CATHOLIC EDUCATION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

TERMS OF REFERENCE

CATHOLIC SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

Good Shepherd Catholic School, Lockridge

Catholic Education Western Australia Limited
ABN 47 634 504 135

Catholic School Advisory Council

Terms of Reference

<Insert Name>

CATHOLIC EDUCATION
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PREAMBLE

The vision for Catholic Education Western Australia Limited (CEWA) is to be a Christ-centred, child-focused community of engaged learning environments, inspiring all to actively live the Gospel. Through Quality Catholic Education, as the elaboration of CEWA's vision, Catholic schools are called to operate in accordance with the four pillars of Catholic Identity, Education, Community and Stewardship.

As part of the Church's mission, Catholic schools contribute to parish life and the close and mutually beneficial working relationships between school leaders, parents and the parish are essential.

A Catholic School Advisory Council (Advisory Council) provides parents and community members with structured ways to provide support and expertise to the Principal and school leadership team. School community members are encouraged to participate on the Advisory Council, and contribute to the commitment to Christ-centred and child-focused learning environments.

The Advisory Council operates in accordance with these Terms of Reference, Quality Catholic Education, Policies, Executive Directives and the Delegations of Authority. The Advisory Council is accountable to the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA).

1. NAME

The name of the Advisory Council is "The Good Shepherd Catholic School Advisory Council."

2. AUTHORITY

2.1 CECWA has established Advisory Councils to provide a local and contextual advisory function for all Principals, enabling the skills and expertise of Catholic school communities to be included within school decision-making processes.

2.2 For CECWA to fulfil its governance and strategic functions, the Advisory Council must operate in accordance with Quality Catholic Education, CEWA Strategic Initiatives 2030, CECWA Policies, Executive Directives and the Delegations of Authority, as amended from time to time.

2.3 This Terms of Reference is issued by CECWA and will be reviewed once every three years or as the need arises.

2.4 The purpose of this Terms of Reference is to establish and provide a consistent approach for the operation of the Advisory Council.

2.5 If the Advisory Council breaches the Terms of Reference, CECWA may dismiss the Advisory Council on the recommendation of the Executive Director.

2.6 In the event of any uncertainty as to the meaning or intent of any clause in these Terms of Reference, the matter must be referred to the Executive Director for interpretation and decision.

3. FUNCTIONS

3.1 The Advisory Council is established to support the Principal to fulfil their responsibilities in leading the Catholic Identity, Education, Community and Stewardship functions of the Catholic school in pursuit of CEWA's vision to be Christ-centred and child-focused.

3.2 The Advisory Council must carry out the following functions:

(a) support planning for the present and future operation of the Catholic school;

(b) provide membership, at the principal's request, on selection panels for the employment of staff to the Catholic school in accordance with the relevant CECWA Policies and Executive Directives;

(c) provide membership on the panel that recommends the appointment of a Principal in accordance with the relevant CECWA Policy and Executive Directives;

(d) in consultation with the Principal, communicate about the Catholic school and about Catholic education to persons and organisations in the School Community;

(e) endorse the Catholic school's annual budget before submission to CECWA for approval; and

(f) advise the Principal on school financial matters such as performance against budget, sustainability, and capital and recurrent planning.

3.3 Requests to change the functions of the Advisory Council to suit local context must be submitted to the Executive Director for consideration.

4. CATHOLIC ETHOS AND FAITH FORMATION

4.1 The Advisory Council, in representing the Catholic School Community, is to actively promote and support the Catholic ethos of the school.

4.2 The Advisory Council must participate in an initial school-based formation, which may include commissioning of Advisory Council members, at the commencement of each school year.

4.3 Advisory Council members must undertake appropriate ongoing faith formation, including formation regarding the Catholic social teaching principles.

5. INSURANCE

5.1 CEWA holds an appropriate insurance policy to cover Advisory Council members and CEWA against losses for any unintentional wrongful act committed.

6. MEMBERSHIP OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

6.1 Advisory Council membership conditions are:

(a) a commitment and desire to promote Catholic education and give service to the Catholic School Community;

(b) a commitment to the safety, wellbeing and pastoral care of all students, staff and the wider Catholic School Community;

(c) an ability to work cooperatively and constructively with the Principal, school leadership team and all other members of the Advisory Council;

(d) the possession of skills, competencies and experience that are reflective of, relevant and beneficial to the Catholic School Community; and

(e) a sufficiency of time to devote to Advisory Council duties.

6.2 The Advisory Council must, where the School Community enables, comprise:

(a) the Principal as an ex-officio member;

(b) a priest as an ex-officio member:

- for a primary school connected to a Parish – the Parish priest; or
- for a secondary school/diocesan school – a priest with an existing relationship with the school, a priest nominated by the zone of priests, or another arrangement approved by the Executive Director.

(c) between four and six persons, with skills and experience relevant to the needs of the school community, elected in the manner provided in Section 8 of this Terms of Reference;

(d) no more than two (additional) persons may be co-opted by the Advisory Council for a period of up to three years if such appointments are considered desirable or necessary; and

(e) in a Parish School, one member of the Parish Council, as nominated by the priest, as an ex-officio member.

