

**CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL OPERATING GUIDE**

SECTION A

Each School Council in the Prince George Diocese is constituted by the authority of Catholic Independent Schools of the Diocese of Prince George (hereinafter called the Society) and each is directly responsible to the Society.

Part I MANDATE OF THE LOCAL SCHOOL COUNCIL

1. There shall be included within the jurisdiction of the Society those certain Catholic schools designated as follows, namely:

Annunciation School	Prince Rupert
Immaculate Conception School	Prince George
Notre Dame School	Dawson Creek
Sacred Heart School	Prince George
St. Anthony's School	Kitimat
St. Joseph's School	Smithers
St. Mary's School	Prince George
Veritas School	Terrace

2. A School Council shall be responsible for the governance of the school in accordance with the Society's Constitution, bylaws, policies and procedures.
3. The Board of the Society must approve any locally-developed policies or initiatives that would have a substantial impact on the school.

Part II THE NAME OF THIS SCHOOL COUNCIL shall be:

Catholic Independent Schools Diocese of Prince George

(School Name) Council (hereinafter referred to as "the Council")

Part III COMPOSITION OF THE SCHOOL COUNCIL

The Electorate

1. Eligible voters are all parents/legal guardians having children in the school and any person who is nineteen years of age or older who is a member of the parish or parishes served by the school. Employees of CIS, principals, teachers and other staff members are eligible to vote for school elections in the parish in which they work.

The Council

2. Each School Council must have a minimum of six members from the parish. Those serving on the council must be:
 - a. practicing Catholics as defined in the Catholicity Clause;
 - b. at least nineteen years of age at the time of election;
 - c. supporter of Catholic education;
 - d. approved by the pastor prior to entering the election;
 - e. nominated for the position;
 - f. not a relative of a member of the school staff nor an employee or spouse of an employee of CIS, or any School Council;

- g. prepared to attend meetings regularly; take the Oath of Confidentiality upon election.
3. The pastor is an *ex officio* member with the power of veto in matters concerning the Catholicity of the school as outlined in the canonical legislation concerning Catholic education. (Canon 793 – Canon 806 (1 & 2)).
4. All members have a vote. As an employee, the principal attends the council meetings, but does not have a vote.

A non-Catholic parent/legal guardian of a child attending the school is not eligible for election, but may serve on a Council-appointed sub-committee.

Part IV THE TERM OF OFFICE

Shall be two-years, renewable twice for a maximum of six years. Terms of office shall be staggered so that three persons are elected at a time.

Part V REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

1. A member of the School Council who ceases to meet the conditions for eligibility to hold office automatically ceases to be a member.
2. A member may be removed from office for conduct unbecoming a member which in the opinion of the Pastor is likely to bring discredit on the school. A member removed in these circumstances has the right to appeal to the Board of Directors of the Society.
3. A member who misses three consecutive monthly meetings may be removed by a majority vote of the Council.
4. The Society reserves the right to remove a Council member or members for just cause.
5. The loss of individual membership on a School Council will result in the loss of membership and office in the Catholic Independent Schools of the Diocese of Prince George Society.

Part VI THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL COUNCIL

1. Ensure compliance with the policies and directives of the Society. The CISPG provides an online policy manual (www.cispg.ca) and a paper copy is available in each school staff room.
2. Develop local school policies in compliance with CIS policy.
3. In consultation with the principal, prepare the annual budget for the operation of the school. Such budget requires the approval of the Pastor. The fiscal year shall begin on July 1st and end on June 30th each year.
4. To administer all educational funds over which the council has jurisdiction and as specified in the current approved budget.
5. To review financial statements at its regular meetings.
6. To administer a bank account in the name of “Catholic Independent Schools Diocese of Prince George – (School Name) Account” into which shall be paid contributions from supporters, funds allocated from the parish, and any other grants or subsidies which may be received.
7. To ensure that all cheques are signed by two of the following: pastor, school council chairperson, vice-chairperson, treasurer or principal. Current bank documents must be in place for all persons having signing authority.

8. To ensure that all financial records of the school are audited by a person qualified under Section 204 of the Companies Act. An audited financial statement shall be presented to the School Council, the Parish Finance Council and the CIS Society. The School Council appoints or confirms the employment of its auditor on an annual basis.
- 9 To set tuition fees and other fees as may be required, and to oversee their collection.
10. To oversee payment of operating expenses, maintenance of facilities and grounds and transportation when such service is provided by the school.
- 11 To work with the Superintendent of Schools to select a Principal for the educational and administrative leadership of the school.
12. To work with the Superintendent and principal to select teaching staff. All teacher and principal contracts must be signed by the Superintendent of Schools on behalf of the Society. Support staff shall be employed by the School Council and shall be employed under a letter of appointment which clearly outlines the conditions of work inclusive of the hourly rate of compensation and the benefits that the employee is entitled to during the time of employment.
13. To establish local student admission and dismissal policies. The Pastor, Principal, and Chairperson or delegate shall comprise the Admissions Committee. Each School Council shall have an admissions committee.

