

**St. Charles Catholic Elementary School
School Council Bylaws
2010 - 2011**

I. Name of organization

This organization will be St. Charles School Council. (Hereafter called the “Council”.)

II. Definitions

In these bylaws:

Acclaimed	refers to candidates that have been nominated as members of the Council that do not exceed the stated number
Board	refers to the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board
Council	refers to St. Charles School Council
Executive	refers to the Chair or Co-chairs, Vice Chair (if applicable), Treasurer and Secretary of the St. Charles School Council
Parent/Guardian	refers to a parent/guardian of children that are enrolled as students at St. Charles Catholic Elementary School

III. Mandate of the Council

The purpose of the Council is to:

- support the St. Charles School Mission Statement (Appendix A);
- provide opportunities for parents/guardians to be more involved in the education of their children;
- be a positive voice for Catholic education and foster good relations among parents/guardians, staff, local community, related groups, and parish;
- respond to school and educational needs as they arise;
- work in conjunction with the Principal.

The role of the Council is that of an advisory body governed by the Education Act and the Policies and Regulations of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board.

The Council will not have any of the powers and duties reserved by law or regulation for the Board, the Principal, or Collective Agreements.

IV. Representation and Membership

Membership of the Council shall be composed of:

- parents/guardians of students enrolled at the school shall make up the majority of membership
- the school Principal (designated non-voting member appointed by the Board)
- teaching representative (elected by members of the school teaching staff)

- non-teaching representative (elected by members of the school non-teaching staff)
- parish representative (pastor, his designate, or parishioner)
- community representative (member of the local business community)

Membership on the Council is voluntary and without remuneration.

Each member, excluding the Principal who is a non-voting member, is entitled to one (1) vote during Council meetings.

The maximum number of members on the Council shall not exceed 18. Should the number of interested parties exceed 18, then a secret ballot election will be required to determine membership.

V. Election Process

i. Council Membership

An election of parent/guardian members shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the Chair/Co-Chairs of the Council after consulting with the Principal of the school.

Elections are organized by the retiring Council and supported by the school Principal.

The Principal shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent/guardian members, on behalf of the Council, give written notice of the date, time, and location of the election to every parent/guardian of a student who is enrolled in the school.

Self nomination forms will be sent home to parents/guardians by the principal with the first newsletter of the school year, and are available on the school's website. A set date for return of nomination forms will be clearly stated on the forms and reiterated in the school newsletter and website.

Should there be a need for a secret ballot election eligible nominees may be asked to provide the school with a written introduction of themselves and indicating why they would like to serve on the Council. These information sheets will be posted in the school foyer prior to and during the election. The secret ballots will be counted by the Principal or designate. Results will be communicated to the school community via written notice and/or school website. Results will also be clearly posted in the school foyer.

The community representative will be offered a one year term, and shall be appointed at the first meeting of the new Council.

ii. Executive Membership

The Council shall have a Chair (or Co-chairs), who is a parent member of the Council and elected, by the Council. Prior to the election for this position it must be mutually agreed upon by all Council members as to whether there will be a Chair and Vice Chair or Co-chairs. The Chair or Co-chairs shall be Separate School supporters as defined by the Education Act.

An employee of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board cannot serve as Chair or Co-chair of the Council.

VI. Term of Office

The term of office for an elected or appointed Council member shall be one year. Any member of the Council can be re-elected or re-appointed in any future elections. The teaching and non-teaching representative will be elected or appointed for a one year term.

An executive position on the Council (Chair or Co-chairs, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary) can only be held for a one year term. Any executive member of the Council can be re-elected or re-appointed in any future elections.

VII. Vacancies in Membership

i. Council Members

A vacancy in membership on the Council occurs when a member:

- no longer has a child enrolled in the school;
- moves from the school area;
- is no longer employed at the school (teaching/non-teaching representative);
- has violated the Code of Ethics; or
- has submitted a Letter of Resignation to the Chair/Co-chairs
- where there exists just cause or a Council member has been absent from two consecutive meetings without notifying the Chair or Co-chairs and the Council is satisfied that such absence was without adequate reason, the Council will notify the said Council member in writing.

A vacancy in the membership of the Council does not prevent the Council from fulfilling its mandate and shall be filled by an election process.

ii. Executive Members

A vacancy in an Executive position will be filled by an election process.

Vacancies in the position of the Chair will be automatically replaced by the Vice-Chair. If the Council agrees to Co-chairs, vacancies in this position will be filled by an election or appointment by the Council.

