



## **Saint Patrick Catholic School**

### **The Celtic Council Constitution and Bylaws**

*This Constitution was first adopted by the Second General Assembly on September 19, 2008 and was ratified by the Celtic Council on September 19, 2008.*

#### **ARTICLE I – NAME, PURPOSE, AND DUTIES**

1. This Student Council Association of Saint Patrick Catholic School will be called the Celtic Council. It will consist of a General Assembly drawn from the Student Body which includes one representative from each homeroom (grades third through eighth, inclusive), an Executive Council elected by the student body and appointed to work with the General Assembly, and Advisors appointed by the school principal to work with the Executive Council and General Assembly.
  
2. The Celtic Council will have these purposes:
  - a. To assist in providing for the total formation of all students of Saint Patrick Catholic School with emphasis on the mission of the school and a safe and caring Christian community.
  - b. To support character formation through the recognition and celebration of each individual student's gifts, and the self-confidence to strengthen those gifts.
  - c. To support the spiritual development of each of its students with the understanding that membership in a faith-based organization supports the desire for more insightful qualities thereby strengthening the Student Body's relationship with God.
  - d. To encourage and nurture the leadership qualities of each of the Celtic Council members inherent in the preparation, logistical support, and execution of the duties of the council.
  - e. To develop an understanding of the importance of academics in maintaining the rigorous extra-curricular schedule that the Celtic Council demands.
  - f. To foster the physical well-being of the student by keeping pace with the demanding schedule that provides for a sound mind and body.
  - g. To provide for a strong ethic of service through volunteerism and the support of the surrounding community.
  - h. To improve communication between and among the Student Body, Faculty, and Administration of Saint Patrick Catholic School by providing a place for students to voice their opinions and become actively involved in issues affecting their general welfare.
  - i. To encourage active participation by all students in the various extra-curricular activities of Saint Patrick Catholic School.
  - j. To develop servant leadership qualities, organizational skills, and democratic ideals in preparing the students of Saint Patrick Catholic School for active participation in a democracy.
  - k. To promote Catholic values by reviewing and supporting where appropriate bills and programs endorsed by the Virginia Catholic Conference and the United States Catholic Conference.
  - l. Associate with the World Affairs Council of Norfolk and other top leadership organizations to understand better global issues and leadership skills.
  
3. The Celtic Council will have these duties:
  - a. To discuss concerns of the Student Body or any segment of it and to take positive student action under the direction of the Council's Advisors when appropriate.
  - b. To work with other organizations to sponsor assembly programs and otherwise enhance the educational experience for the Student Body of Saint Patrick Catholic School.
  - c. To conduct elections each year for representatives to the General Assembly, and the various offices of the Executive Council.
  - d. To assist the student body in the understanding, skill building and effective implementation of conflict resolution.
  - e. To actively work in Christian service and charitable programs and projects, providing leadership when and where possible and appropriate.

## ARTICLE II – SOURCE OF AUTHORITY

1. It is recognized that the authority for a school to call itself Catholic is granted by the Bishop of the Diocese in which the school resides. It is further recognized that the Saint Patrick Catholic School Board of Directors create policy and strategic planning, secure funding for the school, provide financial oversight and have a fiduciary responsibility for school operations.
2. It is recognized that the Principal oversees all school operations and that the Council and all other school programs function at the principal's discretion. It is understood that the Council submits to the Principal all proposals for actions not otherwise granted to it in this constitution and bylaws. It is therefore understood that the Principal has the duty to rescind programs, decisions or actions of the Council that in the Principal's belief is not conducive to the smooth operation of the school.
3. The Advisors, designated by the Principal or his/her designee, guide and oversee all aspects of Council operations. The Advisors will settle all disagreements involving the interpretation of this Constitution and Bylaws.
4. It is recognized that only the Student Body has the right to choose the representatives and officers of the Celtic Council, and that no Faculty approval is needed to become a representative or officer in it. The Principal of Saint Patrick Catholic School shall have final authority in approving the selection of the representatives and officers of the Celtic Council.