Part VII LOCAL POLICY

1. A resolution to adopt, amend or rescind any local policy must be passed by a majority of the council members present at a meeting of which fourteen days' notice in writing, together with the text of such resolution, shall have been given to all council members.

SECTION B

Part I ELECTION OF OFFICERS, TERM OF OFFICE

1. The first meeting after an election shall be the last meeting of the old School Council, with newly-elected members in attendance. At the conclusion of this meeting, the new School Council shall elect from among its members a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary and treasurer.
2. The term of office of School Council officers is one year, renewable five times.

Part II VACANCIES

1. In the event that a vacancy occurs on a School Council, the vacancy will be filled through appointment by the Council.

Part III THE ROLE OF THE PASTOR IN THE SCHOOL

The Code of Canon Law outlines the role of the Pastor as the representative of the Bishop in the community entrusted to his care.

Responsibility for governance of the school is vested with the CIS Board of Directors, which exercises its mandate through the pastors and School Councils. The CIS Board of Directors adopts policies and procedures, for the schools. Pastors and School Councils work together with the Principal at the local level to implement the policies of the CIS Board of Directors and develop local policies as needed. The supervision and evaluation of the educational program, staff and administration of the school are the responsibility of the Principal and the Superintendent. This includes the following:

- instructional and program issues
- complaints received against the school, personnel, and students
- investigations of school matters and personnel
- legislated reporting of abuse matters
- supervision, evaluations and suspensions of staff
- internal evaluation of programs, excepting religious education.

1. The Pastor and the Operation, Maintenance of the School

The Pastor shares responsibility with the other members of the School Council for the operation and maintenance of the school facility in accordance with articles set out in the Local School Council's Operating Guide for the Prince George Diocese.

2. The Pastor, Society and School Council Relationship

By virtue of the bylaws of the CISPG, the Pastor of every Parish with a School is a member of the Society. The Pastor is an ex officio member of the School Council, as well as any committee formed by the Council. The Pastor should provide spiritual formation to the School Council members and help them become more effective in their role.

3. The Pastor and Admission and Dismissal of Students

The Pastor, Principal and Chairperson should form an admission committee for new students to the school based on Policy #503 Student Admission and Dismissal from the CISPG Policy Manual. The Pastor should be consulted before the dismissal of a student from the school.

4. The Pastor and the Hiring and Termination of Staff

The Pastor must play a role in the hiring of the teaching staff for the school according to the Hiring Policy of the CISPG Board of Directors. His role is specific to assessing the applicant's Catholicity and qualification to teach the Faith. The Pastor must be involved in the decision to terminate a teaching staff member in accordance with CISPG Policy #408.

5. The Pastor and the Principal

The administration of the school on a day to day basis is the professional duty and responsibility of the Principal. The pastor should provide support and formation to the principal to help him or her exercise spiritual leadership in the school. The Pastor must be part of the selection committee for choosing a new Principal in accordance with CISPG Board of Directors' Policy #307.

6. The Pastor and Staff

The Pastor must provide spiritual support and formation to the staff to help them fulfill their role as Catholic educators.

7. The Pastor and Catechesis

The Pastor must be involved in the diocesan-approved religious education program in the school. This includes classroom visitations and leading liturgical services.

8. The Pastor and Integration of the School into the total Life of the Parish

The Pastor must ensure that the school does not become a separate community, but rather that it is integrated into the liturgical, apostolic, charitable, and social life of the Parish. The Pastor should regularly promote the school to ensure that the largest number of children can receive a Catholic education.

