

# Constitution template for a Parish Education Board: Explanatory notes

## Introduction

The Archbishop of Melbourne and Catholic Education Melbourne support the establishment of boards for parish primary schools which encourage partnership and participation of school, parish and the wider community in the life of the school and parish. The preferred title of a board of a parish primary school is *Parish Education Board* (PEB).

While the provision of a school environment that supports the Catholic ethos is largely the responsibility of the parish priest, principal and the school staff, boards play a significant role in supporting the spiritual and educational welfare of students.

The parish priest, upon consideration of local circumstances, including the functions of existing parish groups, is responsible for making any decision about the establishment of a board and its arrangements.

Broadly, the key functions of the PEB may include:

- providing advice on education matters relating to whole of parish including the school
- or
- providing advice on education matters relating only to the school

The PEB, through its constitution and supporting documents – handbook, minutes and agendas – provide a structure and a process for shared leadership and collaborative decision-making. Their existence creates a climate of good governance that supports the “effective development of the strategic direction of the school” *VRQA Guidelines to the Minimum Standards*, 13.

The following explanatory notes unpack the purposes of each of the clauses of the template constitution for a primary school to adapt. Explanations and suggestions are in *green italics*.

# XXXX Parish Education Board Constitution

*Insert the name of the Parish, School (including address and logo) and date of change on the front cover page. Include those details in the footer of the document.*

## 1. Profile of Our Parish and School

*(Provides a profile of the parish and school establishing a focus on the foundational Catholic identity of both bodies. Information should include the importance of the name, connection to any religious orders, charism and be structures around the history of the parish and school, using the vision statement for the parish and the vision and mission statement for the school as essential support statements)*

### **History of the parish and school**

XXXX

### **Vision Statement for the parish**

XXXX

### **Vision and Mission Statement for the school**

XXXX

## 2. The Governing Principles for the Parish Education Board

*(Lists the governing principles that reflect our Catholic Tradition as discussed and determined by the PEB that will guide their work and processes. For example, accountability, authority, autonomy, collegiality, consensus, diversity, engagement, interdependence, participation, partnership, respect, subsidiarity, confidentiality, transparency.*

*Resources for these governing principles can be found in the Board Formation section of the CEVN School Board site)*

## 3. Governance and Authority

*(Acknowledges the role and authority of the Catholic Church, the Archbishop of Melbourne and the parish priest in Catholic education in the parish and parish primary school. The PEB has no responsibility for the internal management and administration of the school, which are the responsibility of the principal.)*

### **Parish**

- 3.1 Within the provisions of Canon Law, the parish priest in consultation with the parish community is responsible for providing for the Catholic education of parish children and young adults as well the catechetical formation of the faithful and outreach to those who are no longer practising their faith or who do not profess the Catholic religion.

The parish education board (PEB) provides advice to the parish priest within the context of this Constitution and the vision statement of the parish.

### **Parish Primary School**

- 3.2 With the approval and under the direction of the Archbishop of Melbourne, XXXX, has been established to provide Catholic education, according to the precepts, teachings and practices of the Catholic Church.

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This school is administered by the parish priest of XXXX under the supervision of the Archbishop of Melbourne and is acknowledged as Catholic by his authority.

The governance of this school is undertaken by the parish priest with the support of the principal.

The parish education board (PEB) provides advice to the principal within the context of this Constitution and the school's vision and mission statements.

The parish priest reserves his authority in matters relating to:

- the Catholicity of the school
- diocesan regulations
- employment of staff
- the formation and dissolution of the board
- appointment of board members and office bearers
- the appointment and dismissal of the principal
- school finances.

3.3 Within the provisions of Canon Law, the PEB is responsible to the parish priest, who in turn is subject to the vigilance of the Archbishop of Melbourne.

3.4 The PEB has no responsibility for the internal management and administration of the school, which are the responsibility of the school principal.

## 4. Definitions

*(Provides definitions of terms used in the constitution.)*

The **Archbishop** is the Catholic Archbishop for the time being of the Archdiocese of Melbourne or the person duly appointed to administer the Archdiocese.