## ARTICLE III – THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

1. The General Assembly will include:
  - a. Two representatives elected from each grade level or one per homeroom (grades third through eighth, inclusive). Any eligible member of the Student Body has the right to be elected as a representative and maintain that position, except as outlined in the Eighth Section of this Article.
  - b. Each member of the Executive Council elected by the Student Body (grades third through eighth, inclusive) not serving as a Grade level Representative.
2. Representative elections will be conducted by secret ballot by grade level no later than September 15<sup>th</sup> of each school year. The names of the elected homeroom representatives will be delivered to the Advisors within three days after the election.
3. The General Assembly will meet twice per month from September through May. Meeting dates will be set by the Executive Council or the Advisors and be announced at least one week in advance, except in case of emergency.
  - a. Any member of the Student Body has the right to attend and speak before the General Assembly, but only the Celtic Council may introduce, second, or cast a vote on any motion or resolution.
  - b. Special meetings may be called from time to time to consider requests made by students or faculty.
4. Within the structure and operation of the General Assembly, the Celtic Council President has the following restrictions and powers:
  - a. The President may not introduce, second, or cast a vote on any motion or resolution, except where a tie must be broken. This restriction will apply to the Vice President if he or she is presiding over the General Assembly.
  - b. The President may veto any action of the General Assembly, in person at the meeting where the action took place, or delivered in writing to the Advisors within two days of that meeting. The President must inform all members of the General Assembly of the veto prior to the next meeting. This veto can be overridden by a two-thirds majority vote of the entire General Assembly. This power will rest only with the President and cannot be delegated.
5. Robert's Rules of Order defines quorum as the minimum number of members required to be present to transact business legally. In order to establish a quorum of the Celtic Council, at least one more than half of its total membership must be present. In order to begin a meeting of the General Assembly or Executive Council, a quorum must be established. Also, no motion or resolution may be voted on by the General Assembly without the presence of an Advisor and the President or the Vice President.
6. All meetings will follow modified Parliamentary Procedure, with Robert's Rules of Order as the official reference. An Advisor will assist the Parliamentarian in settling all confusion concerning Parliamentary Procedure.
7. All meetings will include, but are not be limited to, the following:
  - a. The President calling the meeting to order.
  - b. Prayer to begin the meeting.
  - c. The Secretary taking attendance and calling for the approval of the minutes of the last meeting.
  - d. Reports from each officer and committee chair.
  - e. Report from an Advisor.

- f. Resolution of any old business from the last meeting.
- g. Introduction and possible resolution of new business.
- h. Information regarding the next scheduled meeting.
- i. Motion from the floor to adjourn.

8. A member of the General Assembly who has consistently failed to carry out his or her duties, or who has failed to uphold its standards of ethics and behavior, may be removed as follows:

- a. On the fourth absence from Celtic Council meetings. Absences may be excused by the President or an Advisor with prior notice.
- b. Any member who has consciously violated the disciplinary standards of Saint Patrick Catholic School may be referred to the Principal, who has the authority to remove him or her from the General Assembly for the rest of the year.
- c. If a representative is removed from the General Assembly, a class election will be conducted to select a new representative.

## **ARTICLE IV – THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

1. The Executive Council will be chosen in a general election of the Student Body in all representative grades (third through eighth, inclusive), and will contain at most six student members except in times of transition. All terms for the offices listed below will begin immediately following Election Day in May and will end on Inauguration Day in the following year. In the case of graduating eighth grade students and/or students not returning to Saint Patrick Catholic School, the vacancies left shall be filled by the remaining members of the Executive Council. The Vice-President shall assume the role of acting President until a special election can be conducted. In the case where more than half of the existing Executive Council has not returned for the new school year, the Advisors and the remainder of the Executive Council will appoint temporary officers from the existing membership of officers and representatives. These appointees will hold office until a special election can be conducted. Where there are vacancies in class representation, representatives may be appointed by class as soon as practical during September.

- a. A President, who will be an eighth grade student during the following school year.
- b. A Vice President, who will be a seventh grade student during the following school year.
- c. A Parliamentarian, who will be an eighth grade student during the following school year.
- d. A Secretary, who will be a seventh grade student during the following school year.
- e. A Treasurer, who will be a sixth grade student during the following school year.
- f. A Historian, who will be a sixth grade student during the following school year.

2. In the case where there were no interested candidates for a particular office, the open office will be offered to the runner up from a higher position (for example, if no interested candidates ran for the office of Vice-President, this position will be offered to the runner up from the Presidential race). If the runner up chooses not to accept the available position, a special election will be conducted as soon as practical.

3. There will be a registration period of at least three school days, in which interested Middle School members of the Student Body will have the opportunity to declare their intent to become a potential candidate for Executive Council. The dates for this period will be set by the Advisors and provided to the administration for inclusion into the school calendar.

