

Mary Immaculate

Star of the Sea School



Board of Management

1 Mary Immaculate Star of the Sea School Board of Management Membership

1. The Pastor

2. The School Principal acts as Chair of the Board of Management

3 & 4. Two parents of children enrolled in the school preferably one father and one mother who are elected by the general body of parents.

(To ensure the widest possible representation these parents should be from separate families and bear no relationship to any other member of the board)

5. & 6. Two Teachers

(who are elected by vote of the teaching staff.)

7 & 8. Two Parish representatives.

(Appointed by the Pastor, these representatives may be chosen in consultation with the other members listed above at the first meeting of the board and are then invited to join the board)

9. The Parish Financial Manager

10. Clergy invited by the Pastor.

Duration

Each member serves two years. Election is staggered to allow for one new teacher, parent, and parish representative every other year.

The Chairperson

The Principal who is entitled to vote and who, in the event of a tied vote, also has a casting vote and for whom this Board is Advisory.

The Secretary

Is a Board member elected to this office by the Board

The Treasurer

To be elected or appointed by the Board

THE MARY IMMACULATE STAR OF THE SEA

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Part of the essential work of the Board of Management of a Primary School is the maintenance of links with a number of people or groups. In some cases, it is sufficient for the Board to know of the existence and work of other groups. In other instances, the Board of Management will have close and important contact with those who are involved in various aspects of the work of education.

The Parish

Mary Immaculate Star of the Sea Catholic School is the Saint Mary Star of the Sea Parish School. Mary Immaculate star of the Sea School exists firstly for Christ, the unseen but ever-present teacher in the classroom. The Board of Management would facilitate and promote close pastoral links between the Pastor, and clergy and the teachers and pupils of the school. The local priest visits the school regularly. He would be given access to all classes during the religious instruction period and, outside of that time, by arrangement with the Principal and the other teachers. The role of the priest visiting the School is essentially a pastoral role. His work will embrace the whole school community, students, teachers and parents. His role is distinct from that of the Board of Management or that of the teacher.

The priest exercises his pastoral role with the pupils: by personal contact with the individual students; by class contact; through liturgical worship; by maintaining an interest in pedagogical, recreational, cultural and apostolic activities.

In keeping with his pastoral role, he will be available to the staff by way of individual and group discussion. He will seek the co-operation of the staff members in the question of religious worship and apostolic activities.

The pastoral role of the priest in the school extends to the home of the pupils. He will make whatever informal contacts he can with the parents.

The Board of Management would encourage collaboration between the school and the parish, particularly in the preparation of the children for the Sacraments and for participation in the liturgical life of the parish community. Children would also be encouraged to become involved in appropriate ways in their parish, e.g. as altar servers, members of the junior choir, in collaboration with Parish Ministries, and Archdiocesan approved ministries.

The mutual help of the priest and teachers, with the support of the parents, is essential for the spiritual development of the pupils.

The Board of Management would also welcome the local priest's pastoral support for the teachers themselves, particularly in times of stress or difficulty. It is helpful if the priest and the teachers can reflect and pray together about their shared vocation of caring for the young people in the school.

The Pupils

The school exists to serve its pupils. The educational progress and the welfare of the children should be the overriding consideration in all decisions arrived at by the Board of Management. The Board of Management has a duty of care for the children attending the school. This duty is exercised by the Board's promotion of the welfare of the children and by a vigilance which is aware of difficulties and tries to eradicate or at least diminish them. The Board of Management must ensure that the school premises are safe for pupils and teachers.

The Board must also endeavor to provide a good learning environment by maintaining the school in good structural and decorative order and by providing, within its means, for appropriate teaching aids and class requisites.

The Board of Management must ensure that the curriculum and programs of the school are meeting meet all requirements set forth by the Florida Catholic Conference and are in compliance with the regulations and policies of the Archdiocese of Miami's Department of Education.

The Board of Management must ensure that the school has a code of discipline and of behavior for pupils which is drawn up in consultation with parents and known to parents. The code of behavior should note that any form of bullying is unacceptable. Corporal punishment of pupils is not all owed.

