



# TERMS OF REFERENCE

## St Anne's College Advisory Council

[October 2023]

### 1. Vision

The vision for Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited (**CES Limited**) is to provide, in partnership with our families, stimulating, enriching, liberating and nurturing learning environments in each of the Catholic school communities within the Diocese. At the heart of this vision is our commitment to the ongoing duty of care that we have for the safety, wellbeing, and inclusion of all children and young people.

We believe:

- that the values of the Gospel are central to who we are, what we do, and how we act
- in leadership encompassing vision, innovation and empowerment.

### 2. Introduction

**CES Limited** is the new proprietor (owner and operator) of the existing fifty-two schools within the Diocese of Sandhurst which was previously governed under unincorporated governance arrangements. Accordingly, the Board of Directors of CES Limited (the Board) is the governing authority of **Sandhurst Catholic Schools** as defined under the CES Limited Constitution. CES Limited is committed to working with school leadership and school communities to build thriving Catholic education schools. A key dimension of this collaborative work is the establishment and effective operation of advisory councils to support the work of schools. These advisory councils are not part of the governance structure as such they sit separately from the delegation and reporting lines to the Board. They are formation created at a school level to assist the Principal with advisory functions.

This document provides the Terms of Reference for the St Anne's College Advisory Council, hereafter referred to as the Council.

The St Anne's College Advisory Council acknowledges the Yorta Yorta nation, the original custodians of the land on which the College operates.

The St Anne's College Advisory Council is committed to the Victorian Child Safe Standards as provided in Ministerial Order 1359, and acknowledges that every child has the right to feel safe and be safe all of the time.

### 3. Governing Principles

The St Anne's College Advisory Council is committed to democratic principles, consultation, dialogue and co-responsibility.

The Council is committed to the fundamental principles of Catholic school governance which can be articulated as follows:

- **The Love of Christ:** We are animated by and based upon the love of Christ for all people
- **Educational Quality:** To provide the best possible quality of education for all students
- **The Role of Parents:** The primary educators of their children with whom we work in partnership
- **Faithfulness to the Mission of the Church:** To bring the Good News and be faithful to Church teaching
- **Inclusivity and Social Justice:** To include and empower the most disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalized
- **Subsidiarity:** Ensuring decisions are made where appropriate, by those closest to and most accountable to those affected
- **Solidarity:** Recognition that we are all gifted in different ways, but called to work together for the one purpose
- **Stewardship of Resources:** We are entrusted to use financial and other resources responsibly, ensuring sustainability for future generations
- **Canon Law:** As part of the Church we are constituted and operate in accordance with Canon Law.

### 4. Vision and Identity Statements

#### Identity Statement

St Anne's College is a Catholic community welcoming all, inspired by a loving God, committed to faith, wisdom and learning.

*Central to the mission of St. Anne's College is an unequivocal commitment to fostering the dignity, self-esteem and integrity of children and young people and providing them with a safe, supportive and enriching environment to develop spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.*

***St Anne's College promotes the safety, wellbeing and inclusion of all students.***

## Vision Statements

At St Anne's College we strive to:

- Develop a relationship with God that supports and nurtures our personal faith.
- Create relationships that are collaborative and in partnership with students, staff, parents, parish and the wider community.
- Empower individuals to grow in confidence and a willingness to explore their world: spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally and physically.
- Implement a curriculum that is contemporary, focuses on the needs of the individual and celebrates the joys of new learning.

## 5. Student Outcomes

At St Anne's College we aspire for our graduates to be:

- Engaged learners, risk takers and confident leaders
- Able to apply literacy and numeracy skills capably
- Able to readily transfer learning as collaborative global citizens
- Stewards of our environment
- Skillful, responsible and competent users of technology
- Socially respectful, value diversity and act justly

## 6. Responsibilities

### 6.1 Catholic Education Sandhurst Limited

CES Limited is the responsible entity for the governance and management of St Anne's College including its legal and educational obligations. It is the employer of all staff within the College and directly delegates to the Principal significant educational, administrative and operational responsibilities and accountabilities.

### 6.2 Parish Priest/Administrator

The Parish Priest is appointed by the Bishop of Sandhurst and is responsible for the pastoral care and canonical governance of the parish. He has a key role in working with and supporting the College in accordance with the [Shared Mission Framework and Commitment Statement](#)

### 6.3 Principal

The Principal is appointed by the Chief Executive Officer of CES Limited and is delegated with key responsibilities in the educational, administrative and operational functions of the College in accordance with [CES Limited Delegations framework](#).

### 6.4 Advisory Council Scope and Purpose

The St Anne's College Advisory Council is the leading consultative and advisory group for the Principal, as an active forum for parent and community participation, providing support and advice principally in strategic planning and school improvement. As outlined in the CES Limited [Governance Charter](#) Advisory Council members do not have decision making powers.