The **parish** is as defined by the Archbishop of Melbourne in accordance with Canon Law.

The **parish priest** is the parish priest for the time being of the parish of XXXX or the person duly appointed to administer the parish.

The **parish education board (PEB)** is the body responsible for advising the parish priest and principal according to the provisions of this Constitution.

## 5. Land and Buildings

*(Notes the ownership of the parish land and buildings.)*

5.1 The ownership of land and buildings thereon is vested in the Roman Catholic Trusts Corporation for the Diocese of Melbourne, which shall hold such in trust for the parish in accordance with Canon Law.

# XXXX Parish Education Board Constitution

- 5.2 The costs of all land and buildings, comprising buildings equipped to satisfy the requirements of a parish school, shall be underwritten by the parish.

## 6. PEB purposes

*(Lists the purposes of the PEB in relation to education matters in the parish, whether pertaining only to the school or more broadly.)*

The purposes of the PEB are to:

- (a) act as an advisory body to the parish priest and principal, on matters concerning education in the parish
- (b) act as a forum for discussion on matters concerning education in the parish primary school
- (c) provide a link between the parish priest, principal, teachers and parishioners in relation to the provision of Catholic education in the parish community
- (d) promote community development by fostering a strong interrelationship between parish and the parish primary school, Catholic secondary colleges and pre-schools.

## 7. PEB responsibilities

*(Lists the responsibilities of the PEB, which may pertain to broader education matters across the parish including the school or only to those concerning the school. The parish priest, upon consideration of local circumstances and the functions of any existing parish groups, is responsible for determining the extent of the PEB's responsibilities.)*

The responsibilities of the PEB are to:

- (a) promote the Catholic ethos of the school and to support the Religious Education programs
- (b) provide advice on the development and review of school policies
- (c) plan for the future of the parish primary school and its ability to accommodate future enrolments
- (d) provide advice on budget planning and finance-related matters
- (e) contribute to the selection process for the school principal

*(Clause 7 (f) and (g) may be retained or deleted depending on the decision of the parish priest as to the function of the PEB.)*

- (f) ensure the appropriate provision of faith development and RE programs for children attending Government schools
- (g) foster adult education in faith.

## 8. The Parish Education Board (PEB)

*(Clause 8.1 provides details of PEB membership. Membership under clause 8 (c) and (d) are not mutually exclusive. A single parish representative may be sufficient for a PEB fulfilling its function in dealing with education matters relating to the school.)*

### Membership

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- 8.1 The PEB shall be composed of at least ten (10) members who appreciate, value and share the educational mission and ethos of the Catholic Church. It shall consist of:
- (a) the parish priest (ex officio)
  - (b) the school principal (ex officio)
  - (c) four (4) parents of children attending the parish primary school elected by the parents of the school, including a nominee of the parent and friends association
  - (d) three (3) parishioners nominated by the parish priest
  - (e) other persons co-opted for a period of time to serve a particular need on the education board.

## **Ordinary Meeting**

*(Clauses 8.2 to 8.5 provide details of meeting requirements.)*

- 8.2 The PEB should meet at least XX times per year and at least once in every two months.
- 8.3 A quorum, comprises a majority plus one of PEB members at the time of the meeting and members must be present at all time during a meeting.

## **Annual General Meeting**

- 8.4 The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the PEB shall be held once a year.
- 8.5 An annual report is to be presented at the AGM and communicated to the parish community.

## **9. Office Bearers**

*(Lists the office bearers. The PEB executive officer has responsibility for developing the agenda with the Executive Committee. For boards responsible for providing advice on education matters relating to the school, the role of executive officer is undertaken by the principal.)*

- 9.1 Following the AGM, the PEB will elect from its own members a chair. Ex officio members and employees of the parish or school shall not be eligible to hold the office of chair.
- 9.2 The PEB will elect a deputy chair who will carry out the duties of chair in his/her absence.
- 9.3 The PEB will appoint a secretary from among its members. The secretary attends board meetings and prepares necessary documentation under the direction of the executive officer or chair.
- 9.4 The PEB will appoint an executive officer.