Vacancies in the positions of Treasurer and Secretary will be filled by an election or appointment by the Council if the Council determines that there is insufficient time left in the school year to warrant an election or appointment, the Council may leave the position vacant.

Teaching and Non-Teaching representatives will be replaced by their own staff members.

VIII. Council Meetings

St. Charles School Council will meet a minimum of four (4) meetings per year which shall be accessible and open to the public.

The first meeting to be held within the first thirty-five (35) days of the new school year after elections at which time dates, times and locations of all meetings will be established. The school community will be notified of these meetings by the Principal in writing through the school newsletter and website as well as being posted at the school in a location that is accessible to the parents/guardians of the students enrolled at the school.

Meetings will only take place when a majority of the Council members are present and that a majority of the members present are parent members.

All Council members shall regularly attend all scheduled meetings unless absence is due to mitigating circumstances and shall notify the Chair/Co-chairs of their absence. Failure to do so may result in members being removed from the Council.

Dates, times and locations of all meetings will be established at the first meeting of the new Council and will be communicated to the school community by the school Principal through the school newsletter, website and posting at the front entry to the school including any changed or cancelled meetings within a timely manner.

Special requests to address the Council must be given, in writing, to the Chair or Co-chairs, at least fourteen (14) days before the scheduled Council meeting.

Sub-committee meetings may be held as required, without public notice of a time/date.

IX. Council Decision Making Process

Any matter raised at a meeting of the Council should be dealt with by achieving a consensus of the Council members.

Should a consensus not be reached, the issue shall be deferred to a later meeting. If a consensus can still not be reached at the later meeting, the issue will go to a formal vote.

When a formal vote is required, each member will have one vote. Absentee ballots and/or proxies will not be permitted; a simple majority rules.

A simple majority, 50+1%, of the Council membership shall constitute a Quorum. The following members must be present to constitute a Quorum:

- a presiding officer (Principal, Chair/Co-chair, Vice Chair (if applicable))
- at least two (2) parent members
- at least one (1) teaching or non-teaching representative
- at least one (1) member to act as Secretary.

X. Roles and Responsibilities of the Council

i All Members of the Council will:

- be a positive voice for Catholic education and foster good relations among parents/guardians, staff, local community, related groups, and parish and promote at all times the best interest of the Catholic school community;
- promote values of the Catholic faith;
- abstain from all situations where conflict of interest might occur;
- maintain a school wide perspective on issues;
- represent the interest of all the members of her/his constituent group.
- participate in all regular Council meetings;
- elect an Executive, at the first meeting of the school year following elections, that will consist of the Chair, Vice Chair or Co-chairs, Treasurer and Secretary;
- inform the Chair/Co-chairs of her/his absence;
- encourage the participation and involvement of all members of the school community;
- be entitled to one (1) vote during Council meetings or committee meetings, excluding the Principal who is a designated non-voting member;
- not be disruptive during meetings. A Council member who is consistently disruptive during meetings shall be required to attend a special meeting with the Chair/Co-chairs (see “Conflict Resolution” in Appendix B);
- establish within its advisory role, annual goals and priorities that meet the needs of the school community and evaluate the progress of these goals annually;
- abide by established rules respecting participation in Council proceedings in cases of “Conflict of Interest” (see Appendix B);
- abide by established “Conflict Resolution” process for internal Council disputes in accordance with any applicable policies established by the Board (see Appendix B);
- hold periodic open forum discussions and/or written surveys with the parents/guardians of the school to ensure that their issues are being addressed;
- prepare and/or review operational By-laws in accordance with Board policies and procedures;
- participate in information and training sessions to enable members of the Council to develop effective and collaborative leadership skills;
- if necessary, establish committees to make recommendations to the Council, such committees to include at least one (1) parent member of the Council and to be governed by the Council by-laws;
- keep minutes and records of all meetings (both Council and Committee meetings) and financial transactions for a minimum of four (4) years, and make these available at the school for examination, without charge, by any person;

- upon request, Council will attempt to have meeting minutes translated to accommodate our unique school community;
- Executive to submit on an annual basis, a written report on its activities, including fundraising, to the Principal and to the Board;
- not be incorporated.

