



CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION NATIONAL
vision community partnership

Board Members Handbook

The information contained in this handbook is of a general nature only and is not intended as, and does not represent that it is, advice on any of the matters contained in it. Whilst every care has been taken in the preparation of the material, Christian Education National is not providing legal or professional advice. No person should act, or not act, on the basis of any of the information contained in this handbook. If any reader requires legal or other professional advice they should obtain such advice from appropriate advisors.

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INTRODUCTION

Christian Education National seeks to be a vibrant, healthy, mutually supportive association in which members work together in obedient response to God's word to see Christ centred education available for all who desire it. Christian schools and their associations are thus committed to teaching and learning from a biblical perspective. Each association recognises and promotes the God given responsibility placed upon parents to raise their children to be disciples of Christ. Board members therefore seek to be faithful to the Lord by encouraging their educational communities to cultivate and apply biblical principles in all areas of their lives. They commit to modelling this in their governance practices.

Thus the purpose of this handbook is to provide board members with an outline of their legal and other responsibilities, strategies for efficient management and ideas for vision, mission and strategic planning based on effective principles which reflect our commitment to Jesus. Paul affirms that Jesus *is before all things, and in him all things hold together*. (Colossians 1.17) We look to Jesus to hold together our governance practices. At the same time we recognise our own responsibility to build the capacity of our boards and committees to work in transformative ways to ensure vibrant, healthy associations and school communities.

The content of this handbook does not constitute formal advice. It is of a general nature and intended to form a basis for more detailed information and policy development at association and school level. Boards should obtain relevant legal, industrial, financial and other advice from appropriately qualified sources.

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VISION, MISSION AND CORE VALUES

Vision

To be a vibrant, healthy, mutually supportive association in which members work together, in obedient response to God's Word, to see Christ centred education become available to all who desire it.

Mission

The member associations of Christian Education National seek to serve each other and the wider community by:

- helping each association fulfil its own mission;
- assisting each association to provide quality education from a biblical perspective;
- promoting the cause of Christian education;
- assisting parents to establish and operate Christian Schools;
- supporting parents to fulfil their mandate to educate their children in Christ;
- encouraging teachers to grow in their Christian faith in order to teach from a biblical point of view and in accordance with their association's policies and priorities.

Core Values

1. The Bible's central place in the life of our associations and school communities.
2. Christian parents having a determinative and ongoing involvement in setting the direction of the school.
3. Associations and schools demonstrating a vibrant biblical faith in every aspect of activity.
4. A national community supported by and accountable to each other.
5. Sharing the vision of Christian education with the wider Christian community.
6. The education of children for responsive discipleship, to share God's life and hope.

For a full discussion of the Biblical Basis, Vision Statement, Mission Statement and Core Values of Christian Education National see APPENDIX F.

1. The Work of the Board

1.1 *Efficiently Structuring Communities for Governance*

Any group of people who come together for a common purpose around a shared vision form a vision community. The vision community in member Christian schools encompasses all parents, staff, students and others who actively engage in some aspect of the vision for a school which acts on behalf of Christian parents, in a dynamic partnership with parents, to provide Christ centred teaching and learning which prepares students for lives of loving and faithful service to the Lord.

Such a vision community can only function effectively when it is structured to provide governance that allows the school to fulfil its purpose. Member Christian schools provide a structure for effective governance through Christian parents who actively commit to and support the vision for Christ centred education through membership of their local association. The name *Christian Education National* thus simply refers to schools which are *governed by Christian parents* who share a common vision.

The association of Christian parents is the moral owner of any school(s) it controls. The association elects a board from amongst its members as its authorised governance team. The board members are the legal owners of the school(s) with responsibility to interpret the vision of the association into policy and structures. At law, some decisions can only be made by the association's members. Apart from such decisions, ultimate responsibility for the association's business is vested in the board members.

A Board needs to understand that while it owns the organisation it does so only for the purpose and mission for which the association exists. Board members are not stock holders; they own the organisation because they care about and are committed to the vision.¹

The Christian Education National board consists of committed Christians who lead Godly lives and hold a vision for and commitment to Christ-centred education. The board represents a cross-section of the association and will be sensitive to the needs of the whole school community. Effective board members display a keen interest in the school(s) run by the association. Board activities are characterised by humility, gentleness and patience (Eph. 4:2,3). Before God the board is responsible to the association.

The board appoints a principal or other executive officer to carry the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school(s). This involves interpreting the vision through the policies to create effective management structures and processes. Other staff members are appointed as needed. Day-to-day operation remains with the principal and staff. The board is responsible to monitor the performance of management. Before God the principal or executive officer is responsible to the Board.

1.2 *The Authority of the Board*

The board's authority should be clearly defined in the association's constitution. The board's authority relates only to a particular context: the educational task of the association and its school(s). Under Australian law, the board, as noted above, holds legal responsibility for the association's activities which of course includes schools.

Board responsibilities will vary depending upon whether the school is incorporated under the Corporations Act 2001 as a company limited by guarantee or whether incorporation is pursuant to a State Associations Incorporation Act. These issues are also partially addressed in section 2. However board members should seek legal advice in their own states regarding their particular responsibilities.

1.3 *The Authority of Individual Board Members*

Board members are officially board members only when the board meets with a quorum and agenda for a specific purpose. They may only speak as board members when in such a meeting or when specifically authorised to do so by the whole board. Outside of formal

board meetings board members are to be regarded as volunteers along with all other parents. It is important that the whole school community understands this legal reality as there is significant risk that other parents and community members may perceive the role of board members differently and assume they have authority to act independently of the full board.

1.4 *The Central Task of the Board*

The most critical task for the board is to determine the vision for the school.

It is the board's privilege and responsibility to set, refine and ensure implementation of a Biblical basis, vision and direction with reference to the ultimate goal of teaching and learning which prepares students for lives of loving and faithful service to the Lord. It is equally the board's privilege and responsibility to faithfully articulate and model this Biblical vision at every opportunity.

A Biblical vision provides a picture of the future that produces passion in people. It guides strategic planning, aligns existing programs and determines the basis for the appointment of teaching staff.

Written statements of an association's vision and strategic plans need not be long and complicated documents. However they are essential to give clear direction for the future.

Strategic plans should answer the following questions:

- WHAT is our motivation? (Mission)
- WHERE do we want to be? (Vision)
- WHAT is important to us? (Values)
- HOW do we get where we want to be in the future (Strategy)

A strategic plan gives legs to the vision. It is DRIVEN by the mission, SEEN through the vision and GUIDED by the values. It is determined within a context of humble reliance on God for ongoing organisational health and vitality.

The office of Christian Education National can assist with strategic planning seminars.

1.5 *The General Responsibilities of the Board*

In order to carry out its critical vision setting task, the responsible and accountable board:

- Undertakes governance training
- Commits to faithfully setting a biblical direction and example,
- Commits to praying and applying scriptural principles,
- Provides resources for staff to undertake professional development from a Christian perspective
- Ensures a healthy and growing association
- Trains the association to understand its roles and responsibilities and those of the board
- Develops community among all parents, staff and students.
- Assists all parents to grow in their understanding of and commitment to Christian education.

Responsible and accountable individual board members will:

- Seek to be well equipped for their leadership role
- Commit to the time required to undertake board responsibilities. This may involve monthly board meetings, sub-committee meetings and reading or preparation of reports be familiar with the Scriptures, this handbook and other material relevant to serving as a member of a board,
- Read as widely as possible on Christian education and attend training opportunities

Through the principal the board will:

- Ensure that all teachers and other staff are wholly committed to the Lord
- Be aware of avenues of staff development available from a Christian perspective
- Expect staff to undertake professional development from a Christian perspective

1.6 *The Review Task of the Board*

Boards are responsible to ensure that an effective review process is undertaken through the principal. Review processes may be required by the state or territory or determined by the board.

All states and territories have mechanisms that require educational programmes and often other aspects of schools to be reviewed from time to time.

These differ in each state. The bodies responsible are:

Victoria: The Registered Schools Board
www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/rsb/review.htm

Tasmania: Schools Registration Board
www.srb.tas.gov.au

NSW: The Board Of Studies
www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

South Australia: Non-government Schools Registration Board
www.ngss.sa.edu.au

Queensland: QLD Education
www.education.qld.gov.au

ACT: Department of Education and Training
www.decs.act.gov.au

Western Australia: Department of Education and Training
www.training.wa.gov.au

Northern Territory: Northern Territory Department of Employment and Training (NTDEET)
www.latis.net.au

Generally reviews instigated by government do not take into account the Christian vision and goals of the school(s). Nor do they usually consider the structures, governance or administration of the association responsible for the school(s).

However, various other review instruments do address these aspects of the vision community should a board determine to undertake a review.

Christian Education National makes available the following review instruments and processes for member associations at costs significantly less than commercial rates. The review instruments are available for non-members at commercial rates:

- ***Vision-setting Seminar*** - involves a group of key people within the community in developing a draft vision statement and taking a snap-shot of the association's and/or school's operation to develop an action plan.
- ***Whole School Review*** - equips a *local review team* under a *local coordinator* to thoroughly evaluate the goals and practice across every facet of the association and its school(s). Towards the end, a *visiting evaluation team* validates the process. The review report offers a range of recommendations to underpin a new or updated strategic plan. The combination of a local coordinator and team with a visiting evaluation team ensures a thorough process that unites a community round a common vision for Christ-centred education.
- ***Compact School Review*** - assists an association and school(s) to address particular issues or to gain information to inform a strategic planning process. An external review team conducts a thorough and prompt review process based on the goals and aspirations of the association/school community concerned.
- ***Organisational Development and Consultancy*** – facilitates an association and school(s) to determine critical issues and set specific objectives to be addressed. An external team addresses those specific objectives and brings a report with recommendations based only on those objectives.

In each case additional integrated support (such as board training, professional development or management and finance input) can be made available to the community as required.

Reviews offer constructive opportunities to consider the current effectiveness of the whole organisation. They also provide a framework to determine what actions need to be taken to ensure future effectiveness. Reviews are vital if the board is to fulfil its obligation to properly monitor progress toward the vision and implementation of the strategic plan. Reviews may be undertaken internally. However it is important to aim towards a *review cycle* over 5 to 8 years which includes the participation of objective external reviewers towards the end of that cycle.

1.9 *The Policy Development Task of the Board*

Policies are in-principle determinations providing a framework for board governance and school management decisions. One of the board's key tasks is to establish a policy framework to ensure that the association's vision and goals are achieved through its school(s). This is the chief focus of board discussion and decision-making in order to monitor and ensure the implementation of the strategic plan.

In establishing and maintaining a policy framework it is wise to keep the following in mind:

- **Identify and apply biblical principles to policy development.**
Relevant biblical principles, especially those which undergird the school's core values, provide an essential foundation from which to develop policy. It is important that the board undertake appropriate background reading to identify and articulate these biblical principles. Such reading might include, along with bible itself, biblical commentaries, seminar papers from Christian Education National, NICE books and other relevant publications. Some suggestions are included in the bibliography.
- **Important external compliance obligations impact policy development.**
The board is responsible to establish and keep up-to-date, policies which guarantee the school's compliance with obligations legislated by local, state and federal government laws, regulations and other policy requirements (including all registration requirements). The board will work closely with the principal to determine these obligations.
- **Slipshod policy development can unintentionally redirect the school.**
It is critical to seek advice where appropriate. The Christian Education National website provides a suite of policies as templates for member associations. These policies have been developed in conjunction with legal advice in NSW. Boards and senior executives in other states and territories will also find them a useful basis for policy development in conjunction with local advice.
- **Too many policies can restrict and dampen effective school operation.**
The purpose of a policy is to provide clear guidelines for issues and activities that regularly occur and to anticipate critical issues. It is unreasonable for the board to overburden the school operation with a proliferation of policies. An effective policy framework supports, encourages and releases the activities of the school.
- **Applying policy to specific individual cases within the school's operation is the province of the executive officer/principal and senior staff.**
Policies set the general parameters for governance and provide underlying principles that release senior management to make decisions without constant reference back to the board. It is counterproductive for the board to spend time in protracted discussion of specific situations and incidents. When this occurs it is usually at the expense of setting and maintaining the organisation's strategic direction in obedience to the Lord. Particular issues need only to be discussed when policy is lacking or in order to clarify and monitor the operation of policy.
- **Translating policy into the classroom is the task of staff led by the principal.** This is not the role of the board. The executive officer's/principal's reports should convey the means by which the association's vision for Christian education is being realised in

the school setting. As with all reports to the board, they should report progress in achieving the objectives of the association's strategic plan.

1.10 *Policy Handbook*

Each board needs its own policy handbook. A copy of this handbook is provided to newly elected board members. The policy handbook is to be updated by the board secretary once each year or more frequently if changes necessitate it. This ensures that each board member is aware of the policies under which the association and its school(s) operate. An up-to-date policy handbook prevents unnecessary discussion and misunderstanding thus saving valuable time during board meetings. Ideally the handbook includes policies relevant to the local association and its school(s) regarding finances, salaries, teacher qualifications, hiring, curriculum matters, student matters, promotion, building and maintenance. It is useful to include a detailed school calendar or annual time line (see also 1.18 below).

1.11 *The Board and the Principal/Executive Officer*

(see also section 8)

The principal provides educational leadership in the school community.

He or she is appointed by the association of parents and others through their Board. It is the principal's task to identify, appropriate (i.e. personally take on board) and articulate parents' Biblical educational vision for their children.

The principal is the conduit through which the school community communicates with the board.

A communications protocol must be established so that parents and others do not undermine the principal's authority by communicating directly with the board.

The principal/EO implements the board's strategic plan and its policies in the school community.

As the key officer, the principal/EO is normally integrally involved in assisting the board to develop its plan and policies. The principal/EO is responsible to the board for their performance of these duties. An appropriate reporting mechanism needs to be established so that the board can monitor the principal/EO's performance. The board's monitoring role will include board delegations to management, statements of accountability, annual performance targets and measures.

