



## ST. BRIGID'S COLLEGE PARENT FORUM

### St. Brigid's College Parent Forum Constitution

Adopted at Annual General Meeting held – 16/11/2016

Next Review – prior to the AGM to be held in 2020

The primary right of parents to educate their children must be upheld in all forms of collaboration between parents, teachers and College authorities, and particularly in forms of participation designed to give citizens a voice in the functioning of Colleges and in the formulation and implementation of educational policies.

**" Article 5, "Charter of the Rights of the Family", issued by The Holy See, Rome, October 1983.**

Adopted by a General Meeting of the Parent Forum held November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016

- ***PF President - Dave Thomasson***
- ***PF Secretary – Paul Kettle***
- ***St. Brigid's College Principal – Amelia Toffoli***



# ST. BRIGID'S COLLEGE PARENT FORUM

## 1. AIM

The Parent Forum is a group of parents and guardians with the canonical obligation, and supporters with common purpose, to assist in the provision of a Catholic education for the children.

## 2. NAME OF ASSOCIATION

The name of the Parent Forum shall be the **St Brigid's College Parent Forum**, hereinafter referred to as the "Parent Forum".

## 3. DEFINITIONS

- a. The Parent Forum is the body of parents and guardians of the children at St Brigid's College ( " College " ) and includes ex officio membership to Parish Priests and College Principals (or their respective appointed representatives).
- b. The Executive consists of the primary office bearers of the Parent Forum, that being: President; Vice-President; Secretary; and Treasurer elected as per Clause 8.
- c. The governing bodies of the College are the Principal and Mercy Education Limited.

## 4. OBJECTIVES OF THE PARENT FORUM

- a. The objectives of the Parent Forum are to act to fulfil the aim of the Parent Forum

The objectives are:

- i. work within the spirit and letter of the Constitution;
- ii. strive to build tangible and lasting relationships between parents, Lesmurdie Parish and the College so that the students may experience a sense of Christian community;
- iii. recognise and respect the authority of the Principal as leader of the College Community and work closely with the College authorities to achieve common goals and the College vision;
- iv. encourage invitations for representation on the College Advisory Council, the Lesmurdie Parish Council and as advisory / governing bodies for the College and Parish respectively;
- v. plan, organise and promote social, sporting, cultural and educational activities for interaction of parents, students, staff and the Parish;
- vi. encourage parental participation in College programs to enjoy the exciting experience of their children's formal Schooling Years;
- vii. act as a forum for ideas and discussion on any relevant issue that will benefit the education of the children;



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- viii. liaise with the Lesmurdie 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;
- ix. work to provide in-kind or financial resources that the Parent Forum deems necessary for the children, or, for professional assistance to the teachers, in consultation with the Principal and Mercy Education Limited;

### b. Parent Forum Expenditure

It is the aim of the PF to expend levy monies in the year that they were collected. This principle will ensure the expenditure benefits those children and parents who made the contributions.

PF expenditure can include but is not limited to the following:

- i. Approved small grant applications
- ii. Larger grants applications for capital and other items
- iii. Community building events

**Ultimate authority for PF expenditure is at the full discretion of the College Principal.**

Note - Expenditure of an incidental value up to and including \$ 500.00 is at the discretion of the Executive Committee (minimum 50% vote, majority voting must agree, if split 50 / 50, President has casting vote). This concession allows appropriate flexibility for appropriate expenditure outside the formal meeting cycle.

### 5. **MEMBERSHIP OF THE PARENT FORUM**

- a. Any parent / guardian of a child attending the College, or any person who supports the objectives of the Parent Forum.
- b. The Lesmurdie Parish Priest(s) and the College Principal or their respective appointed representatives, shall be deemed ex-officio members of the Parent Forum.

### 6. **REGISTER OF MEMBERS**

- a. In the case of those qualifying for membership as parents and / or carers of children currently at the College, the College roll shall be considered as the register of members.
- b. The Secretary shall keep and maintain, in an up-to-date condition, a register of the members of the Executive committee comprising:



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- i. name;
- ii. position; and
- iii. contact number.

c. The Register shall be available for inspection to any member;

### 7. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Parent Forum shall be governed by an Executive Committee that shall include the four (4) office bearers:

- i. President;
- ii. Vice-President;
- iii. Secretary;
- iv. Treasurer; and
- v. up to eight other members of the Parent Forum that may include:
  - a. College Advisory Council representative;
  - b. Parish Council representative;
  - c. Federation representative.

