

Catholic Schools Parents & Friends Association Constitution

Dated December 2018



Bishop's Commission For
Catholic Schools Policy



Catholic Schools Office
Diocese of Armidale

Parents and Friends Association Constitution

Terms of the Constitution

1.0 Name

This Association shall be known as St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Armidale Parents and Friends Association.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 The following definitions will apply in this constitution:

Ad Hoc Committee	Committee created for a specific task or purpose as necessary;
Advisory	Giving advice, information or opinion regarding action to be taken and is not managerial in nature;
Advisory Council	Catholic School Advisory Council;
AGM	Annual General Meeting;
Annual General Meeting	A yearly meeting of the members of the Association especially for holding elections and reporting on the year's events;
Association	Refers to Parents and Friends/Parents, Teachers and Friends Association;
Bishop	The Bishop of the Diocese of Armidale;
BCCS	Bishop's Commission for Catholic Schools;
Church	The Catholic Church;
Committee	School Advisory Council or P&F Association committee or working party established for a specific task;
Diocese	Diocese of Armidale;
Ex officio	This Latin term means "by virtue of his or her office". The Principal and Parish Priest are members because of their positions. Ex officio members have full voting rights;
General Meeting	A meeting open to all members of the Association;
Parent	The parent or carer of a child enrolled at the school;

Parish	The Cathedral Parish of Armidale;
Parish Priest	The Parish Priest/Administrator of Armidale;
Principal	The Principal of St Mary's School, Armidale;
SAC	School Advisory Council;
School	St Mary's School, Armidale;
School community	All members of the school community;
Simple Majority	A majority in which the highest number of votes cast for any one candidate, issue or item exceeds the second highest number, while not constituting an absolute majority;
Standing Committee	Committees which have an on-going role and are elected annually;

3.0 Authority

- 3.1 Parents and Friends Associations have been approved by the Bishop for the service of the Church and the Catholic school communities in the Diocese of Armidale.
- 3.2 The Constitution is issued by the Bishop's Commission for Catholic Schools, Diocese of Armidale, with the authority of the Bishop.

4.0 Aims

- 4.1 The Association recognises and values the role that parents/carers play in the education of their children and aims to strengthen the partnership between family, school, parish and the wider community for the benefit of the faith formation, development and learning of all of the students of the school.
- 4.2 The giving of encouragement and support to parents in fulfilling their responsibilities and engagement with the Catholic education of their children at home and at school.
- 4.3 Providing opportunities for parents to gain insights into the life of the school, current developments in education and Catholic education in particular.
- 4.4 Providing opportunities to support the faith formation of all members of the school community.
- 4.5 Reaching out to all associated with the school to build a friendly and welcoming community which seeks to involve all its members.
- 4.6 Promoting the principles of Catholic Education.
- 4.7 Fostering a distinctive Catholic environment in the school.

- 4.8 Providing a means for parents through the school to affiliate with a Diocesan Parent Association and thus the Council of Catholic School Parents.
- 4.9 Raising funds to provide resources and opportunities for enriching the learning environment and well being of all students at the school.
- 4.10 Providing support for school maintenance programs.

5.0 Limitations

- 5.1 The Association has no legal identity separate from the school. It is a support body, established under the auspices of the Principal, who is responsible for carrying out the policies and directives of the Bishop and the Catholic Schools Office, Diocese of Armidale.
- 5.2 The Association recognises the role of the Parish Priest with regard to decisions involving school/parish property and the established protocols of the school and the parish.
- 5.3 The Association recognises the role and responsibility of the Principal in making decisions relating to the school and/or activity using the school's name, facilities and/ or resources.
- 5.4 The Association has no authority in the day-to-day operation or management of the school.
- 5.5 The Association does not exercise authority over the teaching staff, children or educational issues relevant to specific children.
- 5.6 The Association shall seek the consent of the Principal before undertaking any activities.
- 5.7 The Association shall seek the consent of the Principal and the Parish Priest for any activities which affect the parish or school property and its use.
- 5.8 Parents and Friends Associations are not for profit organisations. No member of the Association will receive a financial advantage from the Association. All monies that the Association raises are to be directed towards the objectives of the school community.

