

**St Francis Xavier Catholic School**  
**Montmorency**



**SCHOOL ADVISORY  
COUNCIL  
CONSTITUTION**

# ST FRANCIS XAVIER CATHOLIC SCHOOL

## ADVISORY COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

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# 1.0 PROFILE OF ST FRANCIS XAVIER PARISH AND SCHOOL

## School Overview

### History

Saint Francis Xavier Parish School was opened in 1932 in a small wooden building on Para Road. Two Sisters of Mercy and thirty-two children started classes in February in a building, which had no permanent fixtures. The classroom was also used for Sunday Masses because Montmorency had become too large to remain a part of the Diamond Creek Parish. This was the birth of Saint Francis Xavier School.

It was not long before the 'old bush school' grew in such numbers that the need to relocate to a larger site became obvious. In the mid 1950's, Father Thomas Ashe purchased land (the old chicken farm) and commenced building the school at the present site in Mayona Road. In 1962 the population of the school grew to 182 students, and in subsequent years the number swelled to a peak of approximately 750 students in the mid 1980's.

The school was administered by the Sisters of Mercy from 1932 until a lay principal was appointed in 1983. Many of the traditions established in the early years still flourish today

Enrolment for 2019 currently stands at 320, from 221 families employing 40 staff. School enrolment remains steady due to the reputation and good community standing.

Our teaching and learning takes place in well-maintained and modern school buildings, (a number of which have been recently refurbished) computer technologies and other contemporary learning tools. Numerous refurbishments and improvements have been made to the learning spaces in the past 10 years the more recent being \$1.7M re-development of the original learning block currently occupied by our Year 1/ 2 students. Work commenced in December 2016 and was completed in July 2017. The refurbishment included the upgrade of 8 classrooms incorporating the original multipurpose room to create greater flexible student learning work space with the latest technology and resources. The upgrade also included work the Out of School Hours Care work room and installation of new internal student toilet amenities.

Our current Year Five/Six students also learn in a flexible learning space within our BER building which was designed and purposely built in 2009 to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners. This innovative state of the art building, incorporates a purpose built library, an E-Learning Centre, a multi-purpose area (used as a classroom in 2013, 2016 & 2017) and four other contemporary learning areas, leading to an outdoor learning area. We maintain that this contemporary learning environment supported by contemporary learning technologies enhances student learning and improves student engagement and wellbeing.

Many of our General Purpose Learning Areas have been modified and refurbished to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner. Our excellent facilities (including a large Hall, Performing Arts Theatre, meeting rooms, synthetic grass oval and basketball courts) are also used after school for our Out of School Hours Care Program, netball and basketball training, tennis coaching, our parish Catechetical Program, Adult Education and by a number of groups for various Parish activities.

Other developments include staff room, administration area, Student Services office and planning rooms and the staff professional learning area titled the Professional Learning Centre. That continues to enhance the professional learning opportunities for staff and demonstrate our commitment to building a professional learning culture.

93% of the students are baptized Catholics and our school population includes 3% Language Backgrounds Other Than English (LOTE). Montmorency remains predominately a middle class area and therefore the school is 109 on the Socio Economic Status Scale. With an increasing number of dual parent employment, the school still continues to enjoy the fact that many parents are able to support the school in a variety of ways during any given week. The working parents have the added benefit of enrolling their children in the before and after school carer program housed at the school.

We welcome the involvement of parents and members of our parish community, as evidenced by our highly effective teams of dedicated parents who support us through our Parents Association, School Advisory Council, Works and Maintenance Committee, Uniform Shop, Tuckshop, Social Outreach

programs, Parish Fete Committee and the Parish Pastoral Council. Parents and parishioners also volunteer as parent helpers in classroom in Literacy and Numeracy lessons, excursions and at a variety of school events.

Enlivened by the Gospel Values, our school strives to be a vibrant, welcoming and inclusive within our Parish community. As an inclusive community, we work in partnership with the parish of St Francis Xavier, Fr Michael Sierakowski our Parish Moderator, Father Terry Kean Pastor in Solidum, our Parish Pastoral Associates and with our associated Federation Schools, Holy Trinity Primary School Eltham North and Our Lady Help Of Christians Eltham.

