

**St Mary's Catholic Parish  
Malvern East**

Parish Education  
Advisory Board

Constitution

**19 October 2010**

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# **1 Our School**

## **1.1 History**

The land on which St Mary's Church and School now stand originally belonged to the Emo Estate. Blessed by Archbishop Carr as a station church for the parish of St Stephen's Oakleigh, it was purchased last century for 542 pounds.

St Mary's East Malvern was formally constituted as a parish in February 1915. In 1917, disaster struck when the original church was destroyed by fire. Shortly after World War 1, fundraising commenced and ambitious plans were drawn up to build the gothic church that has become a landmark in the parish. It was to be a memorial church dedicated to Australia's noble dead who fell in the Great War.

On Easter Sunday, 4 April 1920, Archbishop Mannix blessed and laid the foundation stone for the new church, designated as St Mary the Immaculate Conception. Three years later, on 18 October 1923, St Mary's Church was opened.

Life began for St Mary's School when Archbishop Mannix laid the foundation stone on 30 June 1918. Prior to this, classes were conducted in the rear of the church. The school was enlarged considerably in 1930. For many years, the Sisters of the Brigidine Order Convent from Malvern conducted the school on behalf of the parish. In 1976, the Sisters withdrew and the first lay principal was appointed.

St Mary's School continues to grow and develop today in order to meet the needs of the parish community.

## **1.2 Profile**

St Mary's School is a Catholic, co-educational school from Preparatory to Year 6. The school prides itself on academic excellence and a strong sense of community, and works hard to provide a warm, welcoming, family atmosphere. Parents, staff and children work closely together to enhance the learning opportunities for all students, and to encourage achievement at the highest level.

The school aims to provide its students with a challenging integrated curriculum that inspires excellence and promotes a positive and confident approach to learning. St Mary's provides an opportunity for all students to reach their full human and educational potential in an inclusive and caring environment.

As part of the St Mary's Parish family, the school promotes Christian values and the respect of self, others and the environment. In particular, St Mary's supports the development of the Catholic faith of its students through its religious education program, prayer and participation in the sacraments.

# **2 Governance and Authority**

With the approval and under the direction of the Archbishop of Melbourne, St Mary's School has been established to provide Catholic education according to the precepts, teachings and practices of the Catholic Church. The school is administered by the Parish Priest of St Mary's Parish under the supervision of the Archbishop of Melbourne and is acknowledged as Catholic by his authority.

The governance of the school is undertaken by the Parish Priest with the support of the Principal. The Board provides advice to the Parish Priest and Principal within the context of this Constitution and the school's vision statement.

The Parish Priest reserves his authority in matters relating to:

- (a) the Catholicity of the school;
- (b) diocesan regulations;
- (c) employment of staff;
- (d) the formation and dissolution of the Board;
- (e) the appointment of Board members and office bearers;
- (f) the appointment and dismissal of the Principal, and
- (g) school finances.

Within the provisions of Canon Law, the Board is responsible to the Parish Priest, who in turn is subject to the vigilance of the Archbishop of Melbourne.

The Board has no responsibility for the internal management and administration of the school, which are the responsibility of the school Principal.

### **3 Board's Vision Statement**

As an advisory body and extension of the parish community, the Board's vision is to:

- (a) ensure and encourage the provision of Catholic education for all parishioners;
- (b) advise and guide the school in nurturing the academic, intellectual, spiritual, physical, social and emotional development of each child;
- (c) support the school's aims of achieving excellence through a broad and inspiring curriculum, a love of learning and the development of life skills by all students, and
- (d) advise and support the school in fulfilling its vision and promoting an open, dynamic environment in which individuals are challenged at the highest level, and encouraged and empowered to reach their full potential.

Through our support of the life and mission of our parish, we aim to inspire and encourage Christian values in the students, parents and school staff, and to foster a collective sense of purpose in the education of our parish community.

