

# **CONSTITUTION OF OUR LADY OF THE GULF SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

## **Article I**

### **Introduction and Rationale**

The Catholic parochial school is an expression of the educational mission of the parish with which it is associated and of the diocese. Therefore, the pastor is responsible to the bishop for the administration of the total parish school. The principal functions as the chief administrator of the school and is a member of the parish staff. Regular and open communication between the pastor and the principal is essential.

Just as the parish council serves with the pastor on behalf of the total parish community, so the school advisory council serves with the principal for the good of the school community. Today's Catholic principal, with the many demands which are made, needs assistance from a group of people who are committed to the Catholic school and are willing to work for the good of the school and parish.

## **Article II**

### **General Statements**

Our Lady of the Gulf is an educational institution operated by Our Lady of the Gulf Parish under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bishop of Victoria. As such, the school is subject to the Canon Law of the Roman Catholic Church and the duly enacted policies and regulations of the Diocese of Victoria, the diocesan School Advisory Council and the Office of Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Victoria.

All Acts of the Our Lady of the Gulf School Advisory Council are subject to the approval of the pastor of Our Lady of the Gulf Parish.

## **Article III**

### **Name of the Organization**

The name of the body shall be Our Lady of the Gulf School Advisory Council.

## **Article IV**

### **Purposes and Functions**

The advisory council is established by the pastor, in accord with diocesan policy, to assist him and the principal in the governance of Our Lady of the Gulf School. When the advisory council meets as pastor, principal, and members and agrees on a policy matter the decision is binding on all. The council is consultative in the following sense: the members cannot act apart from the pastor and principal and cannot make decisions binding on the parish school without the approval of the pastor. Consultation also means that decisions will not be made in major matters before the school advisory council has been consulted.

Consultation implies that the administrator(s) will listen to the advice of the properly convened body in certain designated matters prior to a decision being made. The operating principle is that the administrator(s) will not act contrary to the advice which has been given, especially when there is a consensus, unless the administrator(s) has an overriding reason. It is customary for the administrator(s) to communicate this reason to the consultative body.

The areas in which the advisory council has responsibility and will be consulted are these:

1. Planning;
2. Policy development and formulation;
3. Finances to include budgeting and policies for financial management;
4. Public relations;
5. Selection of the principal;
6. Evaluation of the principal's relationship with the board.

## **Article V**

### **Relationships With Other Groups**

#### **1. Parish Pastoral Council**

The school advisory council and the pastoral and/or finance councils are consultative to the pastor. Therefore, it is essential that good communication exists between the groups. The relationship which exists is one of information sharing and common planning for the benefit of the total parish community.

#### **2. Parent Organization**

The official designee of the Home and School Association is an *ex-officio* non-voting member of Our Lady of the Gulf School Advisory Council.

#### **3. Diocese**

The relationship between Our Lady of the Gulf School Advisory Council and the diocese is expressed in the general statement of this document as well as in diocesan educational policies which are available for local school advisory council members.

**Article VI**  
**Organization of the School Advisory Council**

**1. Composition of the Advisory Council**

The advisory council of Our Lady of the Gulf School shall be composed of:

- A. The Pastor of Our Lady of the Gulf Parish, who is an *ex-officio* non-voting member;
- B. Six (6) lay representatives four of whom must have children or be guardians, custodians or managing conservators of children who attend School at the time of their election. Two members may be from the community at large. The majority of the six lay representatives must be Catholic.
- C. The official designee of the Home and School Organization, who shall be an *ex-officio* non-voting member attending meetings as needed;
- D. The principal of Our Lady of the Gulf School, who acts as the executive officer of the school advisory council and is an *ex-officio* non-voting member;
- E. The Parish Business Manager, who shall be an *ex-officio* non-voting member attending the meetings as needed.

**2. Persons Ineligible for Service**

Employees of Our Lady of the Gulf their spouses and members of their immediate families (father, mother, brother, sister, children) shall not be eligible to serve as members of the advisory council.

**3. Eligibility, Nomination and Election of Members**

- A. Are parents, guardians, custodians or managing conservators of students of Our Lady of the Gulf School or parishioners of Our Lady of the Gulf Parish or members of the community at large.
- B. Have interest in and commitment to Catholic education and to Our Lady of the Gulf School's philosophy and mission;
- C. Are available to attend meetings and periodic in-service programs and to participate in committee work;
- D. Maintain high levels of integrity and confidentiality;
- E. Deal with situations as they relate to the good of the entire school community;
- F. Are eighteen years or older;
- G. Be credible witnesses of the Catholic faith, or their own faith or religion, to the school community and beyond.