## 2.0 Governance and Authority

### PARISH VISION STATEMENT

To be a  
Christ centred community,  
welcoming of all, celebrating  
friendship, living justly and  
compassionately,  
courageous in facing the future, and finding  
our heart and inspiration in the celebration  
of Eucharist.

### SCHOOL VISION STATEMENT

St Francis Xavier School promotes  
equity and excellence,  
in a contemporary learning community.  
Inspired by the model of Jesus Christ,  
we become successful learners;  
confident and creative individuals;  
and active  
and informed global citizens.

### Parish

**2.1** Within the provisions of Canon Law, the Parish Moderator in consultation with the parish community is responsible for providing for the Catholic education of parish children and young adults as well the catechetical formation of the faithful and outreach to those who are no longer practising their faith or who do not profess the Catholic religion.

The parish School Advisory Council (SAC) provides advice to the Parish Moderator within the context of these guidelines and the vision statement of the parish.

### Parish Primary School

**2.2** With the approval and under the direction of the Archbishop of Melbourne, St Francis Xavier Catholic Parish School has been established to provide Catholic education, according to the precepts, teachings and practices of the Catholic Church.

This school is administered by the Parish Moderator Father Michael Sierakowski under the supervision of the Archbishop of Melbourne and is acknowledged as Catholic by his authority.

The governance of this school is undertaken by the parish priest with the support of the principal.

The School Advisory Council (SAC) provides advice to the Principal within the context of the Guidelines and the school's vision and mission statements.

The Parish Moderator reserves his authority in matters relating to:

- the Catholicity of the school
- diocesan regulations

- employment of staff
- the formation and dissolution of the board
- appointment of board members and office bearers
- the appointment of the principal
- school finances.

2.3 Within the provisions of Canon Law, the School Advisory Council is responsible to the Parish Moderator, who in turn is subject to the vigilance of the Archbishop of Melbourne.

2.4 The School Advisory Council has no responsibility for the internal management and administration of the school, which are the responsibility of the School Principal.

### 3.0 DEFINITIONS

Archbishop Peter Comensoli, is the Catholic Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Melbourne appointed to administer the Archdiocese.

The **St Francis Xavier Catholic Parish** is as defined by the Archbishop of Melbourne in accordance with Canon Law.

The **Fr Michael Sierakowski** is the Parish Moderator of the parish of St Francis Xavier appointed to administer the parish.

The **School Advisory Council (SAC)** is the body responsible for advising the Parish Priest and Principal according to the provisions of guidelines.

**SAC** – School Advisory Council.

**Guardian** – A person who is legally responsible for the care of a child.

**PA** – Parents Association.

**W & M** – Works and Maintenance.

**AGM** – Annual General Meeting.

### 4.0 LAND AND BUILDINGS

4.1 The ownership of land and buildings thereon is vested in the Roman Catholic Trusts Corporation for the Diocese of Melbourne, which shall hold such in trust for the parish in accordance with Canon Law.

4.2 The costs of all land and buildings, comprising buildings equipped to satisfy the requirements of a parish school, shall be underwritten by the Parish.

### 5.0 NAME

The Body shall be known as St Francis Xavier Catholic School Advisory Council Montmorency, referred to as the "School Advisory Council."

### 6.0 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

"Membership on the Advisory Council provides each person with the opportunity to share in Proclaiming the Good News, in building the community of the parish and school and contributing to policy formulation which will provide for the development of educational opportunities in the school."

(Catholic Education Office Melbourne; Community Participation Resource Sheet 2012)

Catholic Primary School Boards, Councils or Parish Education Boards are advisory bodies not canonical authorities: their role is to support the school's mission and the spiritual and educational development of students through contributing to school planning and policies.

The St Francis Xavier Catholic School Advisory Council has been established to:-

6.1 Act as an advisory and support body to the Parish Priest and School Principal in the overall development of St Francis Xavier Catholic School, so that individual children's spiritual, social, intellectual, physical, emotional and aesthetic needs are developed to their full potential.

**6.2** Act as a forum for effective communication within the school community, being the parish, school principal, staff, students, school groups, parents and the parish community generally.

**6.3** Promote community development by fostering a strong interrelationship between parish and the school, Catholic secondary colleges and pre-schools.