- i. Ex officio representation, in person or otherwise, may also be warranted for the roles of:
  - a. Federation Executive Officer, or representative;
  - b. Parish Priest, or representative; and
  - c. College Principal, or representative.

### 8. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS AND VOTING RIGHTS OF MEMBERS OF THE PARENT FORUM

- a. The Executive Committee members shall be elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). For the purpose of this election only, the Principal, Parish Priest, or their nominated representative, will occupy the Chair.
- b. Any member of the Parent Forum, who is present at the AGM, or has consented in writing to be elected, shall be eligible for election to the Executive Committee.
- c. No ex-officio member, or their representative, may be elected to an Executive position.



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- d. An Executive Committee member's term will commence from the time of election at the AGM until the next Annual General Meeting at which point they are eligible for re-election.

*Note: It is the prerogative of the Parent Forum to decide whether to vote for the individual office bearers and Executive Committee members at the AGM, or whether the elected individuals, as generic committee members, elect office bearers from amongst themselves at their first meeting. There should be a call for nominations to the Executive Committee. If inadequate nominations are made, nominations can be accepted from the membership in attendance at the AGM. This is described in the following process.*

- e. Except for nominees under sub-rule (h), a person is not eligible for election to membership of the Executive Committee unless a member has nominated them for election by delivering, to the Secretary, not less than seven (7) days before the day the AGM is held, notice in writing of that nomination, signed by:
- i. the nominator; and
  - ii. the nominee, to signify a willingness to stand for election.
- f. A person who is eligible for election or re-election under this rule may;
- i. propose or second their own nomination; and
  - ii. vote for themselves to be elected.
- g. If the number of persons nominated in accordance with sub-rule (e), for election to membership of the Executive Committee, does not exceed the number of vacancies to be filled in that membership:
- i. that fact will be duly reported by the Secretary at the AGM; and
  - ii. the Chair must declare at the AGM that those persons are duly elected as members of the Executive Committee.
- h. If vacancies remain on the Executive Committee after the declaration under sub-rule (g), additional nominations of Executive Committee members may be accepted from the floor of the AGM. If such nominations from the floor do not exceed the number of vacancies, the Chair must declare those persons to be duly elected as members of Executive Committee. When the number of nominations from the floor exceeds the remaining number of vacancies on the Executive Committee, elections for those positions must be conducted. In such instances a secret ballot is to be conducted under the direction of the Secretary with the recipient of the highest number of votes duly elected. Any tied votes are to be decided by the drawing of lots.
- i. If a vacancy remains on the Executive Committee after the application of sub-rule (h), the Executive Committee may appoint a member as a casual vacancy, within the meaning of Rule 9.



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- j. Subject to these Rules, any member of the Parent Forum present in person at a general meeting of the Parent Forum shall be entitled to a deliberative vote.
- k. Ex-officio members of the Parent Forum and staff of the College are not entitled to a deliberative vote.

### 9. VACATION OF OFFICE AND CASUAL VACANCIES

- a. The term of office of Executive members will be one year, from AGM to AGM, at the conclusion of which period they shall vacate their positions, but shall be eligible for re-election.
- b. If re-elected on an ongoing basis at the AGM, a person shall not hold any particular office of the Executive for more than five consecutive years.
- c. Executive Committee members who wish to resign during their elected term may do so providing they give one month's written notice to the committee.
- d. A member of the Executive shall be deemed to have resigned if:
  - i. without submitting an acceptable apology, he or she is absent from two consecutive meetings of Committee;
  - ii. in accordance with a decision of an absolute majority of the Committee he or she is required to resign from the Committee and fails to do so within fourteen days of the date upon which notification of the decision of the Committee is forwarded to him / her stating the reasons for this action.
- e. Vacancies in the Committee may be filled casually by any member of the Parent Forum, as appointed by the Committee, and serve with full voting rights until the next AGM.