Board and staff school leaders are a valuable gift of God to the community. The effective board will actively model, nurture and support leadership at all levels within the association.

1.12 *The Decision Making Task of the Board*

(see also section 3)

Under the Corporations Act, directors are obligated to act in the best interests of the company and for a proper purpose. It is illegal for board members to make decisions designed to benefit themselves, their children, their spouses or their friends. In order to act in the best interests of the company and for a proper purpose, background information and documents should be distributed a week prior to any meeting to give directors time to think and pray through the issues raised. Papers supporting a decision must always have a recommendation(s) framed in the form of a motion. Whenever possible, important decisions or changes in policy should be raised for discussion at one meeting and then dealt with at the following meeting. Avoid engaging in discussion and decisions on issues that are raised as new items in a meeting. Remember that a board is only as effective as the information it gets.

Board members will seek to reach a common mind on as many issues as possible. On occasion, however, directors may need to dissent if they consider their duty under the Corporations Act is being compromised.

In a close community parents will sometimes attempt to influence the board or to find out information relating to decisions by speaking to individual members rather than going

through the appropriate channels. It is important for all board members to recognise that they may not officially hear complaints, gather information or give out information at times other than when the board is officially meeting or when specific responsibility for communication is given by agreement of the whole board to an individual member or sub-committee. As noted above, at all other times, a board member is simply another parent in the community.

1.13 *Dealing with Complaints*

(see also section 12)

It is essential that boards develop a policy which sets guidelines for dealing with complaints. The manner in which complaints are handled can mean the difference between harmony and tension in a school community. Whilst board members may not be the conduit for complaints, it is important that they be able to refer people to a board endorsed complaints policy should anyone raise a complaint with them.

It is critical that complaints be dealt with appropriately and promptly. The Matthew 18 principle is a fitting place to start for a complaints policy. Examples of complaints policies may be found on the Christian Education National web site under *Policies*.

Child abuse complaints should not be referred to the teacher. As a matter of policy, all child abuse complaints raised with a board member should be directed to the principal as he / she is responsible for employees

It is important that both board and principal/executive officer be aware of issues that may generate concerns within the school community and respond with wise judgement rather than with 'knee jerk' reactions. If change occurs as a result of complaints, careful management of change will help others who have not had the benefit of debate and discussion to adjust positively.

1.14 *Committees*

(see also Section 4)

Board members are usually involved in at least one board sub-committee. The board members on a committee have the significant role of providing the link between the committee and the board. It is not necessary for the board member to be chair of the committee but it is recommended. If the board member is not the chair he/she acts as the convenor.

Committees need clear delegations and terms of reference. It is best practice to have at least an audit committee. *(For committee terms of reference contact the Ideas Exchange at the Christian Education National office.)*

1.15 *Size of Boards*

A board usually functions most effectively when it consists of seven to nine members. This allows for a broad range of experience and skills on the board. It also gives opportunity for member to actively contribute in board meetings and sit on at least one board committee.

1.16 *Multi-school Associations and Systems*

(see also Section 5)

Many associations operate more than one school. Some are recognised by the Commonwealth government as systems. In these situations the association often has an additional layer to its structure where the board delegates some of its functions to a school council. The respective tasks of the board and council, as well as the chief executive officer where that role exists, need to be clearly documented. The principles governing board members' decision-making also apply to those who serve on school councils. Features of corporate governance and compliance with regulations must also operate at the school council level.

1.17 Training for Board Members

Board training is not a choice. Our school communities stand or fall on the effectiveness of the governance their boards provide. It is absolutely imperative that board members be trained to fulfil their duties. This handbook provides a useful beginning. Various resources for board training are included in the bibliography of this publication. These resources may be used as the basis for the orientation of new board members and for ongoing board training as a part of each board meeting or in board retreats.

The office of Christian Education National has developed a number of effective board training resources. State coordinators and the national executive officer are available to undertake board training workshops. It is highly recommended that the professional development budget include an allowance for some board training.

1.18 Annual Time Line

The board should establish an Annual Governance Time Line along the lines of the sample below. This could be part of the policy handbook so that board members know when to make decisions that occur on a regular basis:

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| <i>March/April</i> | Annual General Meeting (AGM) often held at this time. Election of board members and appointments of committees. |
| <i>May</i> | Detailed Principal's report on new staff members. |
| <i>June</i> | Christian Education National Annual General Meeting |
| <i>July</i> | review of promotion program; adoption of maintenance schedule / budget for the following year. preliminary consideration of major new programs, changes, additions (for referral to committees). |
| <i>August</i> | Principal's report on staff appraisal decisions relating to teacher re-appointment and changes in the number of staff members; teacher salaries. Board member reviews. Decisions with respect to changes in curriculum and textbooks; advertising for new staff. |
| <i>October/November</i> | Teacher/other staff hiring; adoption of budget; evaluation of the administrative staff (for corporations, annual accounts, annual reports.) |
| <i>November</i> | Final approval of school calendar and special events during the following school year. Initial discussion of key agenda items for the AGM. |
| <i>December/January</i> | Final planning for the AGM (provide templates for conduct of AGM) |

2. Governance and Compliance Responsibilities

2.1 Introduction

Members of a board have a legally responsible task. Vision setting and strategic planning aspects have been outlined in the previous section. In addition, board members have the following legal and financial obligations.

To operate a school in Australia, an association must be incorporated. Associations can incorporate under Corporations Law, administered by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission or under the relevant state Associations Incorporation Legislation.

The comments that follow apply more specifically to associations incorporated as Public Companies, not for profit and limited by guarantee and operating under Corporation Law. The principles governing behaviour of directors are, however, applicable regardless of the form of incorporation.

Stricter requirements exist for these companies compared with associations incorporated under State Associations Incorporation Acts. Christian Education National requires its members to meet the more stringent requirements of the Corporations Act.

2.2 Form of Incorporation

Some associations are incorporated as Companies Limited by Guarantee while others are Incorporated Associations. Either form of incorporation is acceptable to the Commonwealth government for funding purposes. Directors must be aware of the form of incorporation of the association and familiar with the particulars of the constitution.

2.3 Constitution

The constitution is a statement of principles, aims and rules of operation under which a member Christian association operates. It is, in effect, a contract between the various people who constitute the organisation. Public companies and incorporated associations must be governed by a constitution. The constitution must be reviewed at regular intervals and there ought to be mechanisms in the constitution to do this. This is particularly relevant as the entity must be a not-for-profit and for ITEC status. The constitution should specify that the entity will act in accordance with its objects.

Incorporation involves procedures that can be accomplished without necessarily engaging the services of a law firm. Copies of *Model Constitution for Christian Education National* (Monograph # 30) may be obtained from the Christian Education National office. It is recommended that schools approach Christian Education National for advice on incorporation generally to preserve not-for-profit and tax status.

2.4 Task of Directors

Member Christian school associations elect directors (board members) who, in common with all public companies, must ensure that specific people *“take responsibility for the management and direction”* of the association and see *“that books of account are properly maintained.”*

2.5 Duties of Directors

The duties of directors are prescribed in Corporations Law. These duties are consistent with scriptural responsibilities for people appointed to manage an organisation: *“...select capable individuals from all the people – individuals who fear God, trustworthy individuals who hate dishonest gain...”* (Exodus 18:21)

In order to carry out their task lawfully, directors are required to:

- act honestly,
- exercise care and diligence,
- act only in the interest of the company,
- not use inside information or use their position *“to advantage themselves or cause detriment to the company”*.

Directors must ensure that company officers also meet these standards of honesty, care and diligence.

To help directors meet these strict standards of behaviour they should:

- obtain ongoing information about the association’s operations,
- take an active part in board meetings,
- question management,
- question the impact of any proposal on the association and its school’s business performance,
- seek outside professional advice when there is not enough information to make informed decisions.

As noted in Section 1 board members are encouraged to seek legal advice in their own states regarding the particular responsibilities for corporations and incorporated associations.

2.6 *What is expected of Directors*

In summary, every member of a board or council is expected to:

- be honest,
- be open and transparent,
- do the necessary homework,
- seek advice and information when in doubt,
- give absolute priority to the interests of the association, its members and creditors

2.7 *“Insolvent Trading”*

Directors must not allow the association *“to continue trading and to incur further debts while the association is unable to meet its existing debts.”* *“A company is solvent if and only if, it is able to pay all its debts as and when they become due and payable.”* There is a positive duty not to trade while insolvent.

2.8 *Keeping Proper Books and Records*

It is crucial that directors satisfy themselves about the accuracy of the financial information they receive and to ensure that they receive all the information needed to discharge their duties as directors. Sometimes external professional advice is needed. This is always important especially if there is difficulty meeting financial obligations.

Directors must ensure that the association properly records and explains its transactions. “True and fair” accounts must be prepared, made available to members at least annually and be properly audited.

2.9 *Board and Association Membership*

Changes in board membership are to be reported on the appropriate forms specified by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission or the relevant State authority responsible for incorporated associations. Associations must keep a register of members.

2.10 *Conflict of Interest*

One of the fundamental duties of directors is to act only in the interest of the company. A board member is required to act in the best interest of the association, the school(s) it operates, Christian education and “stakeholders” in the enterprise. **If board members act**

in their own interest they are in breach of the law. These activities may result in civil liability or criminal penalties.

A conflict of interest occurs when a director:

- has an interest in a contract with the association or its school(s),
- uses information of the school/association for personal gain or to advantage others e.g. family members,
- uses school or association property,
- takes advantage of an opportunity open to the association.

When a conflict of interest occurs, the director and the board must ensure that:

- the conflict or material personal interest is declared and disclosed to other directors,
- a register of declarations is maintained,
- the director with the conflict of interest is absent when the decision is taken,
- the director with the conflict of interest abstains from voting,
- members in a general meeting approve financial benefits attributed to the conflict of interest

2.11 Further Help

www.ourcommunity.com.au

This website provides many usable documents for not for profit boards

3. Meetings

3.1 Introduction

In order to make decisions the board meets regularly. Board meetings are to be effective and constructive. A well planned meeting enables the board to manage the association's affairs effectively.

3.2 Agenda

(see sample agenda at APPENDIX C)

An agenda is the board's plan for completing meeting tasks. Careful thought goes into the design of each agenda. Early in a meeting the board formally accepts the agenda, amending the draft agenda where necessary.

The agenda would normally include time for scripture and prayer, noting attendance, approving the agenda for the meeting, approving minutes of the last meeting, receiving committee reports (e.g., education, finance, promotion, ad hoc committees), receiving the principal's report and considering new business.

Before adjournment, the board president will identify particular board activities that arise from the meeting, assign tasks necessary to complete board activity and remind all of the next meeting date. An action sheet is a useful tool.

| Grace Christian School Meeting 6 June 2008 ACTION SHEET | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Minutes Item | Action Required | Board Member | Date required |
| 2.5.3 | Long Service leave policy to be revised and amended | Peter Knowles | November 12, 2008 |
| 3.1 | Proposal for a process to review the Memorandum and Articles | Sue Myers | August 10, 2008 |
| 5.2.2 | Board training date and agenda All members must attend so will give suitable dates to Chris | Chris Adams | September 23, 2008 |
| 7.8 | Interview with parents of suspended student | Mary Riley and Dennis Johnston | June 26, 2008 |

3.3 Meeting Preparation

The agenda, along with written reports and recommendations, should be in the hands of board members at least five working days prior to meeting. Volunteer boards must have adequate time to prepare for decision making. **Board members who are not adequately prepared may fail in their duty of care.**

Reports and recommendations not available to the board a week ahead of the meeting must not be accepted at the meeting. They are to be deferred to another meeting.

3.4 Minutes

(see sample minutes at APPENDIX D)

Minutes of a board meeting ought only to include the decisions (resolutions) made by the board. They may include any notes the board specifically decides to adopt during the course of a meeting. Minutes must not be a record of conversations and discussions.

3.5 Reports

All reports from the principal, bursar, subcommittees etc must relate to the board's strategic plan. Reports must clearly focus on the objectives and goals of the strategic plan. Unless specifically required by the board, reports will not focus on a range of other activities.

A report requiring a board decision(s) must include recommendations. Recommendations are to be written in the form of a resolution which the report writer believes the board should adopt, eg. It is recommended that... or, It was resolved that ...

If a report contains no recommendations, it must be assumed that the board has not been requested to make a decision. The report, therefore, does not need discussion and can be taken as read.

3.6 *The Role of the Board President*

The board president is responsible for ensuring that the board as a whole, and its committees, function smoothly and effectively. To ensure the best use of time at meetings, the president monitors agreed actions from previous meetings. This guarantees the completion of between-meeting activities.

The president may be given the task of **speaking** on behalf of the Board. He does **not**, however, **make decisions** on behalf of the board unless specifically authorised or delegated to do so.

A board is only a board when meeting together!

Clear and direct communication is a must! The president regularly consults with the principal and establishes a dialogue about the work of the board and the operation of the school. The principal must deal directly and straightforwardly with the board. If the principal has concerns about the actions of individual board members that cannot be resolved on a person-to-person basis, the principal should discuss this with the board president.

3.7 *Chairing the Meetings*

(See Standing Orders at APPENDIX B)

The president in most cases also chairs the meetings of the Board. In some instances another Board member with the appropriate skills may have this responsibility. The Chair is responsible for the proper conduct of the meeting.

A good Chair facilitates discussion. This means creating an environment where Board members can debate, struggle with issues, reach compromise and at times agree to disagree.

A Chair should remain neutral. If however there is an agenda item about which the Chair feels strongly, it is appropriate to ask someone else to take the Chair for that agenda item to allow the Chair to participate more freely in the debate.

3.8 *Decision Making*

(See also Section 1)

Ideally boards will seek to reach unanimity wherever possible. For this to occur it is essential that all documentation providing relevant information be distributed to individual board members giving them sufficient time to think and pray over issues. (five working days is recommended)

Papers must always have a recommendation(s) framed in the form of a motion. When critical decisions or changes in policy occur it is recommended that those changes or decisions be raised for discussion at one meeting and formally dealt with at a subsequent meeting.