The Teachers

The teachers are the single most valuable and important assets of the school. If teachers are happy in their work, this will communicate itself to the pupils. Pupils learn best in a calm and positive atmosphere.

The Board of Management should meet the teachers informally at least once a year.

The Board should ensure that the staff under the leadership of the School Principal participates in a process of school planning. The Board and the parents make an input into the school plan at appropriate stages of the process. When the plan is completed, it is submitted to the Board of Management for approval. The school plan is reviewed at regular intervals.

The Board of Management must be aware of its obligations under the Florida Catholic Conference Educational regulations and under the Archdiocese of Miami's Department of Education.

In the event of a difficulty arising between the Board and an individual teacher, agreed procedures should be followed in a spirit of mutual respect and concern.

Most misunderstandings between teachers, or between a teacher and the Principal, can be dealt with informally. If a teacher chooses to lodge a formal complaint to the Board of Management, the Grievance Procedure is to be followed.

Teachers should be encouraged to avail of useful in-service courses and to pursue their professional development.

The Parents

In line with the Church's teaching, the Board of Management acknowledges that parents are the primary educators of their children. The Board of Management would strive to ensure that parents find the school an open, welcoming, inclusive place. There should be a Parents' Association in the School. (The P.T.S.A. needs to adapt the following section to reflect the PTSA)

The following extract is from the Irish Education Act 1998:

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26. – (1) The parents of students of may establish, and maintain from among their number, a parents' association for that school and membership of that association shall be open to all parents of students of that school.

(2) A parents' association shall promote the interests of the students in a school in co-operation with the board, Principal, teachers, students of a school and for that purpose may –

(a) advise the Principal or the board on any matter relating to the school and the Principal or board, as the case may be, shall have regard to any such advice, and

(b) adopt a program of activities which will promote the involvement of parents, in consultation with the Principal, in the operation of the school.

3) The board shall promote contact between the school, parents of students in that school and the community and shall facilitate and give all reasonable assistance to the parents' association

(4)(a) A parents' association shall, following consultation with its members, make rules governing its meetings and the business and conduct of its affairs. The parents' association is to elect officers for its governance once a year.

In a spirit of collaboration and trust, the Constitution of the Parents' Association will recognize that there are areas of school activity which belong to the professional work of the teachers. There will also be a recognition that certain areas of responsibility (e.g. finance) belong to the Board of Management.

A parents' association is needed to raise funds for the administration and activities of the School. Full accounts must be maintained and presented at the parent association in accordance with the rules of the association.

The parents' association should consult with the Board about fundraising for the school or school projects.

The approval of the Board is needed before these funds are raised. The expenditure of these funds is by the Board of management, in consultation with the parents' association and in accord with the Archdiocesan financial regulations. Purchases and contracts are to be approved by the Pastor in accordance with the Archdiocesan regulations and the Parish procedures. The Board prepares a total account of income and expenditure at the end of each school year and this is available to parents.

Any funds raised must be used for the purpose/s for which the money was collected. If, in exceptional circumstances, it becomes unnecessary for the Board to use all the funds collected for the purpose specified, the Board will communicate this to the parents' association and, where appropriate, the local community. In any event, the funds must be used for the school. The change of purpose for which the funds are used will be decided by the Board in consultation with the parents' association committee.

The Board, in consultation with the School Principal, should ensure that arrangements are made for parents to meet class teachers on a regular basis.

Parents will naturally be concerned about the welfare and progress of their own children. They are entitled to have access to records kept by the school relating to the progress and education of their child.

If a parent has a particular difficulty about any aspect of the school's work, the matter should be referred in the first instance to the class teacher and subsequently, if necessary, to the Principal. The matter should be dealt with informally, if possible.

If it becomes necessary to deal more formally with the matter, the agreed complaints procedure should be followed

Anonymous complaints about the teachers or about any matter connected with the school would not be considered by the Board of Management. Individual members of the Board should not agree to bring anonymous verbal messages to the Board of Management meeting. Board members should advise people who approach them with complaints or requests that the matter should be referred to the Principal or to the Chairperson of the Board, as appropriate.

THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT IN ACTION

Frequency of Meetings

The Rules of Procedure for Boards of Management require a meeting at least once in every school term, and usually five meetings per annum. In the absence of regular meetings of the Board, the task of Management will tend to be left to the Principal of the school. This is not satisfactory for any of the members of the Board of Management (including the and Principal).

Consequently, Boards are encouraged to meet once a month – as a general rule – during the school year. Through regular meetings, the Board members will come to function as a team. They will get to know the school, and will be in a position to offer useful support and advice to the Principal. They will also be enabled to take seriously their responsibility for many matters connected with the school.

Length of Meetings

Board meetings would usually last one hour. If there is an item of particular concern which may necessitate a longer meeting, it is advisable to determine at the start of the meeting when the meeting will end.

It is generally recommended to adjourn a meeting and reconvene some days later rather than to rush to a decision when Board members are tired and anxious to finish.

Sample Agenda

The Agenda for every ordinary meeting of the Board of Management should include the following items:

1. Opening Prayer
 2. Apologies
 3. Minutes of previous meeting
 4. Matters arising from the Minutes
 5. Correspondence
 6. Finance – Treasurer's Report
 7. Principal's Report
 8. Any other Business
 9. Agreed Report
 10. Date of next meeting
- 1. Opening Prayer**

The Board members ask the blessing of God on their work for the children of the school for which they have responsibility.

Any bereavements or special needs would be noted at this point.

2. Apologies

The attendance at the meeting should be noted in the minutes.

If a member is absent from three consecutive ordinary Board meetings, without good cause, the Pastor may appoint another person to the Board.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes are drawn up and kept by the Recording Secretary who is the Board Member elected to that office by the Board.

The Minutes need not be long. It is essential to record decisions arrived at by the Board and any votes taken. It is not generally necessary to record details of the discussion of the Board.

The Board will decide how to convey the Minutes to the members.

The Minutes of the meetings of the Board of Management are confidential to those entitled to be present at Board meetings or at a particular board meeting.

When Board members agree that the Minutes are an accurate and complete record of the business of the previous meeting, the Chairperson signs the official copy which is retained by the Recording Secretary.

4. Matters Arising

The Chairperson and/or Board members would make a brief check to ensure that any decision taken at the previous meeting had been implemented.

If any matter arising from the Minutes requires a long discussion, it may more appropriately be dealt with under another heading of the Agenda.

5. Correspondence

If there is a considerable amount of correspondence, it can be helpful to have prepared a list for each Board member. This would merely state the origin and the subject matter of each item of correspondence.

The Board should be made aware of all correspondence addressed to the Chairperson of the Board. The Principal may properly deal with correspondence addressed to him/her, or she/he may decide to bring the matter to the attention of the Board for their information or to seek the advice of Board members.

Much of the correspondence – e.g. from the Department of Education – needs simply to be noted by the Board of Management. This can be indicated on the list of correspondence. Other items may need some discussion and decision by the Board.

6. Finance – Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report should be presented at every Board meeting. The Report should indicate:

- (a) The true Bank balance at the end of the preceding calendar month (i.e. Bank Statement less any outstanding uncashed checks).
- (b) Payments which will have been made since the issuing of the Bank Statement plus payments which will fall due before the next Board meeting.
- (c) Any income due in the same period.

On the basis of this information, the Board of Management will be in a position to consider the financial situation of the school and to make decisions about items of expenditure which may be considered necessary or desirable.

7. Principal's Report

This is the part of the meeting during which the Principal enables the Board of Management to become familiar with the life and functioning of the school. It also enables the Principal to avail of the advice and views of the Board members. The Principal would report to the Board of Management on a wide range of issues which may vary according to the time of the year. These issues could include:

- Intake of new pupils – numbers etc.
- Projection of enrollments for the following year(s) with any implications for accommodation, staffing etc.

