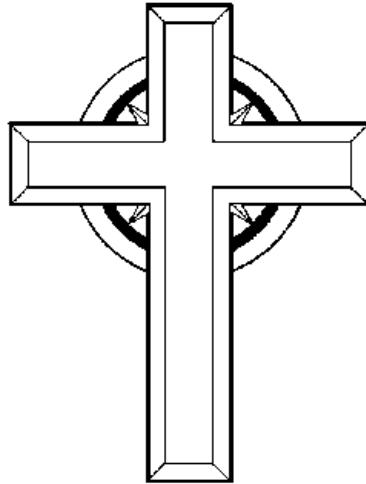


Section 7

ELECTION PROCEDURES



"The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."

Matthew 9:37,38

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board

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SECTION 7: CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The Catholic School Council election process provides an opportunity for people to discern how their gifts and talents might serve the school community. The election process intends to benefit all students and earnestly seek out responsible citizens who value the Catholic education system, as a partner in the development of all learners. Elections are held at the beginning of the school year to enable parents who are new to the school community, such as those with children just entering kindergarten, or those with children entering secondary school, to participate in the election of parent representatives on the Catholic School Council. This provision also gives parents new to the school community the opportunity to be considered for election as parent members on their Catholic School councils.

The annual election of representatives to a Catholic School Council is extremely important to the ethos of any Catholic school. Therefore, it is important that the election procedures be clear, fair, concise and appropriate for the school community. A process for planning and conducting elections is found in this document.

The information that follows outlines the expectations Catholic School Councils are to comply with as per Ontario Regulations 612/00 and 298, and Board Policy 4.01 - Catholic School Councils. Additionally, procedures and by-laws governing the election of Catholic School Council members, as well as templates of letters and forms that shall be used by the Principal and Catholic School Council representatives are included.

ELECTIONS/APPOINTMENTS PROCESS

1. Elections shall be held for membership on the Catholic School Council every year.
2. The total number of parent members on a school council shall not exceed six (6). The school council may, by by-law, specify a larger number of parent/guardian members.
3. An election committee shall be struck by the Catholic School Council in May to help plan the election process, the gathering of nominations, and the running of the election. No one standing for election, or the spouse of anyone standing for election shall be a member of the election committee.
4. Elections of all members of a Catholic School Council shall be held within the first 30 days of the school year. **Note:** Elections are only required when the number of nominations exceeds the maximum number of elected members permitted on Catholic School Councils.

5. When a new school is established, the first election of parent/guardian members of the Catholic School Council shall be held during the first 30 days of the school year on a date that is fixed by the principal of the school in consultation with the Superintendent of the Family of Schools.
6. The principal of the school shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent members, on behalf of the Catholic School Council, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to parents of students enrolled in the school at that time. This notice may be given to students to take home to their parents, and may be posted in a location in the school that is accessible to parents.
7. Each parent seeking election shall be nominated or self-nominated in writing, shall have a child registered at the school, shall be an English Separate School Elector or spouse of an English Separate School Elector, and shall declare if he or she is employed by the school board. The nomination documentation must be signed by an appointed official in the administration office. All nominations will be closed one week prior to the election. Nominations require the consent of the nominated member.
8. The Election Committee shall request a profile from all candidates and make them available to the electorate. Candidates should be prepared to summarize their reason for running for a position on Catholic School Council.
9. Information about candidates shall be made available to the school community at least one week before the election.
10. No individual campaign literature for Catholic School Council elections may be distributed or posted in the school or on school property.
11. School resources, both human and material, may not be used to support particular candidates or groups of candidates.
12. The Election Day proceedings shall be supervised by the principal.
13. The principal shall conduct a lottery to determine the ballot position for each candidate.
14. The election of members shall be by secret ballot. Voters must be present at the school on the election day(s) during the pre-set hours for voting (to include both daytime and evening hours).
15. All eligible voters shall be entitled to cast one vote for each of the candidate positions available. Casting more than the maximum number of votes permitted in the category spoils the ballot.

16. Ballots shall be counted by the principal in the presence of at least two parents who are not election candidates.
17. If there is a tie for the final position for a representative on the Catholic School Council, the winner shall be determined by lot.
18. A motion shall be made to destroy all ballots once the successful candidate(s) have accepted the role.
19. All individuals standing for election shall be notified of the results before the results are released to the school community. Only the names of successful candidates will be made public.
20. The teacher representative shall be elected on a date that is selected by the Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association members at the school.
21. The non-teaching staff member shall be elected on a date that is fixed by the principal of the school in consultation with the non-teaching staff at the school.
22. Appointments of members to the Catholic School Council shall follow the election of members to the school council.
23. All Catholic School Council members must have a Criminal Reference Check or an Annual Criminal Offence Declaration Form.

FOLLOWING THE ELECTION:

1. The names of the Catholic School Council members shall be published in the School Council Newsletter and or School Newsletter.
2. The Principal shall chair the first meeting of the new council until a Chair or Co-chairs have been elected by the members of the Catholic School Council at that meeting. The new Chair/Co-Chairs will then take over the running of the meeting, oversee the election/appointment of other council positions and establish the dates and location of Catholic School Council meetings.
3. The outgoing Chairperson shall prepare an agenda for the first meeting of the new council in consultation with the principal.
4. The Principal shall submit a complete list of elected and appointed members of the Catholic School Council to the Family of Schools Superintendent.