- a. To register, a student must demonstrate an overall combined average grade of DC2 or better through current teacher verification.
- b. To register, a student must submit the required Celtic Council Application Form within the prescribed time frame.
- c. To register, a student must receive recommendation signatures from all core subject teachers.

4. There will be a campaign period of at least three school days, in which all candidates will have the opportunity to distribute campaign materials and convince fellow students to vote for them. The dates for this period and the Rules of Campaigning will be set by the Advisors.

- a. An Advisor will provide, in advance, the Rules of Campaigning to all potential candidates, who have completed the registration process according to the Second Section of this Article.
- b. On the final day of the campaign period, all candidates will be given the opportunity to speak to the entire third through eighth grade Student Body. Speeches will be reviewed by an Advisor at least two days in advance.
- c. Any candidate that violates the Rules of Campaigning may be disqualified by an Advisor with the consent of the Principal.

5. The General Election will be held by secret ballot during the month of May each school year. The Advisors will provide the ballots to all third through eighth grade homerooms. Once completed, all ballots will be delivered to the Advisors for counting and the winners will be notified within three days of the election. In case of a tie vote, a runoff election excluding all other candidates

will be held within five days of the initial election.

- a. The winners will become officers-elect of the Executive Council to assure a smooth transition, but will not gain full membership in it until the term of the departing Executive Council has ended.
  - b. If an officer-elect becomes unable to take his or her office before the term begins, the second place finisher will be elevated to that office.
  - c. An Advisor will seal all ballots and keep them for at least one year following the date of the election.
6. An elected member of the Executive Council who has consistently failed to carry out his or her duties, or who has failed to uphold its standards of ethics and behavior, may be removed as follows:
- a. The member will be required to meet with the Advisors prior to any further action of the Executive Council.
  - b. Advisors will call a meeting with the Executive Council at which time they will discuss a plan for improvement. The member involved will then be given a two week period to demonstrate positive change.
  - c. At the end of this two week period, the Advisors and the Executive Council shall make a recommendation to the Principal concerning the officer's membership. Any further action shall be left to the discretion of the Principal.
  - d. If a member of the Executive Council resigns or is removed, the President will appoint a replacement with consent of the Advisors. If the President resigns or is removed, the Vice President will become President and the Parliamentarian will assume the duties and responsibilities of Vice President.

## ARTICLE V – THE OFFICERS

### 1. The **President** will...

- a. Assist the Advisors in various tasks, as necessary.
- b. Prepare an agenda for each meeting of the General Assembly after consulting with the other officers, committee chairpersons, and Advisors.
- c. Preside over meetings of the General Assembly and Executive Council, ensuring a fair and full hearing to all concerns and the maintenance of order at all times.
- d. With consent of the Advisors, appoint individuals to chair standing and special committees, and monitor the progress of each committee.
- e. Be a member of all standing and special committees.

### 2. The **Vice President** will...

- a. Assist the President and Advisors in various tasks, as necessary.
- b. Preside over meetings of the General Assembly and Executive Council in the absence of the President.
- c. Be ready at all times to temporarily or permanently become President. In this case, the succession procedures in the Fifth Section of the Fourth Article will be invoked to assure continuity.
- d. Act as a liaison to the Virginia Catholic Conference.
- e. Keep current with all relevant issues of the Catholic Virginian newspaper and report monthly.
- f. Be a member of all standing and special committees.

### 3. The **Parliamentarian** will...

- a. Assist the President and Advisors in various tasks, as necessary.
- b. Be thoroughly familiar with Robert's Rules of Order.
- c. Assist the President by ensuring the members of the group follow parliamentary procedures.
- d. Assist the President by recognizing any member requesting to be heard follows parliamentary procedures as he or she addresses the floor.

### 4. The **Secretary** will...

- a. Assist the President and Advisors in various tasks, as necessary.
- b. Keep accurate minutes of all meetings of the General Assembly and Executive Council and maintain a copy in his or her files.
- c. Maintain a calendar of school events and a complete file of minutes and correspondence.
- d. Maintain accurate attendance records for the General Assembly and Executive Council.

### 5. The **Treasurer** will...

- a. Assist the President and Advisors in various tasks, as necessary.
- b. Assist Advisors in collecting all funds due to the Celtic Council, depositing monies, paying bills due and providing for the

safe keeping of all funds.

- c. Prepare and present periodic summaries of financial records to the General Assembly.

6. The **Historian** will...

- a. Assist the President and Advisors in various tasks, as necessary.
- b. Archive all artifacts that are deemed important for the Celtic Council.
- c. Record and document all events in which the Celtic Council participates.

