

Family and School Association Manual

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



June 2016

Parent's Prayer

Heavenly Father, make me a better parent.
Teach me to understand my children, to listen
patiently to what they have to say and to answer
all their questions kindly. Keep me from
interrupting them or contradicting...

Make me as courteous to them as I would have
then to me. Forbid that I should ever laugh at
their mistakes, or resort to shame or ridicule
when they displease me.

Bless me with the wisdom to grant them all their
reasonable requests and the courage to deny
them privileges I know I will do them harm. Make
me fair and just and kind. And fit me, O Lord, to
be loved and respected and imitated by my
children.

Amen.

(Anonymous)

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since the mid-1900s the united Catholic school system has made an increased effort to involve parents and guardians in the life of the school communities to which they and their children belong.

Buoyed by the Vatican Council II documents, *Gravissimum Educationis*,¹ which acknowledges parents as the primary educators of their children, and by *Lumen Gentium*,² which calls laity to more active participation and involvement in the life of the church, Catholic schools began to work more actively with parents and families as true partners in education.

Many documents of the Church, including *The Code of Canon Law*,³ *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*⁴ and other documents quoted in these guidelines reinforce the primary role of parents and family in the education of their children and call for the formation and support of parent associations in the schools. In 2005 the United States Catholic Bishops reaffirmed their commitment to Catholic schools and encouraged the laity's increased involvement with school boards and other educational organizations.⁵

Educational research regarding the role of the family in the education of children leads to the clear conclusion that students achieve more and schools improve with parent and family involvement.

Family and School Associations provide an effective vehicle for families and other members of the school community to work in partnership to promote the educational and spiritual development of all the children. The school community recognizes that parent/guardians are the primary educators of their children in the faith.

1. ***Declaration of Christian Education, Vatican II, Gravissimum Educationis, October 28, 1965***

Partnership between a Catholic school and the families of the students must continue and be strengthened; not simply to be able to deal with academic problems that may arise, but rather so that the educational goals of the school can be achieved. . . . It is not a question of convenience but a partnership based on faith. 322 *The Religious Dimensions of Education in a Catholic School*.

2. ***The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, Vatican II, Lumen Gentium, November 1964***
3. ***The Code of Canon Law, Canon 7962, William B. Erdman's Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI, 1983***
4. ***The Catechism of the Catholic Church, #2223, United States Catholic Conference, Washington, D.C., 1994***
5. ***Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium, USCCB, 2005***

II. FAMILY AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

GOALS

The Family and School Association is an organization of the school dedicated to collaboration between parents, guardians and members of the school and parish staff in the pursuit of quality, faith-centered education.

The Family and School Association promotes and fosters the following goals:

- Spiritual, educational and formational development for parents/guardians and families who are part of the school community
- Support of the school in its role of educational and spiritual development of children
- Regular communication that fosters the partnership of home and school
- Social interaction among the members of the school community
- Networks that support family life and the school community
- Volunteer service to the school
- Service to the poor and marginalized
- Promotion of and in recycling, development of green spaces and other environmentally sound activities
- Involvement in legislative action that supports non-public schools
- Promotion of the school in the local community

The Family and School Association is *not*:

- A school policy-making organization
- Primarily a fund-raising organization
 - Although the organization may sponsor fund-raising activities
- A forum for complaints

“The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to provide an adequate substitute”. 2221, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church, English Translation, United States Catholic Conference, Washington, DC.*

MEMBERSHIP

The Family and School Association, committed to effective collaboration, opens membership to:

- Parents and guardians of the students in the school
- Pastor/associate pastor, Pastoral Associate Parochial Administrator (ex-officio), if applicable
- Principal (ex-officio)
- Faculty (representative designated by principal)
- Members of the parish of local community interested in promoting and supporting the school and the goals of the association

Note: Members are expected to participate in association meetings and activities, and promote the goals of the association.

ORGANIZATION

Officers

The Family and School Association officers usually include a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. The association must use a co-presidents model, i.e. two presidents.

Note: No employee of the local school or parish and no member of the immediate family of an employee shall be eligible for election to office. The term *immediate family member* shall be defined as spouse, child, parents, brother, sister or in-law. It is also

recommended that an officer not serve in other parish/school leadership positions at the same time.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee consists of the officers, a faculty representative and standing committee chairpersons. The pastor, if applicable, and principal are *ex-officio* member of the board (voice, but no vote). A school board member acts as liaison to the executive board. The principal shall be part of, or informed of, all meetings or discussions involving the activities of the Association and will make and/or approve final decisions, in collaboration with other Executive Board members.

Note: A member of the Family and School Association Executive Committee is an *ex-officio* member of the BSJ with full active voice or acts as liaison to the school Advisory Board. The Family and School *liaison* does not have voice or vote on the school board, but may request to have an item placed on the agenda and may, if the item is accepted, speak to that issue at the appropriate time.

Consider the following community partner categories:

**Businesses
Chamber of Commerce
Foundations
Local Government**

**Local Media
Nonprofit associations
Civic groups
Senior Citizens
Youth groups**

National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Program, National PTA

Standing Committees

In order to divide tasks, maximize efficiency and involve more people in the activities of the association, standing committees are needed. Standing committees are committees that are essential to the ongoing life and work of the association and, therefore, remain in existence permanently or until bylaws are developed or changed and another designation is listed. Membership in each committee is open to all members, and the chair of a standing committee sits on the Executive Committee. The following committees are important for the well-being of the association and should be considered for inclusion in the by-laws.

