



School Advisory Councils

Tailoring of the Terms of Reference



Three pathways, one right for your school

Each school has the flexibility to adapt the MACS Terms of Reference for School Advisory Councils to suit its own particular needs. This template is to be shaped and contextualised for each school, and placed on the school website. It remains a Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) document on company letterhead and only **green** highlighted text can be amended by a school without the approval of the MACS Executive Director. **Yellow** highlighted text provides guidance notes for principals that are to be removed upon completion. **Blue** highlighted text is additional and is only to be included for a school that is one of multiple schools located within a single parish community.

It is the primary task of principals in consultation with the parish priest as custodian of mission to work through the **yellow** highlighted guidance notes to determine and co-design the key elements of the School Advisory Council in alignment with the MACS Terms of Reference for School Advisory Councils. This co-design can be achieved through a shared discernment process, which is ongoing and will need to occur each time a new principal or new parish priest is appointed to the school or parish. The renewal will ensure there is common ground as a basis for them working together in mission.

Please read the [MACS Terms of Reference for School Advisory Councils](#) template and adapt it to the context of your school. It is designed to provide a MACS school with the structure for its School Advisory Council.

Guidance notes

There are 10 Guidance notes for principals, two of which (Guidance Note 4 and 10) are for a school that is one of multiple schools supported by only one priest. **Yellow** highlighted text provides guidance notes for principals that are to be removed upon completion. **Blue** highlighted text is additional and only for a school that is one of multiple schools supported by only one priest.

Only the **green** highlighted text can be amended by a school without the approval of the MACS Executive Director.

1. **Guidance Note 1 – School name, logo, vision and mission:** Asks for the Terms of Reference to be contextualised for each school by inserting the name and logo of the school in the highlighted placeholders. There are 15 instances where the placeholder **School name** must be replaced with the school's name, including in the header, the caption under the school logo and the file name. The logo must also replace the Archdiocese placeholder.

In addition, the school can insert brief vision and mission statements that give some clarity to the context. These should be limited to between 50 and 200 words. More detailed explanations of the school's vision and mission can be provided by reference to the School Philosophy Statement (MACS template) via link or as an appendix at the end of the Terms of Reference.

2. **Guidance Note 2 – Custodian of mission:** Asks principals to amend the highlighted text to choose between three options that have been provided under the prescribed/mandatory category (b) of ex-officio members. One option should be selected depending on the canonical ownership of the school prior to the transfer to MACS on 1 January 2021.



3. **Guidance Note 3 – Council membership with regard to context and type:** Asks principals to amend the highlighted text to modify membership of the council to reflect the variety of arrangements appropriate to each school’s local context: large/small, primary/secondary.
4. **Guidance Note 4 – Additional overarching structures or communication strategies for principals of multiple schools within a single parish community:** Asks principals to amend the highlighted text to provide an outline of any overarching structures or communication strategies that have been put in place to support the individual councils at each school in a situation where multiple schools are located within a single parish community.
5. **Guidance Note 5 – How discernment leading to appointment reflects the mission of MACS:** Asks principals to amend the highlighted text to demonstrate how the discernment process reflects the mission of MACS and the school.
6. **Guidance Note 6 – Process for appointing members:** Asks principals to amend the highlighted text to provide an outline of the process for appointing members to the School Advisory Council and how that process is made available to the school community.
7. **Guidance Note 7 – Period of appointment:** Asks principals to amend or confirm the highlighted text to determine the period of appointment.
8. **Guidance Note 8 – Induction and supporting new members:** Asks principals to amend the highlighted text to demonstrate how they support new council members in being inducted to the mission of MACS and the school, and the business and processes of the council.
9. **Guidance Note 9 – Number of meetings:** Asks principals to determine at a school level the number of meetings per year and, for those situations where there are multiple schools within one parish, to add the additional paragraph and indicate the required minimum attendance of the parish priest at the school’s School Advisory Council meetings.
10. **Guidance Note 10 - Additional overarching meeting schedules or communication strategies for principals of multiple schools within a single parish community:** Asks principals of multiple schools supported by only one parish priest to add additional text to outline meeting schedules such as number of meeting[s] per [period – i.e., term/semester/year] the parish priest will attend. Additional information regarding this arrangement can be added here, such as suggested delegations and alternative communication strategies.

Document completion

It is important to recognise that the nature and the role of the School Advisory Council cannot be changed, as School Advisory Councils form part of the broader governance framework of MACS. Note also that:

- The 11 sections in the template cannot be renumbered or removed, but local contextualised points may be added to the current sections as per the **yellow** highlighted guidance notes, provided they are not inconsistent with the rest of the document.
- No additional numbered sections can be added so that, in accordance with the principle of solidarity, across MACS schools the Terms of Reference have a shared and familiar structure.
- The drafting note page, all guidance notes and all highlighting – green, yellow and blue – should be removed once the Terms of Reference is completed.
- The file should be saved as **Terms of Reference for [school name] School Advisory Council.docx**, replacing [school name] with the school’s name, and a finalised copy of the document published on the school’s website.