

POLICY 3

Revised November 2024

ROLE OF THE TRUSTEE

Section 34 of the *Education Act* outlines the role of the trustee. Further to this, the role of the trustee is to contribute to the Board as it carries out its mandate to achieve its mission, vision, values, and goals. The Board believes that its ability to fulfill its obligations is enhanced when leadership and guidance are forthcoming from within its membership.

Alberta's Catholic schools exist to offer families a distinct education that is based on the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. The trustees of this division are empowered by the community to fulfill both the educational requirements set forth by Alberta Education and the vision of the faith community in alignment with the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.

This presents Catholic trustees with a unique challenge. They must ensure that students are provided an education which meets or exceeds the goals of Alberta Education and at the same time, ensure that Catholic values and principles are always reflected in its policies and practices.

The Board is a corporation. The decisions of the Board in a properly constituted meeting are those of the corporation. A trustee who is given corporate authority to act on behalf of the Board may carry out duties individually but only as an agent of the Board. In such cases, the actions of the trustee are those of the Board, which is then responsible for them. A trustee acting individually has only the authority and status of any other citizen of the division.

1. Board Orientation

The Board believes an orientation program is necessary for effective trusteeship. As a result of elections, the Board may experience changes in membership. To ensure continuity and facilitate smooth transition from one Board to the next following an election, trustees must be adequately briefed concerning existing Board policy and practice, statutory requirements, initiatives, and long-range plans. All trustees are expected to attend all aspects of the orientation program.

The division will offer an orientation program for all newly elected trustees that encompasses an overview of the division, including method of operations, and provides information on:

- 1.1 Role of the trustee, Board, and the superintendent;
 - 1.2 Organizational structures, facilities, and procedures of the division;
 - 1.3 Board policy, agendas, and minutes;
 - 1.4 Board Priorities, annual reports, budgets, financial statements, Infrastructure and Maintenance Renewal (IMR) and Capital plans, faith plan, and long-range plans;
 - 1.5 Division programs and services;
 - 1.6 Board's function as an appeal body;
 - 1.7 Statutory and regulatory requirements, including responsibilities regarding conflict of interest;
 - 1.8 Services and materials provided to trustees (See Policy 3 - Appendix A);
 - 1.9 Trustee remuneration and expenses; and
 - 1.10 Most recent evaluation of the Board.
2. The division will provide financial support for trustees to attend Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA), Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA), and faith formation conferences and events as deemed necessary by the Board.
 3. The Board Chair and Superintendent are responsible for developing and implementing the division's orientation program for newly elected trustees. The Superintendent shall provide each trustee with access to the Board Policy Handbook and the Administrative Procedures Manual at the organizational meeting following a general election or at the first regular meeting of the Board following a by-election.
 4. Incumbent trustees are encouraged to help newly elected trustees become informed about the history, functions, policies, procedures, and issues.
 5. The trustee shall, at the time of assuming office, take and subscribe to the official oath and deposit it with the Secretary-Treasurer.

Specific Responsibilities of Individual Trustees

The trustee shall:

1. Model the values and requirements of a practicing Catholic and participate in parish and church activities through a personal lifestyle that reflects the teachings of the Church.
2. Know and understand Board policies and the legislation referenced in the policy (Section 34 and 51 of the *Education Act*), and become familiar with administrative procedures, meeting agendas, and reports to participate in Board business. The trustee will become familiar with division policies, meeting agendas, and reports to participate in Board business.
3. Refer governance queries, issues, and problems not covered by Board policy to the Board for corporate discussion and decision.
4. Refer administrative matters to the Superintendent. The trustee, upon receiving a complaint from a parent, community member, or school council representative about school operations, will refer the parent, community member, or school council representative to the appropriate contact as expressed in *Policy 3, Appendix B: Communications Protocol for Holy Spirit Catholic School Division*.
5. Keep the Board and the Superintendent informed in a timely manner of all matters coming to their attention that might affect the division.
6. Assist the Superintendent with counsel and advice, given the benefit of the trustee's judgment, experience, and familiarity with the community.
7. Attend meetings of the Board, participate in, and contribute to, the decisions of the Board to provide the best solutions possible for the education of children within the division.
8. Ensure that Catholic values and principles are always reflected in the Board's policies and practices.
9. Support the decisions of the Board and refrain from making any statements that may give the impression that such a statement reflects the corporate opinion of the Board when it does not.
10. When delegated responsibility, exercise such authority within the defined limits in a responsible and effective way.
11. In alignment with the Board engagement efforts, provide for the engagement of parents, students, and the community in matters related to education.
12. Participate in Board/trustee development sessions so that the quality of leadership and service in the division can be enhanced.
13. Share the materials and ideas gained from a trustee development activity with fellow trustees at the next available opportunity.

14. Stay current with respect to provincial, national, and international educational issues and trends.
15. Strive to develop a positive learning and working culture both within the Board and the division.
16. When possible, attend:
 - 16.1 Zone and provincial trustee functions
 - 16.2 Division functions / events
 - 16.3 Extra-curricular school activities
 - 16.4 Relevant municipal meetings (in Ward)
17. Understand, sign, and adhere to the Trustee Code of Conduct.
18. Report any violation of the Trustee Code of Conduct to the Board Chair or Vice Chair if applicable.

References **Sections 33, 34, 51, 52, 53, 64, 67, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96 *Education Act***
 Section 6, *Commissioner of Oaths Act*