



CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION
Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn

Constitution

for

Merici College

School Board

August 2010

TERMS OF THE CONSTITUTION

1.0 Name

- 1.1 The official name of this Board is the Merici College School Board.¹

2.0 Definitions

The following definitions will apply in this Constitution.

"Archbishop"	The Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn.
"Board"	The Parish Primary, Central, Secondary School Board created by this Constitution.
"CEC"	The Catholic Education Commission of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.
"CEO"	The Catholic Education Office of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.
"Church"	The Catholic Church.
"P & F"	The Parents and Friends Association.
"Parent"	The parent or guardian of a student enrolled at the Diocesan school.
"Parish"	The Parish of Our Lady Mercy Parish.
"Parish Priest"	The Parish Priest Our Lady Mercy Parish.
"Principal"	The Principal of Merici College.
"School"	Merici College
"School Community"	The community of Parish Priest or Priest Chaplain, parents, Principal, staff and students of the school and other persons interested in or sharing responsibility for the well-being of the school.
"Standing Committee"	A continuing committee of the Board.

3.0 Authority

- 3.1 School Boards have been established for the service of the Church and Catholic school communities in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn.
- 3.2 This Constitution is issued by the CEC with the authority of the Archbishop.

4.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Constitution is to establish and provide regulations for the operation of the Board as specified below.

¹ Small schools may amalgamate their Board and P&F Association and this may be recorded in their name, eg. the name of the Board/P&F Association will be School Board and P&F Association.

5.0 Mission and Objects

- 5.1 The Board, in accordance with the authority entrusted to it by the Archbishop, is to assist the school fulfil its mission in accordance with the Code of Canon Law, Archdiocesan directives and guidelines and policies of the Catholic Education Commission and the Catholic Education Office.

6.0 Role

- 6.1 The Board provides the opportunity for members of the school, parish and Archdiocesan communities to support the mission of Catholic education in the school. Working with the Principal, Parish Priest or Priest Chaplain and staff, the Board members provide leadership to the wider school community.
- 6.2 The Board has a decision making role in certain policy areas and an advisory role in others. The policies of the school are always set within the wider mission of Catholic education. In the areas where it has responsibility for the development and monitoring of policy, the Board operates within the policy and procedures determined by the CEC and the CEO.
- 6.3 The Principal has responsibility for the day-to-day leadership and management of the school.

7.0 Functions

- 7.1 The Board has responsibility to take decisions in the following areas:
- Supporting the development of the Catholic identity, ethos and mission of the school.
 - Supporting pastoral care strategies in the school community.
 - Promoting the school in the local community.
 - Appointing a member to the school's enrolment committee.
 - Developing, approving and monitoring the annual budget, including school determined levies, loan commitments and the fees collection and remission policy.
 - Developing and monitoring school enterprises, eg Outside School Hours Care (OSHC), sports associations, hall hire.
 - Developing capital and maintenance programs.
 - Developing local strategic plans (finances, buildings, resources) and contributing to Archdiocesan educational strategic planning.
 - Facilitate local school community debate in response to System leadership by the CEC and the CEO in lobbying governments in school funding campaigns.
 - Approving school uniform items decided at school level.
 - Ensuring that the parish and school community receives the Annual School Board Report.
 - Consulting with the Parent Body which is a subcommittee of the Merici College Board on the expenditure of levies or funds in keeping with Archdiocesan regulations.
 - Discussing the continuing Catholic education viability of the school, as appropriate.
- 7.2 The School Board has responsibility to provide advice in areas such as:
- Curriculum offerings.
 - Educational policies for the school, eg reporting, homework.
 - Student welfare policies, eg discipline, sun safe.

- Parent support processes.
- Other matters as requested by the Parish Priest or Principal.

8.0 Membership

8.1 Secondary School Boards

The Secondary School Board shall have no more than twelve (12) members:

- The Principal is an ex officio member and its Executive Officer.
- The Priest Chaplain is an ex officio member. The Priest Chaplain may nominate an alternate to attend in his place.
- One (1) member of the School Executive appointed by the Principal.
- Up to two (2) representatives of the of the Parent Body Committee to be appointed by the Parent Body Committee. The Parent Body Committee is a sub-committee of the Board.
- Up to two (2) staff members elected by the staff.
- At least one (1) and up to three (3) parent members appointed in accordance with the Constitution.
- As many as two (2) persons appointed by the Board for expertise, eg. representative of parishes served by the school or the student body.
- A representative from the Catholic Education Office (when requested by the school community or the Director of the CEO).

8.2 The Bursar is an ex officio and may act as Secretary to the Board.

8.3 Criteria for Membership

- The Chairperson of the School Board will normally be a Catholic and a committed member of a Catholic parish.
- All Board members should have a demonstrated commitment to Catholic values and the ministry and mission of Catholic education.
- An understanding of local Church policies, particularly as determined by the Archdiocesan Synod process.
- A genuine desire to be of service to the school community.
- Having the necessary skills to contribute to the Board's work.
- The ability to work collaboratively and constructively with other members of the Board.
- Adequate time to give to Board duties.
- Willingness to act within the code of ethics for Board members.

8.5 Term of Office

- Only ex officio members may remain as members of the Board for more than six (6) consecutive years.
- A term of membership of the Board shall be for a period of two (2) years for all other Board members.
- Members of the Board may be elected for a maximum of three (3) consecutive terms but may not hold the same position of Chair, Deputy Chair, Secretary or Treasurer beyond two (2) consecutive terms.

8.6 Vacancies

Should a position of an elected member become vacant, the Board shall appoint a replacement for the unexpired term of the retired member from the same category of membership.