### **4 Functions and Responsibilities**

The Board's functions are:

- (a) To provide inspiration, leadership, informed advice and support to the Parish Priest and Principal, with a view to assisting them in realising the vision of St Mary's school as a challenging, dynamic, high achieving and caring community;

- (b) To nurture and support the Catholic ethos and identity of the school;
- (c) To act as a forum for discussion on educational matters concerning the school;
- (d) To advise on and assist with the development of school policies regarding the education of students and the well being of the school and its community;
- (e) To contribute to the development of strategies and action plans to support and maintain the vision of the school;
- (f) To provide support for the school in the development of facilities;
- (g) To advise on budget planning and finance-related matters;
- (h) To work in collaboration with school parents' auxiliaries;
- (i) To assist with activities which promote the school within the parish and the broader community;
- (j) To facilitate the integration of parents and children new to the school;
- (k) To develop school/community relationships and encourage home/school and home/parish interaction;
- (l) To liaise with Catholic secondary schools attended by children from the parish, particularly with regard to the provision of places for children from the parish;
- (m) To support the provision of religious education to children not in the parish school;
- (n) To foster adult education in faith;
- (o) To assist in the selection of a Principal<sup>1</sup> when such an appointment is being made, and
- (p) To contribute to educational debate in the Archdiocese, or at the state or the National level.

## **5 Board Structure**

### **5.1 Representation**

Through membership on the Parish Education Board each person assumes a leadership role in the parish. Members must be committed to the values and principles outlined in the Board's Vision Statement. The members of the Board meet together with the Principal and Parish Priest as their advisory council.

The membership of the Board is:

- (a) Ex-Officio Members:
  - Parish Priest
  - Principal

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<sup>1</sup> This appointment happens in accord with Archdiocesan guidelines.

- (b) Nominated Members:
- Parish Priest's nominee
  - Principal's nominee
  - Parents and Friends Association's nominee
- (The nominated members are annual appointments).
- (c) Elected Members:
- Up to 8 parents elected by the parent community

## **5.2 Executive**

The Parish Priest, Principal, Chairperson and the Secretary of the Board form the Board Executive. The Executive serves as the Board leadership team and furthers the work of the Board between meetings. The Board Executive finalises the agenda and will meet as required.

## **5.3 Working Parties and Focus Areas**

The Board may create working parties from its membership or appoint Board members to particular focus areas.

Working parties have the option to co-opt additional members from outside the Board. Their work is to perform tasks and specific functions from time to time on the Board's behalf. Each working party should have at least one member of the Board among its membership, be chaired by a Board member and report regularly to the Board.

Focus areas are driven by the School Leadership Team who will collaborate with Board members to form a partnership which supports staff in each particular area.

# **6 Elections**

## **6.1 Election process**

Elected members will serve a three year term. No Board member may serve more than two consecutive terms. If it is necessary in particular circumstances, an extra year may be added to an elected Board member's term at the discretion of the Board Executive.

Elections will normally be held in conjunction with the conduct of the annual general meeting (AGM). The Chairperson must publish all Board vacancies and details about the Board nomination and election process at least one month prior to the scheduled AGM. Each nomination for Board membership must be made in writing to the Parish Priest at least 14 days prior to the scheduled AGM, and must be accompanied by a written statement from the Nominee setting out the Nominee's proposed contribution to the Board. Nominations and accompanying statements will be published in the school newsletter prior to the AGM.

Where there is more than one nomination for a vacancy, the Chairperson will call for a ballot among members of the school community. The ballot will take place at the AGM. Only those attending the AGM will have the opportunity to vote. New members will be elected using a simple "first past the post" method, or if necessary, another method as decided by the Principal and Parish Priest.

## **6.2 Office Bearers**

Following the AGM (or as the last item of business at the AGM), the Board will elect from its membership, a Chairperson and other office bearers. The Chairperson will not be a school or parish employee. No Chairperson will serve more than three years consecutively.

The Chairperson is responsible for the conduct of Board meetings, oversight of Board agendas, and the follow-up of actions and decisions arising from Board meetings.

The Principal, as manager of the school, is the Executive Officer of the Board. The Executive Officer is the chief education advisor to the Board.

The Secretary is responsible for the minutes of each meeting, for managing Board correspondence and for other administrative tasks as may be necessary from time to time, including the regular communication of Board news to the school community via the school newsletter or other means.

## **7 Meetings of the Board**

### **7.1 Annual general meeting**

The annual general meeting of the Board will normally take place in Term 4 of the school year. The school community will be notified a minimum of one month prior to the meeting. At this time, in accordance with the process described above, nominations will be invited to fill any elected positions on the Board which become vacant.