- **Membership Committee**
Initiates collaborative efforts which encourage and sustain membership in the organization
- **Marketing / Public Relations Committee**
Initiates collaborative efforts to market the school and the association's goals
- **Program Committee**
Initiates collaborative efforts to provide educational and spiritual development programs
- **Social Activity Committee**
Initiates collaborative efforts to provide social events and activities
- **Nominating Committee**
Initiates a collaborative process of nominating potential candidates for office in the association

Additional standing committees are encouraged:

- **Volunteer Committee**
Initiates collaborative efforts to provide volunteer services to the school, if desired by the principal
- **Legislative Committee**
Initiates collaborative efforts to promote appropriate educational legislative action guided by and supportive of the School Legislative Action Person (LAP)

Note: In schools with Boards of Specified Jurisdiction (BSJ) or other boards that limit local membership, it is expected that an officer or a designee of the Family and School Association shall serve as an ex-officio member of the Board with full active voice. In schools with Advisory Boards, a Family and School Association designee shall serve as a *liaison* to the Board without voice or vote, except when addressing a Family and School Association issue brought to and accepted by the Board. The principal may invite Family and School Association members or other parent/guardians at large to serve ad-hoc (for a specific purpose) to address school matters that do not fall under the purview of the board.

Special Committees

- Standing committees may convene additional short-term committees to plan and implement special activities and events.
- These special committees cease to exist when a specific task is completed.
- Special committees are extremely important because they provide service opportunities to those who are unable to make long-term volunteer commitments. Examples of this type of activity are: pot luck meal, evening of reflection, workshop, dance, teacher appreciation, family skating party, bowling party, Catholic School Week PR, membership drive, new parent/guardian welcome, etc.
- A Bylaws Committees is a special committee that initiates a collaborative process to develop and/ or review the association's bylaws. The executive Board convenes a Bylaws Committee as needed.

Note: Chairs of special committees are not members of the Executive Board

Bylaws and Standing Rules

- Bylaws of the Association are developed by a committee convened by the Executive Board. The bylaws are developed in cooperation with the principal, pastor, if applicable, and School Board or Board of Specified Jurisdiction in accordance with the mission and goals of both the school and parish.
- The organization and operation of the Family and School Association are described in the association's bylaws and standing rules.
Note: Procedures for the collection, accounting and disbursements of all revenues are described on page seven of this section of the manual
- The process of adapting the bylaws when needed can be found in the Appendix section.
- The membership of the Family and School Association gives final approval of the bylaws by a majority vote of those in attendance at a specified meeting. (Sample *Bylaws and Standing Rules* can be found in Appendix A of this manual)

When parents are involved, students achieve more, regardless of socio-economic status, ethnic/racial background or parent's education level. *A new Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement, Henderson, Anne, Berla and Nancy.*

Dues

Generally, associations may collect dues, but these should be kept to a minimum so that families are not financially inconvenienced. Dues are determined in collaboration with the principal. Dues may be solicited:

- At a booth on book day
- At association meetings during the year
- By letter

Financial Guidelines

The members of the Family and School Association, working in consultation with the pastor (where applicable) and principal of the school, promote fund raising and community awareness activities for the benefit of the school. The nature, purpose and fund receipt and distribution of the event are determined during this consultation.

In order to assist in this raising and management of funds, the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools has set forth the following guidelines:

- Fundraising is not the primary purpose of the Family and School Association.
- The budget (revenue and expenses) of the Family and School Association is developed by the officers of the Association in consultation with the principal and the pastor (where applicable). The principal brings the Association budget to the Finance Committee of the School Board for inclusion into the school budget, which is incorporated into the overall parish budget.
- The Family and School Association revenues and expenses are tracked in the school's monthly financial reports using separate general ledger codes (expense codes) and in some cases class codes (department codes).
- If a bank account is needed, the Association's bank account appears on the balance sheet of the school's finance statements.
- Bank Statements are mailed to the principal on a monthly basis and the principal reports back to the officers of the Family and School Association as to the monthly detailed activity.
- Bank reconciliations are completed on a monthly basis by the school or parish business manager.
- Full financial transparency is reported back to the Family and School Association on an ongoing basis.
- The Family and School Association may be charged with raising funds for specific school needs in consultation with the principal.
- When funds are to be raised for specific needs of the school as determined in consultation with the principal, this obligation should be met first. After this obligation

had been met, the remaining funds may be spent on other items approved in consultation with the principal.

- If specific funds are needed and the Family and School Association raises the funds the expenditures are charged to the general code which best fits the purpose of the expenditure. The expenditures are not directly charged against the event or appeal. **Note:** The accounting procedure described here is of benefit to the Family and School Association because it acknowledges the total amount earned at a function or activity.

In Parish Schools

The pastor had fiduciary responsibility for all operations of the parish. The pastor, along with the principal, must be one of the signatories on all financial accounts of the school and its associations and organizations.

III. ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A FAMILY AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

STARTING A FAMILY AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

A pastor, (if applicable), principal, teacher, school board member, or parent(s)/guardian(s) may initiate the process of starting a Family and School Association. Normally, the process is as follows:

- The initiator(s) obtain(s) the support of the principal and pastor (if applicable).
- The principal convenes a small group of interested persons who belong to the parish school community.
- The group develops a letter or email and a survey addressed to school families to determine interest and solicit direction regarding the initiation of a Family and School Association. (A sample letter and survey can be found in Appendix A of this manual)
- The small group compiles the results of the survey.
- The principal convenes a meeting of those interested in starting and belonging to a Family and School Association and shares the result of the survey.
- The new, larger group develops initial goals and a structure for the association that is consistent with the mission of the school and parish, (if

applicable) and with Archdiocesan guidelines and is attentive to the results of the survey.

