

School Advisory Councils

discernment process

Opening the conversation around 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.3

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 play such a critical role in the system 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will discern that some schools will be required to transition the current advisory board or council by replacing the superseded constitution with the MACS [Terms of Reference for School Advisory Councils](#). Others will require the establishment of a School Advisory Council to either 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 that are essential for principals and 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 adopt the MACS *Terms of Reference*?
- Having read the MACS *Terms of Reference* does our current board/council require changes to the 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 and who and what roles will they play?
- How will the MACS *Terms of Reference* be customised for your 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 its parish or association of parishes?

To ensure that the School Advisory Councils ‘actively embed the life of the local Church in the life of each school’ (MACS *Statement of Mission*) it is essential that these conversations custodians of mission and principals have at a local level as they establish and nurture School Advisory Councils be informed by reference to the following foundation documents found on the School Advisory Councils website:

<https://governance.melbourne/resources-sac/>

* The term custodian of mission is used interchangeably for ‘parish priest’, ‘canonical administrators’ or ‘Archbishop’s nominee’.

- [MACS Statement of Mission](#)
- [Working Together in Mission](#)
- [MACS Terms of Reference for School Advisory Councils](#)

