

St Mary Catholic School Council

By-Laws



May 2019

ST. MARY CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL BY-LAWS

Mission Statement of St Mary Catholic School:

St. Mary Catholic School in partnership with Family, Community and Church is dedicated to discovering truth through lifelong learning and faith development.

The School Council contributes to the achievement of the school's mission, by supporting a faith-centered learning environment that strives to develop self-assured individuals to their full potential who contribute to society. The School Council is a vehicle by which everyone in the school community has a voice in educational issues.

ARTICLE I. Name of Organization

The organization for which these bylaws have been developed will be known as the **St. Mary Catholic School Council**.

The following bylaws shall govern the School Council at St. Mary Catholic School under the jurisdiction of the Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB). Throughout these bylaws where the term parent(s) is used, it will imply guardian(s).

ARTICLE II. Purpose and Objectives:

The School Council in conjunction with the school Principal (or designate) and, where appropriate, the HCDSB, will promote the best interest of the school community. The objectives of the School Council will be to link home, school, church, and community by establishing and maintaining good communication and participation in education among school, parents, church, and community.

This will be achieved in the following ways:

- Work with the school's mission statement and goals rather than on day-to-day management of the school
- Provide opportunities for meaningful parental involvement in the education of their children
- Provide a vehicle for transmitting parental ideas, recommendations and concerns to school board committees or to the Board itself
- Organize information and training sessions to enable members of the School Council to develop skills as council members in the areas of team work, consensus building, and school-based decision-making.
- Support activities that encourage input into educational matters and enhance lines of communication between home, school, church and community
- Share information with the school community and serve as a resource for parents
- Consult, share information, and co-operate where necessary with other School Councils and educational partners on broader issues

- Assist in the building of a visible Catholic community working together in the best interest of Catholic education

In carrying out its various responsibilities, the School Council will reflect our Catholic values in accordance with Catholic School Council Pledge (Appendix 1) and Declaration (Appendix 2), as signed by each council member.

ARTICLE III. Council Member Code of Ethics:

All members of School Council are expected to act as ambassadors for St. Mary Catholic School, encouraging positive communication between all stakeholders, and explicitly seeking to promote the accomplishments and initiatives of the school. Mindful of the presence and power of social media, Council members are encouraged to model ethical digital citizenship through their judicious use of on-line tools.

Each School Council member shall:

- Be guided by the mission statements of the HCDSB and St. Mary Catholic School
- Endeavour to be familiar with school policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- Carry out his or her duties with honesty, respect and integrity
- Recognize and respect the personal integrity of each School Council member as well as each member of the school community
- Encourage a positive atmosphere where individual contributions are encouraged and valued
- Respect and apply democratic principles
- Consider the best interests of **all** students at all times. No individual or group can be allowed to promote its own agenda or self-interest at the expense of others.
- Respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the School Council
- Refrain from disclosing confidential information
- Limit discussions at Council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole
- Use the appropriate communication (and escalation) channels when questions or concerns arise
- Promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community
- Accept accountability for decisions
- Declare any Conflict of Interest* (as defined in Article X)
- Accept no payment for school council activities

In addition to these ethics, School Council Members shall adhere to any code of conduct as outlined by the HCDSB and or the Ministry of Education and Training.

Failure to adhere to the code of ethics shall result in the implementation of the conflict resolution process and possible dismissal from the Council (as defined in Article XII)

ARTICLE IV. Composition:

The St. Mary Catholic School Council shall endeavor to have its membership reflect the diversity of its school community. The School Council members shall include:

- Up to 15 Catholic parents*
- Up to 2 non-Catholic parents*
- 1 teaching staff member
- 1 non-teaching member
- The school Principal and Vice-Principal
- One parish representative
- One community member

It should be noted that the two non-Catholic representatives would be in addition to the 15 positions reserved for Catholic parents. The community member will be appointed by the School Council. The parish representative will be appointed by the School Council, in consultation with the parish priest. At the Principal's discretion, the maximum number of School Council members (15 Catholic parents, up to 2 non-Catholic parents: total of 17) may be overridden by 1, if 18 people put forward their names for School Council. In the event that more than 18 parents put forward their names, an election will be called.