- Temporary committees and leadership are determined in order to continue the development of the organization, i.e., a Bylaws committee, membership committee, program committee and a social activity committee.

These temporary committees should remain working until the bylaws are ready for presentation to the new membership. The association then continues its development in accordance with the bylaws accepted by the membership.

Note: It is wise for the new group to delay an election for six months or even a year until members come to know each other's gifts and expertise and can make informed leadership choices.

REVITALIZING A FAMILY AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

If an existing Family and School Association needs revitalization, most of the suggestions listened under the previous section entitled **Starting a Family and School Association** may be used. Additional assistance may be found in the upcoming section entitled: **Problems and Suggested Solutions**.

LEADERSHIP STYLES

There are many different styles of leadership. For example, a charismatic leader exercises influence by the strength of his/her personality, while a managerial leader knows how to organize and delegate. Effective leadership takes many forms, and with some adaptation of a leader's natural style to the group the situation and with a positive attitude on everyone's part, success is always possible.

All leaders, whatever their style, need to:

- Develop a vision statement and goals in collaboration with the principal and the members of the association which are in harmony with the philosophy and

mission statement of the school and the parish (A spiritual dimension must be incorporated in this vision)

- Communicate clearly the vision and goals to all members of the association and school community
- Invite members to take part in the implementation of the goals according to their skills and interests
- Oversee implementation of the goals
- Evaluate the implementation of the goals
- Give praise and encouragement

Leaders are chosen for different reasons and bring varying gifts and skills to the role. Each leader can achieve effective results through prayer, collaboration and planning.

GATHERING THE MEMBERSHIP

Business Meeting

The *Business Meeting* should be orderly and move as quickly as possible. Familiarity with *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* (which is available in any library or bookstore) will aid in conducting the meeting in an efficient manner.

The following summary of **Business Meeting Procedures** may serve as a guide for officers and members:

- The president, with the aid of the Executive Board and principal or designated school representative, prepares an agenda before each meeting and follows it carefully. The minutes and the agenda are distributed to the members prior to the meeting. A sample agenda for a business meeting can be found in Appendix A.
- The meeting opens with a prayer.
- The president calls for approval of the minutes of the last meeting, which should be distributed to the members prior to the meeting.
- Routine matters, such as the treasurer's written report, are distributed. They are discussed only upon request by a member.

- The president rules any discussion that is not pertinent to the agenda as “out of order”. Each meeting agenda should include an item that allows members to raise issues for future consideration.
- Each member is entitled to speak to an agenda item publicly at meetings. This should be done as clearly and briefly as possible.
- It is the president’s responsibility to ensure that each member has an opportunity to voice his or her perspective, but keeps that perspective to a reasonable amount of time. A member may not speak a second time unless all others who wish to speak have been heard.
- Issues should be resolved by consensus (discussion and compromises) or, by vote, if necessary.

Educational Meeting

The *Educational Program* can be introduced after a brief business meeting. If no business meeting is held prior to a program, a suggested agenda might be:

- Refreshments/Social
- Opening prayer by pastor (if applicable), principal, president or program chair
- Welcome and introduction of speaker personnel
- Introduction of speaker
- Educational program/presentation
- Group questions/discussion, if desired
- Next meeting reminder
- Closing prayer

A detailed meeting checklist can be found in Appendix A of this manual.

Social Event

A *Social Event* is not held in conjunction with a business meeting or educational program. A chair or chairpersons, enthusiastic committee members, good organization and good publicity are needed for a successful social event.

Note: No alcoholic beverages should be served at any event at which children are present.

Social events include such activities as:

- Dinners
- Dances
- Parties for children and/or families
- Plays
- Picnics
- Bowling Party
- Skating Party, etc.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Personal contact with parents/guardians and parishioners is primary. In addition, many other forms of public relations will also be effective and are necessary. Some examples are:

- E-mails or letters to parents and guardians from the Family and School Association and the principal
- School website
- Facebook, Twitter, Texting- any technology avenue available to parents/guardians
- Posters (church, school, neighborhood businesses)
- Announcement from altar on the week preceding an event
- Church bulletin announcements - two weeks in advance of an event
- Neighborhood newspapers
- Phone relay system calls
- Flyers from school

- Student promotion enlisted through school announcements and pep talks
- Advertisement of babysitting services Use adults or older students who have completed a background check and are *Virtus* certified. (See Appendix B for further information regarding Virtus and a background check application)

HOSPITALITY

A warm, welcoming, respectful climate at all meetings, programs and events influences the extent to which families become involved in their children's education and school activities. Practices such as the following enhance this climate:

- Have Welcome Committee members sit at a table near the meeting entrance
- Greet members and guests warmly as they arrive
- Use markers for bold, large print on nametags
- Encourage long-term members to welcome and mentor new members
- Arrange seating to maximize comfort and viewing ability, i.e., semi-circle or staggered rows of chairs
- Start and end on time
- Allow adequate time for discussion or questions and answers, if appropriate
- Make written materials available in appropriate languages in a multi-lingual parish
- Provide translators, where necessary
- Follow up with e-mails, website information and any technology avenue available to the participants

PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

History gives a good indication of the major causes for a Family and School Association to falter. The following problems are itemized, not with the intent of discouraging Family and School Association organizers, but rather to alert them to possible pitfalls.

These items may be used as a checklist in an effort to revitalize a faltering Family and School Association. With the aim of providing assistance, each problem is followed by a suggested solution:

- *The association has no clear vision or goals and is not sure of its role.*
Suggested solution: Bylaws, which include goals, are written, or revised if the group has been in existence for some time. Members are surveyed prior to the development of the bylaws to determine their desires for the association.
- *The association members, school administration or personnel have lost faith and trust in each other and have not been able to dialog in a positive, open manner.*
Suggested solution: Another serious effort is made to arrange a tranquil, prayerful, honest discussion, perhaps with an impartial facilitator. Any previous animosity is left at the door, because the good of the Christian educational community must always supersede past discords and individual personality differences.
- *The association has come to be viewed merely as a fund-raising organization and the membership is “burned out.”*
Suggested solution: The association broadens its operation to include educational programs, volunteer activities in the school (if needed by school leadership), social activities, service projects, and/or other activities of interest to its membership. Again, a survey for suggestions is helpful. Fund raising should not be the main purpose of the organization and is frequently the cause of burnout when it becomes such.
- *Leadership is perceived to be held tightly by a few who are not open to change.*
Suggested solution: Whether the perception is real or imaginary, leadership must make a concerted effort to change the present image. New leadership must be identified in order to stimulate new life in the organization. The present leadership may have to be ready to relinquish its role and give a strong call for new leaders through new outreach efforts, an open election and an expanded Executive Board.

- *Meetings are not organized or businesslike.*
Suggested solution: The Executive Board always develops an agenda and the president should closely follow that agenda as he/she chairs the meetings. Items not on the agenda are not discussed at this meeting. This helps to avoid complaint sessions. *A suggested agenda can be found in Appendix A of this manual.*
- *Programs do not meet the needs of the membership.*
Suggested solution: A survey of the membership's interests and needs gives new direction to program content and should attract members. Topics which have been requested and speakers/presenters who have been highly recommended and approved by the principal and Executive Committee should be chosen.
- *Attendance is low despite good programs, good leadership, good publicity, etc.*
Suggested solution: Attendance is not the sole determinate of the worth and viability of a Family and School Association. In today's climate, parents/guardians have multiple time demands made upon them, and the large attendance common in earlier years is not a realistic expectation. If the association is supporting the school, meeting the needs of a reasonable number of people and operating in a Christian atmosphere, the leadership should relax and continue to do its best.

Note: There are always larger turnouts for family centered events.

All efforts to address serious problems of a Family and School Association should be made in collaboration with the principal and the pastor, if applicable.

IV. CONCLUSION

An effective Family and School Association necessitates a Christian partnership between home and school as called for by Pope John Paul II in his pastoral letter, *Familiaris Consortio*, and as spoken of frequently by Pope Francis. It requires a relationship of listening, care and concern among association members, with parish and school administration and personnel, with other parish organizations (if applicable) and with the local community.

Canon 796 –

§1. Among educational means the Christian faithful should greatly value schools, which are of principal assistance to parents in fulfilling their educational task.

§2. It is incumbent upon parents to cooperate closely with the school teachers to whom they entrust their children to be educated; in fulfilling their duty teachers are to collaborate closely with parents who are to be willingly heard and for whom associations or meetings are to be inaugurated and held in great esteem.

The Code of Cannon Law, Chapter I Schools.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE SURVEY FOR STARTING/REVITALIZING A FAMILY AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

SAMPLE

(School Name)

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____

Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ E-mail

address _____

1. **What do you see as priority goals for the Family and School Association?**

2. **How many general meetings should be held during the school year?**

Bimonthly 4 times a year Other _____

3. **What time is most convenient for you to attend a Family and School meeting?**

Morning _____ Afternoon _____ Evening _____

What day of the week is most convenient?

Mon. Tues. Wed. Thurs. Fri. Sat. Sun.

4. **What topics would you like to hear addressed at a Family and School meeting?**

Substance Abuse Prevention Overseeing Technology Use

Motivating Your Child to Learn Communicating with Your Child

Faith in the Family

Other Topics:

5. **What activities would you like to see presented by the Family and School Association?**

Family Pot Luck Skating Party Family Christmas Party

Adult Dinner Dance Other _____

6. **What committees would you suggest be established by the Family and School Association?**

7. **Would you be willing to volunteer for either a short or long term role in the**

Family and School Association? Yes No

If your answer is "Yes", what would you be interested in doing?

Program Committee Home Computer Assistance

Public Relations Committee Other _____ Leadership Role

8. What do you consider a reasonable fee for Family and School annual membership?

\$5.00 \$7.00 \$10.00 Other _____

Please Return To: _____ **By** _____

Thank You

SAMPLE COVER LETTER FOR SURVEY

SAMPLE

(School Name)

Date

Dear Parent or Guardian:

(School Name) is in the process of forming a Family and School Association.

Membership in (School Name) Family and School Association will be open to all parents and guardians who have children enrolled in our school. Faculty, other school personnel and members of the parish (if applicable) and local community interested in promoting and supporting our school may also become association members.

Your opinions and suggestions are very important if the Family and School Association is to reflect your needs, and if the partnership role of parents in Catholic education in our school is to be enhanced.

Please complete the enclosed survey form and

Return to _____ by _____ (Date)

Thank you for your support in this effort and may God bless you and your family.

Sincerely,

School Principal

BYLAWS AND STANDING RULES

The following sample Bylaws (or Constitution) and Standing Rules are offered in the belief that rules for the operation of an organization give both security and freedom. In the words of Henry M. Robert, author of Robert's Rules of Order, which provides the framework for this sample: "Where there is no law, but everyone does what is right in his own eyes, there is the least of real liberty."