### 10. CHAIR

- a. Subject to Rule 8(a), the President shall chair all general and special meetings of the Parent Forum and all meetings of the elected Executive Committee. The President is empowered to regulate the proceedings and procedure including, with the consent of the meeting, adjournment of business.
- b. In the absence of the President at a general / special / committee meeting, the Vice-President shall have the power to conduct and chair meetings of the membership and in the absence of the Vice-President, the members present and entitled to vote shall



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have the power to select one of their number as Chair.

### 11. SECRETARY

The Secretary shall:

- a. co-ordinate the correspondence of the Parent Forum;
- b. keep full and correct minutes of the proceedings of the Executive Committee and Parent Forum;
- c. have custody of all books, documents, records and registers of the Parent Forum, including those referred to in Rule 6, other than those required by Rule 12 to be kept and maintained by, or to be in the custody of, the Treasurer, unless the members resolve otherwise at a general meeting, and
- d. perform such other duties as are imposed by this Constitution.

### 12. TREASURER

The Treasurer shall:

- a. be responsible for the receipt of all monies paid to or received by the Treasurer on behalf of the Parent Forum and shall issue receipts for those monies in the name of the Parent Forum;
- b. pay all monies referred to in paragraph (a) into such account or accounts of the Parent Forum as the Executive Committee may from time to time direct;
- c. make payments from the funds of the Parent Forum with the authority of a general meeting and in so doing ensure that all cheques are signed in accordance with Rule 14(c);
- d. maintain the accounting records of the Parent Forum by:
  - i. keeping such accounting records as correctly record and explain the financial transactions and financial position of the Parent Forum;
  - ii. keeping its accounting records in such manner as will enable true and fair accounts of the Parent Forum to be prepared from time to time;



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- iii. keeping its accounting records in such manner as will enable true and fair accounts of the Parent Forum to be conveniently and properly audited; and
  - iv. submitting to members, at each AGM of the Parent Forum, accounts of the Parent Forum at the end of the immediately preceding financial year.
- e. at each meeting, submit a report, balance sheet or financial statement and any other report as directed by the President;
- f. unless the members resolve otherwise at a general meeting, have custody of all securities, books and documents of a financial nature and the accounting records of the Parent Forum, including those referred to in sub-rule (d) and (e) herein; and
- g. perform such other duties as are imposed by this Constitution.

### **13. GENERAL MEETINGS OF THE PARENT FORUM**

- a. An Annual General Meeting of the Parent Forum shall be held as close as practicable to the end of the College year to:
- i. receive and consider the annual reports of the office bearers, including but not limited to:
    - a. President's Report; and
    - b. Treasurer's Financial Report;
  - ii. appoint the auditor for the ensuing year;
  - iii. elect the members of the Executive Committee for the ensuing year; and (iv) deal with any other matter or matters brought before the meeting.
- b. General meetings of the Parent Forum shall be held regularly (normally two per term) during the College year, and otherwise as determined by the Executive Committee.
- c. Where possible, matters to be brought before a Parent Forum meeting should be submitted in writing to the Secretary at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting, to facilitate circulation and/or inclusion on the agenda.
- d. Special Meeting of the Parent Forum
- i. may be convened by the President or Secretary or by the members of the Parent Forum at any time, and shall be convened by them within fourteen (14) days or within a 28-day period if



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the request is not within a College term, of receiving a requisition in writing signed by at least ten (10) members of the Parent Forum. These signatories shall be required to attend the meeting so called or submit a written apology. In order for the meeting to be valid, at least five (5) of the signatories must attend the meeting. The requisition must itemise all matters to be discussed at the meeting.

