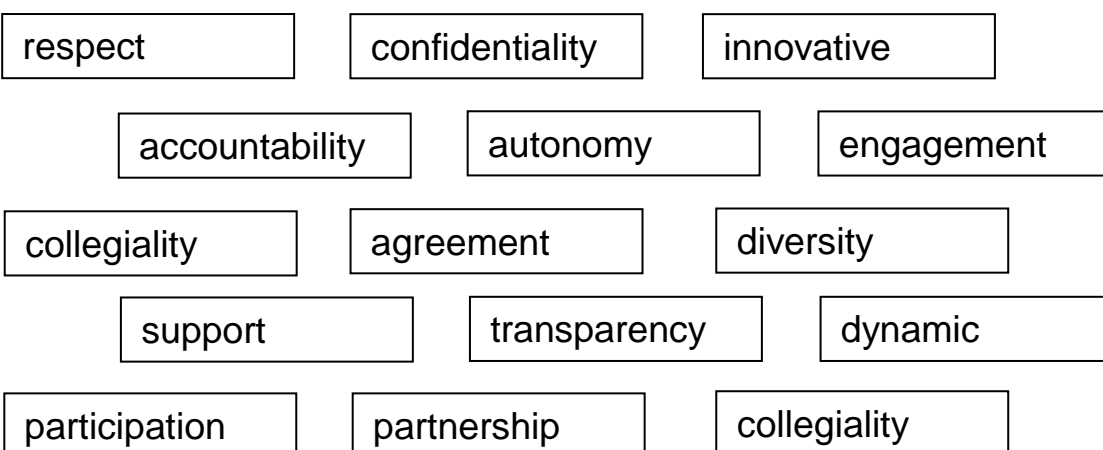
At St Joseph's school we are committed to the teachings of Jesus and our Christian beliefs. The gospel values of Harmony, Care, Cooperation, Inclusiveness, Respect and Community are the essence of our relationship with God, each other and the earth.

### **Mission Statement**

At St Joseph's school we will: -

- Work in partnership with the parents, the parish and the wider community to provide Religious Education that is meaningful, challenging and supportive of parents who provide the foundation of their child's faith education.
- Work together to challenge each child to achieve their potential and fulfil their personal goals.
- Provide a learning environment that is welcoming, safe, supportive, and that celebrates success.
- Be vibrant members of our caring, friendly and cohesive community.

## **2. The Governing Principles for the School Advisory Council**



### 3. Governance and Authority

#### Parish

3.1 Within the provisions of Canon Law, the parish priest in consultation with the parish community is responsible for providing for the Catholic education of parish children and young adults as well the catechetical formation of the faithful and outreach to those who are no longer practising their faith or who do not profess the Catholic religion.

The school advisory council (SAC) provides advice to the parish priest within the context of this Constitution and the vision statement of the parish.

#### Parish Primary School

3.2 With the approval and under the direction of the Archbishop of Melbourne, St. Joseph's Primary School, has been established to provide Catholic education, according to the precepts, teachings and practices of the Catholic Church.

This school is administered by the parish priest of St. Joseph's Coleraine under the supervision of the Archbishop of Melbourne and is acknowledged as Catholic by his authority.

The governance of this school is undertaken by the parish priest with the support of the principal.

The School Advisory Council (SAC) provides advice to the principal within the context of this Constitution and the school's vision and mission statements.

The parish priest reserves his authority in matters relating to:

- the Catholicity of the school
- diocesan regulations
- employment of staff
- the formation and dissolution of the council
- appointment of council members and office bearers
- the appointment and dismissal of the principal
- school finances

3.3 Within the provisions of Canon Law, the SAC is responsible to the parish priest, who in turn is subject to the vigilance of the Archbishop of Melbourne.

3.4 The SAC has no responsibility for the internal management and administration of the school, which are the responsibility of the school principal.

## 4. Definitions

The Archbishop is the Catholic Archbishop for the time being of the Archdiocese of Melbourne or the person duly appointed to administer the Archdiocese.

The **parish** is as defined by the Archbishop of Melbourne in accordance with Canon Law.

The **parish priest** is the parish priest for the time being of the parish of St. Joseph's Coleraine or the person duly appointed to administer the parish.

The **school advisory council** (SAC) is the body responsible for advising the parish priest and principal according to the provisions of this Constitution.

## 5. Land and Buildings

5.1 The ownership of land and buildings thereon is vested in the Roman Catholic Trusts Corporation for the Diocese of Melbourne, which shall hold such in trust for the parish in accordance with Canon Law.

5.2 The costs of all land and buildings, comprising buildings equipped to satisfy the requirements of a parish school, shall be underwritten by the parish.

## 6. SAC purposes

The purposes of the SAC are to:

- (a) act as an advisory body to the parish priest and principal, on matters concerning education in the parish
- (b) act as a forum for discussion on matters concerning education in the parish primary school
- (c) provide a link between the parish priest, principal, teachers and parishioners in relation to the provision of Catholic education in the parish community
- (d) promote community development by fostering a strong interrelationship between parish and the parish primary school, Catholic secondary colleges and pre-schools.

