Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College
Advisory Board

Constitution

Approved by the Interim Advisory Board
Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College
8 September 1997
BOARD CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

The Marist Brothers, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, Alice Springs and the Diocese of Darwin

At the invitation of the Bishop of Darwin, during 1995, the Marist Brothers (Southern Province) accepted responsibility in April 1996, for the administration of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, a Diocesan Primary and Secondary College in Alice Springs. The Brother Provincial thus nominates a Brother to be Principal of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College, and the Bishop, in consultation with the Director of Catholic Education, Diocese of Darwin, confirms this appointment. This arrangement will continue as long as both parties are able to honour the agreement.

Although the Brothers bring with them their own Marist character and vision for Catholic education, they are conscious of the spiritual foundations laid by the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart. Hence, they will endeavour to promote the educational values of the two religious founders, Fr Marcellin Champagnat, and Fr Jules Chevalier.

Whilst the College is administered according to the Diocesan guidelines, the Brother Principal is also equally accountable to the Brother Provincial for the proper conduct of all aspects of the school. It is understood, therefore, that the Brother Provincial is fully consulted on all Diocesan policy initiatives that will impact on the running of the College. Where possible, he or his nominee will meet on a regular basis, with the Director of Catholic Education. Likewise, he or his nominee should be part of any formal evaluation of the operation or senior personnel of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College.

The Diocese of Darwin, together with the Parish of Alice Springs, appreciates the continuing support given by the Marist Brothers to Catholic Education in the town.
School Board Mission Statement

Within the Community the School Board seeks to promote and maintain the development of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College as a Catholic School which:

- is founded on the person of Jesus Christ and is enlivened by Gospel values;
- highlights the relevance of our Faith to life and contemporary culture;
- is embedded within the community of believers and shares in the evangelizing mission of the Church;
- is committed to the development of the whole person.

1. The Spirit of the Board

Our School Board is to be characterised by a spirit of service derived from the example of Christ who demonstrated by attitude, word and action that He came not to be served but to serve.

To be true to this spirit of Christian service all Board members must strive earnestly to discern God's will and to translate that, and not their own will, into practice in the fulfilment of their duties. All the deliberations and activities of the Board will be carried out with justice and charity.

2. Definitions

For convenience the following abbreviations are used in this document:

The College means Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College.

The Board means Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College Board.

The Bishop means the Bishop of the Diocese of Darwin.

The Principal means the Principal of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College.

The Provincial means the Provincial of the Marist Brothers, Southern Province.

The College Community means the staff, students and parents and other persons interested in or sharing responsibility for the welfare of the College.

Catholic Education Council (NT) means the advisory body established by the Bishop to advise on policy for Catholic schools in the Northern Territory.

Catholic Education Office means the administrative body responsible for the overall administration of the Catholic education system in the Diocese.

The Director means the Chief Executive Officer of the Catholic Education Office, responsible to the Bishop.

3. Name of Board

The Name of the Board shall be Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College Board.
4. **Role of the Board**

4.1 The Board acknowledges the role of the Principal as the Leader of the College. The role of the Board is to advise the Principal, and assist the College in the development of policies, which then become the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement.

4.2 In exercising this role, Board members are required to be mindful of the responsibilities which belong to the Principal and staff to make decisions in accordance with Catholic Education Office guidelines. These guidelines cover such matters as curriculum, pastoral care, discipline and methods of instruction and learning, finance and staffing.

5. **Functions of Board**

The functions of the Board are to assist the Principal by providing advice and recommendations:

5.1 to develop, formulate and evaluate College policies.

5.2 to develop structures helpful to determining future needs of the College.

5.3 with the forward planning of the capital development of the College.

5.4 in the appointment and appraisal of members of staff where requested, by the Principal.

5.5 assist in the formulation of the annual budget and in developing the priorities within the budget.

5.6 in the selection of a lay Principal and/or lay Assistant Principal, in accordance with Diocesan guidelines, when such an appointment is being made.

