



# Somerville House School Advisory Council Charter

August 2022



# PMSA

PRESBYTERIAN AND METHODIST  
SCHOOLS ASSOCIATION

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### 1. Preamble

*It will be asked, what is the aim of the promoters of this undertaking and of the Churches which have accepted it?*

*Our answer is – “The whole movement has been an inspiration of faith ...*

*The education of our young people is to us a matter of vital concern, and we felt we ought to be doing more than we have done to surround them with influences which would help to strengthen their Christian faith, and to form in them the Christian character.”*

**Hardie, D. (1918). ‘The Official Historic Statement,’ PMSA**

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this Charter is to document the objectives, responsibilities and approved framework for the operation of Somerville House School Advisory Council as part of the PMSA Group.

## 3. Legal entity

- 3.1 The PMSA was established as a body corporate by letters patent granted in 1918 pursuant to the *Religious Educational and Charitable Institutions Act 1861* (Qld) and is the legal entity for the four PMSA schools. The PMSA is a joint mission of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod and the Presbyterian Church of Queensland that promotes Christianity through involvement in education.
- 3.2 The PMSA is a large not-for-profit organisation registered under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (Cth) (ACNC Act) whose purpose is to advance education and to advance religion.
- 3.3 The PMSA is subject to the ACNC Act, the *Australian Education Act 2013* (Cth) and the *Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017* (Qld).

## 4. The PMSA Group

- 4.1 The PMSA formed a Group (Group) of schools and entities that, together, work to achieve the Christian mission of PMSA in education.
- 4.2 The Group is governed by the Constitution, By-laws and governance framework that supports the unique identity of each school within the Group.
- 4.3 The PMSA Board (Board), through their Constitution and By-laws has resolved to form a sub-committee – the Somerville House School Advisory Council. The School Advisory Council is advisory in nature and is delegated responsibilities by the Board to assist in governing the activities of Somerville House within the parameters, guidelines and frameworks set by the Board. The School Advisory Council reports regularly to the Board.
- 4.4 The School Advisory Council has an important shared governance relationship with other sub-committees that are responsible for organisation-wide initiatives of the Group. Together they work with the Group Office to achieve the Objects of the PMSA and support and promote the sustainability of the PMSA.

## 5. Somerville House

- 5.1 Somerville House was established in 1899.
- 5.2 The School vision is: Educating girls to be fearless leaders of change, developing excellence, confidence and connection to their individual purpose.

## 6. Objectives

The objectives of the School Advisory Council are to provide support and guidance to the Principal and input into the Principal's advice to the Board to implement the school Strategic Plan.

## 7. Role and responsibilities

The School Advisory Council is an Advisory body and does not have a decision-making authority. It informs, advises, and supports the Principal, CEO and PMSA Board.

- 7.1 As a sub-committee of the PMSA Board, the School Advisory Council has the following advisory responsibilities:
  - (1) Strategic advice – monitoring and advising the Principal regarding strategic matters.
    - (a) Provide a forum for continuous strategic discussion and ideas aimed at the long-term sustainability and development of the school;

- (b) Inform, advise and support the Principal in the development of the school strategic plan for approval of the Board including:
    - (i) supporting community consultation;
    - (ii) considering the assumptions made in the strategic plan; and
    - (iii) considering the school plan in the context of the overall PMSA strategic direction.
  - (c) Monitor and provide advice to the Principal on the school master plan.
  - (d) Monitor and provide advice to the Principal on the school's annual Business Plan and budget.
  - (e) Provide advice to the Principal on significant proposed capital works projects.
  - (f) Provide advice to the Principal on significant areas that may be of strategic risk.
  - (g) Provide advice to the Principal on the effectiveness of achievement of the school's Christian ethos and mission.
- (2) School ambassadors
- (a) Be ambassadors of the school:
    - (i) actively support the Principal in the encouragement of parent/guardian engagement;
    - (ii) connect with the school community and support groups to promote collaboration in achieving the school's strategy;
    - (iii) promote partnerships with wider local communities to enrich the school's offer to pupils; and
  - (b) Use their network of contacts to contribute to the growth of the school.
- (3) Advice to the Board

The School Advisory Council will provide advice to the Board on matters as requested from time to time.