When a board member believes that a decision breaches his or her legal duties, there may be no other option than to resign. This is especially important in reaching decisions about critical issues, for example, the appointment of a principal.

3.9 *Difficult Decisions*

At times boards are faced with making difficult and possibly unpopular decisions such as enforcement of discipline policies, expulsion of a student, non-renewal of a teacher's contract, or a probationary re-appointment. In such cases, it is critical that board members

act within appropriate, agreed policies and seek relevant advice, including industrial relations advice if necessary. (See also *Natural Justice* below). As much as possible boards should reach such decisions by consensus. At all times the biblical call to act humbly and prayerfully with love, mercy and justice outlined in Micah 6:8 will undergird decision making processes. The board must address and resolve difficult decisions and not defer them.

Where a resolution is reached by majority vote, board members must abide by the outcome of the vote and support the board. If a board member has voiced dissent in reaching a decision he/she is entitled to have that dissent minuted. A board member in disagreement with a decision must not be compelled to agree. On the other hand a board member in disagreement with a decision is legally obliged to affirm the decision once it is made by majority vote and cannot undermine trust in the board by public dissent. As noted elsewhere, a board member may resign if he/she believes the decision is personally compromising. If a board member believes that the board is acting against ASIC or other legal requirements he/she is obliged to raise the issue with the Chair.

3.10 Confidentiality

Every Board handles matters that require the utmost confidence. Maintaining confidentiality is a legal requirement of all board members. At board meetings the members are required to express views frankly and honestly. This can only occur in a context of safety and trust. Each board member has a responsibility to protect the integrity of the board.

Minutes of board meetings are confidential and the right to access them is limited by the law. If any director asks that a matter be kept confidential, this request must be honoured by all (subject to any specific legal obligations which may over-ride confidentiality). The reputation of teachers, students and their families need to be given the utmost protection or the board will have failed in its duty.

It is wise to require a confidentiality agreement from board members. (For a sample agreement, see: www.ourcommunity.com.au) Directors need a consistent response to any approaches for information by others outside the board. Such a response might be: "I'm sorry, but all board members have a legal duty of confidentiality"

3.11 Natural Justice

Dismissals and expulsions are subject to procedural fairness (natural justice) and decisions cannot be made without reference to proper process.

The following are some principles of Natural Justice which may apply when managing complaints of discrimination or harassment, staff grievances, staff and student discipline matters and other disputes,

- Any allegation against an employee or student should be made known to that person.
- The staff member or student should have the opportunity to respond to the allegation/s and have their response immediately considered.
- All investigations and decisions must be made by person/s with appropriate authority.
- In the circumstances of discipline, a staff member or student would be given the opportunity to improve their performance or behaviour before any sanctions or actions are applied (this may be excluded in cases of serious misconduct).
- Staff and students must feel confident that they will not suffer any victimisation or discrimination as a result of taking a complaint, a grievance or being subject to discipline.
- In all cases appropriate levels of confidentiality must be maintained.

4. Committees of the Board

4.1 *Community involvement*

Committees provide an excellent vehicle for tapping into the gifts and talents of a wide range of people in the school community. Committees are to be appointed by the board, and include at least one board member for effective liaison. Ideally committee members are suitably gifted people appointed for their interest, abilities and willingness to do the work promptly and regularly. Boards appoint persons in whom they have confidence. It is unwise for Boards to re-cover ground covered by committees. **Boards can delegate decision making to committees and staff but under the Corporations Act must have reasonable grounds as to their skill and competence.**

4.2 *Standing Committees*

Committees appointed by the board may exist for a particular task and specified period of time. Committee members may be more willing to perform tasks within a set time frame rather than being left with the sense that they have signed up for a life sentence! Many boards find the following standing committees a crucial support to their operation:

- education
- finance;
- membership;
- promotion;
- grounds and maintenance.

It is critical that people with appropriate professional expertise be appointed to committees dealing with issues such as education and finance.

4.3 *Ad hoc Committees*

Ad hoc committees are a suitable tool for tackling specific issues and initiatives. Community progress occurs by utilising the specific interests and talents of school community members for a set time. From time to time the following ad hoc committees may be needed:

- discipline;
- future visioning;
- planning for a new campus or school;
- planning for new levels of schooling;
- development of certain policy areas

Ad hoc committees are a method of drawing in those community members who are less involved. The nature of ad hoc committees can be a vehicle to develop the confidence and future involvement of those people.

4.4 *Committee Mandates*

Each committee appointed by the board should do its task according to a clear written mandate. The mandate should outline:

- the task expected from the committee set by a Board approved Terms of Reference
- the level of authority delegated to do what needs to be done while not acting outside its Terms of Reference
- reporting requirements
- time frame

Committees may be empowered by the board to act on decisions of delegated authority in certain areas. Board minutes are to reflect this. Where that power does not apply, decisions of committees are in fact recommendations to the board and must be approved before they can take effect. Rather than duplicate a committee's work and spend time discussing committee proposals, boards are to refer unsatisfactory reports or recommendations back to the committees for further clarification or with additional specific instructions.

5. Multi-school Associations and Systems

5.1 *Introduction*

Various associations operate more than one school. Some are recognised by the Commonwealth government as systems. In these associations the board often delegates particular functions to a school council. While councils have a function different from that of the board, the principles for decision-making are the same as those for board members. When incorporated under the Corporations Act, Council members have the same obligations as directors.

The Board retains obligations for the legal entity and so all decisions must ultimately be made with the authority of the Board.

5.2 *Toward Board/Council distinction*

Where an association operates more than one school, the board does not usually have a direct role in the operation of each constituent school (apart from school registration obligations which cannot be delegated). This is especially the case for associations that have formed systems or who operate through an executive director or chief executive officer.

These associations have a board comprised of directors who do not have a direct role in any of the constituent school communities, other than perhaps being one of many parents or, in some cases, being the board's representative on the council. The board would have its own office bearers and operate through employed officers, led by the chief executive officer instead of the principal as chief executive officer.

In this case the association (or system) usually has school councils in each school community with office bearers such as chair, secretary and treasurer. These people have the direct interface with the school community but do not have the responsibilities of directors, except where the school is incorporated under the Corporations Act when they will have such responsibilities. Because the association and its board comprise the legal entity, the school council is a delegate of the board.

The respective tasks of the board and council, as well as the chief executive officer where that role exists, need to be clearly documented.

5.3 *Associations and school communities*

It is usually the case that school communities are similar from the principal down no matter how many schools are operated by the association. However, associations can be larger than one school community and usually work through officers with titles other than principal.

The board need not necessarily operate through a principal although it may do so, or through an executive director, chief executive officer or other officer. Whatever the structure or roles, the role of the principal in educational leadership within the particular school community should not be diminished as a result of the roles filled by other association officers. Neither the board nor the System executive officer should ever usurp the educational role of the principal.

6. Enrolment Policy

6.1 *Elements of the Enrolment Policy*

(For policy samples see the [Christian Education National website](#))

The association's enrolment policy for its school community/s will include:

- Discrimination (e.g. disability, religious),
- A requirement that all parents of prospective new students be interviewed before any offer is made
- Interviews for secondary students which may include disability assessment
- The schools position on Privacy
- The schools position on Communications
- The schools position on Discipline.
- The schools position on values and priority in selection **without ranking** priorities.
- A clear outline of Christian commitment of the school
- Clear reference to the statement of principles and Biblical basis of the association and the school and the expectation that all parents will uphold these principles;
- A statement outlining the parents' responsibilities regarding compliance with school policies and financial obligation
- A statement regarding enrolment of under-age children in kindergarten or year one;
- A statement as to how the appropriate elements above will be communicated to families seeking enrolment.

6.2 *“Open” or restricted enrolment policy*

Member associations of Christian Education National require agreement with the association's biblical basis and an active Christian commitment of all association members and all staff employed. However associations adopt a range of student admission policies.

Some associations and their schools require at least one parent to express an active Christian commitment, while others have policies that are open to some degree. The key issue is that each association recognises the consequences of its enrolment policy and put in place policies that reflect the situation. For example, schools with open enrolment policies know that some students, perhaps a significant proportion, will not have an active faith or understanding of church, bible and Christian expectations. The school needs to cater for, induct and educate children and their parents. If a school has an open enrolment policy, how are the families enrolling students to be inducted into the school, networked with other families and challenged to be open to the Gospel?

When developing enrolment policies surrounding students with disabilities and learning difficulties it is wise to also consider the educational responsibilities the school holds towards all students enrolled.

6.3 *Variations in Policy in the one association*

Some associations operate more than one school community. In this situation it is both possible and permissible for the association to operate its different school communities under different enrolment policies. Again, decisions about policy are made entirely by the association involved.

6.4 The enrolment policy should, of course, never be driven by short term enrolment requirements. Decisions about the enrolment policy should always be made in the context of an unequivocal commitment to the biblical basis and to the vision and strategic plan.

The policy must be honest to ensure that what is promised can be delivered. Care must also be taken in drafting prospectus and brochures.

7. Budgets and Finances

Financial policies are never an end in themselves. They help to provide the best possible Christian education with the resources God has given. Boards have the responsibility to weigh priorities, to propose a realistic and attainable budget, and to supervise the income and expenditures of all monies of the association. On a monthly basis the treasurer reports to the board the status of the school's financial resources.

The *Management and Finance Manual* published by Christian Education National and distributed to all member associations is an important resource to assist boards in making sound management and finance decisions.

7.1 Educational Considerations

Most associations aim to provide complete Christian education programs from the earliest years of schooling to year twelve. Indeed, many associations offer pre-school facilities because it enables parents to experience Christian education for their children in a continuum throughout their schooling years.

Due to financial or other constraints this may not be possible in smaller communities. When advice, for adding additional levels such as secondary to a small Christian school, is needed, the office of Christian Education National may be able to assist.

7.2 Government Funding

For details

- see the Management and Finance Manual provided by Christian Education National available from your school.
- Contact: Australian Association of Christian Schools
P 02 4751 9815 E rjohnston@aacs.net.au W www.aacs.net.au

At the point of the publication of this handbook the following funding arrangements apply:

All Christian schools are eligible for an amount of government funding. This funding comes from two sources • Commonwealth and State governments.

The amount payable by the Commonwealth government is determined by the Socio Economic Status (SES) of each school community. The SES is an index calculated by the government from census data that they hold on each household in the country. The data used includes household income, occupations of household members and level of education received by each member of the household. This data is averaged for the Census District (approximately 200 households) in which each household is located. A school's average SES score is calculated by the Dept of Education, Science and Training from student addresses supplied to the Commonwealth by each school. The SES score for each school is recalculated every four years. The SES score for each school determines the percentage of Average Government School Recurrent Costs (AGSRC) that they will receive from the Commonwealth

When the SES approach to the calculation of Commonwealth funding was introduced, the Commonwealth government put in place a safety net to prevent schools from *losing* the level of funding on which they had been up to that time. These schools are described as either "Funding Maintained" schools or "Funding Guaranteed" schools.

If schools believe that there is a problem with their SES score, they have access to an appeal process that follows set criteria.

The amount payable by State governments varies from state to state. Each state has its own formula on which its non-government school funding is calculated. (Historically, non-government schools have received the lion's share of their funding from the Commonwealth while government schools have received the lion's share of their funding from State governments. This is entirely the product of the legislative route through which non-government school funding came into existence.)

State governments have traditionally used the different source of funding for non-government schools as a lever for minimising their responsibility to non-government school students. Christian schools therefore have a great deal of work to do in each of the states and territories to ensure that a reasonable level of funding continues to flow from their state/territory government.

7.3 *Financial Survey and Health Watch*

Christian Education National undertakes an annual financial survey that provides detailed information to schools regarding their own performance against national average figures. Specific advice is also available together with a “financial health watch” service through which schools can avail themselves of regular advice.

7.4 *Planning Budgets*

The budget for the ensuing year should be based on the operational plan approved by the board for that year.

The budgeting process should begin about half way through the year. Many associations hold a special board meeting after mid-year to discuss the overall budget for the next school year. The treasurer, on the basis of the current budget and input from both the principal and staff and the board committees, should present a draft budget to the board. Budgets should contain reserves, created by depreciation, for the eventual replacement of capital items such as a new roof or replacement of computers.

Questions that should be asked during the budgeting process:

- is the budget attainable?
- have assumed student numbers been tested?
- can association members and parents of students afford it?
- is the board willing to be accountable for the budget?
- are enough finances allotted to ensure a great Christian educational programme?
- are teachers and other staff paid a fair salary?
- does it provide funds for provisions such as long service leave and depreciation?
- Are realistic sensitivities built in?
- Insurances?

The most crucial factor that affects budgeting is the number of teaching positions. Whether individual or combined classes are developed (and there is no evidence that combined classes are inferior educationally - though they may be more demanding for the teacher), the goal is to fill as many seats as possible in the classroom. It costs little more to teach 25 students than 14 but the income is greatly increased.

7.5 *Salaries*

Member associations establish salaries commensurate with the awards that apply in their state/or territory. . An industrial agreement may be negotiated and registered with the relevant industrial tribunal where the association and staff so desire.

7.6 *Income*

Christian schooling should be within the reach of all families who desire it. This principle is given effect in a variety of ways. Some associations levy a school fee that is a proportion of family income. Others charge a set fee for the first child with significant reductions for further children.

7.7 *Fees*

Government funding does not cover the whole cost of educating a student in a Christian school. Parents pay fees to ensure that the whole cost is covered. Some associations find “per family” fees rather than “per student” ones may be more in line with our responsibility “to share with others” (Hebrews 13:16). Other associations apply a fee based on a “family”

salary in an effort to reflect more accurately the needs of families. Parents whose children attend more than one Christian school can benefit where schools have negotiated fee-sharing arrangements.

