



St. Bernard's

Catholic Primary School, East Coburg

School Advisory Council – Expression of Interest

The School Advisory Council is a living expression of the principle of subsidiarity in action and is informed by the theology and vision articulated in the MACS Statement of Mission

<https://www.macs.vic.edu.au/About-Us/Our-mission.aspx#:~:text=MACS%20Statement%20of%20Mission,is%20deeply%20and%20enduringly%20humanising.&text=Education%20is%20integral%20to%20the,to%20proclaim%20the%20Good%20News.>)

and the Working Together in Mission charter

https://www.macs.vic.edu.au/MelbourneArchdioceseCatholicSchools/media/Documentation/Documents/SAC/MACS_Working-Together_WEB1.pdf

The School Advisory Council provides a forum for discussion and discernment, where parent voice and community perspective are available to inform and support the decisions made by the principal and parish priest as the custodian of mission for the good of school and parish where students' wellbeing and outcomes are paramount.

Serving on the School Advisory Council of a Catholic school is a form of Church lay ministry. It is a response to the call to support the local Catholic parish and school communities in a particular way. It is also a means for members of our community to share their skills and talents for the common good.

The School Advisory Council does not have governance responsibility, it supports the principal and school leadership and provides an important connection to the parish. The primary role of members of the SAC is to provide assistance and advice on school matters to support the principal in their leadership role

The process of appointment is preceded by discernment to assist potential new council members to understand:

- the vision and mission of MACS, the parish and school
- the roles, responsibilities and processes of MACS and the St Bernard's Primary School Advisory Council
- how council members can support the principal and the parish priest
- the appropriateness of their personal readiness to serve.

A discernment process ensures that those who have expressed an interest have had an opportunity to discern their readiness to serve. This process at St Bernard's Primary School includes:

- reflecting on the mission of MACS and the school
- exploring the shared understanding that serving on the School Advisory Council is a means for members of our community to share their skills and talents for the common good
- interviewing those who submitted an expression of interest
- sharing known background information about the potential members – with observance of privacy laws and confidentiality
- considering the good character of the person and their disposition
- guaranteeing a balance of gender, cultural diversity and skill sets on the School Advisory Council.

Key considerations in the appointment of SAC members include

- Child Safe Standards
- Code of Conduct for School Advisory Council members
- Conflict of interest
- Diversity

The period of appointment for council members, except the parish priest, the principal and any other exofficio appointment, is generally a term of three years, ending on the conclusion of the third year following their appointment, with the option of being reappointed for a total of three consecutive terms

School Advisory Councils:

- are not the governing body of a school
- do not have a decision-making authority (WTiM)
- do not have a legal identity
- do not become involved in the day-to-day management of the school
- are not a forum for parent advocacy or special interest representation
- are not a parents and friends association
- are not a fundraising forum or fete-organising committee

While no particular expertise is required, the school seeks people with a range of diverse skill sets. Anyone interested in becoming a member of the St Bernard's Primary School Advisory Council may seek advice from the principal, or parish priest on the process of appointment. Consideration will also be given to succession planning through staggered renewal of members to ensure continuing institutional memory

There are currently 8 members of our SAC including Fr Leo, Phil Pearson & myself as ex- officio members and 5 parents / parishioners . We will have 2 vacancies on our School Advisory Council for next year. If you are interested in applying to become a member of the SAC, we would welcome your application in writing **to Joanne Doherty by Friday 22nd November**. Further information regarding the next phase of the process will then be provided to those who have expressed their interest.