



CONSTITUTION FOR HOLY CROSS COLLEGE, RYDE PARENTS AND FRIENDS ASSOCIATION

Prepared in conjunction with advice from Federation of Parents & Friends Associations
of Catholic Schools, Archdiocese of Sydney and the Parent Personnel from
the Catholic Education Office, Sydney

This constitution was adopted at the Annual General Meeting of the Holy Cross College,
Ryde on 31 October, 2006 and is to be reviewed at the AGM in 2011.

2006

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1. NAME

This Association shall be known as Holy Cross College, Ryde Parents and Friends Association of and shall be referred to in this document as the Association.

2. AIM

2.1 What is the aim of the Association?

The Association of Holy Cross College, Ryde 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 their children's overall development and learning.

2.2 How will the Association do this?

The Association will endeavour to do this by:

- (a) reaching out to all associated with the school to build a friendly and welcoming community which seeks to involve all its members;
- (b) providing a parental perspective to assist the Principal in decision making;
- (c) acting as a mechanism for representing parents when it is appropriate to do so;
- (d) raising funds to provide resources and opportunities for enriching the learning environment of the school;
- (e) supporting parents/carers in their parental responsibilities and involvement in their children's learning at home and at school;
- (f) providing a forum where matters relating to the education and development of students can be discussed productively;
- (g) providing opportunities for parents/carers to gain insights into the life of the school, current developments in education and Catholic education in particular;
- (h) providing a means for parents/carers to affiliate with the Federation of P&F Associations of Catholic Schools and have a voice at Archdiocesan level.

3. LIMITATIONS

3.1 Are there any restrictions on the Association?

- (a) The Association has no legal identity separate from the School. It is a consultative body established under the auspices of the Principal, who is responsible for carrying out the policies and directives of the Archbishop and the Catholic Education Office, Sydney.
- (b) The Association has no authority in the day-to-day operation or management of the school.
- (c) The Association shall seek the consent of the Principal and the Parish Priest for activities which affect the parish or school property and its use.

4. MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Who can be a member?

- (a) All parents/carers of pupils attending the school, school staff and friends of the school who are interested in furthering the aim of the Association are members.
- (b) The Principal and the Parish Priest (or priest representing feeder schools) are ex-officio members of the Association and its committees.

5. MANAGEMENT

5.1 What is the Executive Committee?

- (a) The Executive Committee is the group responsible for the management of the Association.
- (b) The Executive Committee comprises the President, Secretary and Treasurer together with the ex-officio members and other members elected at a general meeting.
- (c) The Principal and Parish Priest (or priest representing feeder schools) are ex-officio members of the Executive Committee.
- (d) The Executive Committee has the power to make decisions at Executive Meetings on behalf of the Association when appropriate and within the limits of clause 12.3(c) (allocation of funds).

5.2 What are the responsibilities of the Executive Committee?

The Executive Committee is responsible for:

- (a) organising an appropriate induction process for Executive Members;
- (b) identifying and using opportunities that promote the aim of the Association;
- (c) ensuring that the Association works collaboratively and co-operatively with the Principal and the relevant priest/s;
- (d) ensuring the Association's financial accountability (see clause 12 Funds);
- (e) organising General Meetings (see clause 10.1 Meetings);
- (f) setting up and supervising Committees that assist with the work of the Association (see clause 13 Committees).
- (g) appointing delegates to the Federation of P&F Associations.

5.3 How does the Executive Committee work?

- (a) The Executive Committee shall meet by arrangement with the Principal or Principal's nominee for the effective planning & management of the Association.
- (b) The Executive Committee shall organise an Executive Committee Meeting prior to each General Meeting for the purpose of preparing the agenda and finalising arrangements for the General Meeting.
- (c) The Executive Committee Meeting must comprise half of the Executive Committee plus one. This must include the Principal or Principal's nominee.

6. DUTIES OF OFFICE

6.1 What is the role of the President?

The President:

- (a) Provides leadership and direction for the Association by working co-operatively and collaboratively with the Principal;
- (b) Promotes the aim of the Association in dealings with its members;
- (c) Supports the Executive Committee Members;
- (d) Presides at all meetings or, if absent, nominates another member of the Executive Committee to preside;
- (e) Ensures the efficient running of meetings;
- (f) Prepares the agenda in consultation with the Executive Committee;
- (g) Ensures that Minutes of the previous meeting are endorsed as being an accurate record of what took place.
- (h) Prepares and presents the Annual President's Report of the Association

6.2 What is the role of the Secretary?

The Secretary:

- (a) Manages the day-to-day communications and records of the Association
- (b) Organises meetings, records accurate Draft Minutes in a style agreed upon by the Executive Committee and gets them formalised as agreed to by the Executive Committee;
- (c) Receives and deals with correspondence in a manner agreed upon by the Executive Committee;
- (d) Maintains copies of Minutes and such correspondence as is appropriate;
- (e) Receives agenda items as in 10.1 (c);
- (f) Passes on records, in good order, to the incoming Secretary.