- ii. will be convened within fourteen (14) days at the request of any of the College governing bodies (i.e. the SBC Principal or the College Advisory Council).
  - iii. items for discussion will be limited to the matters relating to the calling of such a meeting.
- e. Notification of Parent Forum General or Special Meetings, including details of matters to be raised, will be given to all members at least two (2) days prior to the meeting.
- f. QUORUM AT MEETINGS - at any Parent Forum General or Special Meeting, a total of ten (10) members of the Parent Forum, including at least two (2) Office Bearers, shall constitute a quorum.
- g. CONFLICT OF INTEREST - If a member of the Parent Forum has potential to receive an extraordinary benefit not shared by other members, they must promptly declare that fact and withdraw from the discussion. Records of the meeting must record that fact. That is to say:

***A member of the Parent Forum having any direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a matter or proposition, made by, or in the contemplation of, the committee (except if that pecuniary interest exists only by virtue of the fact that the member is a member of a class of persons for whose benefit the Parent Forum is established), must disclose to the meeting, the nature and extent of the conflict of interest and withdraw from deliberations or decision, with respect to that matter.***

**The Secretary must record in the minutes of each meeting every disclosure under sub-rule (e) and confirm every withdrawal under sub-rule (e).**



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### 14. POWERS OF THE PARENT FORUM AND ITS MEMBERS

- a. The Parent Forum is a part of Mercy Education Limited, as such:
  - i. The Parent Forum accepts the authority of the Mercy Education Board and the College Principal.
  - ii. The College Principal shall have right of veto over any decision of the Parent Forum.
  - iii. The Committee members of the Parent Forum shall be covered by MEL insurance.
  - iv. Activities organised by the Parent Forum shall be covered by MEL Public Liability insurance and Volunteer Workers insurance.
  - v. The accounts of the Parent Forum will be maintained as a separate subset of the school accounts, and reported annually in the accounts of Mercy education Limited.
  - vi. Membership of the Executive Committee may be terminated by the Chief Executive of MEL.
  - vii. The Parent Forum may be wound up at any time by a direction of the MEL Board.
  
- b. The members of the Parent Forum may do all things necessary or convenient for carrying out its objectives, but subject to its ability to give such security for the discharge of liabilities incurred by the Parent Forum, as the Parent Forum sees fit. These include but are not limited to:
  - i. being responsible for the planning, management and organisation of the Parent Forum's affairs;
  - ii. holding regular (two per term) general meetings that are open to all parents and friends, the Principal and staff, parish clergy or the religious associated with the College, and other interested persons;
  - iii. formulating the Standing Orders of the Parent Forum to be applicable to such meetings as the members may determine;
  - iv. establishing such sub-committees as they may determine to give effect to the aims of the Parent Forum;



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- v. providing for the election or appointment of members to any such subcommittee and for the terms of reference for conduct and operation thereof;
  - vi. providing for the election or appointment of officers, including definition of duties, responsibilities and authority;
  - vii. appointing delegates to other groups (e.g. College Advisory Council and the Parish Council);
  - viii. raising funds in accordance with the aims of the Parent Forum;
- c. Members of the Parent Forum may by ordinary or special resolution exercise any power authorised by the Constitution subject to the provisions of the Law as varied.
- d. A resolution of the Executive shall have full force and effect subject to a later resolution of the members at the AGM or in a general meeting which would have the effect of amending or rescinding the resolution of the Executive. The Executive shall not act in a manner inconsistent with any resolution of the Parent Forum.
- e. If, for any reason, the Executive Committee does not function satisfactorily, assistance from Mercy Education Limited may be sought.

### 15. FINANCE

- a. Funds are to be used solely for the Aim of the Parent Forum. All funds raised by or on behalf of the Parent Forum must be banked promptly and fully intact into the College Bank Account.
- b. Cheques drawn upon the account shall be signed by the Treasurer and at least one other authorised member, or by any two others as are authorised by the members of the Parent Forum. At the end of their term of office, their signatures must be removed and replaced by the signatures of the incoming officers.
- c. The accounts will be subject to an audit every year.

### 16. LEVY OF MEMBERS OF PARENT FORUM

- a. The levy amount is recommended by the retiring Executive Committee to the Annual General Meeting each year, for approval by the members of the Parent Forum.



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### 17. NON-PROFIT MAKING

The income and property of the Parent Forum howsoever derived shall be applied solely towards the promotion of its objectives as set out in this Constitution and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise howsoever to its members, provided that nothing herein shall prevent the payment in good faith of remuneration to any officer or servant of the Parent Forum or reimbursement for costs incurred in the service of the Parent Forum.

