

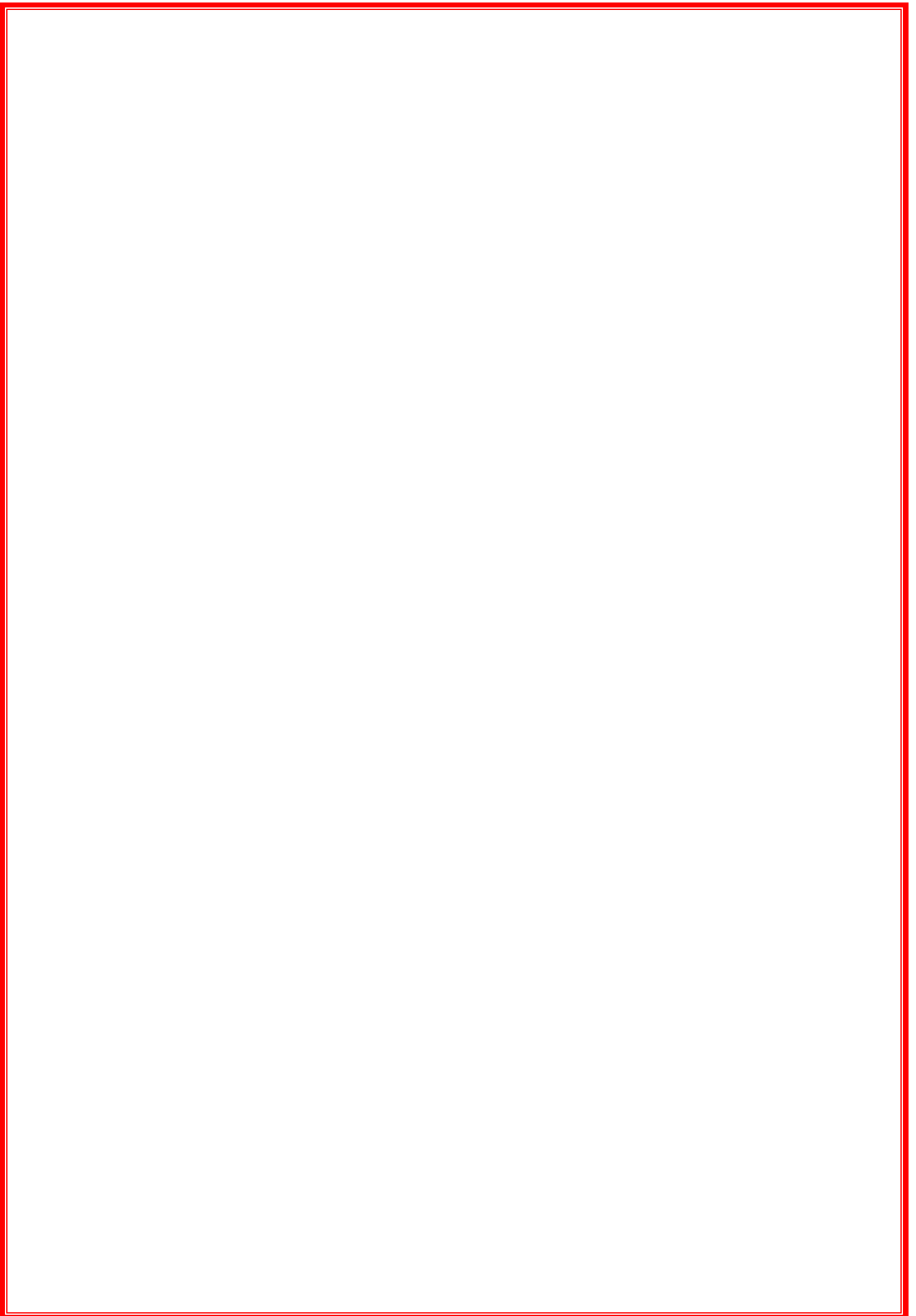
St. Martin de Porres School  
Avondale Heights



# *Parents & Friends Association*

## **Constitution**

Revised Dec. 2021



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## FOREWORD

*“The primary right of parents to educate their children must be upheld in all forms of collaboration between parents, teachers and school authorities”.*

(Article 5, U N Charter of the Rights of the Family)

The Catholic school participates in the evangelizing mission of the Church. It centres its vision on the life and teachings of Christ with the Gospels as the reference points of its philosophy. It is concerned with building a Christian community where parents, staff and students work together.