7.2 Each School Advisory Council member is individually responsible to:

- (1) act in good faith and in the best interests of the school and the Group;
- (2) not improperly use their position or misuse information obtained as a School Advisory Council member;
- (3) declare any conflict of interest;
- (4) act with care and diligence in providing advice and support; and
- (5) report to the Board any matter that adversely impacts on the sustainability and reputation of the school.

## 8. Membership

- 8.1 School Advisory Council members are volunteers working collaboratively with the Principal in the best interests of the School within the context of the PMSA.
- 8.2 The School Advisory Council shall consist of up to five members with an appropriate balance to be drawn from both the school parent and wider community.
- 8.3 The Principal is an ex-officio, non-voting member of the School Advisory Council.
- 8.4 The PMSA CEO is to be invited to attend all School Advisory Council meetings as an ex-officio non-voting member.
- 8.5 The School Advisory Council may from time to time invite any person, including senior school executives, to attend meetings. Such attendance is non-voting.
- 8.6 PMSA Board Members reserve the right to attend any School Advisory Council meeting as an ex-officio, non-voting member.

## 9. Skills and capabilities

9.1 The Advisory Council members shall be appointed based on their appropriate skills and/or experience in relation to the business conducted by the school.

9.2 Mandatory skills and capabilities

- (1) Proactive commitment to the PMSA's and the school's Christian ethos, mission, vision, values and frameworks.
- (2) Understanding of the trends and issues in school education.
- (3) Community leadership or representation.
- (4) Ability to apply sufficient time and effort to achieve the objectives of the School Advisory Council.
- (5) Sufficient experience in committees / associations / boards to develop a good understanding of corporate governance requirements.
- (6) Preparedness to publicly identify with or champion independent, Christian-based schools.
- (7) Current Blue Card eligibility in accordance with the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (Qld) (Working with Children Act).
- (8) Meet the ACNC requirements of a Company Director.

9.3 Desired skills and attributes

In addition to these essential skills, new School Advisory Council members may be required to possess other specific skills and attributes depending on the School Advisory Council's skills matrix needs, which will be developed in collaboration with the Principal. These will be outlined in specific School Advisory Council vacancy advertisements.

## 10. Appointment

- 10.1 A call for expressions of interest will be advertised for vacancies of all positions on the School Advisory Council.
- 10.2 All appointments will take account of the skill matrix and requirements for the School Advisory Council and are in accordance with Group appointment processes overseen by the PMSA Nominations and Remuneration Committee.
- 10.3 The Chair is appointed from the members of the School Advisory Council by the PMSA Board following a recruitment process. This process shall take place by application and will take account of the mandatory skills and capabilities as well as the capabilities determined by the School Advisory Council or the PMSA Board for the position of Chair.

## 11. Terms of membership

- 11.1 Each School Advisory Council member will hold office for two years, or a shorter duration as approved by the PMSA Board.
- 11.2 At the end of each term, School Advisory Council members will be subject to retirement by rotation but shall be eligible for re-appointment subject to Clause 11.3.
- 11.3 A School Advisory Council member may be appointed for a maximum of six years.
- 11.4 The term of appointment as Chair is two years and are eligible for reappointment subject to Clause 11.3.

## 12. No remuneration

- 12.1 No School Advisory Council member may receive any remuneration for service in their capacity as a School Advisory Council member.

- 12.2 Notwithstanding Clause 12.1, a School Advisory Council member may be reimbursed for reasonable travel and other business expenses incurred in connection with their role on the School Advisory Council with the approval of the Principal.

### 13. Vacation of office

#### 13.1 Removal from office

- (1) The PMSA Board may dismiss a School Advisory Council member, including a School Advisory Council Chair. Prior to such action, the PMSA Chair will consult the Principal, the CEO, the School Advisory Council Chair and the individual concerned.
- (2) A School Advisory Council member has no right of appeal against the decision of the PMSA Board.