6.3 What is the role of the Treasurer?

The Treasurer:

- (a) Is responsible for ensuring that all the financial dealings of the Association are carried out in accordance with 12.2 and 12.3;
- (b) receives all monies and keeps appropriate financial records as set out in Federation Information Sheet 4;
- (c) Presents, at each General Meeting, a statement of accounts showing current receipts and expenditure together with the outstanding balance;
- (d) Organises the Annual Audit of accounts in accordance with 12.4 and presents the Annual Financial Report of the Association;
- (e) Passes on records, in good order, to the incoming Treasurer.

7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

7.1 How will elections be conducted?

- (a) The members of this Association, at the Last General Meeting of each year, shall elect all Executive Officers mentioned in 5.1(b)
- (b) Candidates for the Executive Committee are to be nominated and seconded. 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.
- (c) Candidates for President should have previous service on the Executive Committee or active participation on other Association Committees.
- (d) The returning officer for any election is the Principal (or nominee).
- (e) Any vacancy on the Executive shall be filled by election by the members of the Association at any General Meeting.

8. RE-ELECTION

8.1 Can officers be re-elected?

- (a) At the Last General Meeting of the year all of the officers of the Executive Committee shall retire but may be eligible for re-election.
- (b) The President must not hold office for a period exceeding four (4) consecutive years.
- (c) Other Officers must not serve in the same position for a consecutive period exceeding three (3) years.

9. TERMINATION OF OFFICE

9.1 Can positions be terminated?

- (a) The position of any officer absent from any two consecutive General Meetings without reasonable cause may be declared vacant.
 - (b) 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.
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10. GENERAL MEETINGS

10.1 How will the Association meet?

10.1.1 General Meetings

- (a) The Executive Committee will organise a General Meeting at least once every school term.
- (b) The First General Meeting is to be held by the end of March and the Last General Meeting before the beginning of December.
- (c) Notice of meeting shall be given in a prior school newsletter and shall indicate the need for members to send agenda items, in writing, to the Secretary before the date of the next Executive Committee Meeting.
- (d) A quorum for a General Meeting shall be eight (8) members including the Principal (or nominee) and three (3) Executive Committee members.
- (e) A period of fifteen minutes is to be allowed before a General Meeting is cancelled.
- (f) No meeting is to continue beyond one and half-hours unless a two-thirds majority of those present agree to an extension.
- (g) The meetings will be chaired by the President or member of the executive in the President's absence.
- (h) All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with standard meeting procedures. In the case of a tied vote the chairperson shall exercise a casting vote.
- (i) The meeting will be chaired by the president or member of the executive committee delegated by the president.
- (j) The order of business is as follows, unless the majority of those present agree to change it:
 - Prayer and Welcome
 - Record of Attendance and Apologies
 - Confirmation and acceptance of the Minutes of previous meeting
 - Business arising from those Minutes
 - Correspondence: incoming & outgoing
 - Reports
 - Matters arising from Executive Meeting (includes Motions proposed)
 - Guest Speaker and / or Discussion Session on nominated topic
 - Matters for Future Consideration
 - Confirmation of next meeting date
 - Conclusion

10.2 At which General Meeting will the Annual Reports of the President and Treasurer be presented and elections held?

The Last General Meeting will be the occasion for the formal presentation of the Annual Reports, accounts balance sheet (pending audited accounts as at 31 December) and the election of office bearers (whose term commences at this General Meeting).

11. SPECIAL GENERAL MEETINGS

11.1 What is a Special General Meeting?

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

11.2 What is involved in calling a Special General Meeting?

- (a) A Special General Meeting can be called on the authority of the Executive Committee or on written request to the Executive Committee by members of ten (10) individual families.
- (b) A Special General Meeting must be held within 28 days of the request being appropriately registered 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.
- (c) At least seven (7) days notice of the Special General Meeting shall be given in a prior school newsletter. The object of the meeting shall be clearly stated.
- (d) A quorum for a Special General Meeting shall be fifteen (15) members and must include the Principal or Principal's nominee and three (3) members of the Executive Committee.
- (e) A Special General Meeting can also be called on the authority of the Principal in the event of there not being an appropriately constituted Executive Committee or if, in the opinion of the Principal, the Association is not fulfilling its aim.

12. FUNDS

12.1 How are funds raised?

- (a) The Executive Committee develops a strategy for fundraising that considers the community's ability to raise funds. The proposals are presented to the general meeting for discussion and approval.)
- (b) At Holy Cross College, the Parent Fundraising Levy is a fee set to alleviate the burdens and demands that fundraising activities place on the current parent community. Fundraising is not restricted to this levy. Alternate fundraising options need to be explored and committed to by a majority of the current parent community prior to the levy being abolished.
- (c) The annual amount of the Parent Fundraising Levy will be decided by a vote at each Annual General Meeting. The levy will be collected with general school fees in terms 2 and 3 each year. The collection of the levy will be managed by the school in a designated separate account. The use of the funds will be decided at the Annual General Meeting, or first general meeting of the year and in consultation with the principal.