ELECTION COMMITTEE ROLE:

1. The Election Committee shall have representation of parents, teaching/non-teaching staff and administration.
2. No person standing for election, or his/her spouse, shall be a member of the Election Committee.
3. The date, location and time of the Elections shall be established and published at least 14 days prior to the election;
4. The Election Committee shall ensure that the school community is notified of the election dates.
5. The Election Committee shall provide nomination forms.
6. The Election Committee shall request a profile from all candidates and make them available to the electorate. Candidates should be prepared to summarize their reason for running for a position on Catholic School Council.
7. The election shall be conducted by secret ballot.
8. A motion shall be made to destroy the ballots once all the successful candidates have accepted their roles.
9. All individuals standing for election shall be notified of the results before the results are released to the school community.
10. All results and related information are to be kept confidential.
11. The total number of parent/guardian members on the Catholic School Council shall not exceed six (6) members unless stipulated in the Catholic School Council by-laws. This does not include appointment members.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS IN PLANNING FOR ELECTIONS

May/June

A committee is established to plan the school council election of parent representatives.

The Catholic School Council by-laws are reviewed to determine how the Catholic School Council election process will occur. By the last council meeting of the school year, the date, time, and location of the new elections for the coming fall are determined, as well as how the election will be advertised in the fall. A nomination form is also developed. (See sample)

Refer to by-laws if you are in a new school community or there are two schools merging. The principal(s) will ensure that election procedures are reviewed and followed based upon Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board Policies. Consultation with parents by forming an “Election Committee” would ensure that the school community stakeholders feel a part of the election procedures.

Early September

In the September newsletter, the principal includes how nominations will be received, the date by which nominations must be received at the school and who is eligible to stand for election, the date of the election, and other information about the election. This package must be in parents’ hands at least fourteen calendar days prior to the election and must follow the bylaws.

The principal posts the Catholic School Council election information in an area of the school that is easily accessible to parents. Good venues would be a community bulletin board, or a school website or flyer.

Parents return nomination forms to the school office by the set date.

Mid-September

A list of parent nominees is prepared and presented for election according to the by-laws.

End September

The election of the teacher, non-teacher, and student reps (if applicable) should take place.

Elections of parent representatives should be held according to by-laws but no later than 30 days from the commencement of the school year.

Late September to Early October

The first meeting of the new Catholic School Council takes place within the first 35 days from the start of the school year. Established at this meeting should be the following:

- a) positions of office
- b) dates of meetings
- c) locations of meetings
- d) appointment of OAPCE , Parish, student and (if applicable) Community Representative.

The names of the new Catholic School Council members are publicized to the school community within thirty days of the election as is described in the above information. Publication may be in the school's October newsletter or a Catholic School Council flyer or newsletter, etc.

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENT/GUARDIAN ON ELECTION INFORMATION (ON SCHOOL LETTERHEAD)

Re: Catholic School Council Election Information

Date

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Please find enclosed information concerning the election procedures prepared by the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board.

There will be a Catholic School Council information meeting at School Name on Date at Time p.m. in our school location.

Nomination forms for parent/guardian representatives on the Catholic School Council for the Year school year will be available in the school office between the hours of Time and Time.

Completed nomination forms must be received in the school office by 4:00 p.m. on Date.

If needed, the election for parent/guardian representatives to the Catholic School Council will take place at location on date between the hours of Time and Time by secret ballot. Eligible voters must vote in person. Proxy voting is not permitted. An appointed steering committee will assist with the implementation of election procedures.

I look forward to seeing you at the Catholic School Council information meeting and thank you for your continued support of your school.

Sincerely,

Principal

SAMPLE AGENDA

Information Meeting Regarding Catholic School Councils

This could be used for an inaugural meeting of a Catholic School Council for a new school or an Information Meeting for an existing school.

1. Opening Prayer
2. Catholic School Councils: Mission, Roles, Parish Information, Regulations, Policies
3. Review of Catholic School Council Election Procedures (Bylaws)
4. Nomination Procedure
5. Speeches
6. Election of Chair and other offices
7. Appointments
8. Question Period

Other agenda items might be: Liturgy, Principal's Report, Financial Review and Annual Report.

NOMINATION FORM FOR ELECTION OF PARENT MEMBERS

Name of School:

Please complete the following and return to our school office by

Name

Address

Telephone

Child's Name

- 1 I am an English Separate School elector or spouse (Note: To be eligible, a candidate must be an English Separate School elector or spouse.) Yes No
- 2 I am an employee** of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board and I work at this school. Yes No
- 3 I am an employee** of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board but I work elsewhere in the Board (i.e. not at this school). Yes No

****Note: “Employee” includes parents/guardians who work as Student Monitors and/or Emergency Supply Instructors.**

This is self-nomination. (name):

It is not necessary to receive a nomination from another parent.

This is a nomination made by another parent:

I nominate _____ to be a parent representative on our Catholic School Council.

Signature of Nominee

Name (print)

Signature of Nominator

Name (print)

Signature of School Official

Date

Please attach a brief biography (one or two paragraphs).

FOR FILLABLE FORM, PLEASE SEE SECTION 11

Sample Nomination Form Receipt

| | |
|---|------------------|
| NOMINATION FORM RECEIPT | |
| The nomination form for parent/guardian representative on the Catholic School Council for | |
| _____ | |
| School Name | |
| _____ | _____ |
| School Address | School Phone No. |
| _____ | _____ |
| (Parent Nominee's Name) | (School Name) |
| has been received by: | |
| _____ | _____ |
| Name of Principal or Chair of the Nomination Committee | Date |

FOR FILLABLE FORM, PLEASE SEE SECTION 11

LINKS TO RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Regulation 298: Operation of Schools – Duties of Principals re: School Councils
http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_900298_e.htm

Regulation 612/00 School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees
http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_000612_e.htm#BK3

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board Policy 4.01: Catholic School Councils
<http://dp24/PnP/Board%20Policies/04.01.pdf>