The St Anne's College Advisory Council is intended to:

- provide a voice for members of the school community
- actively support, in collaboration with the local parish, the Vision and Catholic Identity of the College
- provide input into and support for strategic planning and directions
- provide input and contribute advice in the processes of school improvement and school review
- support the Principal in meeting his/her responsibilities and accountabilities for educational outcomes, effective stewardship of resources, and annual reporting
- actively support the Principal in the encouragement of parent/guardian engagement
- support the ongoing sustainability of the Council and its members in its succession and learning

#### 6.5 Members of the College Advisory Council acknowledge that:

- All management and operational matters such as delivery of curriculum, human resource matters, parent complaints, programs and policies are the responsibility of the Principal who may seek the advice of Council members around these matters from time to time.
- Issues of a personal nature or issues involving individuals of the school community will not be raised at Council meetings.
- The Principal is the spokesperson for the College for initiatives, announcements and issues raised in the local media. No Council Member has authority to speak on behalf of the College or Advisory Council, unless explicitly delegated and authorised by the Principal.
- Members of the Council do not have the authority to expend or commit College funds.

#### 6.6 Code of Ethics

The Council will be guided by the Members' Code of Ethics as developed and reviewed by the Council, and approved by the Principal.

All members of the Council must hold a valid Working with Children Check or equivalent. Members of the Council are bound by the College's Child Safe policies, and Child Safe Code of Conduct.

## 7. Membership

The Council consists of the following members:

#### *Ex officio*

- Principal
- Parish Priest
- Representative appointed by the Diocesan Director of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd

- College Business Manager

### ***Elected or Appointed Members***

- Up to 6 members elected from and by the College's parent/guardian community
- 1 representative appointed by the Parish, in consultation with the Parish Priest

The term of office for each elected and appointed member will commence at the beginning of Term 1 in the relevant year.

All members should be inducted by the Council Chair and Principal.

## **7.1 Election of Members**

Prior to the expiry of the term of office for elected members, nominations will be invited through the College's newsletter.

Nominations should be in writing and delivered to the Principal by the designated date.

If the number of nominations equals or is less than the number of vacancies, the nominees will be declared to be elected. Should the number be less than the number of vacancies further nominations may be invited or the Principal and Council Chair may approach other persons to request their nomination.

If there are more nominations than there are vacancies, a ballot will be held among the parent/guardian community in the manner determined by the Principal and Council Chair.

## **7.2 Tenure**

The ex-officio members will be ongoing members for the term of their appointment to that role.

Other members will serve for a three-year term. Members may be re-appointed for a further consecutive term at the discretion of the Council Chair and Principal.

It is preferable that appointed members do not serve more than two consecutive terms. However, where the Principal and Council Chair consider it in the best interests of the College for a tenure to be extended, this may be done. Appropriate reasons may include stability of membership, for appropriate succession planning or for the achievement of a particular strategic direction.

## **7.3 Vacancies**

A vacancy will be declared when a member:

- Reaches the end of a three-year term and is not being reappointed
- Resigns from office by notice in writing or verbally
- Fails to attend three consecutive meetings of the Council without proper excuse and/or apology

Should a vacancy arise outside the normal election cycle, the Principal and Council Chair may approach and appoint a substitute member for the balance of the former member's term of office, or leave the position vacant, or call an election. Any period served in such a casual vacancy will not count as a term of office for the purposes of section 7.2.

## 7.4 Removal

The Principal and Council Chair may discern the need to terminate the membership of a Council member where serious concerns over capacity, integrity, communication style or alignment to the values of Catholic education are demonstrated. The advice of CES Limited Executive Management Team members will be sought before such a decision is enacted.

## 8. Council Chairperson

At the first meeting of the Council, the members will discern the appointment of a Chairperson from amongst themselves. This will be for a term of three years.

Upon the expiry of each three-year term or earlier if the Chair is no longer a member of the Council or resigns from that position, as a natural progression the Deputy Chair takes the role of Chair for the remainder of the term. The nomination process for the Deputy Chair is for members to self-nominate for the position. When there are multiple nominations, there will be a member in-house vote. If the current Deputy Chair does not accept the position of Chair, the process for the Deputy Chair will be mirrored for the Chair position. If no member self-nominates or applies for the position of Deputy Chair, the Principal will nominate a member for the role. The new Chair and/or Deputy Chair must go through the same process for the commencement of a new term and can hold the position for two consecutive terms thereafter.

A member cannot ordinarily serve more than two consecutive terms as Chair, unless the Principal determines there are extenuating circumstances. Should the appointment be outside the normal three-year cycle, the appointment will usually be only for the balance of the former chair's term, and that time will not count towards the maximum period of two consecutive terms.