Some form of fee relief or scholarship funds are essential to help parents who truly cannot afford the fee level but who genuinely desire a Christian education for their children. *(Comment: This is a complex area of equity where some parents effectively subsidise other children, and needs to be thought through carefully.)*

7.8 Accounting Control

The Christian Education National *Management and Finance Manual* helps the treasurer and board develop appropriate financing policies. In addition each year a national survey of Christian school finances is conducted. The published results provide a very detailed analysis of various areas of income and expenditure.

7.9 Base of Support

Some boards maintain a wide base of financial support in the community at large, so that the financial burden does not fall solely on parents. Associations could aim to raise a proportion of their budget through donations. This takes concerted efforts each year but can have significant benefits:

- fundraising makes the wider community aware of the school and its aims,
- the school taps sources that otherwise would not be asked to contribute, and
- the whole Christian and wider community are able to share the financial cost so that fees are kept to a reasonable level.

7.10 Capital Expenditure

If capital projects cannot be paid entirely out of current operations, their cost may be amortised (gradually reduced) over a number of years. Large projects should take into account the needs and the economic potential of the community for the next ten years. While the cost of buildings may be amortised over 10, 15 or 20 years, equipment such as photocopiers and lawnmowers should be amortised over not more than five years if the money is to be borrowed. Computers have a very short life. Depreciate them over three years!

Boards should carefully explore all sources of revenue. Building projects can benefit from Commonwealth government grants made available through state and territory Block Grant Authorities. Tax exemptions are available to schools. Building and Library funds can be set up so as to attract tax deductibility for donors. Details are available in the *Management and Finance Manual*.

7.11 Building Fund

Christian Education National administers a national fund of some \$800,000. Loans of up to \$100,000 can be made available to member associations at low interest for a five-year term. Requests should be directed to the office. Documentation will then be forwarded giving specific details about the application process.

This fund may also be used to assist in an emergency. Details of eligibility criteria and application process can be forwarded on request.

7.12 Conference Input and Information

Finance and Management Conferences are sponsored biannually by Christian Education National. The most recent was held in August 2005. There is a range of helpful material available from these conferences on the Christian Education National website or from the Christian Education National office. This material stresses the need for a clear vision for advancing commitment to Christ-centred education to be at the centre of any plans for expansion and development.

Structures of Association

8. The Task of the Principal/Chief Executive Officer

The board's task is to govern. The principal has an executive role. It is critical to differentiate between these roles in an informed and healthy manner.

8.1 Educational and strategic leadership

The principal is appointed to be the educational leader of the school. He/she also usually has a significant role carrying out the board's strategic plan. For these reasons, the principal must have Biblical insight, lead an exemplary Christian life and thoroughly understand the basis, goals and practices of the Christian schooling as practised in the association he/she serves.

8.2 Associations with one school

The principal is called to implement board policies and decisions and translate the vision for Christian education into the everyday reality of classrooms. The principal always reports to the board and, other than voting, participates fully in meetings of the board. Where associations operate one school, the principal acts as the board's executive officer. In smaller schools, board members may assist the principal in their executive role and **ensure there is a clear definition of roles.**

8.3 Associations with more than one school

Where associations have responsibility for more than one school, boards may appoint a chief executive officer (a variety of titles such as principal, head of school/campus, etc are possible). In this case, the reporting relationship between principals, the board and the chief executive officer could vary from one association to another. Often the principal relates to a school council as well as (or instead of) the board. For further information contact the office.

8.4 Board support for principal

The principal's position is best described as pivotal. She/he is well placed to draw the school community together and to represent it in other forums. The principal needs the whole-hearted support of the board. Boards must be pro-active in caring for a principal and their care should be evident. They need to leave in-school leadership with the principal or they will diminish the role.

8.5 Principal's support for board

Likewise, a key responsibility of the principal is to support and encourage the board. The relationship between the board and principal should be characterised by humility and service. Both share a common mission and a confidence that each will act in the best interests of the other in order that God's Kingdom may be advanced.

8.6 Educational focus

A major responsibility for the principal is to inform, coordinate, guide and implement the educational program of the school in close cooperation and consultation with the board and the staff. His or her focus must always be the implementation of teaching and learning programmes in the school community in accordance with biblical goals for education. Christian schools exist so that learning encourages students to come to acknowledge Christ as Lord and then to grow as image bearers of the Lord who understand and live their calling according to the principles of God's Word.

8.7 *Staff supervision and appraisal (See also Section 10)*

The principal is responsible for development, supervision and appraisal of staff. The principal should prepare staff appraisal reports annually and present these to the education committee and/or board after discussion with the teacher. Such reports should deal with areas such as classroom rapport, classroom atmosphere, teaching and learning activities, classroom procedures, planning, member of the staff "team" and community relations.

A Staff Appraisal policy is vital for the effective development and review of teaching and other staff. Evaluation processes are vital to the quality of Christian education that takes place. Examples of teacher appraisal policies are available from the Christian Education National office.

8.8 *Job description*

Each board should establish a job description for the principal. (Samples are available from the Ideas Exchange on the Christian Education National website, or contact the Christian Education National office.)

A job description should address itself to at least four areas:

- ***Educational leadership*** (shaping the Christian character of a school, establishing goals, revising and implementing new programs, teacher supervision, ...)
- ***Administration*** (informing, implementing board policy, school organisation, timetabling, supplies, checking facilities, ...)
- ***Student relations*** (Christian atmosphere, counselling and disciplining students, ...)
- ***Community relations*** (parent contact, promotion, admissions, committees, ...)

8.9 *Contract*

In most situations a principal's service within a school community is for a particular time in the school's development. In this regard the principal's career is somewhat analogous to a pastor's. It is a calling that often requires mobility. Humility and sensitivity are needed to be aware when it is wise to move on. Boards and principals would be wise to negotiate fixed term contracts and build in regular and careful review. A process for leadership review and assessment is available through the office.

For a further discussion of these issues Monograph #17 *Relationships between Boards and Principals* is available from Christian Education National.

9. Employment of Teaching and other Staff

The appointment of staff is a vital responsibility for a board but delegated to the principal. All staff must be Christians and live a lifestyle consistent with the association's biblical basis.

9.1 *Christian Teaching*

The task of the Christian school is to partner with parents in fulfilling their responsibility to hold in their own hearts and impress upon their children our call as human beings to "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength..*" (Deut 6:5-6)

Therefore Christian teachers have a responsibility under God to:

- Let God's love and power, as revealed through Jesus, permeate every aspect of school life including the curriculum
- Support parents as they teach and nurture their children from a Christian view of the world
- teach and nurture children from a Christian view of the world
- Challenge students to respond as faithful stewards to God's call in every aspect of their lives
- Attend holistically to the comprehensive development of all students
- Develop students' God-given gifts through rigorous, appropriately targeted programs that have academic integrity
- Equip students to be Christ's discerning agents of transformation in contemporary society
- Prepare students for formal education and other equipping opportunities beyond school
- Train students to be life-long learners

9.2 *Qualifications*

Christian schools have a unique task and it is crucial to their existence that they employ teachers who are committed to a relationship with Jesus Christ, have recognised teaching qualifications and are equipped to teach from a Christian view of the world as they engage in the task of "*taking captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ*" (2 Cor. 10:5).

9.2.1 *Professional Training and Registration*

Teachers must meet the academic qualifications required for teacher registration in a particular state/territory and any other requirements that relate to their specific role. Boards should consider a policy that requires all teachers to possess or be working towards a professional qualification provided by an educational institution committed to a biblical world view.

9.2.2 *Teacher Education – National Institute for Christian Education*

The future health of Christian schools is dependent on the quality of teachers whose biblical insight can and should be nurtured in their Christian school communities. The basic academic training of teachers in Christian schools should include courses taken from a Christian perspective.

The *National Institute for Christian Education* is the teacher education section of Christian Education National. It offers fully accredited post-graduate degrees at Bachelor conversion, Graduate Diploma and Masters levels. These courses are specifically designed for teaching from a Christian perspective and have the potential to transform Christian teachers' practice. Institute courses are available throughout Australia and are provided through distance education and regional seminars.

Boards should seriously consider requiring as a part of each individual or workplace agreement the completion of introductory course units by every teacher new to their school. Such a policy will ensure a basic understanding of Christian education and

provide an incentive for teachers to pursue further units toward a completed qualification.

The Macquarie Christian Studies Institute and Edith Cowan University have joined with the National Institute in a strategic alliance to provide pre-service teacher education from a biblical perspective.

9.3 *Job Description – teachers and other staff*

Job descriptions **for all staff** (including teaching staff, deputy principals, finance officers, coordinators, counsellors, school secretaries, grounds and maintenance staff) are essential.

An effective job description contains the title of the position, the reporting relationship and the main duties involved. The job description enables the board to decide what information is needed from applicants.

9.4 *Selection Criteria*

Based on the job description, selection criteria should be determined. The selection criteria are a list of qualifications, skills, insights, experience and abilities needed to fulfil a particular position. The list ought to distinguish between essential and desirable criteria.

Boards should be on the alert for applicants who possess the Certificate in Teacher Education from the Macquarie Christian Studies Institute or other bible based education courses. Boards may also consider strategies to support year 12 students who intend to become teachers and encourage them to pursue Christian teacher education courses.

9.5 *Written Applications*

Candidates for any school position must provide a written application. A school based Application Form, including the job description and selection criteria is recommended along with a statement of personal faith and a written understanding of Christian education.

In all cases it is important that a detailed and complete employment history be obtained and that candidates certify the accuracy and completeness of the information provided.

9.6 *Advertising*

Advertisements for school positions must contain the following

- name of the school and/or association,
- job title and a concise overview of main tasks to be carried out,
- brief description of the qualities required in the person to be appointed,
- basis on which the person is to be appointed – permanent, casual, full or part time , temporary or casual if applicable,
- location of the position,
- indication of conditions and benefits,
- application information – full contact details, how to obtain application form or selection criteria and closing date for applications.
- Details of any child protection disclosures as required

Advertising of positions is not required, however, a wise board advertises all positions and requires all applicants to go through the application process – including those already known to the board, principal or others in the school community.

9.7 *Shortlist*

On receipt of applications

- Determine the interview time frame and process.
- Write a letter of acknowledgement to all applicants

- Develop a shortlist of suitable applicants
- Ensure sensitive management of internal applicants
- Without giving reasons, advise unsuccessful applicants that their application was not successful

If no applicants seem to meet the requirements, it may be wise to rethink the application process, and perhaps readvertise, rather than appoint an unsuitable person

9.8 Interviews

A personal interview is vital for the applicants who are shortlisted. Along with assessing credentials and competence, an interview establishes the person's ability to articulate the purpose of Christian education.

Interviewing panel

The board may appoint an interviewing panel. Panel members must be clear about their task which includes providing a comprehensive report to the board in support of any recommendation it makes in regards to the employment of a teacher or other staff member.

Interview Venue

Interviews are best conducted

- Privately, where there is no risk of interruption
- In a pleasant, non threatening space.
- Where the applicant can feel at ease
- With seating arrangements that place the interviewing panel and applicant on equal terms.
- As informally as possible

Elements of an effective interview

- Prepare well and plan questions in advance,
- relate questions to the job description and selection criteria,
- start with prayer for the applicant and God's leading in the process,
- introduce people involved and provide an outline of the position,
- Ask how applicant has handled situations posed in the past,
- ask "open ended" questions that cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no",
- ask similar questions of all applicants so that responses can be compared,
- make sure the applicant does most of the talking,
- give applicants opportunity to ask questions – respond concisely,
- outline terms and conditions and date the job starts,
- **let applicants know that you are checking references**
- finish by telling when and how the applicant is to be informed about the outcome,
- close in prayer.

9.9 References and Referees

Do not rely on written references! By all means ensure that original personal, professional and church references are provided as required by the board. If an applicant is seriously considered following the interview, make sure that nominated referees are contacted. These should be contacted in person – preferably by telephone ensuring that someone from the panel has spoken personally with the referee(s). Past employers and supervisors are often objective sources. Be specific about the questions regarding length of service, particular tasks performed, ability to work with others and any other relevant specific information. Ask about the applicant's strengths and any areas where he/she may need to develop.

A good last question is "Would you offer them a job?"

If current or recent employers are not nominated as referees this should be discussed with the applicant and permission sought to contact these people. While there may be valid reasons for those people not to be included as a referee this can also signify some problems in those situations.

9.10 Employment Procedures - General Guidelines

Boards should note some of the following general guidelines:

- Preference should be given to teachers who demonstrate an ability to apply Scripture to their teaching and understand the implications of a biblical world view.
- The academic records of the teacher must be examined together with student teaching reports and/or testimonies of previous experience. Verify everything and do not make assumptions.
- The board must satisfy itself that the applicant does not have any criminal convictions especially in the area of child abuse. There are checking processes in each state.
- Eligibility for teacher registration should be established where this applies.
- Candidates should be clearly advised of any requirements for professional development and/or Christian education training. This is the right time to secure an undertaking to complete (at least) introductory studies in Christian education to ensure a minimum standard for all teachers employed in the school.
- Candidates should be informed of the existence of regular formative and summative appraisal processes.
- Candidates should be promptly advised of an appointment and provided with a written statement disclosing the salary and other benefits which will be paid and be required to signify their willingness to teach under those conditions, usually by signing and returning a contract or letter of offer.
- Unsuccessful candidates should be advised and thanked promptly. *(see also 9.7)*

9.11 Anti discrimination Issues

In general, employers are required to avoid discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, immigrant status, sex, marital status, pregnancy, family responsibilities, disability and "religion", where it is a ground of discrimination. These are requirements for all employers, including Christian schools. Take note of your own state legislation.

Some exemptions are available to "religious" institutions. These exemptions have also been applied to Christian schools. In the Commonwealth's Sex Discrimination Act, 1984 – Section 38, the exemption is described in these terms:

"Nothing in paragraph 14(1) (a) or (b) or 14 (2) (c) renders it unlawful for a person to discriminate against another person on the ground of the other person's sex, marital status or pregnancy in connection with employment of the staff of an educational institution that is conducted in accordance with the doctrines, tenets, beliefs or teachings of a particular religion or creed, if the first-mentioned person so discriminates in good faith in order to avoid injury to the religious susceptibilities of adherents of that religion or creed."