8.7 Removal From Office

Any elected or appointed Board member may be removed from membership by formal resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the Board at which at least three-quarters (75%) of all Board members vote in favour of the removal. Such a person shall be ineligible for reappointment to the Board until authorised by an Ordinary Resolution of the Board.

8.8 Absenteeism

Any elected or appointed member of the Board who is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings of the Board without sufficient reason will be deemed to have resigned from the Board. In such instance, the Board will notify the member of loss of membership of the Board and will arrange for a replacement from the same category of membership until the next election for Board members.

9.0 Officers

9.1 Board Members will elect a Chair, Deputy Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Regional secondary schools do not normally require a Treasurer. Ex officio members and staff representatives are not eligible for election to the Chair and Deputy Chair positions.

10.0 Meetings and Procedures

10.1 The Board will meet regularly, at least once (1) in each school term and conduct meetings in accordance with standard meeting procedures.

10.2 All meetings will begin and end with some time spent in prayer led by a member of the Board. Meetings should be limited to no more than two hours duration unless agreement is obtained from those present at the meeting. Reports should normally consist of a one-page summary.

10.3 Such ordinary meetings of the Board will be convened by giving not less than seven (7) days clear notice to each member stating the date, time and place of each meeting and any special business to be considered at that meeting.

10.4 Special meetings may be held when deemed necessary. Special meetings of the Board may be called:

- When agreed to by a quorum including ex officio members.
- When requested by an ex officio member.
- When requested by the CEC or CEO.

10.5 A simple majority of members will constitute a quorum.

10.6 No meeting of the Board may be held without a quorum.

10.7 Wherever possible all decisions must include the Principal and the Parish Priest and should be reached by consensus. Failing this, resolutions of the Board will be passed by simple majority.

- 10.8 Each member of the Board will have a deliberative and equal vote. The Chair will have a casting vote.
- 10.9 In the absence of the Chair and Deputy Chair, members will elect an Acting Chair to preside over that meeting. Elected staff member representatives are not eligible for election of an Acting Chair for a meeting.
- 10.10 The Secretary will take minutes of all Board meetings. A copy of the minutes will be maintained in the Secretary's file and passed to the next elected Secretary. A second copy will be kept by the Principal for inclusion in the school file. The CEC or CEO may request and be given a copy of the minutes of any meeting of the Board.
- 10.11 All correspondence to the Board will be tabled at meetings for perusal by all Board members. Correspondence will be effected through the Secretary of the Board.

11.0 Committees

- 11.1 The Board may appoint committees as it deems necessary and appropriate. Depending on local school circumstances, the P & F may be a Standing Committee of the Board and, as such, is not a separately constituted body. The Board, in consultation with parents, will determine the responsibilities and accountabilities of this Standing Committee.
- 11.2 Committees are appointed and dissolved at the discretion of the Board.
- 11.3 A committee is answerable to and will communicate its advice on recommendations only to the Board.
- 11.4 Membership of committees is limited to persons appointed by the Board. At least one (1) Board member will serve on each committee.
- 11.5 The Board will set terms of reference for each committee.

12.0 Appointments and Elections

- 12.1 The protocols for appointing parent members to the Board are to be determined by the Board and publicised to the school community each year.
- 12.2 A staff member who is also a parent of an enrolled student at the school is only eligible for election to the Board as an elected staff member representative because of the potential for conflict of interest between the staff member's parental role and staff member role.

13.0 Financial Management

- 13.1 The School Board operates as a not-for-profit body.
- 13.2 The Board has the responsibility for setting local school levies/charges, monitoring their collection and following up the non-payment of system tuition fees according to CEO policies.

- 13.3 The Board should have a clear policy and protocol for fee remissions in line with the Archdiocesan Synod, CEC and CEO policies. At all times confidentiality surrounding fee remissions must be maintained.
- 13.4 In the ACT the Board also monitors the collection of the Canberra Catholic Schools Building Fund (CCSBF) contributions.
- 13.5 All financial matters are to be handled in accordance with CEO policy and procedures.
- 13.6 The Board has a vital role in advising the Principal on the short and long term financial strategy of the school. The Board oversees the development of the Annual Budget in consultation with the Principal and school staff and parents. The Board approves and monitors the Annual Budget and endorses the Annual Audited Report of Income and Expenditure. The Board does not have authority to commit more than its known income. In line with Archdiocesan System policy and procedures, the Board is responsible for loans entered into by the school community using school raised funds.
- 13.7 The Board may request financial assistance from the parish but must abide by the decision of the parish, reached by the Parish Priest in consultation with the Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Committee.
- 13.8 The assets and income of the organisation shall be applied solely in furtherance of its above-mentioned mission and objects and no portion shall be distributed directly to the members of the Board except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the Board.

14.0 Amendment

- 14.1 The CEC retains the right to amend this Constitution as the need arises and after consultation with the Board.

15.0 Disputes

- 15.1 Any dispute or uncertainty concerning the meaning or intention of this Constitution will be referred to the CEC for interpretation and decision.
- 15.2 If for any reason the Board does not function effectively the assistance of the CEO should be enlisted promptly.

16.0 Dissolution of a Board-Controlled Service

- 16.1 In the event of a Board-controlled service being dissolved, the amount that remains after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall be transferred to another Board-controlled service with similar purposes which is not carried on for the profit or gain of its individual members.

17.0 Dissolution

- 17.1 The Board will be dissolved at the direction of the Archbishop at any time.
- 17.2 If the Board is dissolved by decision of the Archbishop, the assets of the Board and its committees will be disposed of in accordance with the directions of the CEC.

17.3 If the Board intends to pass a Special Resolution at a General Meeting to voluntarily dissolve the Board, this decision must be communicated to the Director of the CEO prior to the Special Resolution being put to the meeting.

Approved by

Mark B Coleridge
Archbishop of Canberra & Goulburn

on this day.....