6.0 Membership

- 6.1 The Principal and the Parish Priest are ex-officio members of the Association and its committees.
- 6.2 All parents/carers of students attending the school, school staff and friends of the school who are interested in supporting the aims of the Association are members.
- 6.3 Friends can be parishioners, alumni of the school and the parents/carers of former pupils.
 - 6.3.1 These shall be entitled to vote only after qualifying by attendance at two of the previous four General meetings of the Association.
 - 6.3.2 A register of qualified friends is to be kept by the Secretary.

- 6.4 All members of the Association when engaged in authorised activities of the Association, or performing duties associated with their position in the Association are deemed to be volunteers and as such are covered by the policy held with Catholic Church Insurance (CCI).

7.0 Management

7.1 The Executive Committee/Office Bearers:

- 7.1.1 The Executive Committee is responsible for the management of the Association.
- 7.1.2 The Executive Committee comprises the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, together with the ex-officio members and any other members elected at the Annual General Meeting according to local need.
- 7.1.3 The Principal and Parish Priest are ex-officio members of the Executive Committee and have the voting rights of other members.
- 7.1.4 The Executive Committee has the power to make financial decisions at Executive Meetings, on behalf of the Association and within the limits of this constitution.
 - 7.1.4.1 The Executive Committee should only deal with matters that are urgent or of a sensitive nature and must ensure such action is minuted at the next general meeting of the Association.

7.2 Responsibilities of Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is responsible for:

- 7.2.1 Organising an appropriate induction process for Executive members.
- 7.2.2 Identifying and using opportunities that promote the Aims of the Association.
- 7.2.3 Ensuring the Association works collaboratively and cooperatively with the Principal and Parish Priest.
- 7.2.4 Ensuring the Association works collaboratively with the School Advisory Council.
- 7.2.5 Organising General Meetings of the Association in accordance with this Constitution.
- 7.2.6 Ensuring the Association's financial accountability in accordance with the Financial Policies and directives of the BCCS and this Constitution. See 8.4.
- 7.2.7 Providing a quarterly financial report to the nominated Catholic Schools Office Officer.
- 7.2.8 Establishing and supervising committees that assist with the work of the Association in accordance with this Constitution.

7.3 Method of operation of the Executive Committee

- 7.3.1 The Executive Committee shall consult with the Principal for the effective planning and management of the Association.
- 7.3.2 The Executive Committee shall consult prior to each General Meeting for the purpose of preparing the agenda and finalising arrangements for the General Meeting.
- 7.3.3 These consultations may be conducted via telephone, email or other electronic means.
- 7.3.4 The Executive Committee shall also meet at the request of the Principal or when at least half of the members of the Executive Committee request, in writing, such a meeting. This meeting must include the Principal or Principal's nominee.

8.0 Duties of the Executive Committee

8.1 The President

- 8.1.1 Provides leadership and direction for the Association by working cooperatively and collaboratively with the Principal and the Parish Priest.
- 8.1.2 Promotes the aims of the Association in dealing with its members.
- 8.1.3 Supports members of the Executive Committee.
- 8.1.4 Presides at meetings of the Association as Chairperson, and if absent, nominates the Vice President or another member of the Executive Committee to preside.
- 8.1.5 Ensures the efficient running of meetings.
- 8.1.6 Prepares the agenda in consultation with the Executive Committee.
- 8.1.7 Ensures the minutes of the previous meeting are endorsed as being an accurate record of what took place.
- 8.1.8 Prepares and presents the President's Report at the Annual General Meeting of the Association.

8.2 The Vice President

- 8.2.1 The Vice President assists the President and fulfils the duties of the President when the President is unavailable.

8.3 The Secretary

- 8.3.1 Manages the day-to-day communications and records of the Association.

- 8.3.2 Assists in the organising of meetings, records accurate draft minutes in a style agreed to by the Executive Committee and ensures they are formalised as agreed to by the General Meeting.
- 8.3.3 Receives and deals with correspondence in a manner agreed upon by the Executive Committee.
- 8.3.4 Maintains copies of the minutes of the General Meeting.
- 8.3.5 Receives agenda items in accordance with this Constitution.
- 8.3.6 Informs members of forthcoming meetings in accordance with this Constitution.
- 8.3.7 Provides the minutes for inspection of any member who so requests it.
- 8.3.8 Passes on records, in good order, to the incoming Secretary.