6.3 The Advisory Council must invite the following to attend meetings and contribute to the discussions:

(a) one person nominated by the Religious congregations connected to the charism of the School, and

(b) one person nominated by the school Parents and Friends' group.

These attendees are ineligible to vote or serve in officer positions on the Advisory Council.

6.4 In addition to 6.2 the Executive Director may appoint an additional member to the Advisory Council and may dismiss or replace that member.

6.5 Membership of the Advisory Council is for a period of three years.

6.6 Members, other than the Principal, priest or representative of a Religious Congregation, can serve no more than six consecutive years.

6.7 An elected member may resign from the Advisory Council at any time during their term. This notice must be in writing to the Advisory Council Chair and Principal.

6.8 Should a position of elected member of the Advisory Council become vacant the Advisory Council can co-opt a replacement until the next election.

6.9 Any elected or co-opted member may be removed from their role, for reasons including not adhering to the Terms of Reference, through the following process:

(a) any Advisory Council member may raise a concern with the Principal in accordance with their Advisory Council responsibilities;

(b) the Principal must raise the concern with the relevant School Improvement Advisor / Regional Officer;

(c) the Executive Director, in consultation with the Principal, must endorse the removal of the member, and

(d) the Executive Director, in collaboration with the Principal, must communicate the decision with the Advisory Council.

6.10 Advisory Council members must advise the Chair of their absence from any meeting.

6.11 Any elected or co-opted member who is absent from two consecutive meetings without an apology, must be contacted by the Chair and advised that if the member is absent from a third consecutive meeting, they will be deemed to have vacated their position.

6.12 No person, or spouse of a person, employed or enrolled by the Catholic school is eligible for nomination, election or appointment to the Advisory Council except with the written permission of the Executive Director.

6.13 The Principal, with the agreement of the Advisory Council Chair, may invite Catholic school staff or others to attend meetings, in an ongoing or ad-hoc manner, as appropriate.

6.14 The Advisory Council, through the Principal, may request membership conditions be varied subject to the approval of the Executive Director.

7. ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

7.1 Advisory Council members must complete a National Police Clearance check through the Department of Education upon appointment, with the cost to be covered by the school.

7.2 Advisory Council members must participate in a Catholic Education System information session, provided by CEWA, in their initial year of membership.

7.3 Advisory Council members must comply with the CEWA Code of Conduct.

7.4 Advisory Council members must participate in learning opportunities, at least annually, regarding CEWA's Code of Conduct, Mandatory Reporting in child sexual abuse, CEWA Child Protection Procedures and child safe practices within the Catholic School Community.

8. THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND ELECTION OF ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

8.1 The Advisory Council must conduct a meeting to be called "the [School/College] Advisory Council Annual School Community Meeting" each year between 1 November in one year and 28 February of the following year inclusive.

8.2 The Advisory Council must follow the Catholic School Advisory Council Annual Community Meeting (ACM) Procedures, noting that:

(a) notification of the ACM and the Advisory Council vacancies arising is provided at least 21 days prior to the meeting;

(b) preparation of the ACM Agenda is undertaken by the Chair and Principal and shared with the Catholic School Community;

(c) determination of Advisory Council membership eligibility and vacancies are undertaken with notification provided to the Catholic School Community; and

(d) the election of Advisory Council members is undertaken in a fair and transparent manner.

9. MEETINGS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

9.1 Advisory Council members must elect their own chair and should elect a deputy chair, secretary and treasurer if relevant to the School's context.

9.2 The Advisory Council must determine the meeting schedule, with a minimum requirement of one meeting per school term plus the ACM. Special meetings may be held as often as deemed necessary.

9.3 The Advisory Council meeting must only go ahead if the Principal, or their delegate, and two elected members are in attendance.

9.4 Through the request of any Advisory Council member, the Chair in consultation with the Principal, may call a special meeting of the Advisory Council. No less than three days' notice is required.

9.5 No decision can be made without a quorum.

9.6 In the absence of the chair, the deputy chair must preside over the meeting.

9.7 All members (including the chair) have equal voting rights on matters related to the functions articulated at clause 3.2. Decisions will be determined by a majority of votes. In the case of a voting deadlock the motion will be considered to have been lost.

9.8 Minutes of all meetings of the Advisory Council must be taken, with the final minutes stored securely. The Executive Director may request a copy of the minutes of any meeting.

10. COMMITTEES OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

10.1 Each Advisory Council should have a Finance Committee unless local circumstances dictate otherwise (e.g. small country schools). The membership of the committee must be the Principal, the Advisory Council treasurer, school finance staff and others as appropriate (e.g., Assistant/Deputy/Vice Principal).

10.2 The Advisory Council is empowered to appoint any committees as it deems necessary in accordance with the Advisory Council Committee Guidelines.

10.3 Other than the Finance Committee, as soon as any other committee's specific task is completed, or even earlier if the Advisory Council so determines, the committee is dissolved.

11. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

11.1 The Advisory Council's financial delegated authority is as defined in the CECWA Delegations of Authority. The Advisory Council must operate within this delegated authority.

11.2 Annual School Budget:

(a) the Principal must prepare the annual school budget and present it to the Advisory Council;

(b) in accordance with the Delegations of Authority, the Principal must not undertake any financial commitment involving expenditure beyond the limits of the school's known annual income from all sources (i.e. the Principal must prepare and maintain a balanced budget);

(c) the Advisory Council endorses the annual school budget (including tuition fees and charges).

(d) once endorsed by the Advisory Council, the Principal must submit the annual school budget to CEWA by the end of September each year for approval by CECWA;

(e) the Chair, in consultation with the Principal, should contact the Executive Director if the Advisory Council has concerns with or does not endorse the budget;

11.3 Monitoring of school finances:

(a) the Principal must provide, at each Advisory Council meeting, the year to date Income and Expenditure Statement (compared to budget), Balance Sheet and Cash Flow Statement. Other financial reports may be requested by Advisory Council members and provided by the Principal as considered necessary; and

(b) the Advisory Council must support and advise the Principal on school financial matters such as financial performance against budget, sustainability and recurrent and capital planning.

11.4 CECWA may give directions, at any time, concerning priorities and limits of expenditure, whether recurrent or capital.

11.5 The setting and collection of school tuition fees must be in accordance with the CECWA Policies, Executive Directives and annual guidelines.

11.6 The Principal must make and keep written financial records of the school that:

(a) correctly record and explain the school's transactions, financial position and performance;

(b) enable true and fair audited consolidated financial statements of CEWA Ltd to be prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards;

(c) correctly record the school's operations; and

(d) are stored securely and retained for at least 7 years.

11.7 The Principal must maintain a school bank account with a Catholic Development Fund for all school transactions and operate it in accordance with CECWA's Delegations of Authority. The account must be kept separate to Parish or church bank accounts and operations.

11.8 Financial returns, as required by CECWA and government agencies, must be made by the Principal by the required date.

12. COMMUNICATIONS

12.1 The Principal will keep the Advisory Council informed of current school activities and events, CEWA system information and changes in CECWA Policies and Executive Directives, as they occur from time to time.

12.2 The Advisory Council, in consultation with the Principal, should be an effective liaison agent between the Catholic school and the community served by the school.

12.3 The Advisory Council, in consultation with the Principal, should disseminate information about Advisory Council meetings and decisions to the Catholic School Community, the Parish Council (where applicable), the Parents and Friends' group and all other groups and individuals interested in the Catholic school.

12.4 All written communications from the Advisory Council must be made with the knowledge and approval of the Principal and must be actioned through the Principal.

13. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

13.1 The Principal is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the school improvement plan in collaboration with the Advisory Council and all other relevant stakeholders. The plan should align with Quality Catholic Education and CECWA's Strategic Initiatives, as amended from time to time.

13.2 The Advisory Council provides planning and development advice to the Principal on meeting the present and future needs of its school students, in accordance with CECWA policies, Executive Directives and Delegations of Authority.

14. REVIEW

14.1 In collaboration with the School Improvement Advisor or Regional Officer, the Advisory Council must establish a process for the periodic review of the effectiveness of its operations.

14.2 If for any reason the Advisory Council does not function effectively, the advice and assistance of the Executive Director must be sought.

14.3 If, after receiving assistance from CEWA, the Advisory Council is still unable to operate effectively, it may be dismissed by CECWA on the recommendation of the Executive Director. After consultation with the Ex-Officio members, new members may then be appointed by the Executive Director.

APPENDIX – DEFINITIONS

In this Terms of Reference (unless the context requires otherwise):

Advisory means giving advice, information or opinion regarding action to be taken and is not managerial.

Advisory Council means the Advisory Council created by this Terms of Reference in respect of the Catholic School.

Bishop means Bishop of the Archdiocese or Diocese as appointed from time to time.

Catholic School means the Catholic school now known as (present name) at (address).

CECWA means the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia.

CEWA means Catholic Education Western Australia Limited, including all schools and offices.

Executive Director means the Executive Director of Catholic Education in Western Australia or the Executive Director's nominee.

Ex-Officio means being a member of the Advisory Council by virtue of one's office or official position, i.e. Parish Priest and Principal.

Endorse means to resolve in a meeting of the Advisory Council to declare support of a matter.

Parents means parents, guardians and caregivers of students enrolled in Catholic schools.

Parish means the Parish of the Catholic Church in which the Catholic school is situated.

Principal means the Principal of the Catholic school.

Quorum means one half plus one of all elected/co-opted Advisory Council members and must include the Principal (or the Executive Director's nominee).

Registration Standards are the Registration Standards for Non-Government Schools in Western Australia, as amended from time to time.

School Community means the community of parents served by the Catholic school, and other persons interested in or sharing responsibility for the welfare of the Catholic school.

System Agreement is the registration agreement between the Minister for Education (WA) and Catholic Education Western Australia Limited.

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