## **7.0 FUNCTIONS**

The functions of the School Advisory Council shall be to assist and advise:-

- 7.1 With fostering the Catholic ethos of the school and supporting the Religious Education program.
- 7.2 The Parish Priest, school Principal and staff in the formulation, maintenance and review of school policy.
- 7.3 The Parish Priest in the selection of a lay principal when such an appointment is being made and in accordance with Diocesan guidelines.
- 7.4 With the induction of parents and children new to the school.
- 7.5 With liaising between the school community, the Catholic Education Melbourne, secular authorities, parish groups and the broader community in matters of concern to the school.
- 7.6 With providing feedback to the Parish Priest and Principal on matters concerning the financial operation of the school.
- 7.7 The School and parish to address enrolment demands.
- 7.8 With an annual report of the operation of the School Advisory Council to the school community as part of the Annual Report to the School Community.
- 7.9 Ways to stimulate interest in the school and to encourage participation by parents in their children's education.
- 7.10 Ways to actively seek frequent and productive communication between all parents and the school, providing an avenue for input and discussion.
- 7.11 With exploring initiatives that will impact positively on the school community.
- 7.12 With the Parents Association and WAM as a sub-committee of the SAC.
- 7.13 With developing school – community relationships and encouraging home - school interaction.
- 7.14 With developing strategies for the promotion of Catholic education in the local community.
- 7.15 With liaising with Catholic Secondary schools attended by students from the Parish.

## **8.0 MEMBERSHIP**

### **Qualities of members**

When seeking board members it is important to reflect on the qualities and skills of benefit to the School Advisory Council in carrying out its functions. The following is a suggested list of key qualities and skills for members of councils.

- Commitment to Catholic education in the Parish and school .
- Ability to uphold, support and promote the Catholic ethos and Faith formation of community members.
- Be a well respected member of the Parish School Community.
- Commitment to the vision and mission of the parish and school .
- Be a positive role model in the community.
- Have an understanding and be supportive of the role of Parish Moderator, Principal and other

- board members.
- Willingness to ask questions and seek clarification.
- Ability to think strategically.
- Willingness to support the contributions of other board members.
- Capacity to listen in an active and meaningful way.
- Willingness to work co-operatively with others.
- Commitment to maintaining confidentiality at all times.

### **Expectations of the Council member**

#### **Each Council member is required to commit to the following:-**

- Understanding the council's role.
- Having a positive and constructive attitude.
- Preparing for council meetings.
- Bringing expertise and views to discussions on behalf of the parish school community.
- Participating actively and responsibly.
- Participating in committee work.
- Participating in council formation activities.
- If possible, members should attend all scheduled meetings but if this is not possible, at least 75 percent during the year.

**8.1** The SAC shall be composed of at least ten (10) members who appreciate, value and share the educational mission and ethos of the Catholic Church. It shall consist of:

- The Parish Moderator
- The Principal
- School Staff Representative (selected by the Principal)
- Parish representatives (selected by the Parish Moderator)
- Elected parent or guardian representatives
- A Parents Association representative (may be a reciprocal arrangement)
- A Works and Maintenance Committee representative (may be a reciprocal arrangement)

### **Ex Officio Members**

- Parish Moderator
- Principal

### **8.2** Parent or guardian Representatives

A minimum of four and a maximum of six members shall be elected from the parents of the school. This number may be varied from time to time at the discretion of the Parish Moderator.

**8.3** Wherever possible Council should have parent or guardian representation from a cross section of year levels (lower, middle, upper).

Where possible a representative from the Parents Association and Works & Maintenance committee should be a member of the SAC. Where this is not possible a SAC member will be nominated as a liaison rep to the P.A. and W&M .

### **8.4** Other Representatives/ Committees

The Parish Priest may also invite members from the school /Parish community into the School Advisory Council.

**8.5** Other sub committees, or working parties, may be established by the SAC for a specific purpose in response to identified needs of the SAC.

## **9.0 OFFICE BEARERS**

Office bearers will comprise of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary

**9.1** Office Bearers shall be the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary. The Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary shall be selected via nomination by the appointed Members of Council as the first item of business in the first meeting of each Council year following the AGM.

