



## BY-LAWS

St. Nicholas Catholic School Council  
2020/2021

### MISSION STATEMENT OF THE HALTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

*"The Halton Catholic District School Board, in partnership with home and church, is dedicated to providing excellence in education by developing Faith-centered individuals able to contribute to society."*

### GOVERNING VALUES

We know that:

- our school community exists to foster and exemplify Catholic values;
- the education of our students is a necessary investment in society;
- education is a lifelong process that fosters the worth of the individual;
- education is a process involving a partnership of students, home, school, Church and community;
- the education of everyone toward their fullest potential creates a better future;
- an effective learning environment fosters in each student a sense of unique value, self-esteem and importance to society;
- dedicated teachers and staff ensure a positive and caring learning environment enabling students to reach their full potential;
- the ability to understand, manage and direct change is essential to success;
- we are accountable to the community for the effective management of our resources.

### ST. NICHOLAS CATHOLIC SCHOOL'S MISSION

*BUILDING RESILIENCE, COMPASSION, STEWARDSHIP AND CHARACTER THROUGH CHRIST'S LOVE IN ACTION*

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## 1. Name of Organization

The organization for which these bylaws have been developed will be known as the *St. Nicholas Catholic School Council*. Within these bylaws the terms *School Council* and *Council* will be used to represent this name. This organization falls under the jurisdiction of the Halton Catholic District School Board. Within these bylaws the term HCDSB will be used to represent this body.

## 2. Code of Ethics

Members of the School Council shall act in a manner that adheres to the code of ethics as outlined by the school bylaws.

Council members shall:

- Be guided by the mission statements of our school board, the school and yearly goals set by Council members
- Endeavor to be familiar with school policies and operating policies and act in accordance with them
- Practice the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, integrity and truth
- Recognize and respect the integrity of each member of the school community
- Encourage a positive atmosphere where individual contributions are encouraged and valued
- Apply democratic principles
- Consider the best interest of all students
- Respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operations of the School Council
- Not disclose confidential information
- Limit discussions at school meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole
- Use the appropriate communication 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
- Accept no payment for School Council activities, except as permitted by Regulation 612/00 and Board Policy

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.

### **3. Purpose and Objectives**

The School Council in conjunction with the school principal and, where appropriate, the HCDSB, will promote the best interest of the school community in curriculum development and care of physical assets. The objectives of the Council will be to link home, school, the church and community by establishing and maintaining good communication and participation in education among school, parents, the church and community.

This will be achieved in the following ways:

- The School Council will act in conjunction with the Principal or Designate and the HCDSB
- Provide opportunities for meaningful parental involvement in the education of their children
- Develop annual goals for the school and evaluate its success in achieving these goals
- 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 Council to develop skills as Council Members
- Support activities that encourage input into educational matters and enhance lines of communication between home, school, church and community
- Consult and 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 interest of Catholic education

### **4. Membership and Qualifications**

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

The Catholic School Council, while designed to support school activities, views its primary role as an involved participant in giving advice around decisions that set direction for the school and board.

Composition of the Catholic School Council at St. Nicholas under the jurisdiction of the HCDSB shall be based on Regulation 612/00, Section 3(1)-(7); comprised of Principal, Vice Principal, 1 Teaching Representative, 1 Non-Teaching Representative, 2 appointed members (Parish Representative and Community Representative) and 8 elected members.

#### **4a. Membership**

The Council shall be comprised of members only as follows:

- Parents of students enrolled in the school
- A community representative
- A parish representative
- School principal or Designate
- A teaching staff member
- A non-teaching staff member
- Student representative (where a student Council exists and/or the Student Council has appointed a pupil to membership of the School Council)
- Notwithstanding the above, in addition to the membership requirement of Regulation 612, the Catholic School Council at St. Nicholas may make provision for the election of up to two non-Catholic parents/guardians of Catholic children attending St. Nicholas Catholic School
- The Council shall endeavor to have its membership representative of its school community

## 4.b Membership Selection

Membership on the Council as indicated above shall be determined in the following manner:

- Parents shall be elected at large by the parents of students enrolled in the school and shall form the majority on Council
- The parents of students enrolled in the school may elect up to two non-Catholic representative(s) at large
- The Chair of the Council shall be a Catholic member who is also an elected parent representative and shall be elected by the elected Council
- The community representative shall be appointed by the Council upon going through a selection process, as determined by the Council
- The parish representative is recommended by the Parish Priest and ratified by the Council
- The school principal by virtue of his/her position shall be a non-voting member of the Council
- The teachers from amongst themselves shall elect the teacher representative
- The non-teaching staff members from amongst themselves shall elect the non-teaching representative
- The principal may appoint a student representative after consultation with other members of the School Council

## 5. Election Procedures

### 5.a Nominating Committee

A Nominating Committee will supervise elections. The Nominating Committee will include the Principal or Designate and parent volunteers (not nominated or related to a nominee). The Principal shall deal with all correspondence and issues related to the elections.

### 5.b Call for Nominations

The principal, through news publications and an evening session (if deemed necessary), will inform the school community of Council elections.

- Positions open for election
- Eligibility
- Roles and responsibilities
- Term of office
- Nominating procedures
- Election procedures

### 5.c Election

Elections will be held once a year for positions on Council.

- Elections shall be held in the first thirty days of each school year
- An announcement of the Election Day will occur at least 14 days prior to the election
- No individual campaign literature may be distributed or posted on the school site. Exception: "Response to Pre-Election Questionnaire" may be posted on the School Council bulletin board
- 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 vote
- Candidates will be listed in alphabetical order on the ballot

- Voting – Ballots will be numbered and distributed 1 per family – all ballots must be returned to the school by the noted date – no more than 8 names can be checked and balloted must be signed by a parent
- A plurality vote shall determine the winners
- If there is a tie for the final position, the winner shall be determined by lot
- Nominations will be accepted up until 7 days prior to the election
- Election of Council Members shall be limited to 2 non-Catholic members (as per the guidelines of the Halton Catholic District School Board).

## **6. Officers and Duties**

### **6.a Council Members – General Duties**

The members of the Catholic School Council as St. Nicholas 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.
- Act as a link between the School Council and the community.
- 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, ten days prior to the meeting.
- Submit, as chair of a committee, reports to the Council.

### **6.b Chair (or Co-Chairs)**

The Chair will be used to represent the position of Chair (or Co-Chairs). The Chair of the Council shall:

- Call School Council meetings.
- Prepare the agenda for School Council meetings, and ensure distribution one week prior to Council meeting.
- Chair School Council meetings.
- Ensure that the minutes of School Council meetings are recorded and maintained.
- Participate in information training programs.
- Communicate with the school principal prior to the distribution of the agenda.
- Ensure that there is regular communication with the school community.
- Consult with senior board staff and trustees, as required.
- Ensure goals, by-laws and procedures are reviewed on an annual basis.
- Promote the participation of all Council members.
- Attend Council of Chairs Meetings.
- Ensure adequate representation on each committee.
- Be the spokesperson for the Council
- Appoint temporary or standing committees as needed, and serve as an ex-officio officer of all committees
- Monitor the implementation of Council decisions

## 6.c The Principal

The Principal of St. Nicholas 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, as required.
- 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 the election with the support of the Nominating Committee, Principal and Vice Principal will do the counting of election ballots.
- Have the election results posted on the Council section of the school website and email families of St. Nicholas, following the election.

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.

## 6.d The Community Representative

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.
- Build lines of cooperation to enhance student learning.
- Utilize community partnerships to assist Council and committees in the achievement of their goals.

## 6.e The Parish Representative

The Parish Representative shall:

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

## 6.f The Teacher Representative

The Teacher Representative shall:

- Serve as a member of the School Council.
- Support the actions and decisions of the School Council.
- Ensure a teacher voice is expressed in all decisions, which affect teaching and learning.
- Promote a collaborative, collegial model of decision making at the school and for the School Council.

- Encourage parents and community to become involved in school activities.
- Communicate information back to all teachers at the school.

### **6.g The Non-teaching Representative**

The Non-teaching Representative shall:

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

### **6.h The Student Representative – If needed..**

The Student Representative shall:

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

## **7. Terms of Office**

The terms of office shall be determined as follows:

- All elected positions shall hold office for a period of one year.
- The term of office for School Council runs from the first meeting after the elections until the first meeting after the elections of the following year.
- Elected and appointed representatives may seek additional terms of office.
- There will be no honorarium paid to members of the Council.

## **8. Vacancies**

- When a vacancy occurs among the parent representatives, the Council shall notify the school community of the position and request volunteers. A Committee shall be formed whose purpose is to review applicants for the position and provide a recommendation to Council.
- When a vacancy occurs among the constituent representatives, the Council shall notify the constituent body and request it select a replacement representative (e.g., teacher, non-teacher, parish representative, Student Council).
- A replacement Council Member shall serve only for the balance of the term of the Council Member he/she is replacing.

In the event that an elected or appointed posting cannot be filled, then such position shall remain vacant until such time as it can be filled.



## 9. Meeting Guidelines

### 9.a Meeting Expectations

- There shall be a minimum of four meetings per school year; the first meeting to be held within the first 35 days of the school year, following the election of Council member.
- Each meeting will begin with a prayer.
- The first meeting following the election will begin with a Prayer Service for the new St. Nicholas Catholic School Council. It will include the Commissioning Ceremony and Prayer of Commitment. This service will be followed by the election of the Chair.
- An annual schedule of the regular meetings shall be published on our school website/calendar.
- All Council meetings shall be opened to members of the school community. The Council will not meet 'in camera' since there is nothing in its mandate which would require this procedure.
- 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. The Council has the right to limit the number of presentations of any meeting.
- At the Council's discretion, members of the school community may be allowed to provide input and or engage in debate on the matters before the Council during the meeting. They are not to take part in the voting/consensus process.
- The Council must reach consensus on motions or make decisions by majority vote.
- A Council quorum shall be fifty percent plus one of the members of which elected parents are in the majority.
- A meeting of the Council cannot be deemed "official" without the attendance of the Principal' delegate.
- If a person misses three consecutive meetings without a reasonable just cause, that position will be deemed vacant.
- The Chair shall attend three Council of Chairs meetings, as convened by the School Board.
- All attendees at meetings shall act in a manner that supports the governing values of the Council, and is respectful of all other attendees.