This is consistent with the recently reformed Vision of St. Martin’s de Porres which states,

“St. Martin de Porres Parish School Community comprises a welcoming partnership of students, their families and school staff seeking to faithfully live the teachings of Jesus Christ in the Catholic tradition.

We encourage each member to strive for excellence, celebrate the diversity of background, develop attitudes of life-long learning and become active citizens responsive to the emerging challenges of our community, our nation and our planet.” (May 2008)

The more success the school community experiences in implementing this Vision, the more success St. Martin de Porres students will experience in regard to their learning.

The Parents and Friends Association (here after called ‘the Association’) exists to support the school community in carrying out this Vision and more specifically, for two major purposes. Parents/carers, as members of the Association, have a vital collaborative role to play in the development and implementation of social activities which enhance the welcoming partnership of students, their families and school staff. Secondly, the Association is responsible for the organization of fundraising activities which will resource this partnership and which will provide the school with much needed funds to support the learning needs of St. Martin de Porres students.

The Association therefore plays a significant role in the development of a collaborative and cooperative school community where parents/carers are recognised as authentic partners, with school staff and the School Administration, in regard to social and fundraising issues.

This partnership of collaborative endeavor between the Association, its members, school staff and School Administration assumes that mutual respect and trust binds the partnership in collectively working towards improved learning for its primary aged children.

### **Parents and Friends Association Constitution**

The Constitution:

- Sets common aims and objectives;
- Establishes rules for membership, elections, voting etc;
- Arranges for proper management of the finances;
- Allows for amendments and changes to be discussed, debated and resolved;
- Sets standards for appropriate community involvement; and
- Establishes other rules for the organisation's operation.

Officer bearers of the Association and the School Principal should ensure that copies of the constitution are readily available for perusal.

## 1. NAME

The name of the Association shall be St. Martin de Porres Parish School Parents and Friends Association.

## 2. INTERPRETATION

In this Constitution unless the context otherwise requires:-

- a. **“Parent/carer”** means the natural parents, legal custodians or people who are ‘in loco parentis’ i.e. someone who is legally acting in place of a parent on behalf of a minor.
- b. **“School”** means St. Martin de Porres Parish School Avondale Heights.
- c. **“Ordinary Member”** is a Parent/Carer of a child currently enrolled at the School.
- d. **‘Office Bearers’** means those elected or appointed to fill the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. It also includes the School Principal or Nominee and Parish Priest or Nominee.
- e. **“The Executive”** - means those elected or appointed to fill the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, School Principal or Nominee and Parish Priest or Nominee.
- f. **“Ex-officio Members”** are Members of the Executive of the Association by virtue of the office they hold. These are the School Principal and Parish Priest. They shall have full voting rights.
- g. **“General Committee members”** are those ‘ordinary members’ and ‘friends’ who regularly attend the general meetings of the Association and do not hold ‘Office Bearer’ positions.
- h. **“Sub-Committees”** means those ‘Ordinary Members’ or ‘Friends’ elected or appointed to particular committees (e.g. Fete, Tuckshop, Uniform) to fulfil specific roles and/or tasks that are agreed as required.
- i. **“Friends”** are the school staff and other members of the parish / school community not covered under (a) and (c) above, who are interested in pursuing the objectives of the Association by their regular attendance at meetings. The names of “friends” are to be agreed at an AGM or a regular meeting of the P&F Association.

## 3. OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The Objectives of the Association shall be those that accord with the content of the documents ‘The Catholic School’ (Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, Rome 1977), the Code of ‘Canon Law (1983)’, and “The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium” - Congregation for Catholic Education (For Seminaries and Educational Institutions).
- 3.2 In particular, the Association will participate in the optimum spiritual, intellectual, social and physical development of pupils in the school by:
  - a. providing a medium of support, information and involvement of parents/carers in social and fundraising opportunities for the school community
  - b. developing collaboration between parents/carers and school staff.
  - c. promoting the principles of Catholic education.
  - d. fostering a distinctive Christian environment in the school.