8.4 The Treasurer

- 8.4.1 Is responsible for ensuring that all the financial dealings of the Association are carried out in accordance with this Constitution.
- 8.4.2 Receives all monies and keeps appropriate financial records in accordance with this Constitution and the directives of the Bishop's Commission for Catholic Schools and the Catholic Schools Office.
- 8.4.3 Presents, at each General Meeting, a statement of accounts showing current receipts and expenditure together with the latest reconciled bank statement.
- 8.4.4 Organises the annual audit of income and expenditure in accordance with this Constitution and presents the Annual Financial Report of the Association.
- 8.4.5 Passes on records, in good order, to the incoming Treasurer.
- 8.4.6 Is responsible for providing a quarterly financial report to the nominated Catholic Schools Office Officer.

9.0 Election of the Executive Committee

- 9.1 The members of the Association, at the Annual General Meeting, shall elect all members of the Executive Committee as mentioned in this Constitution.
- 9.2 Notice of the AGM is to be published in the school newsletter and/or on the school website at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting. The notice should include the list of Executive Officer positions to be elected at the AGM.
- 9.3 Nominations for Executive Committee roles will be called through publication in the school newsletter and/or on the school website at least fourteen (14) days prior to the Meeting. A nomination form will be provided with this call for nomination and will also be available from the school.

- 9.4 A staff member who is also a parent of a student at the school is not eligible for appointment to the Executive Committee because of the potential for conflict of interest between the staff member's parental and staff role.
- 9.5 Candidates for the Executive Committee are to be nominated and seconded by members of the Association. If there is a greater number of candidates than required, an election is to be held by secret ballot and shall be decided by simple majority.
- 9.6 Only members of the Association who are present at a meeting may vote in any election.
- 9.7 The returning officer for any election is the Principal or the Principal's nominee.
- 9.8 Any casual vacancy on the Executive Committee shall be filled by the Executive Committee, and the member so appointed shall hold office until the conclusion of the AGM next following the date of appointment.

10.0 Re-election and Term of Office

- 10.1 At the Annual General Meeting all members of the Executive Committee shall retire but may be eligible for re-election.
- 10.2 Members of the Executive Committee can serve for up to five (5) consecutive years, within which a person shall not hold the same position on the Executive Committee for more than three (3) consecutive years.

11.0 Termination of Office

- 11.1 The position of any officer of the Executive Committee absent from any two consecutive General Meetings without reasonable cause may be declared vacant.
- 11.2 Providing due notice of a motion specifying the grounds for removal has first been given, a member of the Executive Committee may be removed from office by resolution of the Association carried out at a General or Special General Meeting. The Principal, as an ex-officio Executive Committee member, shall be in attendance at the meeting.
- 11.3 The Secretary shall notify the affected elected official within seven (7) days of such notice.
- 11.4 A member of the Executive may resign during their elected term of office, by giving written notice to the Executive Committee.

12.0 General Meetings

- 12.1 A General Meeting of the Association shall be held at least once every term during the school year.
- 12.2 General meetings shall be held within the precincts of the school.

- 12.3 All meetings of the Association shall begin and end with a prayer led by a member of the Association.
- 12.4 A quorum for all General meetings shall be decided by each Association according to the size of the school community, but shall include the Principal or nominee, at least two (2) Executive members and the number of Association members shall at least equal ex-officio and Executive Committee members.
- 12.5 Should, following fifteen minutes after the scheduled time for a meeting, a quorum not be present, the meeting may be adjourned to such other time as the majority of voters present may resolve.
- 12.6 No meeting shall continue beyond one and half-hours unless after a motion by the President, a two-thirds majority of those present agree to an extension of one further half-hour.
- 12.7 Notice of all General Meetings shall be given at least fourteen (14) days prior in the school newsletter and/or school website and shall indicate the need for members to send agenda items, in writing, to the Secretary at least seven (7) days before the date of the meeting. If that member cannot attend to talk to the agenda item they shall make available a paper to provide a basis for discussion. This can be in simple dot point form.
- 12.8 Proxy votes on any motion published with notice, shall be accepted, provided they are presented in writing at the commencement of the meeting.
- 12.9 All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with standard meeting procedures.
- 12.10 In the event that the Association cannot reach consensus on a matter under discussion then a simple majority of votes shall decide the matter after it is put to the vote.
- 12.10.1 In the case of an equality of votes the person appointed to chair the meeting shall have a second or casting vote Or in the event of equality of voting the motion should be lost or defer until the next meeting for consideration.