XI. Executive Membership of the Council

The Council's Executive will be made up of the Chair, Vice-Chair or Co-chairs, Treasurer and Secretary.

i. The Chair (or Co-chairs) will:

- preside at all meetings and provide Catholic leadership to the Council;
- send out request for agenda items to Council members two (2) weeks prior to meeting with Principal;
- prepare a written agenda in co-operation with the Principal and distributes it to all Council members;
- ensure minutes of all meetings and all financial transactions are reviewed, approved and maintained;
- create an email address available to parents/guardians for them to be able to communicate directly with the Council. This email address will be posted on the school website and through the school newsletter;
- serve as spokesperson for the Council;
- monitor the implementation of the Council's decisions;
- express consensus as reached by the Council and when appropriate, conduct a vote to determine the final decision of the Council;
- ensure that an annual report on Council activities, including fundraising is submitted to the Principal and the Board.

ii. The Vice Chair (if the Council has a Chair only) will:

- assist the Chair, as needed, and exercise all functions of the Chair in the absence of the Chair;
- maintain and/or uphold the responsibilities of the Treasurer and Secretary if they are unable to their duties. Should the Council choose to elect Co-chairs then these duties will be divided among the Co-chairs;
- perform the duties of the Treasurer and Secretary until their roles are defined and an individual has been elected for the position. Should the Council choose to elect Co-chairs then these duties will be divided among the Co-chairs.

iii. The Secretary will:

- be responsible for taking minutes at all Council meetings;
- provide within two weeks prior to the next Council meeting, an electronic copy of the previous meetings UNAPPROVED minutes for Council members review;
- maintain a MINUTES BINDER of all APPROVED School Council meeting minutes that is readily accessible, upon their request, to the parents/guardians of the School community;

- provide copies of all APPROVED minutes to the School Trustee;
- provide an electronic copy of APPROVED minutes to the school secretary to be posted on the school website;
- maintain a filing system of all correspondence received by the Council and issued by the Council;
- archive all pertinent correspondence at the end of the school year;
- retain APPROVED Minutes of all School Council meetings for a minimum of four (4) years.

iv. The Treasurer will:

- be the signing authority, along with the Principal, for all cheque issuance related to Council business;
- be responsible for tallying and verification of all monies to be deposited. Deposits to be made by the school secretary into the school/Council account;
- be responsible for maintaining a financial recording system approved by the Chair/Co-chairs;
- provide at all Council meetings a Treasurer's Report, as outlined by the Board, to the Council that is approved by the Council and signed off by the Principal, Chair/Co-chairs and Treasurer;
- provide to the school secretary a copy of the approved Treasurer's Report as well as all supporting banking statements as per the Board's request;
- be responsible for ensuring that there is at least two (2) people, one being a Council member, tallying funds received during all fundraising events every day the fundraising event is being run;
- maintain a filing system of all invoices and payments made throughout the school year;
- maintain a yearly financial archive of all Treasurer Reports, bank statements and all purchase and expenditure invoices and receipts for a minimum of four (4) years.

v. **The Principal shall:**

- assist the election committee in organizing the election of members to Council;
- within thirty (30) days following the election of parent members, make the names of the members of the Council known to parents/guardians of students in the school and upon request promptly provide the names to a supporter of the Board or to the parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school;
- support the Council in establishing its priorities and achieving its goals;
- provide assistance and support for council activities and recommendations;
- give written notice of the dates, times and locations of Council meetings to every parent/guardian and attend every meeting of the Council, unless unable to do so by reason of illness or other cause beyond control;
- collaborate with the Chair/Co-chairs in preparing the agenda for distribution to all Council members;
- serve as a resource on laws, regulations, policies and collective agreements to the Council in order to assist them in making recommendations;
- maintain on file a copy of the meeting minutes and all financial transactions of the Council;
- provide for the distribution to each member of the Council any materials received from the Ministry that are identified by the Ministry as being for distribution to Council members;
- post any materials distributed to members of the Council in a location that is accessible to all parents/guardians;
- consider each recommendation made by the Council and advise the Council of the action taken in response to the recommendation;
- make available the Council's Annual Report to every parent/guardian of a pupil who is enrolled in the school;
- solicit the views of the Council with respect to, but not limited to the following:
 - the establishment or amendment of the school policies and guidelines and the development of implementation plans that relate to student achievements or to the accountability of the education system to parents/guardians including a local code of conduct established under the Education Act governing the behavior of all persons in the school and school policies or guidelines related to the appropriate dress for students;
 - school action plans for improvement, based on the Education Quality and Accountability Office's reports on the results of tests of students, and the communication of those plans to the public.

vi. **The Teaching and Non-Teaching Representatives shall:**

- contribute to the discussions of the Council;
- solicit views from their staff groups to share with the Council;
- communicate information back to the teaching/non-teaching staff from the Council;
- have the option to participate on any sub-committees established by the Council.

vii. **The Pastor or Parish Representative shall:**

- as a member of the community, act as a liaison with the parish in the region served by the school;
- be appointed by the Council;
- encourage and promote programs, events and gatherings that support the Catholicity of the school environment and the enrichment of the student's Catholic education.

viii. The Community Representative shall:

- contribute to the discussions of the Council;
- represent the community's perspective;
- have the option to participate on any sub-committees established by the Council;
- help build partnerships and links between the school and the community.