**9.2** The Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary shall each be appointed for a full calendar year and lapse automatically at the end of that year. In the absence of the Chairperson, meetings shall be chaired by the Deputy Chairperson. In the absence of both Chairperson & Deputy Chairperson, a Chairperson shall be elected from those members present at a meeting. In the absence of the Secretary, minutes shall be recorded by the Deputy Chairperson.

**9.3** The Secretary attends council meetings and prepares necessary documentation under the direction of the executive officer or chair.

**9.4** Ex officio members and employees of the parish or school shall not be eligible to hold the office of Chairperson.

## **10.0 SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETINGS**

**10.1** Meetings of the School Advisory Council shall be held on a monthly basis throughout the school year. (Normally two meetings per term minimum of 7 per year.)

**10.2** Meeting dates will be advertised at the commencement of the school year after consulting with the parish and school calendar of events.

**10.3** Additional meetings of the School Advisory Council may be held at the discretion of the School Advisory Council. Such meetings will have the date and time confirmed by consulting with the Parish and school calendars.

**10.4** Selecting the time for monthly meetings will be given consideration to the availability of its members, however this will normally be 7pm..

**10.5** Meetings shall be conducted under an agreed Meeting Agenda accompanied by the minutes from the previous meeting. The Meeting Agenda will be developed jointly by the Chairperson and Principal.

**10.6** For a meeting to occur a quorum must be present. A quorum is 50% of its members, including one ex-officio member or their representative for a meeting to take place.

**10.7** Members of the School Advisory Council may submit items for inclusion in the agenda to the Chairperson at least one week prior to a meeting,

**10.8** At the discretion of and with the joint agreement of the Chairperson and Principal, items submitted to the Chairperson by an elected member or via a signed letter from a member of the school community will be considered for an agenda item.

**10.9** The Chairperson shall confer with the Principal to assess the considered agenda item:

- If the matter is appropriate for consideration by Council.
- If Council can deal with it in a reasonable time within its current sitting.
- The relative importance or urgency of the matter if it cannot be dealt with immediately, and how it should therefore be progressed.
- If it is not relevant to Council, who should consider the matter, including whether it should be considered at all.
- The person who has presented the matter will be advised about the direction of the matter by the chairperson or Principal.
- NB: Council does not deal with complaints, only suggestions for school improvement.
- The names of individual staff groups, students and families are not discussed.

**10.10** The author of any letter received on matters pertaining to the School Advisory Council will be acknowledged verbally or in writing by the School Advisory Council.

**10.11** A set of meeting protocols should be agreed to at the first normal meeting following an Annual General Meeting and revised periodically.

**10.12** On occasions, "Confidentiality" may be insisted on during a meeting if it is deemed necessary



when certain matters are tabled.

**10.13** Meetings shall commence at appointed times and normally shall last no longer than two hours, unless otherwise agreed.

**10.14** A meeting report will be made available to the community via the newsletter & school website soon after the conclusion of the previous meeting. The report will be prepared by the Secretary.

**10.15** There will be one open meeting inviting members from the school community per year, this being at the AGM where the School Advisory Council will provide a community report on the activities the Council has undertaken in the past year.

**10.16** The last meeting of the School Advisory Council each year will be the AGM held in November) Following the AGM council members will gather to celebrate the years achievements.

## **11.0 APPOINTMENT PROCESS OF MEMBERS**

In accordance with Catholic Education Melbourne Guidelines the process (e.g. nomination and election, by appointment) is determined by the Parish Moderator in conjunction with the school Principal.

**11.1** Declared vacant Council positions are advertised to the school community via the newsletter 4 weeks prior to the AGM.

**11.2** The nomination / election process will conclude by the end of the school year or no later than prior to the first meeting in February. New members will take up positions at the first ordinary meeting in February. Failing this then late nominations and acceptances to the SAC may be approved throughout the course of the school year.

**11.3** Nominating parents or guardians are invited to obtain an information pack outlining the School Advisory Councils function. They may also speak with the Parish Moderator, Principal or a current Council member about the role of the council to assist with their decision to nominate.