5.7 in providing a pastoral caring role which is appropriate for the staff, students, families and the changing needs of the College community.

5.8 to follow the guidelines and directions pertaining to College Boards issued by the Catholic Education Office.

5.9 in promoting the College's involvement with the local and Parish communities.

5.10 to oversee the establishment of auxiliaries of the College and monitor their effectiveness in the College (such auxiliaries shall appoint their own officers and determine their own policies under the co-ordination of the College Board).

5.11 to consider any other matter referred to the Board by the College Principal.

5.12 to hold an annual review of Board operations during the meeting immediately before the Annual General Meeting.
6. **Membership of the Board**

There are four categories of Board membership: ex-officio, elected, nominated and co-opted. The board is to be made up of 2 ex-officio members, 6 elected members, 2-3 nominated members and 1-5 co-opted members. A maximum of three consecutive terms may be served.

6.1 Ex-officio members:

6.1.1 The Parish Priest who is the President of the Board.

6.1.2 The Principal who is the Executive Officer of the Board.

6.2 Elected Members

Six (6) members shall be elected for a two year term. All elected members shall be parents/guardians/care-givers of students attending the College at the time of their election.

6.3 Nominated Members:

These members have a term of one year, commencing at the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting.

6.3.1 One or two members shall be nominated from the College ASSPA Committees.

6.3.2 One member shall be nominated by the whole College staff.

6.4 Co-Opted Members

The Board may appoint up to five additional members to provide specific expertise required by the Board. These members will hold office for a period of time as determined by the Board. In the event that no elected or nominated members have financial expertise, then such a person will be co-opted to the Board.

6.5 Three of the elected members' positions shall be vacated annually. Elections shall be held at the Annual General Meeting.

6.6 The Board may fill any casual vacancies by co-option for the remainder of the current term of the Board.

7. **Elections**

7.1 **Nominations for membership** to the Board are to be received by the College in writing and signed in time for elections to be held within the first 8 weeks of semester one of the College year.

7.2 **Retiring members** complete their term at the meeting of the AGM prior to the election.

7.3 **Any parent/guardian** who has a child currently enrolled at the College is eligible to vote.

7.4 **Election procedures** are to be determined by the Board.
8. **Responsibilities of Members**

Implicit in Sections 1 and 4 above are some of the key responsibilities of Board members. Other responsibilities are as follows:

8.1 **All Members**

Board members are expected to attend all Board meetings. It is important that Board members are able to speak and discuss at meetings from an informed position, and to this end all members will ensure that they make themselves familiar with the College - its physical plant, staff, finances, operation, etc. Board members will be active in promoting Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College and Catholic Education in the wider Parish community and beyond.

8.2 **The President**

The Parish Priest, as the Bishop's delegate, is the President of the Board, and has a special responsibility of helping:

- 8.2.1 to ensure that the Board conducts its business in accordance with sound Catholic pastoral principles,
- 8.2.2 to assist its members' spiritual development,
- 8.2.3 to help the College understand its place and role in the local church so that it is better fitted to discharge its responsibilities with the Church's mission of Christian education.
- 8.2.4 to ensure effective communication between the Board and the Parish Council.

8.3 **The Chairperson**

The Chairperson is required to ensure that meetings are properly conducted, with proper regard by all members for Christian justice and charity.

The Chairperson is responsible for drawing up the agenda for meetings, in consultation with the Principal. The agenda is to be forwarded to Board Members through the Executive Officer in sufficient time for members to prepare adequately for the meeting. Any associated documents which will assist the efficiency of the meeting should be included with the agenda.

The Chairperson is also expected to play a major role in the development of a sound understanding by Board members of the concept of Christian service.

The Chairperson, or a nominee from the Board, is required to attend the monthly Parents' and Friends' Association meeting, to ensure effective communication between the Board and the Association.