The Council Chair will facilitate all meetings of the Council. In the absence of the Council Chair, this responsibility will be delegated to a person nominated by the Chair.

The Chair may also be involved in setting the meeting agenda with the Principal, as deemed appropriate.

A formal meeting format should usually be followed however this may vary at the discretion of the members.

## 9. Executive Officer

The role of Executive Officer will be undertaken by the Principal, with responsibilities for preparation and distribution of agenda, minutes and other meeting papers.

The recording of minutes may be delegated to another member of the Council or College's staff.

## 10. Council Meetings

The Council will meet according to a schedule developed at the commencement of each school year, at a time and place convenient to members. It should meet at least once per term and its meetings should not ordinarily exceed a maximum duration agreed by the Council. Every second meeting per term, if applicable, will be a workshop meeting agreeable to members.

The agenda will be developed by the Principal, in consultation with the Chair and members as needed.

The agenda should be provided to members seven days prior to the meeting. The agenda will include meeting time, date, location and all items for discussion. Where possible, supporting documentation will be forwarded with the agenda.

Meetings will be conducted at a time mutually agreeable to members, but consideration should be given for this time to be sufficient to allow appropriate time for discussion.

A quorum will consist of a simple majority of all current Council Members. If a quorum is not present by 15 minutes after the scheduled starting time, the meeting will be cancelled or re-scheduled as determined by the Executive.

Whenever possible, recommendations of the Council are to be reached by consensus. Though full consensus may not always be possible, members are encouraged to reflect, consult, generate ideas, give consideration to the best interests of the College, and trust in the collective wisdom of the group.

Members must declare any potential conflict of interest and refrain from contributing to discussions if required by the Chair.

Recommendations of the Council may be revisited where new information or advice becomes available, an error becomes apparent or a situation changes to a significant degree.

Any differences in views that the Council feels unable to resolve following a period of discernment and prayer, will be referred to the management of CES Limited for advice. Discernment may continue at the next meeting by those present, if deemed appropriate.

## 11. Communication

The Council will keep minutes of meetings for circulation to members prior to the next scheduled meeting. Minutes will record discussion summaries, resolutions and names of those present. Minutes of meetings are confidential and not for circulation outside Council membership.

A summary of meaningful and non-confidential outcomes from each meeting will be circulated within the College community by the Principal in the College Newsletter.

Deliberations at Council meetings are confidential to the Council with recommendations made by the Council to be fully supported by all Council members outside of meetings.

## 12. Dispute Resolution

Council Members will observe and respect the following Grievance Procedures:

- Where there is a difficulty, dispute or grievance involving a student or parent/legal guardian with a teacher, the issue will not be raised at a Council meeting. The parent/legal guardian will be requested to raise the matter directly with the Principal.
- Where there is a difficulty, dispute or grievance between the Principal and Member of the Council, the issue will not be raised at a Council meeting. The matter will be dealt with privately between the Member of the Council and the Principal.
- If an issue concerns more than one Member of the Council, the issue will not be raised at a Council meeting. The issue will be raised individually with the Principal.

- If resolution is still required, the matter should be referred to the Executive Director, CES Limited.

## 13. Review

These Terms of Reference will be revisited annually by the Council, and reviewed every 5 years, ensuring alignment with relevant policies, guidelines or legal requirements.

**Date of Commencement:** 10 June 2021

**Date Reviewed:** 19 October 2023

**Due Date for Next Review:** 2026

## Appendix 1

### Terms of Reference – Advisory Council Membership Protocol

#### Annual Council membership discernment in Term 3

Actions:

Discernment about Council membership is to be undertaken by the Advisory Council adhering to the Advisory Council Terms of Reference as the framework for decisions.

Discernment occurs annually and tabled as an agenda item in the first Advisory Council meeting in term 3 and includes:

- Review of the current membership: numbers, representation of the college community, skill set and diversity, tenure period, individual members' intentions (discussed confidentially prior to or after the meeting). Refer to the membership table.
- Discuss nomination process and if an election process is required based on the number of vacancies identified, when and how this will occur so this process can be communicated via the College newsletter and other community contact communication channels.
- Advertise to the College community an invitation to attend the second Advisory Council meeting for Term 3.

#### Council membership fulfillment in Term 4 (as required)

Actions:

- Announce vacancies, nominations process and election process, if required, in the College newsletter and via other communication methods, early term 4.
- New members on Advisory Council announced in Term 4.
- Induction occurs in Term 4 – Principal, Parish Priest and Council Chair
- New Council invited to attend last meeting in term 4 as part of induction process.
- New members to formally commence tenure January 1 the following year.