If an "inherent requirement" of the job is that the person must be a Christian then say so. Advertise making reference to Christian activities which are part of the job. Reference could also be made to State legislation.

Take care to ensure that discrimination is only made to avoid injury to commonly held and preferably written faith positions of your community and for no other reason.

If such reasons are a potential factor in an employment decision it may be wise to seek appropriate advice before taking any action.

9.12 Some Key Initial Questions for Teacher Interviews

Personal faith and lifestyle

- Please tell us about your Christian commitment.
- What does your faith mean to you in your personal life?
- How have you been active in church or church-related activities?

Experience

- What experience have you had in teaching?
- In other employment?
- Why have these experiences been good/not so good ones?

Views of education

- Why do you want to teach?
- Why do you want to teach in a Christian school?
- In what ways should a Christian school differ from a state school?
- What is a Christian view of children?
- How does this affect your classroom approach?
- For what kind of classroom atmosphere do you strive?
- What are your views on discipline? standards? student evaluation? subject integration?
- Can you sum up your personal philosophy of education?
- What grade level (and/or which subjects) do you prefer to teach? Why?
- What are the special needs of the child at this level of development?
- How do you intend to meet the goals of Christian education in teaching your subject area?
- Which Christian resource materials have you used in your classroom?
- Are you willing to be involved in working with other teachers in establishing a Christian curriculum?
- How important is on-going professional development?
- Are you willing to undertake two introductory units in Christian education during your first two years of employment?

Other

- Do you have any special abilities that would benefit the school such as music, art, French, physical education or outdoor education and the like?
- Would the salary we offer be satisfactory?
- Are there any questions you would like to ask us?

9.13 Salaries and Remuneration

Staff in Christian Education National are mostly paid in accordance with relevant awards, where these exist. Some states use Enterprise Bargaining Agreements to set conditions. In this case it is recommended to keep up with “going rates” rather than lower safety net award rates. In all cases, compliance with minimum salaries and conditions in an applicable award or agreement is recommended. It is inappropriate to simply agree with a staff member to ignore all or part of the award.

9.14 Professional Growth

Possible activities include:

- planning new or revising existing courses and programs
- developing one or more units in detail
- researching a topic and collecting resource materials for classroom use
- writing a student syllabus or textbook
- participating in curriculum-writing or other workshops
- taking courses leading to the improvement of the teacher's work in the school
- taking courses leading toward teacher certification
- working on school administration (especially principals).

9.15 Development of Bible Based Curricula

During school weeks, teachers have little opportunity for curriculum planning and course design. However, crucial to the development of Christian education and teacher's professional growth, is the allocation of time for the development of Bible based curricula. Teachers need time to plan courses, adapt Christian resources, participate in curriculum workshops, read and research background materials, and undertake courses which update and deepen their insight.

It is significant that boards seek to be flexible in accommodating all reasonable proposals for the development of distinctively Christian curricula. Pupil free days/weeks, regional conferences, inter-school curriculum work and school-based teacher teams can all

contribute powerfully to the development of Christ-centred curriculum and classrooms.

Where legislation permits, employment contracts can be drawn up to ensure that teachers recognise a requirement to use a significant and stated portion of student vacation time as occasions for preparation and structured professional development. **For example, in NSW the Independent Schools Award refers to only 4 weeks' annual leave as per the Annual Holidays Act 1944 (NSW). Other pupil free time is intended for preparation and study.**

9.16 *Letter of Appointment and/or Contract*

The board must make sure that the people it employs are clear about the terms and conditions under which they are employed. This can be achieved either through a letter of appointment or a more formalised contract document.

A comprehensive letter of appointment can be the contract.

In either case the document must clearly spell out the essential terms and conditions and allow for both the school and the employee to signify their agreement to those terms.

The letter offering appointment and/or the contract could include these elements:

- commencement – date, time and place,
- name of the award or agreement under which the person is employed,
- job classification and employment status,
- description of main duties involved,
- whether or not a probationary period applies,
- leave entitlements – annual, long service, sick, other,
- expectations about at least the initial time allocation to face-to-face teaching and other duties,
- extra-curricular expectations,
- professional development requirements,
- salary payment details – pay day, how salary is paid,
- arrangements for deductions – superannuation, tax, other.
- the possibility that duties may be varied from time to time.

All employees should be required to sign a contract or a copy of the letter of appointment. Note that oral agreements are considered contracts and are therefore valid and binding.

The letters of appointment and/or contract are very important documents that set the framework for all of the future employment relationship. Seemingly insignificant changes can have dramatic impacts upon the legal implications of these documents. It is essential that schools seek appropriate advice on their documentation or use a professionally prepared pro-forma.

9.17 *Unfair Dismissal*

Industrial relations law in Australia generally requires that employees and employers be given a “fair go”. Boards need to keep this principle in mind in dealing with dismissal of any staff.

Federal law says that a dismissal is unfair when it is “...*harsh, unjust or unreasonable.*” The law does not define these terms. However, it does set out the factors the Australian Industrial Relations Commission must take into account. These include:

- whether there was a valid reason for the termination related to the capacity or conduct of the employee or the operational requirements of the business;
- whether the employee was notified of that reason;
- whether the employee was given an opportunity to respond to any reason related to their capacity or conduct;
- if the termination is related to unsatisfactory work performance, whether the employee had been warned about that unsatisfactory performance and given a reasonable opportunity to improve performance before the termination.
- the degree to which the size of the employer's undertaking, establishment or service would be likely to impact on the procedures followed in effecting the termination; and

- the degree to which the absence of dedicated human resource management specialists or expertise in the undertaking, establishment or service would be likely to impact on the procedures followed in effecting the termination

Termination of employment is a difficult and complex process with significant potential ramifications for the school and the staff member concerned. Schools must obtain competent industrial relations advice before taking any action that may result in a termination of employment.

10. Teacher Appraisal

10.1 Introduction

The board must ensure that teachers are regularly assessed. Teachers should be appraised in order to improve the quality and the direction of the instruction provided for students and to encourage professional growth and development. The primary purposes of a teacher appraisal policy are to:

- encourage the growth of a Christian community of learning in the school;
- enable teachers to identify their contributions to the school community;
- assist teachers to discover the strengths and weaknesses of their pedagogy, and encourage professional and personal growth;
- note the appropriateness of the teacher's assignment and provide information for deciding promotion, transfer or disciplinary action.

10.2 Guidelines

- Appraisal of teachers should be carried out by the Principal or an assigned designate who supervises the teacher.
- Self-assessment is an essential part of the final teacher appraisal.
- Formative and summative appraisal should occur at regular intervals.
- Formative assessment should emphasise encouragement in the development of day-to-day activities of teaching. This is an on-going process of consultation and assistance and is comprised of mutual discussion and self assessment.
- First year out teachers need a six month, or less, appraisal to assist in developing [Comment: add material here]
- Summative appraisals are cumulative assessments of teachers' pedagogy and their professional and personal qualities as these relate to teaching.
- Summative appraisals should be submitted annually by the Principal for teachers who are in their first, second, and fourth year of employment with the school and subsequently every fourth year of consecutive employment.
- Additional summative appraisals may be requested by the board, education committee or teacher.
- Issue of teacher accreditation under various Education Acts.

10.3 Maintenance of Records

Teacher files are to be kept at the school under the supervision of the Principal. Teachers should have access to their own files. *(State based regulation requirements.)*

Teacher files are to be kept confidential and are usually accessible only to the Principal and teacher. *(Privacy Act and Freedom of Information legislation do not apply.)*

Summative evaluation reports should be signed by the teacher and the evaluator. The teacher should receive a copy of this report and any other documents added to the file. Each document should be dated.

10.4 Appeal Process

Teachers should be able to appeal an appraisal report by submitting a written request. The request should also specify the substance of the appeal. Within fifteen days of receiving the appeal, the board should direct the education committee to establish a procedure for reviewing the assessment. This may include all or any of the following:

- review of teacher's file,
- conduct an additional assessment allowing for the possibility of a mutually acceptable evaluator,
- review the process used to evaluate the appellant,
- outline appropriate alternative for the teacher.

10.5 Addressing Unsatisfactory Performance

Employment law requires a “fair go” for staff

Few decisions are as difficult to make as terminating a teacher's contract. Staff members can expect to be given a “fair go” and treated with love and sensitivity. This means that board decisions in regards to dismissal must be preceded by:

- regular classroom visits and follow-up help by the principal and/or others as appropriate;
- written reports outlining the areas of difficulty or unsatisfactory performance, and suggestions for improvement;
- expectations clearly communicated to the teachers with dates indicating when these are expected to be met;
- opportunity for the teacher to respond to these reports;

Until a final decision is made, the emphasis should be on assisting the teacher in overcoming shortcomings. All staff and particularly young teachers must be given time and necessary support to for improvement. When it becomes apparent to a board that a member of teaching staff has not and very likely will not give satisfactory service, then for the well being of students a final decision regarding termination must be made.

10.6 Termination Procedures

Where performance issues have been identified, the above process has been followed, and teacher function remains unsatisfactory, termination of employment may be necessary.

Board responsibility and decision

The ultimate responsibility for teacher dismissal rests with the board. The board must be assured that proper notice has been given and a remedial process has been followed. The Board (via the Principal) must, in writing, inform the teacher of its decision. The teacher should be made aware of the grievance procedure as delineated in the board's Conditions of Employment.

Boards and supervising staff ought to be aware of the requirements of their state in regard to dismissal

In all cases of termination appropriate and early advice must be sought.

Student welfare foremost

In all cases, concern for the well-being of students and teacher is paramount. It is neither love nor Christian charity that continues to employ a person in a situation which does not suit his/her abilities.

10.7 Toward a policy for appraisal

Christian Education National suggests the following policies:

- Every member of staff should go through formal appraisal after an initial six month period and again at the end of their first twelve months service.
- Regular teacher appraisal followed by professional development appropriate to a position.
- A staff member who wishes to terminate employment must provide adequate written notice as set down in the relevant contract and/or award.
- If a staff member's performance is unsatisfactory, written advice should immediately be given to the teacher, setting out the specific issues regarding their performance, expected improvements and an appropriate time for response.

Attention should be given to a proper integration of letters of appointment, contracts, review processes, and dispute resolution procedures. It is recommended that all documentation demonstrates Christian principles and is in accord with state specific compliance. Some examples are available from the office of Christian Education National.

10.8 Sample documents and resources

Sample copies of the following documents and resources may be available from the Christian Education National office:

- Teacher appraisal process,
- Sample Letters of appointment
- Sample Contracts
- Leadership Review Process Kit
- Dispute Resolution Process papers and Policies

11. Sample Dispute Resolution Procedure

(Comment: Be aware of separate procedures under Child Protection laws.)

STAFF AND VOLUNTEER DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY

This policy outlines the way schools can deal with disputes which may arise between staff and volunteers.

11.1 Background

The SCHOOL seeks to apply a biblical foundation in its approach to dispute resolution. The principles outlined in Matthew 18:15 - 16 are relevant to this policy. The following steps shall therefore apply in connection with questions, disputes or difficulties arising.

11.2 The Complaint Process

Any staff or volunteer who has a dispute or grievance should follow the flow chart outlined below

- a) Those directly involved, shall discuss the question, dispute or difficulty as soon as is practicable.
- b) If the initial discussions do not result in a settlement, the question, dispute or difficulty shall be referred to the line manager / coordinator for further discussion.
- c) If the discussions do not result in a settlement, the matter can be referred to the Principal.
- d) Where the question, dispute or difficulty is unable to be resolved, the matter can be referred to the Board Chair for resolution.

Where a staff member is involved in an unresolvable matter, it is strongly recommended that the process outlined above be fully explored before referring on to an Industrial Relations Commission.

In exceptional circumstances (only) if the employee is not comfortable discussing the issue with their line manager / coordinator, the employee should discuss the matter with the Principal.

In most cases, the procedure will be that the Principal refers the matter to the Chair of the Board and informs the staff or volunteer that this stage has been reached.

The terms of any agreed settlement should be jointly recorded.

11.3 Lines Of Approach

Disputes other than that which directly involve individual staff should only be discussed with and dealt with by the line manager/coordinator or the Principal.

Complaints About The Principal

A situation may arise where a complaint seems to the staff or volunteer to have been mishandled by the Principal. In those circumstances, the staff or volunteer is able to write directly to the Chair.

A situation may arise where the staff or volunteer believes the principal has acted inappropriately and in these circumstances the staff or volunteer is able to write directly to the Chair.

11.4 How To Deal With A Complaint

The line manager/coordinator or Principal must follow the process outlined below when dealing with disputes from a staff or volunteer.

All complaints need to be handled seriously and prayerfully. A gentle expression of concern, or a simple query, may grow into a painful matter if staff or volunteers feel that they have been brushed aside. Equally, issues with the potential to become acutely difficult may dwindle and fade if they are handled well at the initial stage.

All complaints should be recorded. If the person dealing with a complaint believes that the issue may be ongoing or may escalate, or they would like support from the school in dealing with the issue they are advised to fully document all conversations and any other issues they think are relevant. Recording is necessary because:

- a) it may become the cause of legal action in the future;
- b) patterns in the record may indicate a need for action;
- c) the Principal should be able to check the log and report on it regularly to the Board.

The record should contain the following information:

- date when the issue was raised;
- name of people concerned
- brief statement of issue;
- location of detailed file;
- member of staff handling the issue;
- brief statement of outcome; and
- processes used to get to the outcome.

Confidential records on all complaints should be kept.

11.5 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an important issue. It is essential that any complaint is treated in a confidential manner and with respect. Staff must be aware that any issues of conflict will only be shared with senior staff.

It should be made clear to all concerned that it is the school's policy that complaints made by staff or volunteers should not rebound adversely on their children, if they are students at the school.