The council can choose to elect one Chair or two Co-Chairs. The Chair or Co-Chairs of the School Council shall be Catholic, as per Regulation 612-00. Any matters requiring student input will be directed toward student leaders in the school, as selected by the Principal.

**of students enrolled at St. Mary school*

ARTICLE V. Election Procedures:

St. Mary Catholic School Council abides by the suggested by-Laws for Catholic School Council Operation in the HCDSB's Operations Manual, *"School Councils: Strengthening Our Partnerships"*, which is based upon The Ministry of Education's Policy 612/00 and the accompanying document, *"School Councils: A Guide for Members"* (2001), as well as HCDSB's School Board Policy No. 1-23.

If an election is required, the election of parent representatives to the School Council shall comply with Sections 4 and 5 of the Ontario Regulation 612/00 of the Education Act. It is to be noted that:

- Elections shall be held in the **first 30 days** of each school year.
- Voting day must take place by the last day of September.
- An announcement of the Voting Day will occur **at least 14 days** prior to the election.
- Nominations will be accepted up until 7 days prior to the election
- No individual campaign literature may be distributed or posted on the school grounds. If deemed advisable, the Principal may call an "All Candidates Meeting" open to the school community. Short bios of each candidate will be made available.
- School resources, both human and material, may not be used to support candidates or group of candidates.

- Each parent (as defined in regulation 612) of a child enrolled in the school is entitled to a vote.
- Voting shall be secret ballot with no proxy voting permitted
- If there is a tie for the final position, the winner shall be determined by lot
- Election of council members shall be limited to 2 non-Catholic members (as per the guidelines of the Halton Catholic District School Board).

Voting by parents will take place from 8:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. on voting day. The Principal and Vice-Principal will be responsible for counting the ballots after the polls are closed and for communicating the results to the school community.

Positions available will be filled by the top vote getters. If there are positions still vacant, the Principal will inform the school community of the vacancies and call for further applicants. Applicants who come forward at this time will fill the vacant positions in order of their communication to the Principal until all vacancies have been filled.

The installation of the new council members shall take place at the first meeting following the election. The initiation ceremony will involve a spiritual commissioning service for all members (see Appendix 3).

ARTICLE VI. Term of Office:

As per Regulation 612/00, the Council mandate ends in June of every school year. Elected and appointed representatives may seek additional terms of office.

Membership on the Council shall terminate when:

- A member ceases to meet the criteria set out in Regulation 612
- A member has missed three scheduled meetings
- A member submits a formal letter of resignation to the chair or co-chairs.
- A member has breached the Council Member Code of Ethics (Article III).

ARTICLE VII. Vacancies:

If a vacancy occurs, the School Council shall notify the school community of the position and request volunteers. From the names received, Council may appoint a qualified member, in compliance with Article IV. A replacement council member shall serve for the balance of the term of the council member being replaced.

ARTICLE VIII. Roles of Council Members:

The School Council, while designed to support school activities, has a primary role in giving advice to the Principal and Vice-Principal around decisions that set direction for the school and board. The School Council provides a structure in which council members can share information, set priorities, and consult on various issues.

Council Members – General Duties

In addition to following the Code of Ethics, members of the St. Mary Catholic School Council shall:

- Advocate for a strong School Council.
- Promote Catholic education.
- Attend and participate in Council meetings.
- Participate in information and training programs.
- Encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community.
- Continually seek input from the school community to accurately formulate goals
- Act as a link between the School Council and the community by keeping the community well-informed of the council's roles, functions, projects and decisions (along with the reasons for the decisions)
- Support and promote the decisions reached by Council.
- Be of good will working for the common good of the school community.
- Chair or participate in a least one committee during term of office.
- Submit supporting documentation for agenda items to the Chair for distribution with the agenda, 10 days prior to the meeting.
- Submit, as chair of a committee, reports to the Council.

