



CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn



Merici College
School Community Council Charter



Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. The School Community Council	2
3. Role of the Council	2
4. Council Structure	3
4.1 Community Members	3
4.2 Council Executive.....	3
4.3 Ex-Officio Members	4
4.4 Vacant Positions	4
4.5 Working Groups	4
5. Planning.....	5
6. Roles of individuals.....	5
6.1 The Chair.....	5
6.2 Secretary.....	5
6.3 The Principal.....	6
6.4 The Parish Priest.....	6
6.5 The Treasurer and Finance Administrator	6
6.6 Working Group Leads	7
7. Council Meetings.....	7
8. Record Keeping.....	7
9. Management of Funds.....	8
10. Amendment.....	8
11. Dissolution	8

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Merici College (**school**) operates with the consent of the Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn and as part of Catholic Education Canberra and Goulburn (**CECG**), where formation and education are based on the mission of Jesus. Jesus Christ, our greatest teacher, calls us to share and witness our Catholic Faith and Tradition, build inclusive communities, and deliver contemporary quality learning opportunities for every person.
- 1.2 The school strives to imbue education within the school with Gospel values and integrate Catholic identity and faith into each student’s educational experience. The school is committed to educating the whole person and the flourishing of each student’s spiritual dimension is seen as an essential element of their schooling.
- 1.3 The participation and involvement of parents, carers and guardians (collectively “Parents”) and staff and students in the life of the school is integral to building an open, inclusive, welcoming and collaborative school community.

2. The School Community Council

- 2.1 The School Community Council (**Council**) provides a crucial point of connection between the school community and school leaders. The Council provides a framework for welcoming parents and other members of the school community to participate in school activities, to become actively involved in the life of the school and to support the mission of Catholic education in the school.
- 2.2 The Council is advisory in nature, though is able to make decisions in relation to the expenditure of money raised through Council led fundraising activities. While the Council does not have governance responsibility or decision-making authority in relation to the school more broadly, the Council provides an important forum for consultation, a means for members of the community to share their skills and talents for the common good, and a framework for the Principal to draw on the collective wisdom and insights of the parent cohort. The Council also provides invaluable support to the school through community led activities.
- 2.3 The Council welcomes participation by all parents and other members of the school community.

3. Role of the Council

- 3.1 The Council, in accordance with the authority entrusted to it by the Archbishop, is to assist the school to fulfill the school’s educational and evangelising mission in accordance with this Charter, the approved School Community Council Guidelines for the school and any applicable CECG policies
- 3.2 The Council has a key role in supporting the community of parents, students and staff at the school.
- 3.3 Specifically, the role of the Council is to, according to local priorities:
 - a) support the Principal and Parish Priest to develop and promote Catholic Identity, the ethos and mission of the school;
 - b) support the Principal to make strategic decisions relating to the school as part of the consultative process outlined at 3.4 of this Charter;
 - c) promote the school in the local community;
 - d) support the Principal and the school to raise funds for the school through community led fundraising activities, with Council Working Groups operating to co-ordinate the delivery of these activities;
 - e) provide support to the Principal and the school to foster relationships and connections within the school community by developing and delivering community building activities; and

f) provide support to the Principal to foster Parish-school connections.

3.4 The Principal will consult with the Council on:

- a) the Annual Improvement Plan,
- b) the School Master Plan,
- c) the School Strategic Plan,
- d) school expenditure priorities particularly as they relate to funds raised through Council led fundraising activities,
- e) any substantial changes to school policies, uniforms, school enterprises (such as school age care, canteen, uniform pools) or school start and finish times, and
- f) other matters identified as relevant to the Council as determined by the Principal or Parish Priest.

3.5 The Council is not a discrete legal entity and:

- a) has no authority over the day-to-day operation or management of the school;
- b) cannot enter into contracts and/or loans or commit the operational funds of the school.

4. Council Structure

4.1 Community Members

4.1.1 All Parents of students attending the school are Community Members of the Council.

4.1.2 Community Members are encouraged and welcome to attend Council meetings, and to participate in Council led activities as set out in the annual School Community Council Plan.

4.1.3 Community Members are encouraged to share their wisdom, leverage their interests and talents and contribute to the activities of Council in a way that balances their personal commitments with the available opportunities to participate in the school community.

4.2 Council Executive

4.2.1 Where the position of Chair and and/or Secretary is vacant, during Term 4, following an Expression of Interest Process, two members from the Community Members of Council will be elected by the Community Members to undertake the role of Chair and/or Secretary of the Council for the following year.

4.2.2 If Council will lead fundraising activities at the school, the Community Members will also elect a Treasurer. If no nominations are received for the position of Treasurer, the Principal may appoint a member of staff to perform the duties of the Treasurer.

4.2.3 The Chair, Secretary and Treasurer (if elected or appointed) will hold office for the term set out in the approved School Community Council Guidelines.

4.2.4 The Chair, Secretary, Treasurer (if elected or appointed), Principal and Parish Priest together comprise the Council Executive. Members of the Council Executive are responsible for overseeing the activities of Working Groups and assisting Council to fulfill its role.