12.2 How are funds to be managed (other than point 12.1 above)?

- (a) Funds are to be used solely for the Aims of the Association;
- (b) All funds raised by or on behalf of the Association must be banked promptly and fully intact into an account in the name of the Association and all expenses paid by cheque;
- (c) Funds of the Association are to be deposited in a reputable financial institution in the name of the Association;
- (d) Authorised signatories to the account are any two of the following: President, Treasurer, Secretary and Principal. At the end of their term of office, their signatures must be removed and replaced by the signatures of the incoming officers;

- (e) Funds are transferred to the school for the agreed upon purchase of goods and services to ensure that GST input tax credits are obtained;
- (f) All accounts must be paid promptly;
- (g) Funds must be audited as at 31 December.

12.3 How are decisions made about allocation of funds raised?

- (a) The Executive Committee consults with the school Principal to agree on a list of needs and suggest some priorities for ratification at the first General Meeting each year.
- (b) *The Association may only allocate and disburse funds for school purposes after consulting with the School Principal about school priorities. Agreed funds should be presented as soon as practicable.
- (c) *With the exception of petty cash, all expenditure of the Association's funds must be approved or ratified by the Association at a General Meeting.

12.4 What are the Annual Audit requirements of the Association?

- (a) Financial records must be audited as at 31 December each year to comply with Federal Government Financial Questionnaire Reporting.
- (b) The Auditor must be a qualified and independent Accountant
- (c) The Annual Audit must be completed in time to be accepted at the First General Meeting and a copy given to the School Principal by 31 March each year.

13. COMMITTEES

13.1 How do Committees operate?

- (a) The Association may set up Committees to carry out particular functions on its behalf. These Committees are to have specific Terms of Reference and are to report their operations to General Meetings of the Association. Where possible, they should include at least one member of the Executive Committee.
- (b) After paying expenses (receipted) of their operations, the balance of funds of above committees are remitted to the funds of the Association as soon as it is practical to do so.

14. AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION

14.1 How can changes be made to this Constitution?

- (a) This Constitution may only be changed by resolution at a General Meeting or a Special General Meeting and only after due notice, in writing, shall have been given at a previous General Meeting.
- (b) All amendments must be accepted by at least three quarters of those present and must be in accordance with the aims of the Constitution.

15. DISSOLUTION

15.1 How might the Association be dissolved?

- (a) The Association is automatically dissolved if the school closes down or is amalgamated.
- (b) The Association can be dissolved following a Special General Meeting. This can be called in accordance with Clause 11 specifically for the purpose of providing an opportunity for the school community to discuss the issue to dissolve the Association. At least three-quarters of the members present must vote in favour of the resolution to dissolve the Association for the motion to be carried.
- (c) In certain serious circumstances where it is judged that the functions of the Association is at variance with the vision and mission of Catholic Education, the Regional Director may intervene and dissolve the operations of the Association.

15.2 What happens to assets, records and funds on dissolution?

After all expenses and liabilities are paid;

- (a) Where a school is closed under clause 15.1(a), the remaining assets, records and funds shall be handed over to the Parish Priest in the case of a primary school and the CEO in the case of a secondary school
- (b) Where a school is amalgamated under clause 15.1(a), the remaining assets, records and funds shall be handed over to the Principal of the amalgamated school for the purposes of the amalgamated school
- (c) Where an Association is dissolved under clause 15.1(b), the remaining assets, records and funds shall be handed over to the school Principal for the purposes of the school.

Important Reminders:

Don't forget to:

- Date the Constitution,
- Formally minute its ratification,
- Formalise and minute requirement that the Constitution be reviewed in 5 years,
- File copy with Parent Association records and School Office
- Date any subsequent amendments made
- Ensure each member of the Executive Committee has an up-to-date copy and has the opportunity to discuss the role of the Association each year.

Suggested Process for Developing or Updating a Constitution

- **A constitution encapsulates the fundamental principles which underpin an Association and which guide its day-to-day activities.**
- **The Model aims to provide guidance and facilitate the process, helping you clarify your purpose, outline your basic structure and provide you with a solid basis for an effective school Parent Association. Remember that, for CEO schools, some clauses should not be changed and so your draft constitution needs to be checked out by the Principal & CEO Parent Personnel/Federation Executive Officer.**
- **The process you need to follow depends on whether you already have a Parent Association or if you are setting up a new one but try to get input from a wide cross section of the community and keep everyone informed of the project's timeline and progress.**

Timeline

- Project is endorsed by the School Principal
- Preliminary meeting is held with CEO Parent Personnel / Federation Executive Officer to plan the project
- General Meeting / Workshop is used to inform and gain input from community and to set up a small Working Party
- Working Party adapts the Model in consultation with Principal & CEO Parent Personnel/Federation Executive Officer
- Final Draft is made available and formal amendments are invited if people want to suggest any changes
- Working Party considers amendments and how they will be dealt with
- Constitution is ratified at General Meeting / Special General Meeting

Your Parent Association Constitution should be a living document that guides its members in being collaborative and life giving for the whole school community