## **OBJECTIVES (Cont.)**

### **3.3 The Association shall:**

- a. Work in partnership with the administration of the school in supporting all aspects of its operation.

### **The Association shall not:**

- a. affiliate with any political body or party;
- b. affiliate with any association whose objectives are inconsistent with the objectives stated in clause 3.1.

## **4. MEMBERSHIP**

### **4.1 The membership of the Association shall consist of:**

- a. the parent/s and/or carer/s of each child currently enrolled at the School who shall be called 'Ordinary Members';
- b. the Parish Priest, and Principal or their nominees who shall be called Ex-Officio Members;
- c. the 'friends' of the school.
- d. general committee members and Office Bearers who are either 'ordinary members' or 'friends' and 'ex-officio' members who are the School Principal, Parish Priest or their nominees.

### **4.2 Register of Members:**

- a. In the case of those qualifying for Ordinary Membership as parents and/or carers of children currently on the school roll, the school roll shall be considered as the register of Members.
- b. The Executive shall cause a register to be kept in which shall be entered the names of all persons admitted to membership of the Association as "friends". The minutes of a meeting may be used as the register. Membership of a 'friend' shall be reviewed each year.

## **5. OFFICE BEARERS & EXECUTIVE**

### **5.1 Membership of Executive shall consist of:**

- a. President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.
- b. The Parish Priest and School Principal or their nominees as Ex-Officio Members.
- c. Representatives made up of Ordinary Members as agreed by the Association from time to time.

### **5.2 Election of Office Bearers**

- a. At the Annual General Meeting of the Association, all Office Bearers shall retire from office, but shall be eligible for re-election or re-appointment subject to the terms of this Constitution.
- b. Office Bearer positions of President and Vice President shall be elected from the Association membership of Ordinary Members only.
- c. Office Bearer positions of Secretary or Assistant Secretary shall be elected from the Association membership of Ordinary members or 'Friends', save that one of these positions shall be an Ordinary member.
- d. Office Bearer positions of Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer shall be elected from the Association membership of Ordinary members or 'Friends', save that one of these positions shall be an Ordinary member.
- e. The term of office for Office Bearers shall be one year with the right to serve a maximum of three consecutive terms in the one position.
- f. Having served the maximum term in one position the member may stand for election for another position as Office Bearer.
- g. If an Office Bearer has served their maximum term (as per 5.2 c) and no nomination is forthcoming for that position, the Ordinary Members may re-appoint the incumbent to that position.

### 5.3 Role description of Office Bearers

#### a. **PRESIDENT**

- Act as chairperson at all meetings (leading discussions as set out in agenda, giving unbiased directions, being a good listener, restrict repetition, arguments, deviations and interruptions during meetings).
- Act as official spokesperson for the Association.
- Act as a facilitator and be well informed on committee activities.
- Manage the AGM and general monthly meetings.
- Act as point of contact for parents and other members.

#### b. **VICE-PRESIDENT**

- Act as general back up for the President.
- Chair meetings in President's absence.

#### c. **SECRETARY**

- regularly clear the committee pigeon hole of mail.
- record all inward and outward correspondence.
- distribute mail to relevant persons.
- file copies of all relevant correspondence.
- compile minutes of all meetings and distribute to committee members no more than 14 days after the meeting.
- distribute agenda for next meeting.

#### d. **ASSISTANT SECRETARY**

- Act as general back up for the Secretary.
- Take minutes and correspondence for any meeting where the Secretary is absent.

#### e. **TREASURER**

- Manage the finances of the Association.
- Keep accurate books detailing all financial transactions of the Association.
- Prepare and provide a financial report to each monthly Association Meeting.
- Prepare and provide a financial report to the AGM at end of financial year.
- Co-signature the Association cheque account.
- Manage, monitor and document petty cash transactions.

#### f. **ASSISTANT TREASURER**

- Act as general back up for the Treasurer.
- Provide financial reports at meetings, in the absence of the Treasurer.
- Co-signature the Association cheque account.

#### g. **GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

- Attend most general meetings each year and participate in social and fundraising aspects of the Association.
- Support Office Bearers in the performance of their roles.

#### h. **PRINCIPAL OR NOMINEE**

- Support the Association in the achievement of its objectives.
- Oversee all financial aspects of the Association.
- Give direction to fund raising initiatives.
- Co-signature the Association cheque account.

