

ST. BRIGID'S
COLLEGE

PARENT FORUM TERMS OF REFERENCE





This document was developed in consultation with Catholic School Parents WA (CSPWA) and has been endorsed by CSPWA as the preferred operating framework for all Parents & Friends Groups within WA Catholic Schools.



ST. BRIGID'S
COLLEGE

PARENTS AND FRIENDS GROUP

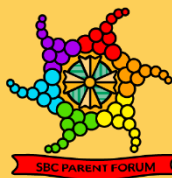
TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

St Brigid's College is committed to providing excellence in education within a Christ-centred environment. St Brigid's College nurtures and supports every student in their growth as contributing members of the community, within the Spirit of Mercy.

As part of the Church's mission, Catholic schools contribute to parish life. Therefore, the close and mutually beneficial working relationships between school leaders, parents and parishes are essential.

A Catholic School Parents and Friends Group (P&F) provides the opportunity for parents, caregivers, and friends of the school to meet, share and become a community that supports and encourages our students and staff in realising the shared vision. The Parent Forum can add strength to their school through community engagement and fundraising initiatives, in addition to being positive advocates for its school.

The Parent Forum operates in accordance with these Terms of Reference and is accountable to and works in close cooperation with the school Principal.



1. NAME

The name of the St Brigid's College Parent and Friends group is St Brigid's College Parent Forum

2. AUTHORITY

- 2.1 St Brigid's College has established the Parent Forum to provide local and contextual support for the College Principal to build a strong, positive Catholic school community.
- 2.2 The Parent Forum must operate in accordance with the Mercy Education Policy 1.03 Associated Entities and corresponding, Operational Instructions.
- 2.3 The purpose of this TOR document is to establish and provide consistency for the operation of the Parent Forum.
- 2.4 If the Parent Forum or any member breaches the TOR,
- 2.5 In the event of any uncertainty as to the meaning or intent of any clause in this TOR document, the matter must be referred to the Principal for interpretation and decision.

3. FUNCTIONS

- 3.1 The Parent Forum is established to support the Principal to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with the College Mission "We at St Brigid's College are committed to providing excellence in education within a Christ centred environment. St Brigid's College nurtures and supports every student in their growth as contributing members of the community, within the Spirit of Mercy."
- 3.2 The Parent Forum should respect and embrace the values of Mercy Education and St Brigid's College

3.3 The Parent Forum should carry out the following functions in the context of their school community:

- (a) collaborate with the Principal to plan, organise and promote social, sporting, cultural, educational and faith formation activities for the interaction of parents, school staff, parish and students and in doing so provide opportunities for community engagement, where relevant;
- (b) support the Principal in the facilitation of fundraising events for the benefit of the students; these funds provide opportunities for students and complement the school budget;
- (c) encourage parental participation in school programs, particularly those related to parent engagement in learning;
- (d) act as a forum for ideas and discussion on any relevant issue that will benefit the students;
- (e) act as a channel to CSPWA to seek advice or express opinion.
- (f) liaise with CSPWA and/or parish and other parties to organise guest speakers for the Parent Forum members on current and suggested educational programs, faith development and other matters of interest;
- (g) in consultation with the Principal, conduct an annual Parent Forum event planning session to establish focus for the year ahead.
- (h) be positive advocates for the school in the local community;
- (i) represent the Parent Forum as an invited member of the Catholic School Advisory Council.

4. INSURANCE

4.1 St Brigid's College must hold an appropriate insurance policy with its nominated insurer to cover the Parent Forum members and Mercy Education against losses for any unintentional wrongful act committed.

5. MEMBERSHIP

All parents of enrolled students at the school are considered **general members** of the Parent Forum.

Friends are persons affiliated with the school community who do not have children enrolled at the school and who are identified as **associate members**.

The Parent Forum is led by a volunteer group of parents, each of whom are elected to office bearer positions. These people are identified as Parent Forum Committee members.

- 5.1 The Parent Forum Committee membership conditions are:
 - (a) a commitment and desire to promote Catholic education;
 - (b) a commitment and desire to give service to the school;
 - (c) a commitment to the safety, wellbeing and pastoral care of all students and staff;
 - (d) an ability to work cooperatively and constructively with the Principal, school leadership team, the College Advisory Council and other members of the Parent Forum; and
 - (e) a sufficiency of time to devote to Parent Forum duties.
- 5.2 The Parent Forum Committee should be comprised of four to six persons (relevant to the needs/context of the school community) plus the Principal or their delegate.
- 5.3 The Principal of the school shall be an ex-officio member of the Parent Forum committee but may not be elected as an office bearer.
- 5.4 Parent Forum Committee must consist of the following office bearers:
 - (a) Chair;
 - (b) Deputy Chair;
 - (c) Secretary; and
 - (d) Treasurer.