**4. Term of Office**

Term of office for all elected members of the school advisory council shall be three years. No one shall serve more than two consecutive terms. The terms of office shall expire May 31 and new terms shall commence on June 1.

**5. Vacancies**

A vacancy occurs when a member resigns from the school advisory council. In addition, when a member of the school advisory council chooses to withdraw his or her children from School and subsequently enrolls them in another school, or provides education under an alternative program, he or she ceases to be a member of the school advisory council.

When a vacancy occurs, the pastor shall appoint an individual to complete the unexpired term.

**6. Elections**

Selection of Members for Vacancies to the School Advisory Council shall be conducted according to Article II of the By-Laws.

**Article VII**

**Officers of the School Advisory Council**

**1. Designation of Officers**

The officers of the school advisory council shall be the chairperson, vice-chairperson and the chairperson of finance, whose duties shall be as follows:

- A. The chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the school advisory council; conduct internal elections; call all regular and special meetings; direct the functions and goals of the school advisory council; enforce the by-laws and perform any and all duties incident to the office of chairperson. The chairperson shall appoint all standing and *ad-hoc* committees and their chairpersons.
- B. The vice-chairperson shall perform all duties of the chairperson in his or her absence.
- C. The chairperson is also the chairperson of the school finance committee and shall assist the pastor and principal in financial planning.
- D. Special provision for a secretary may be included in the by-laws of this constitution.

**Article VIII**  
**Meetings of the School Advisory Council**

**1. Time and Place of Meetings**

Regular meetings of the school advisory council shall be held at a public designated place suitable for the orderly conduct of business and attendance by members and non-members. The date and time for each regular meeting shall be made public. Special meetings may be called by the pastor, principal, or chairperson, in consultation with the pastor and principal. The principal must be present at all meetings. The pastor is strongly encouraged to attend all meetings. All school advisory council members will be notified of the date, time, place and purpose of each special meeting at least twenty-four hours in advance of each such meeting. If school advisory council meetings are attended by non-members, the school advisory council will go into executive session whenever the issues involve confidential matters.

**2. Presentation by Non-members**

With the exception of the bishop and the superintendent of schools for the Diocese of Victoria, no person or group shall have the right to address a meeting of the school advisory council unless prior written approval has been obtained. Any person or group desiring to address a meeting of the school advisory council shall notify the chairperson, in writing, of the nature of their request no less than seven (7) calendar days prior to the next meeting of the school advisory council. On receipt of such a request, the chairperson shall contact the pastor and the principal. An affirmative vote of two of these three persons shall be required to approve such a request and the approval shall set forth the amount of time and the nature of the presentation to be made. Notice of such presentations shall be given to each advisory council member in advance of the meeting at which it is to be made.

If a request to address a meeting is made and the chairperson, pastor and principal all agree that the request is of an emergency nature, approval of such an emergency request shall be granted no less than forty-eight (48) hours before a school advisory council meeting and all members of the school advisory council shall be notified of the nature of the request and the presentations. Approval of an emergency request will specifically provide the person or persons to make the presentation, the nature of the presentation and the time allotted.

No final action may be taken on any matter presented to the school advisory council in accordance with these provisions until the next school advisory council meeting following the meeting at which the presentation is made.

### 3. **Rules of Order**

Ordinarily, decisions regarding policy matter and other major issues are not made at the "first reading" which is for information and clarification. At that time, the council begins its decision-making process. In order to make the best decisions, the consensus method of decision-making should be used. When the school advisory council is unable to reach a consensus, a vote should be taken and the minutes should reflect the different positions and appropriate reasons. In cases involving voting and business procedures, Roberts Rules of Order, Revised should be used.

The decision of the school advisory council shall be considered approved and should be implemented when the pastor approves the written recommendation by affixing his signature.

### 4. **Order of Business**

The ordinary order of the meeting shall be:

- I. Call to Order
- II. Opening Prayer
- III. Routine Matters
  - a. Roll Call
  - b. Items Submitted for Consent
    1. Previous Meeting Minutes
    2. Current Agenda
    3. Budget YTD
    4. Additional Items – to be specified and sent out for review prior to meeting (e.g. School calendar, salary scales, etc. – items we approve on an annual basis)
- IV. General Business (Including Action Items Update)
- V. Committee Business
  - a. Finance
  - b. Community Outreach
  - c. Fund Raising
- VI. Communications
  - a. Teacher Presentation
  - b. Education Moment
  - c. Principal's Report
  - d. Pastor's Report
  - e. H.S.A. Report
- VII. Future Business & Action Items
- VIII. Adjournment
- IX. Closing Prayer

**Article IX**  
Committees of the School Advisory Council

There shall be committees as deemed advisable.