Bylaws

The bylaws of an association define the primary characteristics of the organization, prescribe how it functions and includes rules so important that they cannot be changed without previous notice and the vote of a specified majority.

SAMPLE

Article I – Name

The name of this organization shall be _____ Family and School Association.

Article II – Object

Section 1. The object of this association shall be the advancement of Catholic education, and the spiritual and physical welfare of all the children of this school.

Section 2. It shall further be to act in the promotion of family-school communication, to facilitate parent/guardian networking and to provide social activities as well as opportunities for its members in the areas of faith, education and civic affairs.

Section 3. Finally, it shall attempt to enhance the parent's and teacher's role in the education of the child by increasing their mutual understanding of children, and also by providing opportunities for the entire school community to work together for the

good of the child and to grow in mutual respect and concern.

Article III – Authority

The pastor, (if applicable) and the principal and school board have the responsibility for the school and this association shall function only in collaboration and cooperation with them.

Article IV – Membership

The membership shall be open to school, parish (if applicable) and community individuals interested in the objectives of this association, and who express this interest by applying for membership. Furthermore, all regular meetings shall be open meetings.

Article V – Officers

Section 1. The officers of this association shall be a president (or co-presidents, a vice president, secretary and a treasurer. The term of office shall be for one year, and no person shall be eligible to hold the

same office for more than two consecutive terms, with elections being staggered so that there is continuity provided among officers.

Section 2. No employee of the local school or parish and no members of the immediate family of an employee shall be eligible to hold office in the association. The term *immediate family* shall be defined as spouse, child, parent, brother or in-law. It is also recommended that an officer of the association not to serve in other parish/school leadership positions.

Section 3. Nominations for officers shall be made by a nominating committee of three members selected by the Executive Committee. Only one member of the nominating committee shall be an Executive Committee member. The nominating committee shall report at the meeting prior to the "annual meeting" the names of the candidates for each office to be filled. Additional nominations may be made from the floor at the nomination meeting. The consent of all nominees must have been obtained prior to the election.

Section 4. Voting shall be by secret ballot of members attending the election meeting.

Article VI – Duty of Officers

Section 1. The president shall preside at all meetings of the association and of the Executive Committee. He or she shall perform all the duties pertaining to the office: appoint special committees, be an *ex-officio* member of all committees, and receive notices of all meetings.

Section 2. The vice-president shall perform the duties of the president in his/her absence, assume the duties of the office until the next annual election if the office of the president becomes vacant and perform such other duties as the president or Executive Committee shall designate.

Section 3. The secretary shall keep a written record of all meetings of this association and of the Executive Board, handle correspondence and send meeting notices. He/she shall perform such other duties as the president or the Executive Committee shall designate.

Section 4. The treasurer shall receive all dues and other monies, and make disbursements only as directed by the Executive Committee and countersigned by the pastor (if applicable), principal and Family and School Association president. The treasurer shall make a written or verbal financial report at each general meeting in addition to a written annual report which shall be examined and certified by an Auditing Committee of three members of the association and presented to the membership, the pastor (if applicable), and the principal.

Article VII – Meetings

Section 1. The regular meetings of this association shall be held on the first Tuesday evening of September, November, January, March and April.

Section 2. The regular meeting in April shall be the “annual meeting”. (**Note:** *Annual reports and elections are held at this meeting*)

Section 3. At a regularly called meeting of the membership, those present constitute a forum.

Article VIII – Executive Committee

Section 1. The administrative body of this association shall be known as the Executive Committee. The board shall consist of the pastor or his representative (if applicable), the association president (s), vice president, secretary and treasurer, a faculty representative, a school board liaison representative, the school principal and the chairpersons of any standing committees.

Section 2. All matters of programming and association administration shall be vested in this board with the principal’s approval.

Section 3. A quorum of the Executive Committee shall be a majority of the members.

Section 4. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held prior to each regular meeting and at the call of the president or any three members of the Executive Board with the approval of the principal.

Section 5. The Executive Committee shall have the right to fill any sudden vacancies among the officers of the association, subject to subsequent approval of the principal and the membership.

Section 6. The Executive Committee shall have the right to add or delete special or temporary committees and shall have the power to appoint the chairpersons of said committees with the approval of the membership.

Article IX – Standing Committees

The standing committees of this organization shall consist of: Membership, Program, Public Relations, Volunteers and Legislation. **Note:** *Standing Committees are those required by the organization to exist from year to year.*

Article X – Parliamentary Procedure

The rules contained in *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern this association in all cases not otherwise covered by these bylaws.

Article XI – Amendments

Amendments to the bylaws shall be proposed at one membership meeting and voted on at the next. A two-thirds vote of the membership attending is necessary for an amendment to pass.

Standing Rules

Standing Rules are rules related to the administration of an association rather than to procedure, i.e., the time of the meeting, not the fact that a meeting will be held. When necessary, standing rules may be changed by a two-thirds vote without previous notice. If there is a possibility of serious disagreement, however, previous notice should be given.

Examples

1. Dues shall be \$_____ annually, payable by _____.
(Dues should be reasonable and not excessive)

2. Expenditures up to \$_____ may be approved by the Executive Committee without vote of the membership. An expenditure voted by the membership must have had prior approval by the Executive Board and the principal.

3. Regular meetings shall be held at _____ p.m.

4. Ad hoc committees of this organization shall include; i.e., Christmas Luncheon and Rollerskating Party. (**Note:** These committees are short-term and may change from year to year.)