## 7. SAC responsibilities

The responsibilities of the SAC are to:

- (a) promote the Catholic ethos of the school and to support the Religious Education programs
- (b) provide advice on the development and review of school policies
- (c) plan for the future of the parish primary school and its ability to accommodate future enrolments
- (d) provide advice on budget planning and finance-related matters
- (e) contribute to the selection process for the school principal
- (f) ensure the appropriate provision of faith development and RE programs for children attending Government schools
- (g) foster adult education in faith

## 8. The School Advisory Council (SAC)

### Membership

- 8.1 The SAC shall be composed of at least ten (8) members who appreciate, value and share the educational mission and ethos of the Catholic Church. It shall consist of:
- (a) the parish priest (ex officio)
  - (b) the school principal (ex officio)
  - (c) the school staff representative (ex officio)
  - (d) five (5) parents of children attending the parish primary school elected by the parents of the school, including a nominee of the parent and friends' association
  - (e) one (1) or more parishioners nominated by the parish priest
  - (f) other persons co-opted for a period of time to serve a particular need on the education council.

### Ordinary Meeting

- 8.2 The SAC should meet at least 8 times per year and at least twice each school term.
- 8.3 A quorum, comprises a majority plus one of SAC members at the time of the meeting and members must be present at all time during a meeting.

### Annual General Meeting

- 8.4 The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the SAC shall be held once a year.
- 8.5 An annual report is to be presented at the AGM and communicated to the parish community.

## 9. Office Bearers

- 9.1 Following the AGM, the SAC will elect from its own members a chair. Ex officio members and employees of the parish or school shall not be eligible to hold the office of chair.
- 9.2 The SAC will elect a deputy chair who will carry out the duties of chair in his/her absence.
- 9.3 The SAC will appoint a secretary from among its members. The secretary attends council meetings and prepares necessary documentation under the direction of the executive officer or chair.
- 9.4 The SAC will appoint an Executive Officer, if required.



## 10. Executive Committee

10.1 The SAC shall form an SAC Executive Committee which may comprise:

- (a) chair
- (b) parish priest, or his nominee
- (c) non ex-officio member of the council
- (d) principal
- (e) SAC Executive Officer (optional)
- (f) SAC secretary.

10.2 The SAC Executive Committee provides support to the parish priest, principal and the SAC and operates with terms of reference determined by the SAC.

## 11. Other Committees

11.1 Other committees, or working parties, may be established by the SAC in response to identified needs of the SAC.

### **The SAC Faith Formation and Development Committee**

11.2 The SAC may form an SAC Faith Formation and Development Committee which may comprise:

- (a) parish priest, or his nominee
- (b) 2 members of the SAC nominated pursuant to clause 8(d)
- (c) 1 member of the SAC elected or nominated pursuant to clause 8(c)

11.3 The SAC Faith Formation and Development Committee provides support to the parish priest and the SAC and operates with terms of reference determined by the SAC.

### **The SAC Fundraising Committee**

11.4 The SAC may form a Fundraising Committee which may comprise:

- (a) chair
- (b) parish priest, or his nominee
- (c) 2 non ex-officio members of the SAC
- (d) principal

11.5 The SAC Fundraising Committee provides support to the principal and the SAC and operates with terms of reference determined by the SAC to raise funds for school related purposes.

## 12. Appointment of SAC Members

- 12.1 The parish priest will appoint SAC members nominated or elected under categories 8.1 (d), (e) and (f).
- 12.2 In the event of a casual vacancy, the vacancy will be filled by appointment of the parish priest on a recommendation of the SAC. Any person appointed to a casual vacancy shall hold office for the balance of the term of the member who is vacating the position.
- 12.3 The terms of appointment for members of the SAC are as follows:
- The four (5) parents of children at the school will be elected for three years, and may be re-elected
  - The parishioners will hold membership for three years, and may be re-nominated
- 12.4 The term of appointment for the council executive will be for one calendar year and may be eligible for re-election.

## 13. Council Handbook

Based upon this Constitution, the SAC shall produce and follow a Handbook to guide the operations and protocols of the SAC.

## 14. Change of Constitution

- 14.1 This Constitution may be changed only if the parish priest, after consultation with the SAC, decides upon alterations or accepts any alterations proposed by two-thirds of the members of the SAC.
- 14.2 Notice of any proposed change to the Constitution must be given to SAC members, in writing, 14 clear days in advance of an extraordinary SAC meeting called specifically for the purpose of discussing the matter.
- 14.3 Notwithstanding the above, the parish priest may direct change(s) to the Constitution at any time.

## 15. Confidentiality and Solidarity

SAC confidentiality and solidarity is the key to building trust among members. At times, there will be a good reason to declare an issue, a paper and/or a discussion as confidential. This should be done by the chair prior to a SAC meeting.

SAC members should also respect the right of individuals to express their views freely at meetings without fear of being named outside the meeting as taking particular positions. A sense of trust and harmony among members is vital for the wellbeing of the SAC.

**This Constitution was ratified by the parish priest on**

**Dated** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_