Part IV THE ROLE OF THE CHAIRPERSON IN THE SCHOOL

The role of the chairperson in the School Council is critical to the successful functioning of the School Council. The Chairperson's main task is to work with the Pastor and Principal to implement the policies and procedures of the Society and promote the goals and objectives of the school. The Chairperson is elected to fulfill the following responsibilities:

- a. to ensure that the School Council uses its authority responsibly in accordance with the Society's policies and procedures.
- b. to prepare the agenda for each meeting, in consultation with the Pastor and the Principal.
- c. to ensure that parliamentary procedures are followed. To ensure that a Nominating Committee is appointed to conduct the annual elections for School Council members.
- d. in consultation with the Pastor, to appoint all chairpersons to subcommittees. The Chairperson is an ex officio member of all subcommittees of the School Council.
- e. to direct the preparation of an annual budget for presentation by the treasurer to the School Council.
- f. to ensure that a local school policy manual is developed and approved by the CIS Board prior to implementation.
- g. to ensure that the guidelines of the Society are followed in regard to hiring, evaluation and termination of personnel.
- h. to represent the School Council to parents/legal guardians.
- i. to ensure the development of an annual plan for the school.
- j. to keep the Superintendent informed of any situation that could have a negative effect on the Society.

Part V THE ROLE OF THE VICE-CHAIRPERSON

1. To be acting Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.
2. To carry out any other duties as assigned by the School Council.

PART VI THE ROLE OF THE TREASURER

1. Prepare a draft budget in consultation with the Principal, Pastor and Chairperson. The School Council approves and forwards the draft budget to the CISPG Board.
2. Ensure compliance with all financial policies and directives of the Society.
3. Monitor expenditures and receipts with regard to the budget.
4. Provide monthly printed financial reports to the Council. Oversee the collection of tuition and overdue accounts in consultation with the Principal and Pastor.

Part VII THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARY

1. The secretary maintains the written record of the School Council's meetings in the form of minutes.
2. Prepare letters on behalf of the School Council.
3. Other secretarial tasks as assigned from time to time by the Council.

4. School Councils may choose to engage the school secretary on a paid basis for carrying out its secretarial duties.

Part VIII MEETINGS OF SCHOOL COUNCIL

1. Meetings of the School Council will be open to the public except for *in-camera* sessions.
2. A quorum shall be defined as a simple majority of the total membership. In the event that a quorum is not present, the meeting can be conducted, but motions must be tabled until the next meeting with a quorum.
3. Attendance by a member of the teaching staff (who does not vote) is strongly encouraged. The Principal is not a member of the School Council, but should be present at the entire meeting, with the exception of some *in-camera* sessions, e.g., when his/her performance is under review.
4. Requests by non-members to speak or make a presentation at a Council meeting must be made in writing with a minimum of seven days' notice prior to the meeting. Delegations must provide a text of their material as well as the name of their spokesperson.
5. Any procedures not included above will be according to Robert's Rules of Order.

Part IX REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE SOCIETY

1. Regional representatives to the Society are nominated by a nomination committee of the Society. Nominees are presented at the Annual General Meeting to fill vacancies on the Board of Directors.
2. The members of the Society in attendance at the AGM are the eligible electors.

Part X PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

1. Parents/legal guardians are an integral part of the school community and should be encouraged to become involved in the activities of their child's school. The School Council should coordinate the involvement of parents/legal guardians in the school. It is the responsibility of the School Council to approve and direct any parent group working or acting on behalf of the school.
2. Such Parent Support Groups will come directly under the authority of the School Council and the School Council will appoint from its membership a representative to the Parent Support Group.

Catholicity Clause

The Employee and Volunteer acknowledges that:

- it is an essential condition of this Agreement that the Employee and volunteer exhibit at all times conduct and a way of life that are consistent with Catholic denominational standards.
- the determination of what are Catholic denominational standards shall be the right and prerogative of the Employer.

The primary reference for Catholic Teaching on Faith and morals is *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

A breach of this clause shall constitute just cause for dismissal.

1. PHILOSOPHY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Philosophy of Education for Catholic Schools in the Province of British Columbia

A Policy Statement by the Catholic Bishops
of British Columbia (January 2005)

I THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL SHARES IN THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

At the beginning of the third millennium, all those involved in Catholic education are called to build communities of faith and holiness. In partnership with the family and the parish, the Catholic school participates in the saving mission of the Church. By evangelization, catechesis and works of service, the Catholic school builds up both the family of faith and human community.

The Catholic school provides religious and moral reference points to help students critically examine the culture around them and build a society enlightened by the values of the Gospel:

- in a world that ignores the human thirst for God, it shares the living waters of our faith;
- in a time when there is little reverence for the image of God in the human person, it gives an unequivocal witness to the dignity of human life;
- in an age marked by relativism and a crisis of meaning, it evangelizes our culture's ways of thinking, standards of judgment and norms of behaviour with the truth of the Gospel;
- in a culture in which communication and relationships are often reduced to utilitarian ends, it proclaims a life of communion with God and others;
- in a world disfigured by poverty, oppression and war, it promotes justice and peace;
- in a society marked by personality cults, it bears witness to Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, as the model for the fullest human life;
- in a time that often seems to be without goals and fearful of the future, it gives an account of the hope that is within us (cf. I Peter 3:15).

