Sacred Heart Primary School

Prospective Board Members

Information Guide

Sacred Heart Primary School
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Introduction

This information guide is intended for parents/carers from the Sacred Heart Primary School community who may be interested in joining the Sacred Heart Primary School Education Board (SEB).

This guide provides information on:
- what the SEB is and does
- functions of the SEB
- the governance framework the SEB operates under
- commitments as a board member
- qualities of a SEB member
- benefits and professional support
- recent board achievements
- application process, and
- nomination form

Why Join?

Being on the school board is a great way to get involved as a school leader and have a real say in what your school is doing for its students and the mission of Catholic education. You get to learn a lot and contribute a lot.

It is a great way to help shape the future vision of the school and improve the learning and community environment that students, parents and teachers are all a part of.

It is recognised that parental interest in a child’s schooling is the most important influence on a child’s progress at school. Children have a greater sense of belonging at school when their parents are also actively involved in the school community.

If you are interested, read on. There are contact details and references at the end if you wish to find out more.

What is the School Education Board?

The SEB is a body of representatives from the school and parish community whose role is to provide advice on educational matters relating to the school and parish.

The parish priest and principal make the final decision based on the informed perspective of board representatives and in the best interests of the school and students.

The SEB is therefore about:
- leadership within the school community
- supporting the parish priest and principal in their roles through informed advice
- improving student and school outcomes

Purpose of the Board

The purpose of the SEB is:
- to act as an advisory body to the parish priest and school principal on matters concerning education in the parish
- provide a link between the parish priest, principal, teachers and the school community
- bring the perspective of the school community on educational matters to board discussions
- provide feedback to the school community on directions made by the SEB

Who is on the School Education Board?

The SEB membership comprises of at least nine (9) members from the parish and school community. The board is made up of the following representatives:
- the parish priest (ex-officio)
- the school principal (ex-officio)
- the school deputy or staff member (ex-officio)
- up to six (6) parents/carers of children attending the school nominated by the parents/carers of the school
- a nominee of the parents association
- a nominee from the parish

Each member plays an important part in representing the diverse interests that make up the school community so that decisions are made with the perspective of the whole school community taken into consideration.
Governance

The SEB is governed by its constitution that is formulated and approved by the parish priest.

The governance of this school is undertaken by the parish priest with the support of the principal. The SEB provides advice to the principal within the context of its constitution and the school’s vision statement.

The SEB is responsible to the parish priest, who in turn is subject to the vigilance of the Archbishop of Melbourne.

The SEB constitution decrees that the board has no responsibility for the internal management and administration of the school. This is the responsibility of the school principal.

Who Can Serve?

The SEB is made up of interested parents / carers, teachers and a representative from the parish.

All parents / carers of children in the school are welcome to apply to be a member of the SEB.

By recommendation of the board, the parish priest or principal may co-opt other persons for a period of time to serve a particular need or expertise on the SEB.

Terms of Appointment

All members of the SEB, other than ex-officio members, are appointed for two years and may be reappointed for a further two years.

No SEB member, other than ex-officio members, will serve more than four years.

Voting Rights

All members of the SEB have an active and equal voice at board meetings. Each board member has full voting rights.

A two-thirds majority is required to secure any vote before the board.

What are the Board’s Functions?

What the board does

The responsibility of the SEB is to:

- promote and support the Catholic ethos within the school community
- provide advice on school policies
- provide advice for the future needs of Sacred Heart Primary School
- provide direction for the Parents Association
- represent the school community and provide opportunity for parents / carers to address education matters with school principal and staff
- market the school and board achievements through an effective communications strategy
- respond to school community concerns

What the board does not do

The SEB does not have accountability for:

- school or parents association finances
- the catholicity of the school
- employment of staff
- appointment of board members (this is the role of the parish priest)
- the appointment or dismissal of the principal (although the SEB can be approached for advice during the selection process)
What are the Commitments?

The SEB must have a minimum of six (6) ordinary meetings per year. There is also an AGM held during term 1 where office bearers are nominated and reports are tabled from the parish priest, principal and SEB chair.