XII. Fundraising Events

Fundraising sub-committees will have a Chair that will report back to the Council as a whole. See outline for Sub-Committees below.

XIII. Council Operating Funds

The Council shall maintain a minimum budget of \$1,500.00 to compensate for approved expenses that may be incurred from time to time. All cheque signing requires two signatures, the Principal and the Treasurer.

XIV. Sub-Committees

Any sub-committee's established by the Council will include at least one (1) parent member of the Council who will act as the Chair of the sub-committee and may include parents/guardians and representatives of the business community.

The Chair of the sub-committee will provide, at each Council meeting, a report on all activities conducted by the Sub-Committee until the Sub-Committee's demise.

XV. Grade 8 and Senior Kindergarten Graduation Monetary Donation

The Council will provide a monetary donation to the Grade 8 Graduation to a maximum amount of \$1,500.00. The Council will provide a monetary donation to the Senior Kindergarten Graduation to a maximum of \$100.00. Any monetary donations made by the Council will be acknowledged at these events.

XVI. Classroom Monetary Donation

The Council agrees to provide a \$100 monetary donation to all classrooms. The Council will transfer, at the beginning of each school year to the school account, a maximum of \$1,200.00. Teachers must provide to the Council receipts of their purchases for record purposes. Any monies not used by the Teachers from these funds will be returned to the Councils account by the end of the school year.

XVII. Modification/Amendment of Bylaws

A notification to modify/amend the Council Bylaws must be submitted, in writing, to the Council Chair/Co-chairs two (2) weeks prior to the next Council meeting at which time it will be discussed and voted on.

XVIII. Book Dedications

When Council is made aware that an individual in the school community has retired or is deceased, Council will purchase a new book for the school library, in consultation with the school Librarian, and dedication to that individual.

APPENDIX A

ST. CHARLES SCHOOL OUR MISSION

We the community of St. Charles School, students and parents, staff and parish are joined together on a journey of faith rooted in tradition and in the love of Jesus.

We are committed to the development of academic excellence in a safe, caring, Christian environment where all members of our school community are accepted, understood, and valued for who they are as individuals.

It is our mission to develop the whole person spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and physically – to foster a sense of self worth and love of learning. This will empower all of us to face the challenges of the future and make our world a better place.

APPENDIX B

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of interest relates to a direct financial benefit to the elected Council member, either personally or through the Council member's family.

A Council member must declare a conflict of interest situation to the Chair/Co-chairs as soon as possible.

Once a conflict of interest has been declared by the Council member, the member must remove themselves from the discussion immediately and shall not be able to vote on any issues.

The Chair/Co-chairs of the Council must ensure that the declared conflict of interest is recorded in the minutes.

Failure to advise the Council of the conflict of interest situation may result in the Council member jeopardizing their ability to carry out her/his duties and responsibilities on the Council.

A Council member must not use information obtained as a result of her/his election for personal benefit.

A Council member must not accept any gifts or promise of reward where it is clear that such gift or promise of reward is made solely because she/he is a member of the Council.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Council members are elected to serve the school community and will demonstrate respect for their colleagues on the Council at all times.

From time to time situations may arise where Council members may find they are unable to come to an agreement on matters under their consideration.

A conflict resolution process must take place when a situation occurs among the Council that appears to be at an impasse or insolvable. Each situation will be dealt with in strict confidence.

The following represents a process for conflict resolutions:

1. The Chair/Co-chairs of the Council will ask for order from Council members.
2. If efforts to restore order fail, the Chair/Co-chairs may ask the involved Council member(s) to leave the meeting, citing the reasons for this request.
3. The incident will be recorded by the Secretary and submitted to the Principal.
4. When the Chair/Co-chairs requests the removal of a member(s) from a meeting, the Chair/Co-chairs shall request that the disputing member(s) participate in a special meeting which will include the Principal. The purpose of this meeting is to have the member(s) arrive at an acceptable solution to the dispute.

5. The Chair/Co-chairs has to right to request an independent third party assist in achieving a resolution to the dispute. The independent third party representative may be a school Board member or a mutual agreed upon individual by the parties involved.
6. All resolutions reached at the special meeting to resolve the conflict will be recorded by the Chair/Co-chairs, signed and respected in full by all parties.