8.4 **The Deputy Chairperson**

The Deputy Chairperson substitutes for the Chairperson in his/her absence.
8.5 The Principal

The Principal speaks and acts at Board meetings as a representative of the whole College community, and with a special responsibility for the College staff and students. Amongst the Principal's responsibilities to the Board are the following:

8.5.1 To keep the Board informed about matters of the College's operation that pertain to the Board's functions.

8.5.2 To inform the Board about outcomes of discussions with staff on relevant matters.

8.5.3 To consult with College staff prior to decisions being taken by the Board on important matters affecting staff or students, and to keep staff informed of the outcomes of Board meetings.

8.5.4 To assist the Chairperson in the development of programs of Board self-evaluation and development of members' understanding of their roles and functions.

8.5.5 As executive Officer, the Principal effects the business of the Board.

8.5.6 The principal represents the Board at the Parish Council and acts as a liaison between the two bodies, on relevant matters, as required.

8.6 The Finance Officer.

The Board Finance Officer has key responsibilities.

8.6.1 through the Principal and the College Bursar, to provide the Board with accurate financial statements and their analysis, as often as required;

8.6.2 to ensure, through the Principal and the College Bursar, that the College's finances are in a sound position.

8.6.3 to ensure that adequate forward planning is done for the College's budgeting and the meeting of its financial commitments;

8.7 The Minute Secretary:

The Minute Secretary shall maintain a full written record of the proceedings of the Board, and circulate it to Board members with notice of the next meeting. The Minute Secretary will be appointed by the Principal.

8.8 The Elected Members and the Co-opted Members

It is desirable these members will have skills and interests that are put at the Board's service. These members, as with all others, are required to give the time and effort needed, to understand the role, spirit, and function of the Board.
8.9 Officers of the Board

8.9.1 The Board shall elect for a one year period from within its membership the following officers:

(a) Chairperson  
(b) Deputy Chairperson  
(c) Finance Officer

8.9.2 The Office Bearers, elected by the Board, may hold that particular Office for a maximum of four consecutive years. The Board determines how and at what time of the year these elections are to be conducted.

8.9.3 The Principal holds the position of Executive Officer of the Board.

8.9.4 The Board Executive shall comprise President, Principal, Chair, Deputy Chair, and Finance Officer.

8.9.5 The role of the Executive is to act on behalf of the Board between full Board Meetings.

9. Meetings: Regular and Special

9.1 Regular meetings of the Board shall be held normally once every month during College term. There is to be a minimum of eight meetings a year.

9.2 An Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held at a set time once each year, as determined by the Board. (Refer 7.1)

9.3 The Principal shall, at least 14 days prior to the date set for the AGM, publish a notice in the College's newsletter stating the place, date and time of the AGM.

9.4 A special meeting of the Board shall be held when called by the Chairperson or when requested by a simple majority of the Board, or by the Director.

9.5 A simple majority, including at least two members of the Executive, shall constitute a quorum.

9.6 Any member who shall be absent from three consecutive meetings of the Board, without contacting the Board, shall be deemed to have vacated their place; whereupon the Board may proceed to effect a replacement.

9.7 Decisions are to be made in the spirit of consensus and discernment. Voting should only be used as a last resort, and where necessary in order to keep the business of the meeting moving along.

10. Books of Record

10.1 Minutes shall be kept of all meetings, regular and special, of the Board and its committees. These shall be signed and dated by the Chairperson once they have been ratified by the meeting.

10.2 A copy of the minutes approved by the Board shall be retained by the Principal and by the Minutes Secretary, each of whom shall ensure that a full set of minutes that have been adopted is given to their successors in office.

10.3 A copy of the minutes is to be forwarded by the Executive Officer, to the Bishop, to the Provincial, and the Director after each meeting.
11. Communications

11.1 All written communications to and from the Board shall be tabled at the next meeting.

11.2 The Chairperson and/or the Principal will speak on behalf of the Board.

11.3 The Board shall give particular attention to the development and promotion of a sound program of communications with the College community it represents, and with the wider community.