It may be possible to deal with a problem without naming individuals. However, even if no names are given, the source of the complaint may be clear. Depending on the nature of the complaint and on the circumstances, it may be impractical to investigate without identifying the member of staff or volunteers.

Members of staff are rightly concerned that they should know about complaints that might be damaging to their reputation. Such complaints will be known only to themselves and to those who have to be consulted. Training should help staff to deal not only with complaints that are made to them, but also to complaints that are made about them. The school should be aware of the need to provide support for staff against whom a complaint is made; this should be provided by a colleague who is not otherwise involved.

If there is a situation involving the Police, the Principal, or next most senior staff member if the Principal is unavailable, must take responsibility for action in the school and the Board Chairperson should be informed as soon as possible.

11.6 Resolution

Sometimes the very acknowledgement of an issue by the line manager or Principal brings relief. Satisfaction for a complainant may come from any of the following:

- knowing that changes have been made, and that matters will be different in future
- knowing that the school is now alert to a possible problem
- feeling that their concern has been considered seriously
- clarification of events
- an outcome which may be different from the one they sought, but which they perceive to be well-considered
- a considered letter
- an apology.

If time has been needed to consider matters, staff or volunteers should receive a report letter. This may cover:

- the issues raised
- how the issues were considered
- the people consulted

- the action that is to be taken
- an apology, if appropriate.

11.7 Time Frame

An initial response concerning the dispute, complaint must be given within five working days. This response should clearly state the action being taken. Written complaints require written responses. If the dispute/complaint concerns the welfare of a student the response must be made within 24 hours.

11.8 Procedures For Board Chairs

The Chair should discuss the matter fully with the Principal and be provided with relevant documentation. If a briefing is required from a member of staff, this should occur in the presence of the Principal.

The Chair should respond to the staff or volunteer, notifying them that they are reviewing the matter, asking them if they wish to add anything further and providing a date by which they may expect a response.

The Chair may be able to offer a new approach to the matter, and this may satisfy the staff or volunteer. The Chair's response should be clear and detailed, and should offer a meeting if the staff or volunteer remain troubled.

If a meeting is requested, the Chair offers to meet the staff or volunteer at a time convenient to them. Those involved are:

- the Chair of the Board
- the Principal and, at the most, one other member of staff
- the staff or volunteer

The staff or volunteer should be permitted to bring with them a supportive friend who is not involved with the complaint. Legal representation is not appropriate at this stage.

The Chair, after questioning and listening to the staff or volunteer and the Principal, may be able to find a solution.

With thanks to Strathalbyn Christian College

You may find this link useful: Peacemaker Ministries website

www.HisPeace.org

12. About Christian Education National

12.1 *An Association of Associations*

Christian Education National is a community of schools which are owned and governed by the Christian parents of the children who attend the schools. In all their structural and curriculum practices Christian Education National schools are committed to celebrating God as creator and ruler of all.

Christian Education National schools are committed to a dynamic partnership between parents and teachers in order to teach and nurture children from a Christian view of the world.

12.2 *Objectives*

Christian Education National was established in 1966, to enable member associations to work together:

- to foster Christian educational thought and practice,
- to encourage the formation, growth and welfare of Christian schools,
- to promote collective and individual interests
- to jointly liaise with federal and state governments,
- to promote and grow the understanding of Christian education by way of seminars, conferences and publications.

12.3 *Governance*

Key personnel and activities of Christian Education National (as at 2008)

ASSOCIATION & SCHOOL SUPPORT

Chief Executive Officer, State Executive Officers

- In anticipation of national application, NSW based pilot service with Prolegis, Christian lawyers providing online first level legal services with templates and proformas for commonly experienced areas of risk for schools
- Governance training and resources
- Board chair and prospective chair retreats
- Structured advice
- Board Members Handbook
- Communication
- Connecting people, knowledge and ideas
- Encouraging healthy preventative, proactive action in associations and schools
- Crisis management and trouble shooting

PUBLICATIONS

Publications and Communications Manager

- Publication of *Nurture*: a quarterly journal for parents
- Publication of *Christian Teachers Journal*: a quarterly journal for Christian teachers
- Publication of *Access*: An online newsletter for Christian Education National leaders

MANAGEMENT & FINANCE

Management and Finance Committee with Business and Finance Manager: Business and finance management for the Christian Education National office

- Business and finance services to NICE
- Copyright
- Prudential health watch
- Management and Finance Manual
- Business and finance support and reviews for associations and schools
- Small school management services

TEACHER EDUCATION

Executive Officer, Teacher Education

Principal, National Institute for Christian Education

- Generally: Delivery of accredited masters degree programs, seminars and professional development programs for Christian Education National teachers
- Specifically: Accredited courses – NICE Masters Grad Diploma/Bed, Grad Dip Ed (distance and on-site mode)
- Other professional development programs, blockbusters, speaking at conferences, areas of interest days, curriculum development

ADVOCACY

CEO Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACCS)

- Advocacy from a Christian worldview perspective to federal and state governments
- Policy development from a Christian worldview perspective
- Research into association and school needs in respect of advocacy
- Submissions related to specific issues from a Christian worldview perspective
- Information packs to associations and schools in respect of federal and state legislation

REVIEWS & CONSULTANCIES

Chief Executive Officer

- Consultancy training program from a Christian worldview perspective
- Reviews and consultancies for preventative, proactive health checks and crisis management: strategic planning (vision, mission, core values and planning); leadership reviews; comprehensive school reviews encompassing all aspects of a school; limited scope consultancies targeting specific objectives

CONFERENCES

Chief Executive Officer and State Executive Officers

- Nationally initiated conferences: Annual General Meeting (contact CEO); biennial Management & Finance (contacts: Business and Finance Manager and M & F Committee); biennial Transforming Education (contacts: CEO and EO Teacher Education)
- State initiated and nationally available conferences: Board chairs (NSW State Council, contact NSW State EO); Developing Leaders (Victorian State Council, Contact Victorian State EO) ; Parent Vision (Tasmanian State Council, Contact Tasmanian State EO); conferences related to professional employment roles: Annual Executive Officers retreat, biennial Principals' Conference.

13. Services provided by Christian Education National

13.1 *Association and School Support*

- Parent Vision Conferences
- Board Training
 - Board Training Seminars
 - Board Chair Conferences
 - Board Members Handbook
- Ideas Exchange and policy documents (see 15.1)
- Vision based development
- Professional leaders training
 - Developing leaders & new principals conferences
 - Principals conferences
 - Leadership mentoring, shadowing & reviews
- Management and finance
 - M&F Committee
 - Conferences
 - M&F Manual
- Association/School Health
 - Whole school review
 - Prudential Health Watch
- Nurture
- Exemplars of important policies/documents
- Building fund

13.2 *Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACCS)*

The AACCS is a national grouping of Christian schools of which Christian Education National is a group member. This association is served by an executive officer based in Springwood, NSW who has ready access to senior officers in the Department of Education, Science and Training as well as federal politicians of all political parties. The executive officer reports to a Council on which three of the members are appointed by Christian Education National.

13.3 *Christian Super*

Christian Super is a non-profit industry superannuation fund for Christians working in Christian organisations around Australia. **Christian Super** is non-denominational and not connected with any financial organisation.

The fund is administered by a chief executive officer who reports to a trustee board which has member representation and trustees appointed by Christian Education National.

13.4 *Copyright*

Christian Education National has copyright agreements which are made on behalf of member associations and their schools. For details please contact the Christian Education National office.

Copyright information can also be accessed from the relevant copyright agency:

Copyright Agency Limited: www.copyright.com.au/

AMCOS and APRA: www.amcos.com.au/

Screenrights: www.screen.org/ Australian Copyright Council: www.copyright.org.au/

ARIA Licensing: www.aria.com.au/pages/licensing.htm

13.5 *Christian Education National Website*

Christian Education National has a website at www.cen.edu.au.

The open section contains information on Christian Education National, including a complete school listing containing contact details; and an employment section that has positions vacant and a job seekers registry.

The Members area contains information for member schools and boards. There is provision to post positions vacant and search the job seekers registry. There is also a forum set up for members to share information and for discussions on any topic they feel is relevant.

13.6 *Christian Education National Conferences*

National, state and territory conferences are designed to

- maintain the vision for Christian education for parents
- train professional teachers in teaching from a Christian perspective
- provide governance training for boards
- provide financial and management networking and training for school financial/business managers
- provide networking, peer support and training for principals and executive officers

13.7 *Finance and Management Advice*

A national management and finance committee facilitates management and finance assistance. This includes

- an annual financial survey involving all Christian schools along with a range of other Christian schools. Collated figures assist all schools in their planning,
- a free Prudential Health Watch service to monitor each school's financial performance and assist in planning and budgeting processes
- linking schools with the appropriate people and organisations able to provide accounting services, financial planning advice and consultancies
- financial management conferences for bursars, business managers and treasurers,
- a management and finance manual available to each association

13.8 *Government Liaison*

Christian Education National endeavours to make representation to State, Territory and Commonwealth governments, on a wide range of issues including funding, new schools, accountability requirements and curriculum. Representation may involve:

- briefings regarding the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs,
- meetings with Commonwealth and State ministers and shadow ministers
- responding to initiatives at the Federal and State levels,
- maintaining a presence in Canberra through membership on the council of and representation through the Australian Association of Christian Schools,
- engaging in on-going dialogue to preserve the independence and integrity of Christian schools.

13.9 *International Interests and Connections*

Christian Education National recognises it is part of a broader network of likeminded organisations. Christian Education National welcomes opportunities to make links with and develop mutual relationships with international groups interested in a kingdom vision for Christian education. These might include:

- New Hope International
www.newhopeinternational.net
- Society of Christian Schools, British Columbia - An organisation of Christian schools with a biblical vision for Christian education in British Columbia, Canada.

- www.scsbc.ca
- Association of Christian Schools International
www.acsi.org
- Christian Schools International
<http://community.gospelcom.net/Brix?pageID=2831>

Christian Education National also recognises that our schools may provide international mission, educational and cultural opportunities for their students. These might include:

- Short term mission trips to developing countries
- Providing enrolment places for International students
- Developing 'sister school' relationships for correspondence, exchange and sharing of resources

13.10 Reviews

Christian Education National offers formal instruments for leadership, whole school and compact school reviews.

Leadership Review

- offers opportunity for boards and principals to seek together the Lord's direction:
- identifies strengths to be celebrated
- identifies challenges to be addressed
- considers overall leadership effectiveness in terms of the school's developing needs
- offers recommendations for consideration

Compact School Review

- uses an external coordinator and review team
- assists schools in a thorough and prompt review process
- may address particular challenges.
- offers recommendations for consideration

Whole School Review

- uses a local coordinator and review team
- thoroughly evaluates the goals and practise across every facet of the school
- uses a visiting evaluation team to validate the process
- generates a report for the board with recommendations to assist in the development of a strategic plan
- is a process that can effectively weld a community around a common vision for Christ-centred education

Contact the office for further details.

13.11 Low Interest Loans

The Christian Education National Building Fund exists to provide substantial low interest loans for building projects and land purchase. This fund may also facilitate the sharing of resources amongst our schools.

13.12 National Institute for Christian Education

The National Institute for Christian Education was set up in 1991 and serves Christian schools throughout Australia. Its purposes are to:

- assist teachers understand the special task of parents in nurturing their children and to develop strategies that will support the complementary roles teachers and parents have to play in the education of their children;

- provide accredited and non accredited courses that will assist teachers to extend their understanding of teaching from a biblical perspective and equip them to teach Christianly;
- provide teachers with access to ideas and information that will assist them in their task of equipping students for discipleship and service;
- provide teachers with knowledge and skills that will assist them in the development of Christ-centred curriculum;
- provide teachers with opportunities to think critically about their calling, their craft and their commitment as they relate these to the classroom and society at large;
- provide teachers with special induction programs that will assist them understand the history and context of the Christian parent-controlled schools movement, in particular its biblical roots and foundations, and encourage them to develop a vision for the future that they can share with their school communities.

The National Institute is governed by the Council of the National Institute for Christian Education a division of Christian Education National. The National Institute supports regional and national short courses. The Institute currently offers fully accredited courses at Graduate Diploma and Masters levels. NICE cooperates in the delivery of courses at Macquarie University and Edith Cowan University as well as assisting the Wesley Institute in the provision of a Graduate Diploma if Education initial teaching qualification.

Institute courses are offered in distance education mode, though, by request, some courses are offered in intensive face to face mode in individual schools. There are some four hundred students enrolled each year in courses. These are fast becoming an important touchstone for development of distinctively Christian teaching in Christian schools.

13.13 National Resource Centre

Maintains a range of journals, books and audio visual materials for loan

Books on Christian education and worldview

Christian Education National has published a range of excellent books on Christian education and worldview. They include:

Reclaiming the Future
Crumbling Walls of Certainty
Re-minding: Renewing the Mind in Learning
The Cause of Christian Education
Pointing the Way
Engaging the Culture – Christians at work in Education
[\(see Suggested Further Resources at APPENDIX A\)](#)

The office also has for sale a selection of books especially relevant to Christian teachers and parents. Details are on the NICE website. www.nice.edu.au

13.14 Publications

Christian Education National publishes three regular journals:

Nurture

This is Christian schools flagship publication. Over 10000 subscribers receive "Nurture" four times each year. Special discount sales are available for schools that subscribe on behalf of all their families. The publication is geared toward parents and for many schools it forms an important part of their communication and promotion programme. Nurture aims:

- to challenge and support families in the task of raising their children within a Christian worldview
- to be an effective tool for promoting the Christian school in the local community (eg copies can be placed in the waiting rooms of hairdressers, doctors, dentists etc)
- to build community

The Christian Teachers Journal

Through an editorial committee Christian Education National produces a journal designed specifically for Christian teachers serving the Lord in Christian and other schools. The journal includes:

- practical ideas for teachers
- curricula and book reviews
- news of courses and conferences
- discussions of current educational issues

The journal is distributed free to all teachers in Christian schools and is available by subscription to others. The journal aims to serve Christian educators by challenging them to a fuller understanding of their task and responsibilities. It raises issues critical to the development of teaching and learning in a distinctively Christian way.