#### i. **PARISH PRIEST**

- Support the Association in the achievement of its objectives.
- Delegates most of this authority that pertains to the school to the School Principal.

#### **5.4 Resignation of Office Bearers**

- a. Any Office Bearer may resign at any time by giving notice in writing to the Secretary. Such resignation shall take effect at the time when such notice is received by the Secretary unless some later date is specified in the notice when it shall take effect on that later date.

#### **5.5 Office Bearer Vacancies**

- a. The Executive shall appoint a member to fill any casual vacancy caused by the resignation or removal of an Office Bearer, until the next Annual General Meeting.
- b. Such an appointment shall be ratified at the next scheduled General Meeting of the Association.

#### **5.6 Functions of the Executive**

The Executive shall:

- a. Manage the administration of the affairs, including the property and funds of the Association;
- b. Interpret and apply the Constitution with regard to any matter concerning the activities of the Association;
- c. Formulate by-laws for adoption, repeal or amendment by the General Meeting of the Association, designed to promote the good governance and management of the Association.

#### **5.7 Sub-Committees**

- a. The Executive shall appoint Sub-Committees to undertake such tasks as it may from time to time determine. All Sub-Committees acting in accordance with the constitutional objectives shall be deemed to be a part of the Parents and Friends Association and must report back to the Association.
- b. Each Sub-Committee shall choose from its membership a Chairperson and Secretary.

#### **5.8 Meetings of the Executive**

- a. The Executive may meet separately from the General meeting as required during its term of office to exercise its functions. Decisions taken at meetings of the Executive shall be tabled at the next General Meeting for ratification and reporting purposes.
- b. A special meeting of the Executive shall be convened by the President or in his/her absence, the Vice President, upon the request of a simple majority of members of the Executive. Such request shall clearly state the reason why such special meeting is being convened and the nature of the business.
- c. At every Executive Meeting a simple majority of the Members of the Executive shall constitute a quorum. Conduct of meetings shall be in accord with 6.5 and 6.6 below.

### **6. MEETINGS**

#### **6.1 Meetings of the Association shall be either:**

- a. The Annual General Meeting shall be held in February each year.
- b. General Meetings - the Association shall meet at least six times per year exclusive of the Annual General Meeting
- c. Special General Meeting - this shall be called and held for a specific purpose.

#### **6.2 Agenda of Annual General Meeting**

The business to be transacted at every Annual General Meeting shall include:

- a. The reading and acceptance of the minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting.
- b. Business arising from the minutes.
- c. The receiving of the President's Report.
- d. The receiving of the Principal's Report.
- e. The election of Members of the Executive.
- f. The appointment of Sub-Committees
- g. Review and distribution of Parental Code of Conduct



### **6.3 Quorum**

At the Annual General Meeting, 15 members shall constitute a quorum. At a General Meeting, at least two Executive members, one ex-officio member and three ordinary members shall be present for a quorum to be satisfied.

### **6.4 Calling of Meetings**

- a. The President or in his/her absence, the Vice President, shall convene all Annual and General Meetings of the organization by giving not less than fourteen days notice of such meetings. The Executive shall determine the manner by which such notice is given.
- b. The President, or in his/her absence, the Vice President, shall convene Special Meetings of the Association when recommended by at least two members of the Executive or an ex-officio member.

### **6.5 Conduct of Meetings**

Unless otherwise provided by this Constitution, at every Executive Meeting, Annual General Meeting, General Meeting and Special meeting:

- a. The President shall be Chairperson or in his/her absence the Vice President and in the absence of both, a Chairperson shall be elected by resolution of a majority of the Members present at the meeting.
- b. The Chairperson shall conduct all meetings in accordance with agreed and accepted rules for the conduct of meetings.
- c. Every question, resolution or decision shall be decided by consensus but should a deadlock occur, a vote of all Members of the Association present will be taken and a majority decision shall apply.
- d. Should a vote be required, every member present shall be entitled to one vote. Where a vote is tied, the motion lapses so that the status quo is maintained.
- e. Any resolution or decision requires the endorsement of the School Principal or their nominee and may require the endorsement of the School Advisory Board.
- f. Voting shall be by show of hands or a division of members, unless a simple majority of members present move that a secret ballot be conducted. The Chairperson shall appoint two members to conduct the secret ballot in such manner as he/she shall determine. The result of the ballot as declared by the Chairperson shall be deemed to be the resolution of the meeting at which the ballot was demanded.
- g. The Secretary shall cause full and accurate minutes of all questions, matters, resolutions and other proceedings of every meeting of the Executive, the Annual General Meeting, the General Meeting and any Special Meetings, to be entered in a book to be provided for that purpose. Such book is to be open for inspection at all reasonable times by any member of the Association who applies to the Secretary for that inspection.