The agenda for the annual general meeting will be published for the whole school community. The agenda will include:

- (a) election of the Board and appointment of office bearers;
- (b) reports from the Principal and Chairperson of the Board; and
- (c) provision for questions addressing the reports from those in attendance.

The reports of the Principal and Chairperson will be published and available to all parents.

### **7.2 Ordinary meetings**

The Parish Education Board will meet no less than 6 times during the year. Meetings will be scheduled in the annual school calendar and the agenda and papers will be circulated no less than one week prior to the scheduled date of the meeting.

A time will be set aside at the start of each meeting for prayerful reflection.

### **7.3 Quorum**

A meeting quorum is constituted when there are at least half of the elected members present, in addition to either the Parish Priest, or Principal.

## **7.4 Conduct of meetings**

### **(a) Confidentiality & Solidarity**

Board confidentiality is a key component of building trust among Board members.

Members of the Board are responsible for keeping matters discussed at Board meetings in confidence. Information discussed cannot be shared with non Board members and decisions do not become public until they are ratified and released by the Parish Priest and Principal.

Board members should also respect the right of individuals to express their views at Board meetings, without fear of being named outside the Board meeting, as taking particular views.

A sense of trust and integrity among Board members is vital for the well being of the Board and the community they serve.

Any matters regarding the competence of staff, or about individual student progress, should be referred immediately to the Principal or the Parish Priest.

### **(b) Decision-making**

The process of making decisions generally will be one of consensus. If consensus cannot be reached through discussion, a motion will be put to the vote. A majority vote will be required. In this situation, the Principal and Parish Priest will not vote.

### **(c) Dispute resolution**

Any dispute occurring between members of the Board during and between meetings will be resolved according the approved *Grievance Procedures* (Appendix 7).

### **(d) Member Folio**

Each Board member will be issued with a folio to file all relevant correspondence and papers. All members must bring this folio to meetings. Folios will be passed on to new members to assist with the induction process.

## **8 Amending this Constitution**

The Parish Education Board has the power to amend this document through consensus of its members at a meeting. If consensus cannot be reached, a majority vote will suffice.

In accordance with Archdiocesan guidelines any change to this Constitution must be ratified by the Parish Priest and notwithstanding the above paragraph the Parish Priest may direct change(s) to the Constitution at any time or dissolve the Board.

This Constitution of the St Mary's Parish Education Board was ratified by the Parish Priest on:

*(Date of Ratification) 20th October 2010 (Signature of Parish Priest)*

**Appendix 1**

**ST MARY'S PARISH EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**NOMINATION FORM**

*Elected members will serve a three year term. No Board member may serve more than two consecutive terms.*

*Elections will be held in conjunction with the conduct of the annual general meeting (AGM). The Chairperson must publish any Board vacancies and the corresponding nomination and election process at least one month prior to the scheduled AGM. **Nominations must be made in writing to the Parish Priest at least 14 days prior** to the scheduled AGM.*

*Each nominee must be proposed by two people who must be parents of a child at St. Mary's School.  
The person nominated must be a parent of a child at St. Mary's School.*

We, the undersigned do nominate \_\_\_\_\_  
as a member of the St. Mary's Parish Education Advisory Board.

Name of 1<sup>st</sup> Proposer \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name of 2<sup>nd</sup> Proposer \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Nominee (person accepting nomination) \_\_\_\_\_

*Nominees are to make a written submission regarding their proposed contribution to the Board. If you need extra space, please **attach** an additional sheet.*

This nomination form must be submitted by **Friday 29th October 2010**

Date received \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Annual General Meeting & Elections **Tuesday 9th November 2010**

Thank you for your interest and support of this leadership team within our parish community.

**Appendix 2**

# Catholic Parishes of East Malvern

**St. Mary's Church**

91 Manning Rd  
East Malvern



**Holy Eucharist Church**

1241 Dandenong Rd  
East Malvern

Parish Office & Presbytery: 91 Manning Rd, Malvern East 3145  
Tel 03 9571 2407 Fax 03 9571 5094 Email MalvernEast@cam.org.au

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## **ST MARY'S PARISH EDUCATION BOARD**

### **LETTER OF APPOINTMENT**

[Date]

[Name & Address of new member]

Dear .....