13.0 Order of Business at General Meetings

- 13.1 The order of business at General Meetings is as follows, unless the majority of those present agree to change the order.
- 13.1.1 Prayer, Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome.
- 13.1.2 Record of Attendance and apologies.
- 13.1.3 Confirmation and acceptance of the minutes of previous meeting.
- 13.1.4 Business arising from those minutes not covered in the agenda.
- 13.1.5 Correspondence incoming and outgoing.
- 13.1.6 Reports from Principal, President, Treasurer and Committees.
- 13.1.7 General Business:
- 13.7.1.1 Matters arising from the Reports;

13.7.2.2 Matters on notice;

13.7.2.3 Matters for further consideration;

13.1.8 Confirmation of next meeting date.

13.1.9 Conclusion and prayer.

14.0 Annual General Meeting

14.1 The Annual General Meeting shall be held in Term 1 each year.

14.2 Notice of the Annual General Meeting shall be published in the School Newsletter and/or on the school website at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting and shall indicate the need for members to send agenda items or notice of motions to the Secretary, in writing, at least seven (7) days prior to the date of the meeting. The notice shall include the list of Executive positions to be elected at the meeting.

14.3 The order of business is as follows:

14.3.1 Prayer, Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome

14.3.2 Record of Attendance and Apologies

14.3.3 Confirmation of the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting

14.3.4 Business arising from the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting

14.3.5 Correspondence incoming and outgoing relating to Annual General Meeting

14.3.6 Annual Report of the Principal

14.3.7 Annual Report of the President

14.3.8 Annual Report of the Treasurer (pending audited accounts as at 31 December)

14.3.9 Annual Report of other Committees

14.3.10 Election of the Executive Committee according to Clause 8 of this constitution

14.3.11 Special Business where notice of motions have been presented

14.4 On completion of the AGM the new office bearers assume their roles and conduct a general meeting.

15.0 Special General Meetings

15.1 A Special General Meeting is a mechanism for supporting the continued operation of the Association in unusual circumstances.

- 15.2 A Special General Meeting can be called on the authority of the Executive or on the written request to the Executive Committee by members of six (6) individual families.
- 15.3 A Special General meeting can also be called on the authority of the Principal in the event of there not being a properly constituted Executive Committee or
 - 15.3.1 If in the opinion of the Principal, and following consultation with the Parish Priest and the Deputy Director CSO, the Association is not fulfilling its aims.
- 15.4 A Special General Meeting must be held within 28 days of the request being received by the Secretary, or, if that 28 day period expires on a date which is not within a school term, within 14 days of the commencement of the next school term.
- 15.5 At least seven (7) days notice of the Special General Meeting shall be given in a School Newsletter and/or on the school website. The object of the meeting shall be clearly stated.
- 15.6 A quorum for a Special General meeting must include the Principal or nominee and at least three (3) members of the Executive Committee and at least six (6) other Association members.

16.0 Funds

- 16.1 The Association shall develop strategies for fundraising that consider the community's ability to raise funds.
- 16.2 No fundraising activity is to be undertaken without the consent of the Principal.
- 16.3 No fundraising activity is to be undertaken without a clear and stated purpose.
- 16.4 All funds shall be used solely for the Aims of the Association.
- 16.5 The Association participates in the mission of the Church and centres its vision on the teachings of Christ. Through solidarity and fraternity the Association shall consciously work for the fair distribution of goods and resources in all of its fundraising transactions.
- 16.6 The Association shall be mindful of the BCCS Policy Statement *Collection for Charitable Works in Catholic Systemic Schools in the Diocese of Armidale*.
- 16.7 The Association shall be mindful of the requirements of the NSW Education Act and Guidelines 2015 which states: *To be eligible for NSW Government funding under the Act, registered non-government schools must only use school income and school assets for the operation of the school.*
- 16.8 All funds raised by or on behalf of the Association shall be banked promptly and fully intact into an account in the name of the Association and all expenses paid by cheque or electronic transfer.
- 16.9 All funds of the Association shall be banked or invested with the Armidale Diocesan Investment Group (ADIG).