Note: After approval at the Annual Community Meeting, the positions of Secretary and Treasurer may be held by one person.

- 5.5 Parent Forum Committee membership is reviewed annually at the Annual Community Meeting (ACM)

- 5.6 Parent Forum Committee members are appointed to the role for two years. Parent Forum Committee members can serve no more than six consecutive years (three terms) in that role.
- 5.7 Parent Forum Committee members may resign at any time during their term. This notice should be in writing to the Parent Forum Chair and the Principal.
- 5.8 Should a position within the Parent Forum Committee become vacant, the Parent Forum Committee can co-opt a replacement until the next election.
- 5.9 Parent Forum Committee members must advise the Chair of their absence from any meeting.
- 5.10 Any elected or co-opted Parent Forum Committee member who is absent from two consecutive meetings without an apology, must be contacted by the Chair and advised that if the member is absent from a third consecutive meeting, they will be deemed to have vacated their position.
- 5.11 Parent Forum Committee members should be independent and avoid conflicts of interest. Therefore, a person, or a spouse of a person, employed by the school is discouraged from being nominated to the Parent Forum Committee.
- 5.12 With the agreement of the Principal, the Chair may invite staff or others to attend any meeting in an ongoing or ad hoc manner, as appropriate.
- 5.13 The Parent Forum through the Principal may request membership conditions to be varied subject to approval by the Chief Executive of Mercy Education.
- 5.14 Friends of the Parent Forum:
- (a) must register their membership with the Parent Forum Committee, including name and contact details; this should be reviewed annually;
 - (b) must identify their connection with the school;
 - (c) cannot be a Parent Forum Committee member or hold an office bearer position; and
 - (d) should be invited to the AGM

6. CATHOLIC ETHOS AND FAITH FORMATION

- 6.1 The Parent Forum must support the Mercy ethos of the school and operate within Catholic social teaching principles.
- 6.2 Parent Forum Committee members should participate in an initial school-based formation, which may include commissioning of Parent Forum Committee members, at the commencement of each year.
- 6.3 Parent Forum Committee members should undertake appropriate ongoing faith formation, including formation regarding the Catholic social teaching principles.

7. PARENT COMMITTEE MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 Parent Forum Committee members are identified as regular volunteers, as defined in the *Registrations Standards and Other Requirements for Non-Government Schools in Western Australia (July 2022)*.
- 7.2 Parent Forum Committee members must provide a current National Police Clearance check upon their appointment to an office bearer position, with the cost to be borne by the school.
- 7.3 All Parent members – Committee, general and associate members – must comply with the Mercy Education Code of Conduct (Employees and Volunteers).
- 7.4 Parent Committee members must participate in learning opportunities, at least annually, regarding the Mercy Education Code of Conduct, Mercy Education’s Child Safety Procedures, and any child safe practices within their Catholic school community.

8. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) AND ELECTION OF PF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- 8.1 The Parent Forum must conduct a meeting to be called “the Parent Forum Annual Community Meeting” each year between 1 November in one year and 28 February of the following year inclusive. The Parent Forum and Advisory Council, if local circumstances provide, can hold a joint ACM.
- 8.2 The Parent Forum Chair must ensure that:
 - (a) the notification of the AGM and any Parent Forum vacancies arising are provided at least 21 days prior to the meeting;

- (b) the preparation of the AGM agenda is undertaken by the Chair and the Principal and shared with the school community;
- (c) the determination of Parent Forum Committee membership eligibility and vacancies is undertaken with notification provided to the school community;
- (d) at the AGM, nominations will be called for membership for the vacant Parent Forum Committee positions and that if nominations exceed the number of vacant positions, a vote to be a member of the Parent Forum Committee must occur;
- (e) the election to the vacant office bearer roles is undertaken in a fair and transparent manner and must occur within two weeks of the AGM nomination; all general and associate members attending this meeting will be eligible to vote.

9. MEETINGS AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE P&F COMMITTEE

- 9.1 The Parent Forum Committee must determine the meeting schedule, with a minimum requirement of one meeting per school term plus the AGM. Special meetings may be held as often as deemed necessary.
- 9.2 The Parent Forum meeting must only go ahead if the Principal, or their delegate, and two elected Parent forum Committee members are in attendance.
- 9.3 No decision can be made without a quorum (one half plus one of all committee members) and must include the Principal or their delegate.
- 9.4 Through the request of any Parent Forum Committee member the Chair, in consultation with the Principal, may call a special meeting of the Parent Forum. No less than three days' notice is required.
- 9.5 In the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair must preside over the meeting.
- 9.6 All Parent Forum Committee members, office bearers, general members and associate members (including the Chair) have equal voting rights. Decisions will be determined by a majority of votes. In the case of a voting deadlock the motion will be considered to have been lost. The Chair does not have a casting vote.
- 9.7 Minutes of the meetings of the Parent Forum must be taken, with the final minutes signed by the Chair and stored securely.

10. SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE P&F COMMITTEE

- 10.1 The Parent Forum Committee is empowered to appoint sub-committees as it deems necessary from time to time.
- 10.2 The Chair of the sub-committee must report to the Parent Forum Committee.
- 10.3 The Principal or their delegate must be invited to be a member of the sub-committee.
- 10.4 Prior to the establishment of a sub-committee, a brief should be established to identify the purpose, membership, meeting structure and a timeline for the sub-committee's work.

11. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- 11.1 The collection and distribution of the Parent Forum finances must be in accordance with Mercy Education Policies.
- 11.2 The funds collected by the Parent Forum via a parent levy or fundraising are under the stewardship of the Parent Forum. This stewardship requires the use of funds to be for the benefit of the students and school.
- 11.3 Decisions relating to the use of funds for the benefit of the students and school must be supported at a general meeting, minuted and endorsed by the Principal.
- 11.4 The Parent Forum should aim to spend funds collected (levies and fundraising) in the same year in which they are received, unless funds have been designated for a future purpose
e.g. a nature playground.
- 11.5 A 'Parent Forum' parent levy is an option in lieu of, or in conjunction with, conducting fundraising activities. The value of the levy must reflect the school context and be determined in a consultative process between the Parent Forum and the Principal.
- 11.6 The introduction of a Parent Forum levy must be endorsed by the Parent Forum Committee, Catholic School Advisory Council, and the Principal.

- 11.7 Parent Forum receipt and payment of monies must be transacted through the school operating bank account. The Parent Forum funds will be quarantined for Parent Forum endorsed use only.
- 11.8 The Parent Forum Committee must prepare a plan of how fundraising income received and Parent forum levies (if applicable) will be spent. The plan should be prepared in consultation with the School Leadership Team and the College Advisory Council.
- 11.9 With assistance from school finance staff (as required), the Parent Forum Treasurer, must present a summary of receipts/income and payments/expenses at each Parent Forum meeting.
- 11.10 The Parent Forum financial year will be for a period of 12 months commencing 1 January.
- 11.11 The Parent Forum transactions will form part of the school's annual financial audit process.

12. COMMUNICATIONS

- 12.1 The Principal will keep the Parent Forum informed of the relevant school activities and events.
- 12.2 The Parent Forum, in consultation with the Principal, should be an effective liaison agent between the school and the community served by the school.
- 12.3 The Parent Forum Committee, in consultation with the Principal, should disseminate information about Parent Forum meetings and decisions to the wider school community, the College Advisory Council and other groups interested in the Catholic school.
- 12.4 All communications from the Parent Forum must be made with the knowledge and approval of the Principal and must be actioned through the Principal or their delegate.

13. REVIEW

- 13.1 Any elected or co-opted Parent Forum Committee member may be removed from their role, for reasons including not adhering to the Terms of Reference.
- 13.2 In collaboration with the Principal and CSPWA, the Parent Forum Committee must establish a process for the periodic review of the effectiveness of its operations.
- 13.3 If for any reason the Parent Forum Committee does not function effectively, advice may be sought from the CSPWA.
- 13.4 If a Parent Forum Committee is dismissed and not reformed:
 - (a) all funds in the Parent Forum bank account (if applicable) must be donated to the school, after payment to creditors.
 - (b) notification must be made to the school community within 28 days of being dismissed;
and
 - (c) all records of the Parent Forum must be appropriately stored by the school including minutes, correspondence, and financial documents.

14. APPENDIX - DEFINITIONS

Advisory Council means the College Advisory Council of the school.

CSPWA means Catholic School Parents Western Australia Incorporated. CSPWA is recognised as the peak body representing and advocating on behalf of Catholic school parents in WA.

Ex-officio means a member of the P&F by virtue of one's office or official position (i.e. Principal, Parish Priest).

Friend means a person who is not currently a parent of the school, but who is keen to support the school community in the best interest of the students. Examples of friends would be teachers, grandparents, carers or other community members.

National Police Clearance means a nationally coordinated Criminal History Check Screening Clearance Number (SCN), as processed by the Department of Education (DoE).

Parent means a child/student's primary caregiver.

Principal means the Principal of the school or person in charge of the school.

Quorum means one half plus one of all committee members and must include the Principal or their delegate.

School Community means the community of parents served by the school and other persons interested in or sharing responsibility for the welfare of the school.

Terms of Reference means all clauses, terms, and conditions as outlined in this document as amended from time to time.