### **6.6 Dispute Resolution**

- a. All decisions of the Association shall be resolved via 6.5 (c) – (f) above.
- b. Where a majority of the Executive believe that due and fair process is not being executed via 6.5 (c) – (f), and that this cannot be resolved by or with the School Principal, the Parish Priest shall be asked to intervene to resolve the issue.
- c. The decision of the School Principal shall be final.

## **7. ALTERATION OF CONSTITUTION**

**7.1** This Constitution may be amended at the Annual General Meeting or at a Special General Meeting of the Association, called for that purpose.

**7.2** Notice of any proposed amendment shall be given in writing to the Secretary, signed by ten members who support the proposal. A rationale for the amendment shall also be provided with the amendment.

**7.3** Immediately upon receipt of such notice, the Secretary shall notify the membership of the date, time and place for the Special General Meeting, this being within one calendar month of the notice.

## **8. DISSOLUTION**

- 8.1 The Association shall be dissolved:
- a. if the Membership is less than three persons, or
  - b. if a resolution to that effect is carried by a vote of three-fourths majority of the members present at a Special Meeting convened to consider the question.
- 8.2 In such event, the property and other assets of the Association remaining after the payment of all expenses and other liabilities shall be handed over to the school.

## **9. SUB-ENTITY OF THE SCHOOL**

- 9.1 The Association is considered a sub-entity of the school and as such is answerable in all its dealings to the Parish Priest or the School Principal as his agent.
- 9.2 Any decision in relation to contractual matters is to be authorized by the School Principal.

## **10. FUNDS**

- 10.1 At a time agreed by mutual consent of the Association Executive, Parish Priest and School Principal, the Association may have bank accounts established to manage its financial affairs. The following sections would then be enacted.
- 10.2 The income and any property of the Association shall be applied in promotion of its objectives and specifically to support the learning needs of St. Martin de Porres students.
- 10.3 The funds of the Association shall be banked in the name of 'St. Martin de Porres Parents and Friends Association'.
- 10.4 Proper books and accounts shall be kept and maintained showing correctly the financial affairs of the Association, and the particulars usually shown in books of like nature. Such books are to be open for inspection at all reasonable times by any member who applies to the Secretary for that inspection. The Treasurer should present an updated report to each General Meeting.
- 10.5 All moneys shall be banked by the Treasurer or Assistant Treasurer as soon as practicable after receipt of them.
- 10.6 The signatories to the above account shall be the School Principal, Deputy Principal, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. All cheque transactions must have the School Principal (or Deputy Principal in the absence of the Principal) as one of the two signatures.
- 10.7 All accounts other than petty cash transactions shall be paid by cheque. Cheques shall be crossed 'Not Negotiable' except those in payment of allowances or petty cash recipients, which may be open.
- 10.8 The Executive shall determine the amount of petty cash that shall be available. The Monthly meeting of the Association shall ratify this amount. The use of Petty Cash will be reported in the Treasurers Report at each Monthly Meeting of the Association.
- 10.9 Accounts for payment, consistent with Clause 5.5(a), shall be presented and passed at an Executive Meeting and/or subsequently endorsed by the next General Meeting.
- 10.10 Any decision in relation to expenditure over \$200.00 is to be authorized by the School Principal.
- 10.11 The Association shall, where possible, manage all funds in accordance with an annual budget.
- 10.12 As soon as practicable after the end of each Financial Year, the Treasurer shall cause to be prepared a statement of receipts and payments, income and expenditure, and a balance sheet for the financial year just ended. All such statements shall be examined by the Executive who shall present a report to the next Annual General Meeting following the financial year in respect of which such examination was made.