17.0 Operation of Funds

- 17.1 Authorised signatories for the Association account are the following: President, Treasurer, Secretary, Principal. Two signatures, one of whom shall be the Principal, are required on all cheques. Two authorisations, one of whom is the Principal, are required for all electronic transfers.
- 17.2 Apart from agreed allocation of petty cash, no commitment shall be entered into for expenditure of funds raised by the Association, except by resolution of a General Meeting.
- 17.3 Executive Committee decision for out of session urgent allocation of monies is permitted. The matters shall be reported and minuted at the next general meeting of the Association. The members needed for a decision on any such urgent allocations shall include the Principal, and two executive committee members.
- 17.4 At the end of their term of office, retiring members' signatures/authorisations shall be removed and replaced by the signatures/authorisations of the incoming members.
- 17.5 Funds shall be transferred from the Association account to the School account for the agreed upon purchase of goods and services.
- 17.6 All items of equipment purchased with funds raised by the Association shall become the property of the school.
- 17.7 All amounts received shall be receipted and all accounts must be paid promptly
- 17.8 The Association shall not borrow money
- 17.9 The directives of the Bishop, the BCCS and the CSO shall be followed in regard to the conduct of financial matters and the keeping of records.
- 17.10 The requirements of civil and canon law shall be followed.
- 17.11 Accounts shall be audited each year.
 - 17.11.1 Income and expenditure must be audited as at 31 December each year.
 - 17.11.2 The appointed auditor shall possess appropriate skills and experience in auditing and financial record management. The auditor shall not be an Executive Officer of the association and must not have or appear to have any conflict of interest arising from a personal or business relationship with an executive officer of the association.
 - 17.11.3 The Annual Audit of income and expenditure shall be completed by 31 March each year and a copy given to the Principal.
 - 17.11.4 The Annual Audit shall be presented for acceptance at the Annual General Meeting of the year or at the first General meeting after completion of audit.

18.0 Allocation of Funds

- 18.1 The Executive Committee consults with the Principal to agree on a list of needs and suggests priorities for ratification at a General Meeting, either in the first or last term of each year. These

priorities should be in alignment with the school's strategic planning and always be considerate of the community's ability to raise funds.

- 18.2 The Association may only allocate and disburse funds for school purposes after consulting with the Principal about the school's priorities and obtaining the consent of the Principal. Agreed funds are to be presented as soon as practicable.
- 18.3 Funds are transferred to the school as a donation to support and contribute to the resourcing of the school's strategic plan.
 - 18.3.1 P&F purchases will be made through the school and then reimbursed as a donation to enable the school to claim the GST credit.
 - 18.3.2 All donations are to be transferred expeditiously, in full, and without restriction.
- 18.4 Generally, funds raised should be allocated and disbursed in the calendar year that the funds were raised.
- 18.5 The Association shall not retain funds without a clear and stated purpose.

19.0 Committees

- 19.1 The Association may set up Committees to carry out particular functions on its behalf.
- 19.2 All Committees are to have specific Terms of Reference approved by the Association at a General Meeting and must report their operations to the General Meeting of the Association.
- 19.3 Where possible, all Committees should include at least one member of the Executive Committee.
- 19.4 Committees can also be established as Ad Hoc Committees of the Association and the School Advisory Council to carry out specific functions, tasks or projects and cease after these tasks have been completed. The P&F Association in consultation with the SAC will determine the responsibilities of these committees and the duration of the operation of each committee.
- 19.5 Committees have no discretion to commit funds beyond meeting operational costs.
- 19.6 Ad Hoc committees do not have a constitution separate from the P&F Association, nor a separate set of office bearers. The head of the committee is known as the convenor.
- 19.7 After paying receipted expenses of their operations, the balance of any funds of committees, remain as funds of the Association and, as such, are to be banked in the account in the name of the Association as soon as practicable.