### 18. AUDITOR

- a. The financial year of the Parent Forum shall be from the 1st January to 31st December in each year.
- b. Parent Forum funds are held by the College and are clearly identifiable within the financial records of the College. College accounts are audited annually by the MEL appointed auditor and a copy of the MEL annual accounts are to be tabled at an appropriate Parent Forum meeting.

### 19. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE PARENT FORUM

- a. The Secretary shall cause proper minutes of all proceedings of all General Meetings and Executive Committee Meetings to be taken and then to be entered within two days after the holding of each General Meeting or Executive Committee meeting, as the case requires, in a minute book or file kept for that purpose.
- b. The Chair shall ensure that the minutes taken of a General Meeting or Executive Committee meeting are checked and verified as correct by the Chair of the General Meeting or Executive Committee meeting to which those minutes relate or of the next succeeding General Meeting or Executive Committee meeting as the case requires;
- c. When minutes have been entered and verified as correct under this rule, they shall, until the contrary is proved, be evidence that:
  - i. the General Meeting or Executive Committee meeting to which they relate (called 'the meeting') was duly convened and held;
  - ii. all proceedings recorded as having taken place at the meeting did in fact take place thereat; and
  - iii. all appointments or elections purporting to have been made at the meeting have been validly made.
- d. When minutes have been entered and verified as correct, a copy shall be made available to the parish council or comparable religious body that oversees the spiritual direction of the Parent Forum.



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### 20. AMENDMENT

***This Constitution may be amended at any General Meeting of the Parent Forum, provided that:***

- a. notice of any proposed amendment, including: the meeting time, date and venue; the resolution; and the intention to propose the resolution, shall have been given in writing to all members at least one month prior to such meeting, and,
- b. the amendment must be approved by at least 75% of the members present and eligible to vote.
- c. all amendments must be in accordance with the aims of the Constitution.
- d. a formal review of the Constitution shall be conducted under the direction of the Executive Committee at least once every five (5) years. A report and recommendations arising from the review shall be submitted to the next AGM for consideration

### 21. CLAUSES OF PARENT FORUM BINDING

These clauses bind every member and the Parent Forum to the same extent as if every member of the Parent Forum had signed and sealed these rules and agreed to be bound by all their provisions.

### 22. INSPECTION OF BOOKS AND RECORDS OF PARENT FORUM

A member may at any reasonable time inspect without charge the books, documents, records and securities of the Parent Forum, but may not remove them from the custody of the person to whom they are entrusted.

### 23. DISSOLUTION - WINDING UP OF THE PARENT FORUM

The Parent Forum is automatically dissolved if the College closes down or is amalgamated.

Members can decide at a Special General Meeting to wind up the Parent Forum voluntarily only if it is solvent. This means that the Parent Forum must be able to pay all of its debts and liabilities.

- a. Notice of the proposal to wind-up the Parent Forum, including: the meeting time, date and venue; the resolution; and the intention to propose the resolution, shall have been given in writing to all members at least one month prior to such meeting, and,
- b. the resolution must be approved by at least 75% of the members present and eligible to vote.



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- c. If, in the event of the winding up of the Parent Forum, any property of the Parent Forum remains after satisfaction of the debts and liabilities of the Parent Forum and the costs, charges and expenses of that winding up, that property shall be distributed according to resolution by the members:
- i. Where a College is closed, the remaining assets, records and funds may be handed over to Mercy Education Limited
  - ii. Where a College is amalgamated, the remaining assets, records and funds may be handed over to the Principal of the amalgamated College for the purposes of the amalgamated College
  - iii. alternatively, the remaining assets, records and funds may be handed over to another incorporated Parent Forum having objects similar to those of the Parent Forum; or
  - iv. to the Parents and Friends' Federation; or
  - v. for other charitable purposes;

### FOOTNOTE:

***The Code of Canon Law states:***

***Can. 793 §1 Parents, and those who take their place, have both the obligation and the right to educate their children. Catholic parents have also the duty and the right to choose those means and institutes which, in their local circumstances, can best promote the catholic education of their children.***

***Can. 798 Parents are to send their children to those Colleges which will provide for their catholic education. If they cannot do this, they are bound to ensure the proper catholic education of their children outside the College.***