Other meetings you may be expected to attend are:
- extra ordinary meetings that are held as required
- sub-committee meetings
- school forums

Sub-Committees

The SEB has sub-committees that are formed to address specific tasks and functions required of the board. Each sub-committee has at least one member of the SEB amongst its membership.

Sub-committees:
- meet separately to the SEB as many times as needed
- report progress back through the SEB
- can have their membership made up of other persons co-opted for a period of time to serve a particular need of the sub-committee
- are chaired by SEB members

Types of Committees

Sub-committees may be formed to achieve goals such as:
- buildings and school ground improvements
- school beautification
- official anniversary celebrations
- policies for the school
- parish community relations
- communication & school marketing
- homework policy
- addressing specific issues that affect the school community

Board Meetings

At least one ordinary board meeting is held in every school term as follows:

Meetings:
- are held on a Wednesday night
- start at 7pm
- run for 1.5 to 2 hours
- have a set agenda
- open with a prayer

Conversations and decisions are recorded in official minutes by the secretary.

Meeting dates are set early in the year. All SEB meetings are held on the school premises.
Board Member Qualities

Do you have what it takes to be a Sacred Heart Primary, SEB member?

- You need to be prepared to participate in all board activities.
- You need a positive and constructive attitude, but you don’t need to be an expert.
- It helps if you are a ‘people person’ as you need to be able to work as a team, actively listen and support the contributions of other board members.
- You need to be prepared to commit the time and effort needed to ensure that SEB work gets done.

School boards work best when they have people from a variety of different backgrounds who can bring to the table different experiences and work together to achieve goals.

What are the Benefits?

The benefits of being on the SEB include:

- Having a voice in the education the students of Sacred Heart School.
- Having a greater understanding of the school and its operations.
- Having an afternoon option for those unable to be involved through the day.
- Having a sense of self-satisfaction and pride for SEB achievements.
- Supporting members’ personal careers and resumes.
- Forming working relationships with SEB members, staff and the parish.
- Connecting with the school community.
- Having fun while serving.

Board Achievements

To give you an idea on what projects you may get involved with, the following is a list of activities the SEB has contributed to in recent years:

- Formal opening of new school facilities.
- 75th anniversary celebrations.
- School fees and annual review.
- Traffic control solutions.
- School lunch service.
- School uniforms.
- Contemporary learning.
- Parent survey.
- Role of classroom co-ordinators.
- Reviewing school policies & procedures:
  - Anti-bullying policy.
  - Alcohol policy.
  - Homework policy.
- SEB constitution.
- School website, communication and marketing plan.
- Providing valuable advice on topical community issues that affect our school.

Professional Development

You will be supported as a school board member by the parish priest and school principal. All board members share the same ethos and commitment to Sacred Heart Primary School and will guide and support you all of the way.

You will also attend formal board training at the Catholic Education Office Melbourne (CEOM) to educate you in your new role and responsibilities. This is one 2 hour session, usually held mid-year.
Application Process

All parents / carers of children at Sacred Heart Primary School are welcome to apply to be a member of the SEB.

The parish priest will approve and appoint parent / carer board members in consultation with the school principal.

The process to nominate is as follows:
1. complete the SEB nomination form
2. detail your reasons for wanting to become a board member and list your experiences that will enhance your role on the board
3. ask another parent / carer at the school to ‘second’ your nomination
4. submit the completed form to the parish priest three (3) weeks prior to the AGM
5. meet with parish priest to discuss your nomination

All nominations are confidential.

Nomination Timelines

Nomination forms will be available from the start of term 1 each year.

Nomination forms are available from the school office or published newsletters.

All completed forms must be with the parish priest at least three (3) weeks before the SEB AGM. The AGM is held towards the end of term 1. (See the school newsletter or website for published dates)

The SEB AGM is open for all parents / carers to attend. The agenda is published to the entire school community prior to the meeting.

New board members are presented to the SEB at the AGM by the parish priest or school principal.

More Information?

If you would like to know more, please contact:

Fr John ph. 9568 1206
Parish Priest

Brian Martin ph. 8574 4500
Principal

Kate Borg seb@shoakleigh.edu.au
School Education Board Chair

Catholic Education Melbourne website: