

School Advisory Councils

Discernment Process for School Advisory Councils



MELBOURNE
ARCHDIOCESE
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Local conversations

Parish priests and principals hold distinctive roles of leadership in their parish and school communities, and therefore it is essential that they work collaboratively to ensure that the relationship between parish and school is central to providing the religious leadership necessary for the success of the mission (*Working Together in Mission* p. 6).

Consultation during the establishment of Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) affirmed that the School Advisory Council is a living expression of the principle of subsidiarity in action, and is informed by the theology and vision articulated in the [MACS Statement of Mission](#) and the [Working Together in Mission](#) charter. In this light, the establishment of School Advisory Councils plays such a critical role in the governance framework of MACS that, by the end of 2021, every MACS school in the Archdiocese will have a functioning School Advisory Council. Key to their success is the discernment process so essential at a local level. Such a process will discern that some schools will be required to transition their current advisory board or council by replacing the superseded constitution with the [MACS Terms of Reference for School Advisory Councils](#) appropriate to the school's context. Others will require the establishment of a School Advisory Council either to renew a lapsed council or to initiate a council for the first time.

As suggested in the above quote from *Working Together in Mission*, the ongoing conversations that take place – which are essential for principals and parish priests as custodians of mission working with each other – provide opportunity for discernment at a local level around the vision for School Advisory Councils. The following may shine light on these conversations as appropriate to each school's local circumstances:

- How will an established functioning board formalise the transition from the current board/council constitution to the MACS Terms of Reference?
- Having read the MACS Terms of Reference, does the current board/council require changes to its membership or purpose?
- In establishing a new School Advisory Council, what will the expression of interest process look like or will potential members be nominated?
- How will members be chosen and appointed?
- What will be the make-up of the School Advisory Council? How many members will there be and what roles will they play?
- How will the MACS Terms of Reference be customised for each school?
- Where there are multiple schools in one parish, will there be an overarching body to support each school's own School Advisory Council?
- How will the School Advisory Council make the connection between school and parish or association of parishes?

To ensure that School Advisory Councils actively embed the life of the local Church in the life of each school, it is essential that the conversations parish priests and principals have at a local level as they establish and nurture School Advisory Councils are informed by reference to the foundation documents mentioned above and located on the MACS website at <https://www.macs.vic.edu.au/Our-Schools/School-Advisory-Councils/Resources.aspx>.