5. This organization shall maintain a registration list of members and guests at every meeting.

EDUCATION PROGRAM CHECKLIST

- • Determine date and meeting place availability far in advance of actual meeting.
- • Develop or find an appropriate prayer.
- • Choose interesting, relevant topics.
- • Procure a quality speaker and determine fee and time of payment.
- • Confirm date, time and topic with speaker, in writing, or by email as soon as they are set.
- • Set in motion all publicity methods. (See Public Relations section in this manual)
- • Confirm availability of any technology necessary for meeting.
- • Clarify roles with discussion leaders, if that is needed.
- • Assign hosts and hostesses for the evening; confirm refreshments; prepare name tags, handouts and whatever else the program requires.
- • Arrange for the display of pamphlets and books, outlines or other handouts pertinent to the meeting topic.
- • Reconfirm with the speaker at least a week prior to the meeting, restating desired topic points, and giving information regarding projected size and make-up of audience, seating arrangements, driving directions, parking, entrance door, etc.
- • Check physical details necessary for the meeting a day or two before the event to ensure availability, i.e., screen, overhead projector, electrical outlets, extension cords, podium, microphone, washrooms, etc.
- • Arrive at least 30 minutes early to confirm all arrangements.
- • Follow building closing procedures regarding security and safety after the program.
- • Write thank you notes to all involved.
- • Pay speaker by check at pre-determined time.

SAMPLE BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

- Call to order by the president. (One tap of the gavel.) “The meeting will come to order. _____ will lead us in prayer.”
- Welcome by the president. Introduction of any guests.
- Read minutes by the secretary. (If printed copies were distributed, reading can be omitted.) President asks, “Are there any corrections to the minutes? If no corrections are offered, s/he says, “The minutes are approved.”
- Read treasurer’s report by the treasurer. (If printed copies were distributed, reading can be omitted.) After providing opportunity for questions and clarification, the president says, “The report will be placed on file” and hands it to the secretary. (No vote is taken to accept the treasurer’s report. The auditor’s report may be voted on at the end of the year at the “annual meeting”.)
- Report of officers, if any. Recommendations of Executive Committee for possible action are also presented at this time.
- Reports of Standing Committees (program, public relations, membership, etc.). If a committee recommends action, it is considered when new business is in order; otherwise, no action is taken on reports.
- Reports of Special Committees. Special events committees, or committees asked to investigate questions brought up at previous meetings. Report action taken at this time, if requested to do so.
- Unfinished business. Business left unfinished at last meeting, such as action postponed to this meeting, i.e., an amendment of bylaws for which notice was previously given, approval of a proposed activity, etc.
- New business. Must be presented by a motion by one member or Committee member and seconded by another member. A long motion should be written and handed to the president who states the motion and then gives it to the secretary. All motions must be disposed of by some action, either permanently by adoption or rejection, or postponement indefinitely, or postponement temporarily by a subsidiary motion.

RESOURCE LIST

The following Chicago Archdiocesan offices may be contacted to provide information regarding speakers, programs and/or materials for Family and School Association gatherings:

Family and School Associations	312-534-5304
Educational Legislation	312-534-5304
Mission Office	312-534-3310
Office for Catechesis and Youth Ministry	312-534-3700
Marriage and Family Ministries	312-534-8351
Office of Peace and Justice	312-534-8390
Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs	312-534-5325
Office of Immigrant Affairs and Education	312-534-8105
Office of Hispanic Communication	312-534-5102
Kolbe House Jail Ministry	773-247-0070
Catholic Charities	312- 655-7000
Office of Divine Worship	312-534-8008
Office of New Evangelization	312-534-5316
Office for the Protection of Children/Youth	312-534-5238

VOLUNTEERS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

I. IDENTIFICATION

Definition

Webster's Dictionary defines a volunteer as "one who enters into or offers oneself for any service of one's own free will".¹ While volunteers' work is given freely, and by most interpretations is unpaid, it does have a measurable dollar value in terms of services performed. Volunteers in the Catholic education community give additional value by assisting in the physical, educational and spiritual development of the young members of their community.

Volunteers – Who Are They?

More than half the adult population in the United States will volunteer in some capacity at one time or another. Both men and women volunteer. Those who are employed, unemployed or not in the labor force outside the home volunteer at about the same rate. In fact, women who work outside the home are more likely to volunteer than those who do not, making the old stereotype out of date.²

Volunteers – Why Do They Volunteer?

Most volunteers, whatever their age, gender or work situation, generally give very similar reasons for their willingness to volunteer. These include doing work that benefits their children or family, 'helping others', giving back to the community, meeting new people, using skills in a new setting and gaining new skills.³ Volunteers want to participate in a meaningful way and to improve the organization for which they volunteer. Volunteering gives them an opportunity to use skills and channel energies in ways they may not find at home or in the workplace

Changing Face Of Voluntarism

A number of changes in recent decades have impacted, and will continue to impact, voluntarism. The aging population and the new wave of immigrants have increased the number of people available to volunteer and changed the types of volunteer activities needed. Government and corporate interest in and encouragement of voluntarism is a growing phenomenon and is creating higher volunteer standards and causing some drain on the volunteer pool available to schools. To be attractive, volunteer opportunities must be meaningful and well organized. There must be an invitation to involvement, education to prepare the volunteer, evaluation to determine the quality of the experience and ongoing affirmation. **See Following:** *Virtus Training*

Virtus Training

1. Education and training in child sexual abuse prevention, entitled *Virtus*, is required to volunteer with children and/or young people in the Archdiocese of Chicago, whether in a school, parish or Archdiocesan organization.
2. The training compliance requires that an employee or volunteer who works with children and/or young people attend a live session entitled, *Virtus Protecting God's Children for Adults*. Continuing education includes a monthly bulletin, which is necessary to maintain an active account. This can be found on www.virtusonline.org.