### 9.b Voting

The results of all votes (unless otherwise prescribed) shall be based on a simple majority of those present. Voting can only occur at a meeting in which a quorum is present. The Chair shall determine the method in which the votes shall be cast. Any member of Council has the right to request that a vote (due to the nature of the issue) be implemented through secret ballot.

## 10. Establishment of Committees

Council may establish standing or ad hoc committees. Standing committees are for normal or continuing matters/priorities of importance. Ad hoc (special) committees are for specific issues, concerns or requests that have distinct time frames. The creation of a new committee shall be done at the discretion of the Principal.

## **10.a Committee Membership**

Committee membership:

- Shall be on a volunteer basis.
- Shall contain at least 1 member of Council.
- May include persons who are not on Council.
- All committees will appoint a chair.

## **10.b Committees Duties**

All committees shall:

- Appoint a chair.
- Invite interested community stakeholders where practical and applicable.
- Provide an oral committee status report to all Council meetings (standing agenda item), and as necessary submit recorded minutes to the School Council.

## **10.c Standing Committees**

The following committees shall be considered standing:

- Catholicity
- Curriculum
- Home School Communication
- Community Building

## **11. Record Keeping**

Minutes shall be kept at all Council meetings. Council minutes shall be completed and submitted to the Chair within 14 days of the meeting date. All documents, of School Council shall be maintained in the School Office. All Council documents are to be made available to members of the school community. The minutes of the previous Council meeting are to be reviewed and accepted as information at the next Council meeting. Minutes are not intended to record “word for word” but rather reflect the general discussion.

## **12. Finances**

Financial accounting of all Council activities shall be maintained by the HCDSB, in accordance with their procedures. Council and all committees shall follow established HCDSB guidelines in regards to the collection of revenues and payment of expenses. The Principal shall present a financial statement of Council funds at least once per term using a Board approved software application.

## **13. Remuneration**

No Council shall receive remuneration for serving as a member or officer of a Council. Members and officers of Council shall be reimbursed for expenses they incur as members or officers of Council, as per HCDSB policy.

## **14. Conflict Resolution – see attached addendum for process**

### **14.a Conflict Resolution**

Conflict that evolves from actions and activities that relate to matters and discussion, which are under the mandate of the Council, shall be mediated through the prescribed conflict resolution process. Any dispute between members of the School Council, including parent members, staff members and the Principal, which cannot be resolved by the parties, shall be referred to the appropriate Superintendent of Schools for review and direction.

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.

### **14.b Removal from Council**

The Chair will have the right to limit discussion on any particular topic.

The Chair will ask the speaker/presenter(s) 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 speaker/presenter (s) continues, the Chair shall request the speaker/presenter(s) to immediately stop and stand down.

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If the speaker/presenter(s) continues, the Chair shall call an immediate recess of the Council members for ten (10) minutes and request an immediate sidebar with the speaker/presenter(s), the Principal and Chair in private. The Chair will offer the following two (2) options to the speaker/presenter(s):

1. Resume the meeting and stand down.
2. Resume the meeting and ask the speaker/presenter(s) to depart the premises.

When the meeting continues, if the speaker/presenter(s) behaviour is not appropriate the Principal shall intercede and request the speaker/presenter(s) to voluntarily leave the premises.

Should the above occur, the speaker/presenter(s) shall not gain access to 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 Council, the Chair and principal may present to Council a resolution to remove the member(s).

## **15. Fund Raising**

Council may engage in fund raising, under the following circumstances:

- Conducted in accordance with HCDSB policies.
- Funds are for a purpose approved by HCDSB, or authorized by HCDSB policies.
- Funds raised by Council are used in accordance with HCDSB policies.

## 16. Consultation

The School Council shall consult with parents of pupils enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the Council.

## 17. Annual Report

School Council shall prepare and submit a written request to the principal and the HCDSB. This report will include information on Council activities and fund raising activities. The principal shall, on behalf of the School Council, give a copy of the report to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the copy is given, is enrolled in the school. This may be accomplished by giving a copy to every parent's child for delivery, and by posting the report on the School Council section of the St. Nicholas school website.

## 18. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is considered any situation in which a decision of Council will provide a benefit (personal, political, financial) to a member of Council or a Council committee.

Prior to discussion on a topic that may involve a conflict of interest, the Council or committee member shall declare such conflict, and abstain from discussion, consensus and or voting.

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These by-laws have been prepared for the Catholic School Council at St. Nicholas Catholic School.

Thursday, October 1, 2020-21

Date

**SIGNED BY:**

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Chair

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Co-Chair

Mr. Cacciola  
Principal