



## Home and School Organization HANDBOOK

St. Joseph Catholic School - Rice Lake

*Updated 9/2021*

### **Introduction:**

School personnel and parents are involved in a collaborative ministry of educating the young. As part of this ministry, parents, and teachers, together with the pastor and principal, need to develop a community of faith in which all enable one another in the carrying out of the specific functions of their educational ministry. Such enablement means the sharing and accepting of one another's giftedness; it means providing living witness to young people of what faith community can mean and do. The Home and School Association is intended to be a vehicle by which parents, teachers, pastors and principals are able to collaborate with one another and thereby develop a faith community through which to teach the young by living witness.

### **Purpose:**

The Home and School Association is a means to organize parental efforts to support their Catholic school. The purpose of this association is to provide a forum where parents, teachers, principal and pastor can coordinate educational support for the school's programs.

### **Function:**

- Promote communication among parents, teachers, and administration.
- Offer programs that assist parents and teachers in fulfilling their role in Catholic formation of the children.
- Promote goodwill and cooperation between and among parents, faculty, administration, education committee, and the parish.

- Direct and coordinate parental support to the school through specific assistance activities, social functions, and fundraisers.

### **Membership:**

The membership of this association is ALL of the parents and teachers. The parents and teachers act collectively on behalf of and in support of the school.

### **List of St. Joseph School HSO Activities (List subject to change, and not limited to):**

- Fall Festival
- Parent Friend-Raisers
- SJS Black and Gold Gala
- ?
- ?

### **Interested in joining HSO?**

All parents are a part of HSO! All are welcome to attend our monthly meetings. Monthly meetings will be communicated the week prior to the meeting via school electronic communications.

### **OFFICERS**

Officers for this association are elected “spokespersons” for the group. They are the primary communication link between the parents, the education committee, and the administration. The president or chairperson should be skilled in conducting meetings as well as fair, tactful, patient, respectful, open-minded, and humble. The responsibility of this person is to maintain order and decorum at meetings. The vice-president or vice-chair presides over meetings when the president is absent. The secretary manages the correspondence of the association. The treasurer manages the funds of the organization. The faculty representative represents the teaching staff on the association. The main function of this person is to assess the perspective of the teachers about given topics with the school and communicate them to the association.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GROUPS**

*Executive School Board* – The Home and School Association should not confuse its responsibilities with that of the Executive School Board. The board advises on policy and finances. The home and school is a vehicle in which the education committee can gather information and resources for forming policy and finance decisions.

*Parish* – Because the home and school association is an organization of the parish community, the association must follow all policies and guidelines set by the parish. The parish and finance councils should receive copies of relevant correspondence.

*Diocese* - Because the home and school association represents a school in the Diocese, it must adhere to all policies and guidelines set by the diocese. It needs to also help in ensuring that the school does the same.

*Principal* – The principal is part of the association's executive committee as an ex-officio member.

*Pastor* – The pastor should be invited to attend the HSO meetings and receive copies of the association's correspondence.

*Teachers* – Teachers are active participants in this association. If desired a teacher can be a full voting member of the executive committee.

## **MEETINGS**

A successful association is arranged for efficiency. The aims of the association should be referred to frequently in order to provide direction. There should be a formal program portion that involves either things having to do with educational activities in school or Christian formation for parents in educating their children. A hospitality time should be an informal portion of the gathering. This time gives new members a sense of being welcomed to the group. Adding these aspects to the meeting time should enable the creation of the fine spirit of friendliness.

*Meeting Fundamentals:*

1. Ensure the purpose of the meeting is clear. Carefully plan activities.  
Conduct a well-directed meeting.

2. Adopt rules of order and enforce them in meetings. Use the underlying premise of Robert's rules where one topic is addressed at a time and each member has the right to speak to the topic without interruption.
3. Maintain open communication.
4. Protect the integrity of the association's meeting agenda. Publish it beforehand. Adhere to it. All members should have an opportunity to suggest agenda items.
5. Record proceedings accurately. Make minutes available for all members to review.
6. Provide refreshments.
7. Be in a comfortable setting.

### **VITALITY OF THE ASSOCIATION**

Vitality of the association depends on the active participation and cooperation of all the people involved. A key to the vitality of the association is the officers' ability to develop and direct enthusiasm from the parent community. Parent motivation depends greatly on the good feeling they sense when they volunteer their time to the church and school. To increase parent involvement, the association needs to divide the work so that multiple things can be accomplished.

### **COMMUNICATION**

The most important task of the Home and School Association is to promote the spiritual and emotional growth of the children within the home, school, and church community. Honest and open communication allows all viewpoints to be considered and understood from the sender's rather than the receiver's point of view. Parents, teachers, and administration should feel free to express any concern or thought without fear of retaliation, censure, or criticism, while the meeting of the association still maintains decorum to protect individuals from personal attack. The association should promote respect and tolerance of differing views. The key to this is listening effectively – refrain from any initial judgments, concentrate on the speaker until he/she is finished, not interrupting the speaker until he/she is finished, and rephrasing the content and feeling of the speaker's message.

#### *Possible Ways of Communicating:*

- newsletter
- parent letter

- website post
- face-to-face
- meetings
- social gatherings
- phone call
- text alerts

## **INFORMATION**

The association should allow for mutual educational opportunities for parents, teachers, and administration. All participants can learn from one another and collectively learn from outside experts. Discussion between parents and teachers is the best way to accomplish this mutual learning. Formal educational materials for these discussions can be provided by the association. Outside experts can be invited in to provide information on mutual concerns such as:

- recognizing learning problems
- helping your children read
- helping your child with homework
- managing strong-willed children
- dealing with bullying
- keeping children safe
- raising a healthy child
- managing personal finances
- Other topic ideas can be found on the National PTA website – [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)

## **COOPERATION**

The Catholic school should be like a family – “a group of people united by a common set of beliefs, philosophy, and goals”. The association should foster the growth of each member’s spirit, faith, and self-image promoting love and goodwill. Parents should be involved in the association’s planning, problem-solving and decision-making. Get input on various things through surveys, telephone calls, or other means. Be sure to avoid any immediate judgments on a person’s ideas or criticisms. Ask individuals for the rationale behind their comments. Maybe there is a need for a change. Possible ways to express love and goodwill: gifts for teachers at special times of the year recognize special efforts of teachers and parent volunteers giving rewards to

student groups recognizing children for special achievements verbally  
recognizing people at the meetings.

### **COORDINATE SUPPORT**

The association needs to help organize parents so there is enough volunteer help and support. The school administration should communicate the needs to the association. Develop a way to identify people's talents. Collect and maintain information about the skills and expertise of the parents in the school through a survey. When planning and implementing ideas, ensure that the ideas and talents of all the members are considered. Ask those with specific skills to assist with a project that meets their gifts.

### **FUNDRAISING**

Funds raised by the association can be used to help purchase materials and equipment for the school. These funds can also be used to help the school pay for general operations as well as invest for future sustainability. Fundraising events are dealt with through sub-committees. Successful fundraising is done when...

1. The activities lead toward the completion of a clearly defined goal.
2. Team assignments help accomplish the goal.
3. There is open communication.
4. Volunteers are appreciated and thanked.