## 10. FUNDS (cont.)

- 10.13 The Treasurer of the Association or of a Sub-Committee will hand to the successor in office all records and accounts of the Association or Sub-Committee, as soon as the successor has been appointed.
- 10.14 If a Treasurer of the Association or of a Sub-Committee resigns during the term of office, the Association should arrange for an examination of the records and accounts of the Association or Sub-Committee by the Executive, to be carried out before handing these to the new Treasurer.

## 11. CODE OF CONDUCT

### 11.1 Preamble

The Association provides an open, welcoming and safe environment whereby school staff and parents/ guardians play a crucial role in the effective operation and contribution to social and fundraising activities for and with the school community.

The Code of Conduct is a document attached to the model constitution. It outlines the types of practice we require all adults to follow, as it is designed to ensure the inclusion of all members, outlining behavioural principles, expectations and ideals acceptable as a member of the Association for the effective conduct of meetings, and the development of positive relationships within the school community.

### 11.2 General Conduct

Members agree to :

**a. use respectful, encouraging and accepting language;**

*(Unsubstantiated negative comments are not useful nor do they foster the sense of community we wish for our children's progress....)*

**b Respect the rights of others as individuals;**

*(Acceptance of each others strengths and weaknesses that stimulate healthy discussion....)*

**c. Give encouraging and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism**

*(Ask yourself if your comments will help resolve a situation – are you being fair and friendly to all....?)*

**d. Refrain from public criticism of children and adults in the school community;**

*(Respect the school community goal of striving to achieve a positive, solution focused environment, where we are proud of all our achievements and life learning along our children's journey....)*

**e. Be inclusive of any parent or friend of St. Martin's who offers assistance.**

*(Appreciate any help that is offered, no matter how many other helpers you have – be aware of how rejection makes someone feel & how it can mean someone may never offer to help again.....)*

**f. accept committee decisions made upon a majority.**

### 11.3 Conduct at Meetings

The regular Association meeting is an opportunity for community members to contribute to discussion on social and fundraising issues and to make decisions that will have a positive impact on the school community.

To ensure that this is carried out effectively, community members agree to :

- a. conduct activities in accordance with the Constitution of the Association;
- b. participate in Association meetings and other community activities in a constructive manner and respect the views of others *(every parent has a right to be heard and respected for contributing constructive discussion, every parent has a right to be heard without being dismissed or talked over);*
- c. acknowledge that the decisions taken and actions proposed at the Association meetings are representative of the majority of the school community *(attendance of all parents is encouraged and welcomed at meetings);*
- d. adhere to the processes available to have issues addressed and decisions reviewed *(the constitution states parents seek resolution with the disputing party firstly. If a solution between parents cannot be achieved the principal will mediate concerns and has the authority to make a final decision concerning school related incidents);*

### 11.3 Conduct at Meetings (cont.)

- e. support the President, members of the Association Executive or Sub-committee of core members when they are required to make decisions on behalf of all parents in the school community;
- f. use appropriate conduct when participating in meeting discussions and promote positive personal relationships among community members (*inclusive of turn taking at meetings, respect of individuals strengths and weaknesses and the differences that make our school a community. Please remembering that our support of the school and positive relationships within our school community assist in public perception of our school's reputation in our local community*).

### 11.4 Suspension or Termination of Membership

- a. Any member of the Association may be removed from office or have their membership suspended or terminated at a specially convened meeting of Executive members, Parish Priest and Principal, if the member:-
  - i. fails to comply with any of the provisions of this Constitution; or
  - ii. is deemed to have breached the Code of Conduct.
- b. At any such specially convened meeting, the member concerned shall be given a full and fair opportunity of presenting his/her case, and if the Association resolves to suspend or terminate his/her membership, it shall advise the member in writing within seven days.
- c. The question of suspension for a specified period of time or complete termination of membership shall be determined by the majority vote of the special meeting.

## 12. CERTIFICATION

CONSTITUTION ADOPTED ON: \_\_\_\_\_ [DATE]

**' We certify that this is a true and correct copy of the Constitution of St. Martin de Porres Parish School Parent and Friends Association.'**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(PRESIDENT)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(SECRETARY)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(SCHOOL PRINCIPAL)

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_