## **10. PEB Executive Committee**

*(Notes the requirement that the PEB must have an Executive Committee and sets out its membership. Some members of the Executive may have dual roles e.g. the parish priest may also be the chair; the principal may also be the executive officer)*

- 10.1 The PEB shall form an PEB Executive Committee which may comprise:

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- (a) chair
- (b) parish priest, or his nominee
- (c) non ex-officio member of the board
- (d) principal
- (e) PEB executive officer
- (f) PEB secretary.

10.2 The PEB Executive Committee provides support to the parish priest, principal and the PEB and operates with terms of reference determined by the PEB.

## 11. Other Committees

*(Other committees may be established under the constitution [Clause 11.1]. Depending on the functions of the PEB as decided by the parish priest a PEB Faith Formation and Development Committee may be established [Clause 11.2]. A Fundraising Committee may be appropriate to local circumstances when a PEB is being established or when a school community wishes to incorporate the fundraising role in the functions of a PEB [Clause 11.4].)*

11.1 Other committees, or working parties, may be established by the PEB in response to identified needs of the PEB.

### **The PEB Faith Formation and Development Committee**

11.2 The PEB may form an PEB Faith Formation and Development Committee which may comprise:

- (a) parish priest, or his nominee
- (b) 2 members of the PEB nominated pursuant to clause 8(d)
- (c) 1 member of the PEB elected or nominated pursuant to clause 8(c)

11.3 The PEB Faith Formation and Development Committee provides support to the parish priest and the PEB and operates with terms of reference determined by the PEB.

### **The PEB Fundraising Committee**

11.4 The PEB may form a Fundraising Committee which may comprise:

- (a) chair
- (b) parish priest, or his nominee
- (c) 2 non ex-officio members of the PEB
- (d) principal

11.5 The PEB Fundraising Committee provides support to the principal and the PEB and operates with terms of reference determined by the PEB to raise funds for school related purposes.

## 12. Appointment of PEB Members

*(Notes the suggested appointment processes and tenures of PEB members)*

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- 12.1 The parish priest will appoint PEB members nominated or elected under categories 8.1 (d), (e) and (f).
- 12.2 In the event of a casual vacancy, the vacancy will be filled by appointment of the parish priest on a recommendation of the PEB. Any person appointed to a casual vacancy shall hold office for the balance of the term of the member who is vacating the position.
- 12.3 The terms of appointment for members of the PEB are as follows:
- The four (4) parents of children at the school will be elected for three years, and may be re-elected
  - The three (3) parishioners will hold membership for three years, and may be re-nominated
- 12.4 The term of appointment for the board chair will be for two calendar years and may be eligible for re-election.

## 13. Board Handbook

*(Handbook provide a framework for the institutional memory of the PEB to be carried on over time, accounting for loss due to changes in membership. This allows for the smooth flow of the PEB's day-to-day running. Example of Handbook templates can be found in the Guides and Model Constitutions section of the CEVN School Board site)*

Based upon this Constitution, the PEB shall produce and follow a Handbook to guide the operations and protocols of the PEB.

## 14. Change of Constitution

*(Provides for the process for changes to the constitution.)*

- 14.1 This Constitution may be changed only if the parish priest, after consultation with the PEB, decides upon alterations or accepts any alterations proposed by two-thirds of the members of the PEB.
- 14.2 Notice of any proposed change to the Constitution must be given to PEB members, in writing, 14 clear days in advance of an extraordinary PEB meeting called specifically for the purpose of discussing the matter.
- 14.3 Notwithstanding the above, the parish priest may direct change(s) to the Constitution at any time.

## 15. Confidentiality and Solidarity

*(Recognises the requirement of confidentiality and solidarity in PEB matters from each PEB member.)*

PEB confidentiality and solidarity are key ingredients in building trust among members. At times, there will be a good reason to declare an issue, a paper and/or a discussion as confidential. This should be done by the chair prior to a PEB meeting.

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PEB members should also respect the right of individuals to express their views freely at meetings without fear of being named outside the meeting as taking particular positions. A sense of trust and harmony among members is vital for the wellbeing of the PEB.

**This Constitution was ratified by the parish priest on**

**Dated** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_