The Principal of St. Mary School shall:

- Facilitate the establishment of the School Council and assist in its operation.
- Support and promote the Council's activities.
- Seek input from the Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibility.
- Act as a resource on laws, regulations, board policies, and collective agreements.
- Obtain and provide information required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions.
- Communicate with the Chair of the Council. Establish meeting agendas one week prior to meetings.
- Ensure that copies of the minutes of the Council's meetings are kept at the school.
- Assist the Council in communicating with the school community.
- Encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of all interested people within the school community.
- Be responsible for organizing and conducting elections; count ballots and post election results.

The HCDSB shall be responsible, through the appropriate Superintendent, for making all final and binding decisions on any appeals not resolved at the Principal level.

The Chair or Co-Chairs of St. Mary Catholic School Council shall:

- Call School Council meetings.
- Prepare the agenda for School Council meetings, in collaboration with Principal, and ensure distribution prior to Council meeting.
- Chair School Council meetings.
- Approve the minutes from School Council meetings.
- Participate in information training programs as needed.
- Strive to ensure that there is regular communication with the school community.

- Consult with senior board staff and trustees, as required.
- Ensure objectives, by-laws and procedures are reviewed and updated at least annually.
- Promote the active participation of all School Council members.
- Attend and represent St. Mary Catholic School Council at the Council of Chairs meetings.
- Ensure adequate representation on each School Council sub-committee.
- Be the spokesperson for the School Council.
- Appoint sub-committees as needed and provide support as appropriate.
- Monitor the implementation of School Council decisions.

The Secretary of St. Mary Council shall:

- Chair School Council meetings in the absence the Chair or Co-Chairs and assume the Chair or Co-Chair's duties.
- Record and maintain minutes and attendance for each meeting.
- Ensure the distribution of minutes to each School Council member before the next meeting.
- Ensure that the minutes of any School Council meeting are posted publicly on the St. Mary Catholic School website.

The Community Representative shall:

- Advocate for a strong School Council by bringing the community perspective into the school.
- Assist the school in building partnerships with community members and organizations.
- Build lines of cooperation between stakeholders to enhance student learning.
- Establish and leverage community partnerships to assist the School Council and sub-committees in the achievement of their goals.

The Parish Representative shall:

- Support the actions and decisions of the School Council.
- Ensure a parish voice is expressed in all discussions and decisions, which may impact the parish community.
- Promote a collaborative, collegial decision-making process at the school and within the School Council.
- Encourage parents and the school community to become involved in parish activities.
- Communicate information back to the parish community as appropriate.
- Be a member of the School Council's Faith sub-committee.

The Teacher Representative shall:

- Support the actions and decisions of the School Council.
- Ensure a teacher perspective is expressed in all discussions and decisions, which affect teaching and learning.
- Consult with colleagues, as appropriate, to ensure that the perspective expressed is representative of the diverse teachers within the school.

- Promote a collaborative, collegial model of decision making at the school and within the School Council.
- Encourage parents and teachers to become involved in School Council activities.
- Communicate information back to all teachers at the school.

The Non-Teaching Representative shall:

- Support the actions and decisions of the School Council.
- Ensure a non-teaching staff perspective is expressed in all discussions and decisions, which may impact on non-teaching staff.
- Promote a collaborative, collegial decision-making process at the school and within the School Council.
- Encourage parents and non-teaching staff to become involved in School Council activities.
- Communicate information back to all non-teaching staff at the school.

The student is at the centre of the education system and may play a role as a participant or presenter to, the School Council where appropriate. The attitudes and values the student brings forward will help influence decisions made by the Principal and the School Council, and therefore, help determine the direction of the school. Student Representatives may:

- Support the actions and decisions of the School Council.
- Ensure a student perspective is expressed in all discussions and decisions, which may impact, on the student body.
- Encourage students to become involved in School Council activities.
- Communicate information back to other Student Council members at the school.

ARTICLE IX. Establishment of Committees:

The School Council in collaboration with the Principal may establish standing or ad-hoc committees as needed. Standing committees are established to address continuing matters and such as faith, curriculum and parent engagement. Ad-hoc (special) committees are established to address specific issues, concerns or requests that have distinct time frames, such as reviewing and updating School Council by-laws.