I write to formally advise you of your election and appointment to the St. Mary's Parish Education Board.

The term of appointment is for three years after which you may stand for re-election for a further three year term.

In your membership of the Board you participate in a formal ministry within the Catholic Church supporting the Church's mission, ethos and worshipping life within the local community of faith. In welcoming you to the Board I look forward to your contribution to this vital part of the parish's mission.

We know that all members will take their membership seriously as a most important leadership role that provides informed advice to the Parish Priest and Principal.

If you wish to accept this formal offer please return the enclosed 'Letter of Acceptance and Commitment'.

The Board Secretary will see that you receive a hand over file with necessary documentation and will also advise on further induction procedures.

The next meeting of the Board is on ..... at 7.30pm in the school staff room.

Yours sincerely,

Parish Priest

**Appendix 3**

**ST MARY'S PARISH EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD  
LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE & COMMITMENT**

Date:

From:

To:           The Parish Priest  
              St Mary's Catholic Church  
              91 Manning Road  
              EAST MALVERN 3145

Dear Father,

I formally accept your offer of appointment to the St. Mary's Parish Education Board and commit myself to being an active member of the Board.

I understand the ethos, values and standards of the Catholic Church and will wholeheartedly support the vision of the Parish, the School and the Parish Education Board and promise to work for the common good of all.

I realise that membership of the Parish Education Board is an important leadership role within the Parish Community, a role that witnesses to the words and actions of Christ.

Yours sincerely,

## **Appendix 4**

# **ST MARY'S PARISH EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD**

## **INDUCTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

A thorough induction process for new Board members will ensure that they are able to contribute effectively to the operation of the Board. The Board Executive will delegate responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the induction process to the Secretary or, in the case of the Secretary being new to the Board, to a current member of the Board.

The key objectives of the induction process are to assist new members to understand:

- the mission and vision of the parish and school;
- the roles and responsibilities of the Board;
- how new Board members can contribute effectively to the operation of the Board, and support the Parish Priest and Principal in achieving the school's mission and vision.

The process outlined below is a suggested pathway for Board induction. The Board Executive may wish to amend the process to suit particular circumstances.

- Prior to their first Board meeting, briefings should be arranged between the new Board member and the Parish Priest, Principal, and Board Chairperson.
- The Principal should ensure that the new Board member is given a tour of the school site and facilities.
- The Secretary of the Board should ensure that copies of the Board Member's Folio are given to the new Board member.
- The Board Executive will arrange follow-up briefings with the new Board member after the first Board meeting and at other appropriate times during the year, and offer ongoing support and guidance.
- The Board Executive will arrange attendance at Board development activities, including Board information seminars offered by the Catholic Education Office, Melbourne (CEOM).

### **Ongoing Board development**

A characteristic of an effective and high performing Parish Education Board is that it is engaged in ongoing Board development activities and programs.

Board development is essentially about Board members participating in programs and activities that will enhance their skills as a Board member and provide further knowledge about the operations of the Board.

### **Professional learning and support for Parish Education Boards**

The CEOM acts as an agent of the Archbishop in facilitating the formation and ongoing support of Parish Education Boards.

The CEOM conducts a program of professional learning activities for Board members that are provided centrally and on a regional basis.

**Appendix 5**

**ST MARY'S PARISH EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**AGENDA**

Tuesday xx/xx/xx  
7.30pm in the School Staff Room

1. Welcome
2. Reflection
3. Apologies
4. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting
5. Business Arising
6. Correspondence
  - a) In
  - b) Out
7. Presentations / Reports
  - a) Parish Priest
  - b) Principal
  - c) Chairperson
  - d) Parents & Friends
  - e) Parish Pastoral Council
8. Reports from Focus Areas or Sub Committees
9. General Business
10. Next Meeting
  - a) Confirmation of date & reflection
  - b) Agenda items on notice