Catholic School Voluntarism

Catholic schools have an excellent advantage as volunteer choices because the schools have been freely chosen by families as educational institutions that will best assist them in the intellectual and spiritual development of their children. This makes the school an ideal place for family members to give their service.

1. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged*, Merriam-Webster, Inc. Springfield, MA 01102.
2. *Motivating and Managing Today's Volunteers*, MacLeod, Flora. Self-Counsel Press, North Vancouver, BC,.
3. Ibid.

Today, the many demands on people's time make building a broad base of volunteers more difficult than in the past. This does not mean that adults are not capable of volunteering. It does mean, however, that volunteers have less time to give...and that on-site time during school hours may not be possible for many volunteers.
Catholic Schools and Volunteers: A Planned Involvement, National Catholic Educational Association.

II. ORGANIZATION OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The volunteer program in a Catholic school needs to be well organized while at the same time sensitive to the needs of the school, the students, the teachers and the volunteers themselves.

Successful programs have the following quality indicators:

- The climate of the school welcomes and values families and other community visitors.
- Volunteers and visitors follow the school's visitor management system for school safety.
- Principal, teachers and all school staff, in a collaborative process, assess the volunteer needs of the whole school.
- Teachers determine volunteer needs for their individual classrooms.
(See Appendix B for Teachers' Volunteer Needs form)
- Families and other supportive faith community members are surveyed regarding their interest, talents and availability as volunteers:

A **volunteer coordinator** is solicited from among the list of volunteers to help coordinate school and teacher needs with volunteers' talents and/or interests and oversee the total program.

(It is the role of the volunteer coordinator to see that a volunteer wishing "hands on" work with the children is teamed with a teacher who wants "hands on" assistance. A mother with young children at home who can only volunteer to work at home can be teamed with a teacher who wants a volunteer to do computer or paper work, research, etc.)

The volunteer coordinator, with the assistance of the principal, finds and maintains a secure location where volunteers can leave their coats, papers and other personal belongings. The identification of such a location helps to confirm the importance of the volunteer. Additional volunteer coordinator responsibilities are included in the following sections.

"Volunteer opportunities are designed not only for the average volunteer, but for those with limited time and resources... Volunteer opportunities ensure that those who are unable to volunteer in the school building are given options for helping in other ways, at home or place of employment." 4

4. National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs, National PTA, Chicago, IL.

III. INVITATION TO VOLUNTEER

The invitation for volunteers in the Catholic school should be broad based and extended not only to families of school children but also to the parish community as well, if appropriate. Older members of the faith community are an excellent source of support for the school and make wonderful volunteers. The invitation to become a school volunteer may be extended in many ways:

- Personal invitation
- Letters/emails to school families
- Invitation by phone
- School website
- Facebook
- Parish bulletin
- Letters to all parishioners
- School book/ sign-up day
- Student's back-pack information
- Twitter

Note: Personal invitation is still the most effective means of attracting volunteers. With the extremely busy lives led by people today, it is the personal approach that attracts attention and gains results.

IV. ORIENTATION

Once volunteers have been identified they should be given an orientation as soon as possible. The orientation can be given individually or in a group, if there are numerous volunteers.

The orientations should include:

- Welcome and "Thank You" by the principal.
- Introduction of the Volunteer Coordinator, if one has been identified.
- Distribution of a volunteer packet.
- Explanation of key school policies, protocols, routines and procedures.
- Explanation of *Virtus* training for those working with children.
- Explanation of the necessary volunteer forms and liability protection.
Volunteers of the Family and School Association are covered by the same liability protection and background information requirements of any school volunteer. Appropriate forms and information are channeled through the principal.
- Distribution and explanation of volunteer assignments.
(See Appendix B)
- Questions and answers.
- Tour of school conducted by the volunteer coordinator and/or principal.
- Introduction to teachers and school staff with whom volunteers will be working.
- Arrangement by volunteer coordinator for any specific training needed by a

volunteer in order to do his or her assigned task, i.e., library work, computer updating, etc.

V. EVALUATION

It is the role of the volunteer coordinator or the principal to check with both the volunteer and the teacher or other staff person to see if the volunteer arrangement is working well.

- Is the role of the volunteer purposeful in supporting or enhancing school programs and/or activities?
- Does the volunteer feel energized by the work he or she is doing for the teacher or staff member?
- Is the teacher or staff member satisfied with the assistance of the volunteer?
- If the arrangement is not satisfactory, can it be improved?
- If the arrangement cannot be improved, can some more satisfactory provision be made for both the volunteer and the teacher or staff member?

It is extremely important to audit the satisfaction level of each volunteer and the person with whom he or she is teamed. Satisfied volunteers become the very best public relations agents for the schools in which they work. Conversely, a dissatisfied volunteer could develop a negative view of the school and could do much harm to the image of a school.

Volunteer Packet Contents

Welcome Letter
School Mission Statement
School Handbook
Accident and Emergency Exit Procedures
Building Map w/Volunteer Central Cite Noted
Parking Information
Sign-in/ Out Policies
Insurance/ Liability Information
Check and Screening Form
Safety and Security Procedures
Background Check Application
Safe Environment Requirements

VI. AFFIRMATION

The importance of affirmation of volunteers cannot be expressed too strongly. No one's efforts should ever be taken for granted. Affirmation can be given in many ways. Once a year, volunteers should be honored at a scheduled gathering of the school community. Recognition of their contributions to the school should be part of the program. Each volunteer should be given a certificate or other sign of appreciation.