4.2.5 The Council Executive as set out in 4.2.4 may appoint a minimum of zero and a maximum of eight additional members to the Council Executive in accordance with the approved School Community Council Guidelines following an expression of interest process. These members may be other Community Members of Council, Working Group Leads, representatives from the Parish, members of

school staff or current students attending the school or those that may have attended the school as a student previously.

- 4.2.6 Alternatively, Community Members of Council may elect a minimum of zero and a maximum of eight additional Community Members to the Council Executive each year.
- 4.2.7 Members of the Council Executive will hold office for the term set out in the approved School Community Council Guidelines.
- 4.2.8 All Council Executive members should maintain themselves in spiritual growth, motivation, commitment and competence according to the values and traditions of the Catholic faith.
- 4.2.9 The Council Executive may meet as required, though generally no less than four times each year, with minutes of Council Executive meetings to be tabled at the next meeting of Council.
- 4.2.10 Council Executive meetings may take place in person or online and where appropriate should be open to all Community Members.

4.3 Ex-Officio Members

- 4.3.1 The Principal and the Parish Priest are ex-officio members of the Council Executive. The Principal should, where possible, attend all meetings. The Parish Priest may moderate their attendance at meetings, depending on local priorities.
- 4.3.2 The Principal may request other school staff members to attend Council or Council Executive meetings as appropriate to support the work of the Council and to assist Council Executive members.

4.4 Vacant Positions

- 4.4.1 Council Executive positions will become vacant if:
 - a) A member of the Council Executive resigns by notice in writing; or
 - b) A member of the Council Executive is removed from Office by the Director of CECG.
- 4.4.2 If a Council Executive position is vacant the Council Executive may appoint a Community Member to fill the position for the remainder of the calendar year.

4.5 Working Groups

- 4.5.1 The Council Executive may set up Working Groups to undertake activities in line with the annual School Community Council Plan. Each Working Group must have a clear terms of reference that has been endorsed by the Council Executive.
- 4.5.2 All Community Members are welcome and encouraged to participate in the activities of Working Groups.
- 4.5.3 Each Working Group operates under the direction of the Council Executive and may be disbanded by the Council Executive as required.
- 4.5.4 Each Working Group will be led by a Working Group Lead, appointed by the Council Executive, following an Expression of Interest process. Working Group Leads are encouraged to attend meetings of the Council Executive as required.
- 4.5.5 Each Working Group Lead is required to provide a regular update on the Working Group's progress at Council meetings.

5. Planning

- 5.1 To assist the Council to fulfil its role the Council Executive is responsible for the development of an annual School Community Council Plan and, if fundraising is to be undertaken, an annual Council budget, for each calendar year.

Annual School Community Council Plan

- 5.2 The annual School Community Council Plan will outline the activities that the Council will undertake each year. The annual School Community Council Plan will be approved by the Council Executive and will be tabled at the first Council meeting of the school year.

Annual Council Budget

- 5.4 If fundraising is to be undertaken, an annual Council budget must be prepared by Treasurer in consultation with the Principal and Chair of the Council. The budget must outline the purposes for which the fundraising will be undertaken each year, and the anticipated income and expenditure projected for each project or activity. The annual Council budget must be expressly endorsed by the Principal prior to approval.
- 5.5 The annual Council budget will generally be approved by the Council Executive and tabled at the next meeting of the Council.
- 5.6 The Treasurer will provide regular reports on income and expenditure against the annual council budget at Council Executive and Council meetings.

6. Roles of individuals

6.1 The Chair

- 6.1.1 The Chair provides leadership and direction for the Council by working cooperatively and collaboratively with the Principal and Parish Priest to assist the Council to fulfill its role and:
- works with the Principal and the Council Executive to develop and approve the annual School Community Council Plan and coordinates the Council to deliver the events and activities contained therein,
 - works with the Principal and Secretary to develop the agenda for each Council meeting,
 - presides at meetings of the Council Executive and Council as Chairperson, and if absent, nominates another Council Executive Member to preside,
 - ensures the efficient running of meetings,
 - ensures that minutes of the previous meeting are endorsed as being an accurate record of what took place, and
 - ensures that the Council Executive provides regular reports to Council meetings and otherwise keeps the school community up to date on the activities of Council.

6.2 Secretary

- 6.2.1 The Secretary provides a key role in coordinating the activities of the Council and:
- prepares the agenda for each Council meeting in consultation with the Chair and Principal,
 - circulates the agenda and any relevant meeting papers at least five days before scheduled Council meetings,

- c) records the minutes of the meeting and ensures that they are ready to be tabled for endorsement at the following Council meeting; and
- d) maintains a register and record of Council meetings, and Working Groups, including all applicable documentation and records such as minutes, agendas, and correspondence.

6.3 The Principal

6.3.1 The Principal works in collaboration with the Parish Priest, school staff, members of the school community, and CECG staff to deliver educational programs and services at the school in accordance with the school's mission, vision and purpose and the strategic priorities of the school.