Committee Membership

- Shall be on a volunteer basis.
- Shall contain at least 1 member of Council.
- May include members who are not on Council (parent volunteers, students)

Committee Member Duties

- Appoint a Committee Chair.
- Invite interested community stakeholders where practical and applicable.
- Provide a Committee status report at all School Council meetings, and, as necessary submit recorded minutes to the School Council.

ARTICLE X. Conflict of Interest:

A conflict of interest is defined as any situation in which a discussion or decision of the School Council will provide a benefit (personal, political, financial) to a member of School Council or a Committee member.

Prior to discussion of a topic that may involve a conflict of interest, the School Council or committee member shall declare such conflict. Furthermore, the member shall not participate in any discussion or debate, nor will the member be permitted to vote.

ARTICLE XI. Council Procedures:

At the first School Council meeting of the year, the Council shall:

- Elect either one Chair or two Co-Chairs.
- Elect a parent representative(s) as Secretary to the Council.
- Communicate the dates for future meetings of which there must be a minimum of four (4).

The schedule will be published to the school community. Meeting agendas will be posted on the school website, and all School Council meetings shall be open to all members of the school community. The School Council will not meet 'in camera' since there is nothing in its mandate which would require this procedure. A copy of approved minutes from each meeting will also be posted on the school website.

It is recommended that meetings be no longer than 90 minutes in length. Resolved issues from previous meetings and/or school years will not be revisited without prior consultation with the Chair(s) and school administration. Members of the school community may make a presentation to the Council, not to exceed five minutes, upon giving ten days' notice to the Chair.

A quorum for a School Council shall require a minimum of five (5) parent representatives present, as well as attendance of the Principal or Vice-Principal. A meeting of the School Council cannot be deemed "official" without the attendance of the Principal or Vice-Principal.

The School Council will reach decisions using a consensus-based approach. If consensus cannot be reached a vote will be held requiring two-thirds majority to pass.

ARTICLE XII. Conflict Resolution:

In the event that consensus cannot be reached during a meeting of School Council, the Chair or Co-Chairs shall establish a procedure that permits each School Council member to address the School Council on the matter in dispute. At the conclusion of the statements, the Chair or Co-Chairs shall call for a vote on the matter in dispute. Any dispute between members of the School Council, which cannot be resolved by the parties involved, along with the school administration, shall be referred to the Superintendent of Schools for review. Issues related to items beyond the scope of the Council (i.e. Freedom of Information, board employee actions) shall be referred to the appropriate governing body.

Removal from Council

The Chair or Co-Chairs have the right to limit discussion on any particular topic.

The Chair or Co-Chairs will ask the presenter to bring to conclusion his or her presentation within one (1) minute of the allotted time. This will be made clear in advance of all presenters.

If the presenter continues, the Chair shall request that the presenter immediately stop. If the presenter continues, the Chair or Co-Chairs shall call an immediate recess of the Council members for 10 minutes and request an immediate sidebar with the presenter, the Principal and Chair in private. The Chair or Co-Chairs will offer the following options to the presenter:

1. Resume the meeting with the presenter in attendance, who agrees to refrain from discussing the conflict.
2. Resume the meeting and ask the presenter to depart the premises.

When the meeting continues, if the presenter's behavior is inappropriate, the Principal shall intercede and request that the presenter voluntarily leave the premises.

Should the above occur, the presenter shall not attend future meetings of the School Council until a meeting is held with the School Superintendent (or designate).

When the resolution process has been executed, and behavior continues to be in conflict with the governing values, and the Code of Ethics of the School Council, the Chair or Co-Chairs and Principal may present to the School Council a resolution to remove the member(s).

ARTICLE XIII. Finance:

All funds raised by the School Council are deposited in the schools "School Generated Funds" account.

Funds are allocated by the School Council for specific initiatives, in consultation with the Principal, each year.

The Council will collaborate with the Principal on the form and conduct of the major fundraising activities for the school year and on any additional revenue required through fundraising.