**Appendix 6**

**ST MARY’S PARISH EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**MINUTES**

**DATE:** [insert]

**VENUE:** Staff Room

**TIME:** 7:30-9:30pm

**1. Present:**

**2. Reflection:**

**3. Apologies:**

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION	PERSON	TIMEFRAME
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting	Moved: Seconded:			
5. Business Arising	a) b) c) d)	a) b) c) d)		
6. Correspondence	In) Out)			
<b>7. Presentations &amp; Reports</b>				
a. Parish Priest				
b. Principal				
c. Chairperson				
d. Parents & Friends				
e. Parish Council				
<b>8. Reports from Focus Areas or Sub Committees</b>				
a.				
b.				
c.				
<b>9. General Business</b>				
a.				
b.				
c.				
10. Next Meeting	Date: Time: Reflection: Venue: Items on notice:			

## Appendix 7

# ST MARY'S PARISH EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

## BOARD GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

### 1. Objective

To outline a clear and fair process for members of the Board to raise and resolve a grievance.

### 2. Scope

These procedures cover all members of the Board and cover all grievances between members of the Board and between an individual member and the Board.

### 3. Actions

#### a. Preliminary action

A Board member with a grievance (the complainant) is encouraged to try and resolve the grievance directly with the person(s) concerned. If this is not possible, the complainant may make a complaint in accordance with the steps outlined below.

#### b. Complaint in writing

The complainant must provide to the Board:

- a written statement of the grievance;
- a suggested solution that the complainant believes would settle the grievance.

#### *Appointment of a Grievance Officer*

The Board will appoint a Board member (Grievance Officer) not involved in the particular grievance to investigate the grievance. If it is not possible to appoint an independent Board member as grievance officer, the Board will appoint an external independent investigator. If the independent investigator is not acceptable to both parties, the Board will appoint an alternative external independent investigator.

#### *Investigation by Grievance Officer*

Within 14 working days of receiving the notification of the grievance, the Grievance Officer will:

- gather information to assist with resolving the grievance, including providing the respondent with the statement of the grievance and the opportunity to respond;
- attempt to settle the grievance by using the suggested solution of the complainant (if appropriate) or other appropriate strategies.

Within a further 14 days, the Grievance Officer will write to both parties indicating the outcome of the investigation and specifying any action that has been agreed. A copy of the Grievance Officer's report and any associated documentation will be forwarded as confidential correspondence to the Board.

### **c. External mediation**

If the complainant believes that the grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved by the Grievance Officer, the complainant can request the Board to appoint an independent external mediator.

The mediation process is confidential to the parties involved and no information may be divulged by any party other than as agreed during the course of mediation.

Within 10 working days of receiving the request, the Board will:

- appoint a mediator to hear the grievance;
- advise the parties of the name of the mediator; and
- provide the mediator with a copy of all relevant documentation including that provided by the complainant outlining the grievance.

If the mediator is not acceptable to both parties, the Board will appoint an alternative mediator.

Within 14 working days of appointment, the mediator will:

- interview the complainant, the respondent and other appropriate persons or seek further information the mediator considers necessary;
- where possible, bring the parties together with the aim of obtaining a common understanding of the issues and perspectives of all parties;
- endeavour to obtain outcomes satisfactory to all parties;
- prepare and provide to all parties for signing, a report on the mediation process and its outcomes; and
- submit a copy of the signed report to the Board to report on the outcome of the process.

On receipt of the Mediator's report the Chairperson of the Board will:

- provide a written statement to the complainant and the respondent setting out the Board's suggested course of action (if any); and
- report to the Board regarding the resolution (or other outcome) of the grievance between the parties.

**The report to the parties and the Board will signify the conclusion of the Board's involvement in the Grievance Process and Procedure.**

### **d. Further action**

If the complainant believes that the grievance has not been satisfactorily resolved through the process outlined above, it is open to the complainant to take further action through an external forum

**These Procedures were approved by the Parish Education Advisory Board on:**

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Appendix 8

**ST MARY'S PARISH EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD  
RESIGNATION FORM**

Date:

From:

To:           The Parish Priest  
              St Mary's Catholic Church  
              91 Manning Road  
              EAST MALVERN 3145

Dear Father,

I give notice that I am resigning from my position within the St Mary's Parish Education Board to take effect as from .....

I would like to take the opportunity to .....

Yours sincerely,