6.3.2 In the context of the Council, the role of the Principal is to:

- a) in collaboration with the Chair develop the annual School Community Council Plan each year for the following year that specifies the goals and priorities of the Council,
- b) work with the Chair and Secretary to set the agenda for each Council meeting,
- c) make arrangements with the Secretary to maintain a register and record of Council meetings, and working groups, including all applicable documentation and records such as minutes, agendas, and correspondence;
- d) endorse the annual Council budget, and
- e) consult with the Council Executive or the Council on:
 - the Annual Improvement Plan,
 - the School Master Plan,
 - the School's Strategic Plan,
 - school expenditure priorities particularly as they relate to funds raised through Council led fundraising activities,
 - any substantial changes to school policies, uniforms, school enterprises (such as school-age care, canteen, uniform pools), or school start and finish times, and
 - other matters identified as relevant to the Council as determined by the Principal or Parish Priest in consultation with the Council.

6.4 The Parish Priest

6.4.1 The Parish Priest is the custodian of mission within the Parish.

6.4.2 In the context of the school Council, the role of the Parish Priest is to:

- a) guide the Council in its deliberations to ensure appropriate focus on Catholic mission and purpose; and
- b) support the Principal and Council in the development and implementation of the sacramental program to ensure the school is faithful to its distinctive Catholic identity and spirituality.

6.5 The Treasurer and Finance Administrator

6.5.1 If Council will lead fundraising activities at the school, the Community Members will also elect a Treasurer or one will be appointed by the Principal. The Treasurer is responsible for developing the annual Council budget, for ensuring the appropriate collection of funds raised through Council led activities and ensuring that the expenditure of funds occurs in accordance with the approved annual Council budget.

- 6.5.2 The Treasurer will work closely with the Finance Administrator who will be a member of staff nominated by the Principal to support the Treasurer to collect money raised through community led fundraising activities, account for this money through the school accounts and expend this money in accordance with the approved annual council budget.
- 6.5.3 The Treasurer, in collaboration with the Finance Administrator, will provide regular reports to Council on funds raised through Council led fundraising activities.

6.6 Working Group Leads

- 6.6.1 Each Working Group Lead is responsible for:
- a) ensuring the Working Group operates within the Terms of Reference approved by the Council Executive for the project, event or activity,
 - b) appointing members of the Working Group from Community Members of the Council or staff at the school,
 - c) coordinating members of the Working Group to discuss, plan and deliver the project, event or activity,
 - d) attending meetings of the Council Executive to obtain approval/endorsement of the Working Groups Plans, and
 - e) attending Council meetings to report on the project, event or activity and planning and delivery associated with that project, event or activity.

7. Council Meetings

- 7.1 A Council meeting of Community Members will be held at least two times each calendar year. These meetings are open to all Community Members of Council.
- 7.2 Agendas should be available to Community Members before each Council meeting.
- 7.3 The Chair will preside at Council meetings and minutes will be taken at each meeting by the Secretary.
- 7.4 The Principal will provide a Principal's report at each meeting and discuss a topic or topics of the Council Executive's choosing at the meeting in line with the annual schedule of activities.
- 7.5 If a Treasurer has been elected, the Treasurer in collaboration with the Finance administrator, will provide a Treasurer's report at each meeting.
- 7.6 If Working Groups have been established, each Working Group Lead will provide a report at each meeting.
- 7.7 Council meetings may take place in person or online.

8. Record Keeping

- 8.1 As a minimum, the Principal, in conjunction with the Secretary must ensure the maintenance of the following council documents and records:
- a) the Council Charter (this document),
 - b) a copy of each annual schedule of activities,
 - c) the agenda and minutes of the Council,
 - d) a register of the current members of the Council Executive, including dates of appointment,
 - e) a register of Working Groups, and

f) reports provided to Council by the Principal and Treasurer.

9. Management of Funds

- 9.1 All funds raised through Council led fundraising activities are to be collected and accounted for through the school accounts and coded in the school finance system explicitly as income generated by Council.
- 9.2 Funds raised through Council led fundraising activities:
- (a) can only be expended for the purposes of the school, and
 - (b) can only be expended in accordance with the approved annual Council Budget, or
 - (c) can only be expended in accordance with a resolution carried by the majority of the Council Executive, and
 - (d) do not form part of the school's operating or capital budget; and
 - (e) cannot be used for the purposes of the Catholic Education Office or for the purposes of any other school.
- 9.3 Funds raised through Council led fundraising activities should be received electronically where possible. If cash is received must be banked as soon as practicable, or otherwise securely held at the school. The Council does not hold funds in its own right.
- 9.4 The Treasurer, in collaboration with the Finance Administrator, will provide a regular report at each Council Executive and Council meeting. The report will contain information on funds raised through Council led activities and any funds of this nature that have been expended.

10. Amendment

- 10.1 This School Community Council Charter may be amended with the approval of the Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn or the Archbishop's delegate.

11. Dissolution

- 11.1 The Council may only be dissolved at the direction of the Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn at any time. Upon dissolution, any income that has been generated by Council led fundraising activities that remains in the school account will be distributed in accordance with the directions of the Director of Catholic Education Canberra Goulburn, in consultation with the Council Executive as the Executive existed prior to dissolution.