All financial matters shall be administered in accordance with the School Generated Funds Guidelines by the HCDSB.

ARTICLE XIV. Amendments:

The School Council by-laws will be reviewed annually and revised when changes are necessary. The by-laws may be amended by a quorum vote.

ARTICLE XV. Version Control:

Version	Date	Name	Comments
1.1	2012	C. Hryhorsky	Used By-Laws for Catholic School Council Operation in the Halton Catholic District School Board's Operations Manual, "School Councils: Strengthening Our Partnerships", based upon The Ministry of Education's Policy 612/00 and the accompanying document, "School Councils: A Guide for Members" (2001), as well as H.C.D.S.B. School Board Policy No. 1-23 to develop original constitution of St. Mary school.
1.2	May 2019	K. Dobbie A.M. Toltl L. Dolland (Council Secretary) J. Peer (Focus on Faith chair) P. Doyle (School Environment Chair) Andres Masmela (Curriculum Chair) D. Bergeron (Member at large)	Updated St. Mary by-laws using the original constitution and references to the St. Gregory by-laws as templates.

PLEDGE

I, _____ of _____

Catholic School Council, do pledge to respect, promote and uphold the teachers and values of the Catholic Faith and the Halton Catholic District School Board's Mission Statement and Governing Values.

Pledged before the _____ Catholic School Council
on this _____ Day of _____, 20 ____.

Signed: _____

Witness (Principal or Chair): _____

Name (please print): _____

Phone/Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

DECLARATION

I, _____ do declare that:

I am not disqualified under the Halton Catholic District School Board Policy from being a member of _____ Catholic School Council.

I will truly, faithfully, impartially, and to the best of my ability, execute the office of _____ on the _____, Catholic School Council.

I have not received, nor will I receive, any payment or reward or promise thereof for the exercise of any partiality or other undue execution of this position.

Declaration before the _____ Catholic School Council on this _____ day of _____ 20 _____.

Signed: _____

Witness (Principal or Chair) _____

Liturgy of Commissioning

Leader:

Each of you has been called to be a Catholic Leader in the Halton Catholic District School Board. You are asked to share in the lives of the students and staff and one another, in many different ways. As you live your journey of life in this ministry, may you use your gifts to build up the kingdom of God. May the witness of your lives lead others to share fully in the life of God.

An Antiphonal Blessing

Left: May the spirit of God which has been given to us, strengthen us, as we are sent to bring the good news to the afflicted, to soothe the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and the ear of God's favour.

Right: May we come to our God and each other as living stones. May we let ourselves be like corner-stones in building the spiritual temple of God.

Left: May we continue to search for wisdom so as to gain understanding and peace of mind. May the gifts of wisdom draw us ever closer to God.

Right: May we live for you alone, O God. May you heal us, turn anger into peace, and allow us to sing your praise our whole life long.

Left: May the God whose light shines in our hearts bring us to the knowledge of God's glory shining in the face of Christ...Touched by God's glory, may we with all peoples, offer prayers of thanksgiving to the glory of God.

Right: May we share our five loaves and two fish with all people. May we offer ourselves as fresh bread.

Left: May we be salt and light, so that seeing our good works, all may give praise to our loving God.

Commissioning

Leader: Let us come to the light of Christ and light our candle, praying that Christ will strengthen and sustain us, and that his light will shine through us.

(Each person comes forward. The first candle is lit from the Prayer Table candle. The person with the first candle lights the candle of the next person, saying the following blessing. The lighting continues in the same manner from person to person.)

Blessing

**May you be the light of the world
So that seeing your good works
All may give praise to our loving God.**

Closing Prayer and Blessing of the Assembly

Leader: God has called us out of darkness, into his own wonderful light. May you experience the kindness and blessings of God and may you be gifted with unwavering faith, constant hope, and love that endures to the end.

All: Amen.

Leader: Because you are followers of Christ, the light of the world, may God make you a light to all your sisters and brothers in the school community in which you are called to minister.

All: Amen.

Leader: May God bless your days and work in peace, hear your every prayer, and lead you to everlasting life and joy.

All: Amen.

Leader: May Almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.