II. CHARACTERISTICS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise in a Catholic school (*The Catholic School*, #34). His teaching and life inform the school's identity and characteristics, which include:

- a belief in the inviolable dignity of every human person;
- a sacramental sense that leads us to recognize God manifested by His creation;
- a recognition of God's sanctifying presence in Word and Sacrament;
- a love for encounter with God in prayer;
- a Gospel spirit of freedom and love;
- a spirituality of communion marked by mutual respect, accountability and caring;
- a concern for justice leading to a critical analysis of society;
- a sense of solidarity and commitment to the marginalized.

These core elements of Catholic faith provide a framework for Catholic Education.

A. Teaching the Whole Person

The Church "establishes her own schools because she considers them a privileged means of promoting the formation of the whole man, since the school is a center in which a specific concept of the world, of [humanity], and of history is developed and conveyed" (*The Catholic School*, #8).

Catholic education goes beyond the purely technical and practical aspects of schooling and aims at an integration of all knowledge within a vision of the world and the human person. It focuses on the physical, emotional, moral and spiritual dimensions of human development, leading to a personal synthesis of faith and life in each student. Growth in all areas prepares

students for a meaningful life of service as committed Christians, building the Kingdom of God in a pluralistic society.

B. Faith Lived in Christian Community

The New Testament word for Christian community is “koinonia”, which means a communion or life-sharing relationship with Christ and others. Living Christian community means living in relationship with Jesus, the Head of the Church, and the members of His Mystical Body. Communion with Christ and others leads to relationships characterized by mutual love, honest communication and commitment to serve each other’s needs, to rejoice together, to mourn together, and to delight in each other. “A spirituality of communion indicates above all the heart’s contemplation of the mystery of the Trinity dwelling with us, and whose light we must also be able to see shining on the faces of the brothers and sisters around us” (*At the Beginning of the Third Millennium*, #43).

Catholic education is committed to developing communities of faith. Those involved in Catholic education are called to create a faith community in the school and to link it to the wider Church community.

C. Commitment to Justice and Compassion

Catholic educators nourish in their students a relationship with Jesus that leads to awareness of those Christ loves, namely, all of humanity, and inspires a spirit of solidarity and service.

III. PARENTS AS EDUCATORS

“Parents have a particularly important part to play in the educating community, since it is to them that the primary and natural responsibility for their children’s education belongs” (*The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, #20). The school exists to complement the work of parents as the first teachers of their children. Parents should be involved with the life of the school by participating in school councils and committees and through regular collaboration with teachers.

IV. PASTORS

The priest is a necessary and integral member of the school community. He has a specific role and responsibility, particularly in the religious instruction given and in all matters that affect the Catholic character of the school. Pastors should promote Catholic education especially for those who are poor, those deprived of the benefits of family life and those weak in faith.

V. STAFF AS LIVING WITNESSES

Catholic educators are called to do much more than share religious knowledge. “Professionalism is marked by, and raised to, a supernatural Christian vocation” (*Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, # 37). It is the personal witness and holiness of the teacher that will have the greatest impact on the students. Catholic educators should model collaboration, love of the faith, communion with the Church and concern for the poor and marginalized. They must be committed to leading their students to encounter Jesus and develop a relationship with Him that expresses itself in witness and service.

VI. RELIGIOUS FORMATION IN THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

“The special character of the Catholic school and the underlying reason for its existence, the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is precisely the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the overall education of the students” (*The Religious Dimension of Education in the Catholic School*, # 66) This catechesis should be spiritual, liturgical, moral, sacramental and apostolic (*The Religious Dimension of Education in the Catholic School*, #69), so that the student may experience the transforming power of the Gospel in an integral way.

VII. THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND NEW EVANGELIZATION

As the Catholic Bishops of British Columbia, we emphasize the Catholic school's central role at the beginning of the third millennium in the Church's work of evangelization, which must be new in ardor, methods and expression (*Church in America*, # 6). In setting forth principles to direct the Catholic schools of our province, we call for the commitment of students and parents, teachers and administrators, pastors and religious, trustees and committee/council members, and the whole Catholic community to this great work.

VIII. REFERENCES

Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, 1982.

Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School*, 1977.

Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, 1997.

Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, 1988.

Pope John Paul II, *At the Beginning of the Third Millennium*, 2001.

Pope John Paul II, *The Church in America*, 1999.