**11.4** Parents or guardians may self nominate or be nominated by a parent or guardian of the school. The nominations are to be seconded by another parent from the school. The nomination form is to be accompanied by brief letter stating how they will be able to contribute to the function of the council. Nomination letters are addressed and submitted to the Parish Priest for consideration.

**11.5** The ex-officio members of the Council select from the applications.

**11.6** The term of office for parent or guardian representatives shall be two years, after which time they may submit for re-election for a subsequent term of two years.

**11.7** At the discretion of the Parish Moderator and for the purpose of Council, succession planning terms of appointment may vary for newly elected members between one to two years

**11.8** All nominees will receive a letter of acknowledgement from the Parish Moderator.

**11.9** The Parish Priest would formally write to the new board members advising them of their appointment.

**11.10** The names of the School Advisory Council members will be published in the newsletter and website, along with the email address of the Advisory Council.

**11.11** In the event of a vacancy occurring during the year, the Ex Officio shall have the discretion to appoint a person to fill that position, until the next election for that position.

## **12.0 INDUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS**

**12.1** The St Francis Xavier School Advisory Council will offer an induction process to enable new members to familiarise themselves with the role and function of the Council. This process includes;

- Providing new members with an information folder.
- Folder includes such information about Council function, responsibilities of Council members, current council activities and future plans, meeting procedures, decision making processes, and confidentiality.
- A welcome and introduction of new members to outgoing and existing members at the AGM meeting in March.
- Providing some induction prior to and/or at the first meeting each year.
- Be offered any additional supporting documentation, Professional Learning seminars, on-line modules, videos etc... offered by the Catholic Education Melbourne related to Advisory

Council function.

### **13.0 RESIGNATION / TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP**

**13.1** A member may resign from the SAC at any time by providing 2 weeks written notice to the Chairperson and the Council who will then notify the Parish Moderator or Principal.

**13.2** A parent or guardian representative shall be required to resign from the SAC if his or her child or children cease to attend the school unless invited by the Parish Priest to remain a serving member for a specified period of time.

**13.3** In the event of a serious breach of conduct, or an ASC Member be seen not to be upholding the Catholic principles and ethos of the school, they will be invited to discuss the issue or concern with the Parish Moderator or Principal. In the event the matter can not be resolved then it is at the discretion of the Parish Moderator to determine whether the member continues to serve on the council.

### **14.0 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

**14.1** This Constitution may be changed only if the Parish Moderator, after consultation with the SAC, decides upon alterations or accepts any alterations proposed by two-thirds of the members of the SAC.

**14.2** Notice of any proposed change to the Constitution must be given to SAC members, in writing, 14 clear days in advance of an extraordinary SAC meeting called specifically for the purpose of discussing the matter. Notwithstanding the above, the Parish Moderator may direct change(s) to the Constitution at any time.

### **15.0 CONSTITUTION REVIEW**

**15.1** A review of these School Advisory Council Constitution should occur at least once every two years and normally at the first ordinary meeting in March.

### **16.0 CONFIDENTIALITY AND SOLIDARITY**

SAC confidentiality and solidarity are key ingredients in building trust among members. At times, there will be a good reason to declare an issue, a paper or a discussion as confidential. This should be done by the chairperson prior to a SAC meeting.

SAC members should also respect the right of individuals to express their views freely at meetings without fear of being named outside the meeting as taking particular positions. A sense of trust and harmony among members is vital for the wellbeing of the SAC.

"Any matters regarding the competence of members of staff or about individual student progress should be referred to the Principal or Parish Moderator as appropriate."

(Catholic Education Melbourne :Community Participation Resource Sheet 2012)

**This Constitution was ratified by the Parish Priest on**

**Dated** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Implemented 2015**

**Reviewed 26 April 2016; 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017; 28<sup>th</sup> February 2018; April 2018; November 2019**

## REFERENCES

The following documents and support resources made available by the Catholic Education Office, Archdiocese of Melbourne, were referred to in assisting the revised constitution.

- A Guide for Parish Education Boards
- Catholic School Governance (NCEC32002)
- Community Participation Resource Sheet (2012)
- Descriptors for the role of the Board Consultation Workshop 2012
- Establishing a Board Information for Primary Schools and Parish Education Boards.
- Sample Constitution and Guide.