VII. CONCLUSION

An excellent volunteer program can be developed and well maintained through the use of common sense and Christian courtesy. In a Christian community such as a Catholic school, everyone is treated with respect and affirmed for their good works. Good organization keeps the mechanics of the volunteer program running in such a way that both honors the participants and gives honor and glory to God. With all these pieces in place, the volunteer program will be an unqualified success!

APPENDIX B

VOLUNTEER ROLE EXPECTATIONS

Volunteer in a School in the Archdiocese

A volunteer assists teachers and staff personnel in a school in the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Accountability

The volunteer is directly accountable to the principal. If a coordinator for volunteers exists in the school, this person may be considered the immediate supervisor, with the principal's approval. The volunteer agrees to abide by established policies and procedures of the Archdiocese of Chicago, including child sexual abuse prevention requirements.

Implementing the Mission of the School

Volunteers cooperate with the principal in providing an educational climate for the personal development of each student in the relationship established by the school between culture and the Gospel and the illumination of all knowledge with the light of faith in forming the religious dimension of the Catholic school. (*The Religious Dimension of Education in the Catholic School*)

Responsibilities of the Volunteer

Tasks specific to school volunteers are developed by the principal in collaboration with his/her staff members and with the approval and acceptance of the volunteers

TEACHER VOLUNTEER NEEDS

SAMPLE

(School Name)

Teacher Name _____

Room Number _____

Grade Level _____

I am interested in obtaining assistance from a _____ (School Name) School volunteer.

I can use help in the following areas:

_____ Lunchroom

_____ Field trip chaperone

_____ Room parent

_____ Interpreter

_____ Classroom assistance

_____ Computer assistance

_____ Tutoring

_____ Resource assistance

Other _____

Please return to: _____ (Principal or Volunteer Coordinator) by _____ (Date)

Thank You

CHURCH BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENT

SAMPLE

_____ (Name of School) _____ School is looking for volunteers from the school and parish community to assist in a number of different areas of school life.

Assistance is needed in the office, the classroom, the playground and the lunchroom. Those who are unable to offer help in the school itself may be of service from their home or office.

This is an opportunity to share your skills and interests and possibly learn new skills. Everyone is welcome whether or not they have children in the school. An orientation program will familiarize volunteers with the school, its needs and protocols and provide any necessary training.

Come partner with our school personnel and gain many personal rewards! If you are interested in investigating _____ (Name) _____ School's volunteer program, please contact:

_____ (Contact Name) _____

Contact Person's Telephone Number / Email address

Thank you

VOLUNTEER SURVEY

(School Name)

SAMPLE

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____

Zip _____

Telephone Number (____) - ____ - ____

E-mail Address _____ Fax Number _____

I have _____ child (ren) in Grade(s) _____

I have no children at _____ School

I am interested in the following volunteer activities:

____ Computer work

____ Tutor

____ Room parent/guardian

____ Social event worker

____ Field trip chaperone

____ Lunchroom assistant

____ Library assistant

____ School office assistant

____ Playground assistant

____ Computer class assistant

____ Interpreter (Language _____)

____ Music, Art, Drama volunteer

Other (Specify) _____

I am available:

____ Monday

____ Tuesday

____ Wednesday

____ Thursday

____ Friday

At the following times:

_____ A.M. to _____ A.M.

_____ P.M. to _____ P.M.

____ I am available on some weekends

____ I can volunteer only from my home or office

____ I can volunteer for a one-time only activity

Please Return To:

(Volunteer Coordinator or Principal)

VOLUNTEER LETTER

SAMPLE

(School Name)

Dear School Volunteer,

Thank you for agreeing to offer your time as a volunteer for _____ School.

We are most grateful for your willingness to be more actively involved in our Catholic school community.

You are invited to attend a Volunteer Orientation meeting on:

Date: _____

Time: from _____ to _____

Place: _____

Address: _____

Your survey has been reviewed and you will be working in

_____ (Place) _____ with _____ (Staff Member) _____. You will learn details of your volunteer responsibilities at the orientation meeting. We hope these arrangements are agreeable to you. If you have any immediate questions or concerns, please contact _____ (Volunteer Coordinator or Principal) by email or at the following number () - _____ - _____.

Again, we extend our thanks. We look forward to seeing you at the orientation meeting.

Sincerely,

_____(Principal's Signature)

_____(Volunteer Coordinator's Signature)

VOLUNTEER ASSIGNMENT FORM

SAMPLE

(School Name)

Name _____

Volunteer

Assignment _____

Location _____

Day(s) _____

Hour(s) _____

School Staff Person _____

Thank You!

Principal

Volunteer Coordinator

INSURANCE CONVERAGE FOR VOLUNTEERS

If a volunteer is sued in his or her capacity as a volunteer of the Archdiocese/school, the Archdiocese's self-insurance program will provide coverage for any claim against the volunteer that is based upon negligence. This coverage includes providing the volunteer with an attorney to defend him or herself. Gallagher Basset Services, Inc. selects these attorneys, in consultation with the Office of Legal Services and the Office of Financial Services. Coverage is not provided to volunteers who are sued for criminal conduct or intentional misconduct. Volunteers would be personally responsible for such claims.

CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK APPLICATION

The Criminal Background check form for volunteers can be found at www.eappsdb.com. All registrations should be done online. If you do not have a computer, check with your school or go to your local library.