Access

Regular bulletins are issued from the office containing essential information for association boards, school principals, bursars and staff. Information relates to government initiatives, the activities of Christian Education National and the publication provides a vehicle for interchange of ideas between school communities. Access is distributed electronically twice a term. It is an avenue for key leaders to be informed regarding:

- new and ongoing initiatives
- information pertinent to bursars and business managers
- the National Institute for Christian Education
- conferences
- governance and school leadership issues
- current thinking on Christian education

13.15 Sales

A range of literature and manuals is available at discount prices through the Christian Education National office for use in Christian schools:

Teacher Education

- textbooks developed from a Christian perspective.
- teacher guides and resource books.
- publications that explore Christian approaches to education.
- publications that explore Christian perspectives on science, economics, politics, literature, media and other areas
- An NICE DVD entitled 'Why Christian School' is particularly suitable for viewing by school boards and parent groups.

13.16 Seminars

The office provides a range of seminars, which include:

For parents: (primarily provided through Association and School Support)

- Vision-setting
- Board training
- Strategic planning
- Worldview

For staff: (primarily provided through NICE)

- Developing Biblical Perspectives
- Curriculum Unit Writing
- Faith Development and the Christian School
- Learning Styles and Curriculum Writing

- Mapping the Primary Curriculum
- Implementing Middle Schooling
- Mapping the Middle School Curriculum

13.17 School Strategic Planning

Christian schools change and develop constantly. Christian Education National strongly recommends boards prayerfully develop a dynamic strategic plan which:

- Understands history
- Describes a picture of the future which excites passion (Vision)
- Develops directives about what is to be accomplished (Mission)
- Articulates those things that are deeply valued (Values)
- Creates strategies, based on the Values, that will accomplish the Vision and Mission (Plan)
- Aligns all resources and activities to the Vision
- Is evaluated regularly

A strategic planning process is both rewarding and constructive. Its benefits include:

- Agreed clarity of direction for the future
- Enhanced association and school leadership
- Increased confidence throughout the school and wider community
- Revitalised commitment among staff, parents and students
- Enhanced communication among board, school leadership, staff and parents
- Preparing the ground for any initiatives to be implemented

The office can assist in this process either by linking schools with others who have undertaken this process or through training seminars.

Strategic plans may be one productive outcome of the review processes noted above in 14.10.

13.18 School Visits

Senior office staff and State coordinators visit school communities to:

- Celebrate the vision of Christian education
- Build courage for the task of Christian education
- Strengthen our vibrant, healthy, mutually supportive national network
- Provide opportunities to consider local and national issues
- Develop relationships
- Encourage understanding
- Engage in training and development

Please contact Christian Education National if you would like to initiate a visit.

13.19 Speakers

Christian Education National can assist school communities by recommending or providing speakers for a range of occasions pertinent to Christian schools.

13.20 State and Territory Coordinators

All states and territories are served by a Christian Education National coordinator whose work includes:

- Liaising with national leaders
- Promoting the cause of Christian education
- Supporting member schools and associations
- Planning and training
- Representing the interests of member associations and schools within relevant state or territory government bodies and non-government organisations

13.21 State Councils

Most states have active state councils where representatives from member associations meet to discuss and resolve matters of mutual interest. The councils:

- Play a vital coordination role
- Are networks for information and support
- Advise and guide the state and territory coordinators

13.22 Conflict Resolution

Christian Education National is committed to justice in all member association and school activities. When justice issues are compromised Christian Education National seeks to support conflicted parties by advising and assisting where necessary with a view to supporting a biblical pattern for resolution.

14. Resources available to Board Members from Christian Education National

14.1 *Ideas Exchange*

Materials Database

The Ideas Exchange is a collection of curriculum materials, monographs, school policies and educational papers held at the office of Christian Education National. These resources have been provided from member schools/associations and carefully catalogued to provide ready access.

The Materials database is a key means by which the resources developed in one setting can be shared more widely.

Policies and Procedures Documents

The newest part to our Ideas Exchange section is our Christian Education National Association Policies and Procedures, written with the co-operation of Prolegis Pty Limited for Christian Education National with the consideration of BOS requirements and other legal considerations. Please read our School Policies overview page for more details.

¹ Fishel, David. *The Book of the Board – Effective Governance for Non-Profit Organisations*, The Federation Press, 2003 (page 13)

APPENDIX A – Suggested Further Resources

- Bartholomew, Craig G. and Goheen, Michael W. *The Drama of Scripture: Finding our Place in the Biblical Story*, Baker Academic, 2004
- Balla, Caroline. *Teaching in a Christian School: New Teacher Induction Unit* “(Kit), National Institute for Christian Education, 2003
- Balla, Caroline. *Teaching in a Christian School: New Teacher Induction Unit* (CD only), National Institute for Christian Education, 2003
- Blomberg, Doug and Lambert, Ian (Editors). *Reminding: Renewing the Mind in Learning*, National Institute for Christian Education, 1998
- Dickens, Ken. *The Priority of Faithfulness in the Christian School: The Problem of Triumphalism in Christian Schools* (Video), National Institute for Christian Education, 2002
- Edlin, Richard. *The Cause of Christian Education*, National Institute for Christian Education, 1999 (also available in Korean)
- Edlin, Richard. *Why Christian Schools?* (Video or DVD), National Institute for Christian Education, 2002
- Edlin, Richard and Ireland, Jill (Editors). *Engaging the Culture: Christians at Work in Education*, National Institute for Christian Education, 2006
- Edlin, Richard, Ireland, Jill and Dickens, Ken (Editors). *Pointing the Way: Directions for Christian Education in a New Millennium*, National Institute for Christian Education, 2004
- Fennema, Jack. *Nurturing Children in the Lord*, Presbyterian and Reformed Pub, 1977
- Greene, Albert E. *Reclaiming the Future of Christian Education*, Association of Christian Schools International, 1998
- Lambert, Ian and Mitchell, Sue (Editors). *Reclaiming the Future: Australian Perspectives on Christian Schooling*, National Institute for Christian Education, 1996
- Lambert, Ian and Mitchell, Sue (Editors). *The Crumbling Walls of Certainty: Towards a Christian Critique of Post-Modernism and Education*, National Institute for Christian Education, 1997
- Plantinga, Cornelius Jr. *Engaging God's World: A Christian Vision of Faith, Learning, and Living*, Eerdmans, 2002
- Thompson, Rod. *A Biblical Introduction to Worldview*, Masters Publishing, 2005
- Vryhof, Stephen C. *Between Memory and Vision: The Case for Faith-Based Schooling*, Eerdmans, 2004
- Van Brummelen, Harro. *Steppingstones to Curriculum: A Biblical Path*, Purposeful Design, 2002
- Van Brummelen, Harro. *Walking with God in the Classroom*, Alta Vista College Press, 1998
- Van Dyk, John. *Letters to Lisa*, Dordt Press, 1997
- Van Dyk, John. *The Craft of Christian Teaching: A Classroom Journey*, Dordt Press, 2000
- Walsh, Brian J. and Middleton, Richard. *The Transforming Vision: Shaping A Christian World View*, InterVarsity Press, 1984
- Walsh, Brian J. and Middleton, Richard. *Truth is Stranger Than it Used to Be: A Biblical Faith in a Postmodern Age*, InterVarsity Press, 1995
- Wolters, Albert M. *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*, Eerdmans, 1985
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas P. *Educating for Life: Reflections on Christian Teaching and Learning*, Baker Academic, 2002

For Board Development

Andringa, Robert, C, and Engstrom, Ted, W. *Nonprofit Board Answer Book, Practical Guide for Board Members and Chief Executives*, BoardSource, 2002.

Fishel, David. *The Book of the Board – Effective Governance for Non-Profit Organisations*, The Federation Press, 2003

Renton, N. E. *Guide for Meetings and Organisations, Vol 1, Guide for Voluntary Associations*, LCB Information Services, 2001

Renton, N. E. *Guide for Meetings and Organisations, Vol 2, Guide for Meetings*, LCB Information Services, 2001

Useful Web links

Building Stronger Communities through Stronger Community Organisations
www.ourcommunity.com.au

Council for Christian Colleges and Universities
www.cccu.org

Christian management Australia
www.cma.net.au

Books in Print – Publications about governance issues
<http://users.bigpond.net.au/renton/index.htm>

Christian Schools Australia – NSW Staff Relations
www.christianschools.edu.au/NSWSRS/

Non-profit governance and management centre
www.governance.com.au/

Positive Solutions – consulting, training and research in the non-profit sector
www.positive-solutions.com.au/

APPENDIX B – Standing Orders

These standing orders govern the operation of the Board and General Meetings of Christian Parent Controlled Schools Ltd. Member associations' boards and school communities may find them a valuable guide.

1 Application

These Standing Orders shall be applicable to all General Meetings and shall be construed subject to the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

2 Meeting times

Meetings shall, subject to the presence of a quorum, start at the time set out on the notice, and shall, subject to the discretion of the meeting, continue until all business on the Agenda is disposed of.

3 Opening the meeting

Each meeting will be opened by the chairman or his nominee and shall include a suitable Bible reading and prayer.

4 Order of business

Unless otherwise determined by the majority of those present, the order of business shall be set out in the Agenda provided for the meeting.

5 Debate

- 1.0 Any member desiring to speak at General Meetings or in Committee shall rise in his place or raise his hand and when called upon by the Chairman shall address the Chair. If two or more members rise simultaneously, the Chairman shall call upon the member who first caught his eye.
- 2.0 When the Chairman rises to speak any member on his feet shall resume his seat.
- 3.0 A speaker shall address his remarks only to the Chairman and never to any member of the meeting.
- 4.0 A speaker may not wander from the subject under debate, nor may he call into question any member's motives or character.
- 5.0 Members shall restrict their speeches in debate to the introduction of new matters only, and shall refrain from merely repeating arguments already put.
- 6.0 No member shall speak longer than ten minutes unless the meeting, by a majority vote, permits him to extend his remarks.
- 7.0 Except in Committee, no member other than the proposer of a motion or an amendment shall speak to it until it has been seconded. A motion or amendment lapsing for want of a seconder shall not be recorded in the Minutes.
- 8.0 If require to do so by the Chair, the proposer of any motion or amendment shall submit it in writing.
- 9.0 A motion or amendment before the chair shall not be withdrawn except by its mover and by leave of the meeting. No motion shall be withdrawn while any amendment is under discussion or after any amendment has been adopted.
- 10.0 A motion or amendment before the Chair may be reworded by the mover subject to leave of the meeting.
- 11.0 Except in Committee, no member shall speak more than once to any question except that the mover of a motion (but not of an amendment) shall have a right to reply, which reply shall close

the debate. An amendment shall constitute a separate question from the original motion and from any other amendment.

- 12.0 A member moving a motion or amendment without speaking to it shall be deemed to have spoken to it. A member seconding a motion or amendment without speaking to it may reserve his right to speak to it subsequently.
- 13.0 The Chairman shall, as far as practicable, call on speakers for and against a motion or amendment alternately, subject to the right of the seconder to speak immediately after the mover. If two consecutive speakers have both argued for or against a motion or an amendment, and there is no member wishing to argue the opposite view or, in the case of a motion, to move an amendment, the motion or the amendment shall (subject, in the case of a motion, to the mover's right of reply) be put without further debate.

6 Questions

- 1.0 Immediately following speeches by the mover and seconder, or the mover only where the seconder has reserved his right to speak, a time may be set aside for the asking of questions for clarification.
- 2.0 Only questions seeking clarification of the specific wording of a motion or as to the meaning or effect of words, phrases or figures contained in a report should be asked.

7 Amendments

- 1.0 No amendment shall be accepted by the Chairman which is a direct negative of the motion being debated. However, an alternative motion may be foreshadowed.
- 2.0 No amendment which falls outside the scope of the purpose of the original motion or would amount to a material alternation of the purpose of the original motion shall be accepted by the Chairman.
- 3.0 No amendment shall be accepted by the Chairman before the mover and seconder of the motion to be amended have been given the opportunity to speak.
- 4.0 When an amendment is before the Chair discussion shall be confined to that amendment. No further amendment shall be proposed until the amendment before the Chair has been disposed of (i.e. an amendment may not be amended).
- 5.0 In the event that several amendments are to be proposed the Chairman may decide to take all amendments, each being moved and seconded formally, and may then permit debate on each in turn in the order in which they affect the wording of the original motion. Should there be more than one amendment which affects the motion at the same point the Chairman shall decide which amendment shall be debated first and his decision shall be final.

8 Points of order

- 1.0 A member may rise or address the Chairman at any time, whether another member is speaking or not, to raise a point of order if he believes the Standing Orders or some other meeting procedure is not being complied with.
- 2.0 A point of order needs no seconder and is not debatable.
- 3.0 As soon as a point of order is called, any person speaking shall resume his seat and await the direction of the Chairman.
- 4.0 The member calling the point of order must state clearly and concisely, in less than 3 minutes, the breach upon which the point of order is based, whereupon the Chairman shall rule.

9 Procedural motions

- 1.0 Procedural motions are motions dealing with the conduct of the meeting itself.
- 2.0 A person wishing to move a procedural motion does not require the Chairman's call.