20.0 Dissolution

- 20.1 The Association is automatically dissolved:
 - 20.1.1 if the school closes down;
 - 20.1.2 or is amalgamated.

- 20.2 In certain serious circumstances where it is judged that the functions of the Association are at variance with the vision and mission of Catholic education, the Bishop after consultation with the Director Catholic Schools Office, the Parish Priest and the Principal may intervene and dissolve the Association.
- 20.3 After all expenses and liabilities are met:
- 20.3.1 Where a school is closed under Clause 20.1.1, the remaining assets, records and funds shall be transferred to the Catholic Schools Office;
- 20.3.2 Where a school is amalgamated under Clause 20.1.2, the remaining assets, records and funds shall be transferred to the school/P&F Association of the amalgamated school;
- 20.3.3 Where an Association is dissolved under Clause 20.2, the remaining assets, records and funds shall be transferred to the school for the purposes of the school.

21.0 Amendment of Constitution

- 21.1 This Constitution shall only be changed by resolution at the Annual General Meeting and only after due notice, in writing, shall have been given at a previous General Meeting.
- 21.2 Proposed amendments shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least twenty-one (21) days prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- 21.3 Each proposed amendment shall be signed by a proposer and seconder.
- 21.4 Proposed amendments shall be published in the school newsletter and/or school website at least fourteen (14) days prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- 21.5 All amendments shall be accepted by at least two-thirds of those present at the Annual General Meeting and must be in accordance with the Aims of the Association.
- 21.6 Amendments do not take effect until receiving approval by the Bishop of Armidale through the Deputy Director of the Catholic Schools Office.

We acknowledge the traditional carers and Elders, past and present, across our Diocese with particular acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of lands where Catholic schools are located. As we journey together we pay respect to the spirituality, knowledge and traditions embedded forever within Aboriginal Custodianship of Country.

After approval by the Bishop of Armidale, this Constitution was adopted at a general meeting of the Association on (date dd/mm/yyyy).

Signed:

Name

Name

Association/P&F President

Principal

Date

Date

Effective parental engagement will not happen without concerted effort, time and commitment from both parents and schools. It will not happen unless parents know the difference they make and unless schools reinforce their active engagement in learning.

Harris A, and Goodall J (2009) *Engaging Parents in Raising Achievement: Do Parents Know They Matter?*

Administration:

- ❖ Date the Constitution.
- ❖ Have it signed by the School Principal and President of the Association/P&F.
- ❖ Formally minute its ratification.
- ❖ A signed copy is to be held by the Association/P&F, the Principal and one copy is to be forwarded to the Deputy Director, Catholic Schools Office.

Ethical standards for P&F Association Executive Officers

- ❖ P&F Association Executive Officers will acknowledge that the school is a significant expression of the teaching mission of the Catholic parish and function within the structures of the Catholic Church.
- ❖ P&F Association Executive Officers will give the necessary time to the work of the Association, so that he/she may render effective service.
- ❖ P&F Association Executive Officers will work together in a spirit of harmony and cooperation in spite of differences of opinion that may arise during discussions.
- ❖ P&F Association Executive Officers that may be approached with a problem that is of an internal school administrative nature will refer the person to the Principal.
- ❖ P&F Association Executive Officers will realise that as an individual he/she has no status outside the operation of the Association and must therefore, conduct his/her relationships with all members of the local community on the basis of this reality.
- ❖ P&F Association Executive Officers will never use his/her position in the Association to benefit him or herself or any other individual or agency apart from the total interest of the school.
- ❖ P&F Executive Offices will acknowledge that the welfare of people comes before material things.
- ❖ P&F Executive Officers will work for the good of all members of the community.
- ❖ P&F Executive Officers will be familiar with the provisions of the Constitution, the Catholic Principles of the Primacy of God, Sanctity of Life, Fidelity of Relationships, and the Common Good which support the mission statement of the Diocese of Armidale Catholic Schools Office "To Proclaim Witness and Serve".