**1. Standing Committees**

Members of standing committees need not be school advisory council members. However, the chair of each committee shall be an advisory council member. Standing committees shall meet as needed.

**2. Ad-Hoc Committees**

Ad-Hoc committees will be appointed as needed. The chairperson and members of Ad-Hoc committees need not be members of the council. The appointment of each ad-hoc committee shall state the duration of the committee.

**Article X**  
Amendments

This constitution and by-laws may be amended at any regular or special meeting by consensus of the school advisory council or by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership of the advisory council present and provided:

1. The proposed amendments have been presented in writing to the membership two weeks in advance of a meeting to consider the amendments;
2. The membership shall have opportunity to consider and discuss the proposed amendments, reserving final approval of the amendments until the next meeting;
3. The proposed written amendments are approved by the parish pastor by affixing his signature to the written proposal.
4. The proposed amendments to the constitution and/or by-laws will be sent to the diocesan superintendent of Catholic schools who will present them to the Bishop for approval.

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPROVED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Bishop

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**OUR LADY OF THE GULF  
SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**BY-LAWS**

**Article I**

Purposes and Functions

**1. Finances**

The school advisory council is responsible for formulating and maintaining a fiscal policy designed to insure maximum educational opportunity, growth and development in accordance with the following:

- A. Capital Indebtedness: The capital indebtedness of School shall be the obligation of Our Lady of the Gulf Parish. All proposals for capital indebtedness shall be made by the school advisory council to the pastor of Parish. In turn, the pastor shall follow diocesan policy concerning procedures in implementing such request, including the bishop's approval when required.
- B. Budget: The school advisory council shall have responsibility annually to recommend for approval the budget for ordinary operations and maintenance of the school. Work on a preliminary budget should begin in the SAC Finance Committee in December and a draft should be presented to the school advisory council by the March meeting. This budget should include income needed from tuition, parish subsidy, and other sources in order to meet the projected expenses. The preliminary budget will be refined based upon enrollment, salary obligations, amount of available subsidies and other available income. The final budget shall be presented in writing to the entire board not later than May previous to the beginning of the new fiscal year beginning August 1, in order that the budget may be recommended for approval.

The budget shall not be recommended for approval until and unless it is a balanced budget which provides for fiscal operations which will allow the school to meet its current obligations.

**2. Selection of the Principal**

The school advisory council shall participate in the process for selecting the principal following all regulations issued by the Office of Catholic Schools in this regard and make its recommendations to the pastor and diocesan superintendent of Catholic schools for appointment of the principal.

**Article II**  
Organization of the School Advisory Council

To replace members whose terms have expired, the School Advisory Council will use a discernment method. In March a notice will be placed on the school website, in the parish bulletin, and in an informational note to the school parents, asking for names of those who would like to serve on the School Advisory Council. Those who feel that they could benefit the school through their service on the Council, should submit their names to the parish or school office. At the April meeting of the Council, the Council will discuss the applicants and other potential candidates for their qualifications versus school need as part of the discernment process to select those whom they perceive would best serve the interests of the school. The Council will submit a list of potential candidates to the Pastor and he will formally invite the new member to participate on the board for a three year term.

Members who have three unexcused absences from meetings in a 12 month period may lose membership by action of the School Advisory Council. The following procedure will apply: the member will be notified by the chairperson or pastor; the member shall be given opportunity to respond; the school advisory council may act or not act as the case may indicate. The pastor shall appoint a replacement for the remainder of the school year.

**Article III**  
Officers of the School Advisory Council

**Special Provision for Secretary**

With the approval of the Council, the Chairperson may appoint a person, not a member of the School Advisory Council to record the minutes. The secretary shall maintain a high level of integrity and confidentiality and assure the preparation of typed minutes of each meeting of the school advisory council including copies of all written reports presented at meetings. A complete set of minutes shall be sent to the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Victoria. The original minutes shall be contained in the school files and considered official record of the school. Minutes of the school advisory council meetings shall be submitted to members prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPROVED:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Bishop

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date