12. Committees

12.1 The Board may establish committees as necessary.

12.2.1 Committees, chaired by a Board member, may be established for tasks of an ongoing nature; eg: finance, school maintenance, building, and community liaison.

12.2.2 Committees, chaired by a Board member, may be set up for a specific time, for one-off tasks.

12.2.3 Non-Board members may be co-opted to either permanent or temporary committees of the Board, subject to formal ratification at a Board meeting.

12.3 Membership of Committees is to be reviewed by the Board annually.

12.4 All committees established by the Board are required:

12.4.1 to adhere to their brief and conditions of operation.

12.4.2 to report to the Board on a regular basis.

12.4.3 to submit their final written report, where appropriate, to the Board.

13. Accountability

13.1 Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College is established as a Catholic College with the approval and under the direction of the Bishop.

13.1.1 The Director of Catholic Education acts on behalf of the Bishop in educational matters and is responsible for Catholic Education in the Diocese.

13.1.2 The Principal is appointed to administer the College and is responsible to the Director for the selection and supervision of staff and for the delivery of the College's programs.

13.2 The Board is accountable in the first instance to the Bishop through the Director.

13.3 The Board will prepare and make available an annual report to the above persons/bodies.

13.4 As part of its accountability to the Bishop through the Director, the Board will regularly evaluate its activities and performance, and will be open to suggestions for improvement.
14. **Charter and Status**

14.1 This Constitution may be amended by the Bishop. This would be done in consultation with the Director, the Brother Provincial, and with the Board members, through the Chairperson.

14.2 Amendments to this Constitution may be made by giving notice to the Board within fourteen (14) days prior to the next meeting. All amendments must be subsequently approved by the Bishop.

14.3 In the event of any dispute or uncertainty as to the meaning or intent of any clause or expression in this Constitution the matter shall be referred by the Chairperson to the Director who will consult with the Bishop.

14.4 If for any reason the Board does not function satisfactorily, the advice and assistance of the Director shall be sought. If after receiving special assistance the Board is still unable to operate it may be dissolved by the Bishop.

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Approval given to this Constitution:

Signed: [Signature]

Most Reverend E. J. P. Collins MSC, Bishop.

Date: 28-1-98
APPENDIX:

CODE OF ETHICS FOR BOARD MEMBERS

Being a member of a College Board involves many kinds of responsibilities and relationships. The information that is shared demands a professional ethic that should be understood and observed by all. Board members must know how to handle confidences, what action they should take if complaints are referred to them, and how they should relate to the public. Policy and procedure with regard to the Code of Ethics should be adequately discussed with new Board members and periodically studied by all concerned.

1. A Board member must give the necessary time, thought and study to the work of the College Board, so that effective service may be rendered.

2. A Board member must base their personal decision upon all available facts in each situation, and if there is voting they must vote with honest conviction unswayed by partisan bias.

3. A Board member must be able to abide by and uphold the final decision of the Board regardless of personal views on any issue.

4. A Board member must work with fellow Board members in a spirit of harmony and co-operation regardless of any differences of opinion that will inevitably arise during discussions.

5. An elected, nominated or appointed member of the Board is not in a position to make individual commitments on behalf of the Board. All matters raised with an individual member should be referred to the Board for discussion and action.

6. A Board member must maintain confidentiality of all Board business where appropriate.

7. A Board member must realise that the welfare of the students comes first in decisions.

8. A Board member must never use their position on the Board to benefit either themselves or any individual or agency apart from the total interest of the school. This applies particularly in the case of letting contracts.

9. A Board member approached with a complaint that is of an internal school administrative nature must refer the person making the complaint to the Principal and not become involved in matters that are outside their domain.

10. The duties and responsibilities as set out in the Board Constitution must be undertaken seriously by each Board member.