## **ARTICLE VI – THE COMMITTEES**

1. The following Standing Committees are established:

- a. A Publicity Committee, to publicize upcoming events and maintain the Celtic Council Bulletin Board. The chair of this committee will also assist the Advisors and will work with other chairs to promote the events and activities of their committees.
- b. A Decorating Committee, to decorate for dances, pep rallies, and other Celtic Council activities. The chair of this committee will also work with the Advisors to coordinate these events and activities.
- c. A Graduation Committee, to provide input from the Student Body into the annual ceremony as well as other eighth grade activities. The chair of this committee will also work with the Advisors to coordinate these events and activities.
- d. A Community Service Committee, to coordinate all service activities of the Celtic Council and actively promote participation in service activities by the Student Body. The chair of this committee will also work with the Advisors to coordinate these activities.

2. Special committees may be formed to address other concerns by the President or Advisors, who may appoint members to these committees, and disband the committees when they have finished their work.

3. Any member of the General Assembly has the right to join a committee, except those removed under the Eighth Section of the Third Article or the Fifth Section of the Fourth Article.

4. Chairpersons of each Standing and Special Committee will:

- a. Assist the Officers, President, and Advisors in various tasks, as necessary.
- b. Encourage active participation in his or her Committee by members of the General Assembly as well as the Student Body.
- c. Conduct regular meetings, maintaining a Committee Book that includes accurate attendance records, detailed minutes of each meeting, and written reports of its progress to be reviewed by the President or Vice President and presented before the General Assembly.
- d. With consent of the President, designate an Assistant Chairperson who may serve as acting Chairperson in case of absence.

## **ARTICLE VII – THE ADVISORS**

1. Advisors shall be appointed to the Saint Patrick Catholic School Celtic Council by the Principal and make frequent reports of all Celtic Council activities.

2. Advisors shall support and adhere to the mission and philosophy of Saint Patrick Catholic School as delineated in the current Faculty and Staff Handbook. Advisors shall also exemplify the characteristics expected of a Saint Patrick Catholic School Faculty Member.

3. Advisors shall serve as the point of contact with regard to all matters concerning the Celtic Council, especially when dealing with matters that require legal decisions.

- a. Although homeroom teachers are responsible for conducting the voting process in their perspective homeroom, Advisors shall be informed of each homeroom representative in a timely manner.
- b. The Advisors shall coordinate all campaigning and voting processes for the Executive Council. Advisors are required to maintain sealed ballots for one year after each election. Advisors will inform the Principal of all potential candidates and will report the results of elections to the Principal who will maintain final approval for selection of the Executive Council.
- c. Although regarded as members of the Celtic Council, Advisors shall have no voting authority regarding motions or resolutions. Advisors do not count in establishing a quorum of the Celtic Council meetings, but at least one of the Advisors must be present during all Celtic Council meetings.
- d. Advisors shall serve to assist in all conflict resolution concerning the Celtic Council and liaison with the Principal to effectively accomplish this task.

- e. Advisors shall assist all chair persons in maintaining the effective operation of all committees.
- 4. Advisors shall serve to resolve all disagreements or confusion involving the interpretation of this Constitution.
- 5. Advisors shall be responsible for the creation of all forms and documents supporting the Celtic Council.
- 6. Advisors shall be responsible for the education and procedural training of all General Assembly members.

## **ARTICLE VIII – RATIFICATION AND AMENDMENT PROCEDURES**

- 1. To be ratified, this Constitution must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the entire General Assembly.
- 2. This Constitution will not take effect until the first day of November following its ratification. Afterward, any individual section or subsection can be amended only as outlined in this Article.
- 3. If any part of this Constitution is in violation of Saint Patrick Catholic School policy, only that individual part will be declared invalid, with all other parts of this Constitution to remain in effect.
- 4. Any member of the General Assembly may propose Amendments to this Constitution, which will require a two-thirds vote of its entire membership. However, upon the petition of one-quarter of the Student Body, a special meeting will be held to discuss and vote on their proposal.
- 5. No proposed Amendment may take away the right of students in any class to choose their own representative in the General Assembly or alter the Second or Eighth Articles of this Constitution.
- 6. An Amendment proposed by the General Assembly will become part of this Constitution only after a majority vote by two-thirds of the classes represented at the time of its proposal, and will not take effect until the first day of the following September.

**Ratified on September 19, 2008**

---