- New teacher(s)

Posts of Responsibility

- Substitutes/temporary teachers appointed with the approval of the Chairperson since the last meeting of the Board
- Any incident of behavior, vandalism, any accident etc., which is of concern to the staff of the school
- Proposals about any program, lectures etc., to be introduced for the pupils.
- Events which took place or are planned for the following month.
- Dates of mid-term breaks, holidays etc. (school calendar).
- Review of school curriculum in accordance with the Florida Catholic Conference's standards for accredited education.
- Concern about the condition of the school premises or grounds.

- Retention of a particular pupil in any class.
- Service for children with special needs within the school
- Deployment of additional (concessionary) teachers (if any).
- Any other item of information about which the Principal is concerned or which she/he judges it useful/necessary/interesting to pass on to Board members.

The relationship between the Board of Management and the Principal should be one of openness and of mutual loyalty.

The following are among the other areas of the school organization with which Board members would be familiar and on which they should be advised/informed by the Principal Teacher:

- Enrollment procedures.
- Arrangement of classes.
- Arrangements for supervision of pupils.
- School timetable.
- Arrangements for parent/teacher meetings.
- Homework policy.
- School uniform.
- Arrangements for substitution for absent teachers.
- Fire and safety drills.
- Code of behaviors/discipline for pupils.
- School outings (all of which must be sanctioned by the Board of Management for Insurance purposes).
- Administration of 'school meals', milk schemes, book grant.
- Home/School liaison – formal and informal.
- School library – access to County Library, mobile library etc.
- Assessment of pupils. School reports.
- Availability of back-up services for children with special needs.
- Provision of class requisites.
- Retreats, lectures etc. provided for pupils.

8. Any Other Business

Some Chairpersons find it useful to ask at the beginning of the meeting if any Board member wishes to raise a matter under AOB.

It is not generally advisable to allow substantive issues to be brought up under AOB. If any Board member introduces any such issue, it is usually preferable to defer discussion until the following meeting when the issue can be noted as a main item on the Agenda.

The item AOB is intended to allow brief discussion or announcement about items not otherwise discussed at the meeting.

9. Agreed Report

Under the terms of the Rule for Confidentiality the Board should decide at the end of each meeting what information may be disclosed, to whom, and how. In some instances, it is appropriate for the school Principal to convey information to teachers and parents.

At other times, the Chairperson may need to make an announcement. Usually, however, most of the information may be conveyed informally to teachers and to the Parents' Council.

It is essential that all Board members respect the confidentiality of certain matters, as agreed by the Board.

10. Date of Next Meeting

It can be helpful to agree the dates for all Board meetings for the year when the Board holds the first meeting each academic year.

If this has been done, the Chairperson would remind Board members of the date, and check that the date arranged is still suitable for the members. Dates should not be changed unless there is very good reason for doing so, and then with the maximum notice possible.

If the schedule of meetings for the year has not been agreed, then, at the end of each meeting the Board members will decide when the next meeting will take place and at what time.

Cohesion of the Board of Management

An effective Board of Management is one which has a shared sense of purpose and of commitment to the school for which it has collective responsibility.

It is useful for Board members at the beginning of their term of office to consider together what their particular role is. Board members might discuss objectives for their term of office which would include the development of the school and of the Board of Management itself. A sense of purpose can engender enthusiasm in the Board members.

The Board members should review their perception of their role and the contribution of the Board to the school at least once a year. What can be important is the general discussion by the Board members through which they can arrive at some shared understanding of what they are about.

During discussions, the Chairperson would encourage full participation by Board members. The talents of each member of the Board should be recognized and affirmed. The contribution which she/he has to make to the functioning of the Board should be valued and encouraged.

Tasks to be done by the Board of Management could be delegated to different members, according to their interests and available time. This sharing of tasks can generate a sense of involvement for individual Board members.

The Chairperson should endeavor to generate good communication between members of the Board so as to unite the group. She/he should draw on members' experience and knowledge and encourage the development of ideas rather than the mere articulation of a point which is either accepted or rejected.

Board members must be assisted in realizing and accepting that they carry the responsibility for the management of the school.