- 3.0 Except when moving the closure (that the question be now put) or motions relating to the speaker (e.g. that the speaker be no longer heard) procedural motions can be moved only provided they do not interrupt any speaker.
- 4.0 Procedural motions may not be moved immediately after the mover has exercised his right of reply or while a vote is being taken.
- 5.0 Procedural motions which are open to discussion require a seconder prior to discussion. Other procedural motions can be accepted only at the discretion of the Chairman and must be put without debate.
- 6.0 A member who has not already participated in the debate may at any time, whether another speaker has the floor or not, move, "That the question be now put", which motion, if accepted by the Chair, shall be put without amendment or debate. The Chairman shall have absolute discretion to accept or refuse the motion. The Chairman may also of his own volition put the question if he feels that adequate discussion has taken place. In either case the mover of a motion shall retain his right of reply, if an amendment is before the Chair, the closure motion shall be deemed to close the debate on the amendment only.
- 7.0 A member may at any time move, "That the speaker be no longer heard" or, "That the speaker be heard for a further limited period only". Such motions shall be put without amendment or debate. No other motion, except the closure motion dealing with the speaker's time, shall be moved while a speaker has the floor.
- 8.0 During the discussion of a motion (but not of an amendment), a member who has not already participated in the debate on the motion may move, "That the question be now put". This motion shall be open to debate, and shall be debated together with the original motion. If carried, the original motion shall be put forthwith, subject to the mover's right to reply. The motion may be foreshadowed while an amendment is before the Chair, but in no case shall it be put till all amendments have been disposed of.
- 9.0 A member may move, "That the debate (or meeting) be now adjourned". Discussion shall be in order, but only amendments as to time and/or place shall be permitted. The motion shall take precedence over other business before the Chair except points of order.
- 10.0 A member who has not already participated in debate may move, "That the question lie on the table". Such a motion may be moved only once during the discussion of any substantive motion and shall be put without amendment or debate. If passed the meeting proceeds to the next business. If resumption of debate on the question is desired a motion, "That the question be taken off the table" may be moved. This motion shall also be put without amendment or debate.

(Alternatively the question which was tabled may be moved again as a new motion later in the meeting.)

10 Committee of The Whole

- 1.0 At any point during the discussion of a motion or amendment, provided that the mover and seconder have been given the opportunity to speak, any member may move, "That this meeting resolve itself into a committee of the whole for the purpose of considering" the matter then before it. The motion to be resolved by a majority vote of those present.
- 2.0 Committee members may speak up to three times for no longer than 5 minutes each time, as long as the Chairman is satisfied that new material is being introduced or a statement being clarified and provided that other members who have not already spoken do not wish to speak.
- 3.0 The only motion permissible within a Committee of the Whole is, "That the Committee rise and report ..."

11 Chairman

- 1.0 The Chairman shall control the meeting. He shall ensure that Christian conduct is maintained and the Standing Orders are adhered to.

- 2.0 The Chairman shall rule on all points of order and the eligibility or otherwise of motions.
- 3.0 Any member of the Association who is dissatisfied with the Chairman's ruling may move, "That the Chairman's ruling be dissented from". The motion must be seconded. The mover shall be permitted to give reasons for the motion.
- 4.0 The Chairman shall have the right to reply by giving reasons for his initial ruling. He shall then put the motion in the following way, "That the Chairman's ruling be upheld". If such ruling is upheld, there may be no further debate on that ruling.
- 5.0 Provided a motion is not before the Chairman, he may address the Association on matters which he considers to be of importance to the Association.
- 6.0 The Chairman shall take no part in the debate on any question but may explain his rulings on points of order and answer questions directed to him for clarification.

12 Rescission Motions

A Rescission motion may be moved at the same meeting at which the original motion was passed only with the approval of two-thirds of the ordinary members present in person or by proxy.

13 Suspension of Standing Orders and Leave

A member desiring a departure from the Standing Orders may, "**seek leave to ...**" (e.g. "**seek leave to speak again**"). The Chairman shall then ask the meeting, "**is leave granted?**". If there is no objection leave is granted.

Alternatively or if leave is not granted a member desiring a departure from the Standing Orders may move, "**That so much of the standing Orders as would prevent be suspended**". This motion requires a seconder and is subject to debate, but requires only a simple majority to pass.

14 Minutes

Resolutions and decisions shall be recorded by the minute secretary who shall prepare written minutes for submission to the Board. After approval of the Board the minutes shall be typed and distributed to members for acceptance at the next General Meeting.

15 General

- 1.0 No member shall reflect on the vote of a meeting except on a motion for the rescission of any resolution previously adopted. No member shall reflect on a Section of the Memorandum and Articles of Association or a Standing Order, except on a motion (of which due notice was given) to amend or repeal such section or Order.
- 2.0 Notwithstanding anything hereinbefore contained, any decision made by a validly-constituted meeting shall not be void by reason only of a departure from these Standing Orders which was not detected till after the decision had been made.
- 3.0 Alterations to the standing Orders may only be made at a General Meeting after proper notice has been given.
- 1.1 Any matters not dealt with in the above Standing Orders shall be governed by the customary procedure at meetings as outlined in Guide to Meetings and Organisations 3rd Ed. by N.E. Renton.

APPENDIX C – Sample Agenda

EYRE PENINSULA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ASSOCIATION LTD

AGENDA

Meeting Monday 3 April, 2009

at 3 Railway Terrace, Kimba, South Australia (7.30 - 10.30 pm)

MEMBERS Joan Dove, Paul Golf (Chairman), George Hogan (President), Sally Mitchell (Vice-President), Julie Thompson (Treasurer), Peter Vincent, Bruce White, Tony Wilson (Secretary), Carol Young (Principal) and Harold Wymarra.

1 OPENING

1.1 Welcome

Paul Golf

1.2 Devotion

George Hogan

2 PRESENT

3 APOLOGIES

4 FIXING OF AGENDA

5 MINUTES

5.1 Minutes of Meeting held 6 March 2009

Attached

5.2 Minutes of Telephone Meeting held 20 March 2009

Attached

6 MATTERS ARISING

6.1 Long Service Leave Policy

Tony Wilson

6.2 Appraisal of Staff Members

George Hogan

6.3 School Uniform and Association Meeting

Sally Mitchell

6.4 Information Technology Policy

Sally Mitchell

6.5 Review of Memorandum and Articles

Peter Vincent

7 REPORTS

7.1 Principal's Report

Attached

7.2 Financial Report

Attached

7.3 Membership Sub-Committee

Minutes of meeting 23 March 2009

Attached

7.4 Uniform Committee

Report attached

8 CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 Inward

8.1.1 National Australia Bank

8.1.2 Christian Parent Controlled Schools Ltd

8.1.3 Bill Tucker

Attached

8.1.4 Mr & Mrs Kent

Attached

8.2 Outward

8.2.1 Mr J Cayzer

8.2.2 Mrs R Hughes

9 GENERAL BUSINESS

9.1 Board Training Seminar

9.2 Strategic Planning

Strategic plan 2004-2008 attached

10 NEXT MEETING

11 CLOSING

APPENDIX D – Sample Minutes

EYRE PENINSULA CHRISTIAN SCHOOL ASSOCIATION LTD

MINUTES

Meeting Monday 3 April, 2009
at 3 Railway Terrace, Kimba, South Australia (7.30 - 10.30 pm)

1 OPENING

1.1 Welcome

The Chairman Paul Golf welcomed Board members

1.2 Devotion

The President, George Hogan read from Romans 4 and led the Board to contemplate the impact of God's existence in our ordinary lives. The Board shared in a time of prayer.

2 PRESENT

2.1 Joan Dove, Paul Golf, George Hogan, Sally Mitchell, Julie Thompson, Peter Vincent, Tony Wilson, Carol Young and Harold Wymarra.

2.2 **In attendance** Greg Harris (Business Manager)

3 APOLOGIES

Bruce White

4 FIXING OF AGENDA

4.1 **It was resolved** that item 8.1.4 be brought forward for early discussion.

4.2 **It was resolved** that the agenda be adopted as amended.

5 MINUTES

5.1 Minutes of Meeting held 6 March 2009

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting of Directors held on 6 March 2000, as amended, be confirmed and signed as a true and correct record.

5.2 Minutes of Telephone Meeting held 20 March 2009

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting of Directors held on 20 March 2000 be confirmed and signed as a true and correct record.

6 MATTERS ARISING

6.1 Long Service Leave Policy

It was resolved that the Long Service Leave Policy be approved as amended and that the policy handbook be revised accordingly. Action: Tony

6.2 Appraisal of Staff Members

It was noted that there is nothing further to report at this stage. Action: George

6.3 School Uniform and Association Meeting

It was resolved that these items be considered at Item 7.4 on the agenda.

6.4 Information Technology Policy

6.4.1 **It was resolved** that the paper prepared by Sally Mitchell be received

6.4.2 **It was resolved** that a task force comprising Sally Mitchell and Bruce White (Board); Michael Jones (Deputy Principal); Kelly Smith (Staff); and Bill Tuckworth and Val Wallace (Parents); be requested to prepare a draft proposal ready for the August meeting of the Board.
Action: Sally

6.5 Review of Memorandum and Articles

6.5.1 It was noted that Peter Vincent has agreed to coordinate a review of the Memorandum and Articles of the Association.

6.5.2 **It was resolved** that Peter Vincent be requested to prepare a proposal for a process to review the Memorandum and Articles; and that this process be reviewed by the board at the July 2009 board meeting.
Action: Peter

7 REPORTS

7.1 Principal's Report

It was resolved that the Principal's report be received.

7.2 Financial Report

7.2.1 Financial report Year to 29 February 2009

It was resolved that the Financial report to 29 February be approved subject to clarification of the removal expenses incurred in recruiting Kelly Smith.

7.2.2 Auditor's Letter

7.2.2.1 It was noted that the auditor had provided a letter indicating areas for possible procedural improvements.

7.2.2.2 **It was resolved** that the Treasurer report to the August meeting of the Board responding to suggestions raised in the letter from the auditor. Action Julie

7.3 Membership Sub-Committee

7.3.1 Minutes of meeting held 23 March 2009

It was resolved that the minutes of the Membership meeting be received.

7.3.2 Membership Training

It was noted that the committee has developed a membership training and review process and that this would be presented to the board for consideration at the next meeting.

7.4 Uniform Committee

7.4.1 It was noted that the Uniform Committee had met and produced a report.

7.4.2 **It was resolved** that the committee be requested to develop recommendations for discussion at the Topic Night scheduled for Friday 9 June 2009.

7.4.3 It was noted that the Student Representative Council has been requested by the Committee to participate in its next meeting.

8 CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 Inward

It was resolved that the Inward Correspondence be received.

8.1.1 National Australia Bank

It was resolved that Julie Thompson, together with Paul Golf seek to meet with the Bank Manager to restructure the association's loans. Action: Julie

8.1.2 Christian Education National

8.1.2.1 It was noted that the Chief Executive Director of Christian Education National is planning to visit South Australia.

8.1.2.2 **It was resolved** that Tony Wilson write to Jack on behalf of the board and issue an

invitation to the CEO to include Kimba in his itinerary; requesting him to meet with the board to discuss membership training and the review of the Memorandum and Articles, and to meet with the association to outline an effective partnership between parents and staff in education. Action: Tony

8.1.3 Bill Tucker - Request for one year's leave without pay.

8.1.3.1 **It was resolved** that Bill Tucker be granted leave without pay from 1 January until 31 December, 2005.

8.1.3.2 **It was resolved** that the secretary write to Bill confirming this decision.

Action: Tony

8.1.4 Mr & Mrs Kent – Request for early enrolment for their daughter.

8.1.4.1 **It was resolved** that the request of Mr & Mrs Kent for the admission of their daughter Jane be approved, notwithstanding that her date of birth is two weeks after the normal enrolment limitation date. Action: Carol

8.2 Outward

8.2.1 Mr J Cayzer offering membership.

8.2.2 Mrs R Hughes – letter of thanks for efforts in obtaining playground equipment.

9 GENERAL BUSINESS

9.1 Board Training Seminar

9.1.1 It was noted that all directors are expected to attend the board training seminar being conducted by Christian Education National in Adelaide on Saturday 20 May.

9.1.2 **It was resolved** that potential new board members Mary Anderson, David Middleton and Heather Prudence be encouraged to attend the seminar. Action: George/Tony

9.2 Strategic Planning

9.2.1 **It was resolved** that the Strategic Plan 2004-2008 be reviewed by the board, as a basis for the Strategic Plan 2009 – 2013, at a special meeting called for that purpose at 7.30pm on Monday 15 May 2009.

9.2.2 **It was resolved** that association members and all other parents be invited to participate in a vision and goal setting seminar to be held on Saturday 10 June 2009.

9.2.3 **It was resolved** that the board executive and principal develop a programme for the vision and goal setting seminar for consideration by the board at its next meeting.

Action: George/Carol

10 NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the board is scheduled for **Monday 1 May 2009**.

11 CLOSING

The chairman closed the meeting in prayer at 10.30pm.

APPENDIX E – Nonprofit Boards: 12 Attributes of Excellence

- 1** Role of board is clear and distinct (non-competitive) from role of staff.
- 2** Governance is the board's focus, not functioning as the top rung of the management ladder.
- 3** Board members understand their "3 hats" (roles) — governance hat, volunteer hat, policy implementer hat (this last is seldom used when there are professional staff).
- 4** Board is clear about and "links with" its "*moral owners*" (those to whom it feels accountable) and is clear about the organisation's "*primary beneficiaries*."
- 5** Board adopts clear "ends" policies, ie, Which benefits?...For whom?... What cost/priority? (Then requires CEO to form a strategic plan linked to them.)
- 6** The CEO is the one agent of the board; responsible for achieving the "ends" policies within clear board parameters (other policies) on the "means."
- 7** All board standing policies are organized in one document, encompassing all board functions, and reviewed/improved at every meeting.
- 8** The board chairman "manages" the board, with support from the CEO.
- 9** Committees are formed to efficiently serve the board's needs, not staff needs, i.e., committees speak *to* the board, not *for* the board. The CEO assigns staff to help committees fulfill their governance role.
- 10** Board meetings are well-planned with board-friendly advance materials, good agendas, clear results, time for board fellowship.
- 11** New board members are selected based on known criteria for the right "mix" of board members; are well oriented both before and right after election; and evaluated prior to election to an additional term.
- 12** The board accepts responsibility for improving itself.

By Dr. Bob Andringa, author of *Nonprofit Board Answer Book: Practical Guidelines for Board Members and Chief Executives*, BoardSource (formerly the National Center for Nonprofit Boards).