#### 13.2 The office of a School Advisory Council member immediately becomes vacant if the School Advisory Council member:

- (1) dies;
- (2) becomes bankrupt or compounds with creditors or otherwise takes advantage of the laws in force for the time being related to bankruptcy;
- (3) becomes of unsound mind or a person whose person or estate is liable to be dealt with in any way under the law relating to mental health;
- (4) is convicted of an indictable offence or an offence punishable on summary conviction for which the person is sentenced to imprisonment, other than in default of payment of a fine;
- (5) has been convicted on indictment or summarily and sentenced to imprisonment, other than in default of payment of a fine and the rehabilitation period in relation to the conviction has not expired;
- (6) becomes disqualified from being a director under the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) (Corporations Act) or a responsible entity under the ACNC Act or any order made under the Corporations Act or the ACNC Act;
- (7) no longer complies with the Working with Children Act; or
- (8) resigns from office in accordance with clause 13.3.

#### 13.3 Resignation

- (1) A School Advisory Council member may resign from office by giving written notice to the Chair.
- (2) The resignation of a School Advisory Council member takes effect on the date of receipt of the notice of resignation or any later date provided in the notice.

### 14. Meetings

- 14.1 The School Advisory Council shall meet at least six times per year.

Each School Advisory Council meeting shall be opened and closed in prayer.

- 14.2 The School Advisory Council may determine the conduct of the meeting.
- 14.3 Meetings are called by the Chair of the School Advisory Council and a minimum of seven days' notice will be given.
- 14.4 The agenda and any paper(s) for a meeting will be circulated at least seven days prior to the meeting to all School Advisory Council members, excepting for a meeting called for an urgent matter in accordance with 14.3. (Appendix 1 provides further detail on meeting processes.)
- 14.5 The Principal will appoint a school staff member to provide meeting support. The School Advisory Council Chair is responsible for circulating the meeting outcomes in accordance with the By-laws.

14.6 A meeting must include the Principal or Principal’s representative.

## 15. Reporting

15.1 The Chair of the School Advisory Council shall:

- (1) Provide a report to the Board as outlined in the PMSA annual calendar (and at any time if requested by the Board); and
- (2) Attend the PMSA Board meetings as outlined in the PMSA annual calendar.

15.2 The outcomes of all School Advisory Council meetings shall be provided to the Board via the CEO.

## 16. Authority

- 16.1 The School Advisory Council serves in an advisory capacity only. All executive powers remain with the Board.
- 16.2 The Principal, CEO or PMSA Board is not bound by advice received from the School Advisory Council but will consider it appropriately in the context of the overall strategy and direction of the school and PMSA.
- 16.3 The School Advisory Council may suggest items or issues that ought to be considered by the Board at its meetings via the CEO.
- 16.4 The CEO and/or the Board Chair are the authorised spokespersons for the Group. The Principal is the nominated spokesperson for School initiatives, announcements and issues raised in the local media. No School Advisory Council member has authority to speak on behalf of the School or School Advisory Council, unless explicitly delegated and authorised by the Principal and/or CEO in lieu of the Principal.

The CEO may represent the School in lieu of the Principal and/or delegate this role to the School Advisory Council Chair.

## 17. School Advisory Council evaluations

The School Advisory Council undertakes an annual evaluation of the School Advisory Council performance to support ongoing development and improvement.

## 18. Review

This Charter will be reviewed by the Board as required.

## 19. Review and version control register

Version	Authorising officer	Approval date	Effective date	Change history / superseded documents	Next review date
1.0	PMSA Board	2/9/2019	5/9/2019	Replaced Council Manual – Part A Section 3(a0(vi) Committee Charter – School Council	September 2020
2.0	PMSA Board	15/6/2020	18/6/2020	Amendment to Board membership of School Council	June 2021

Version	Authorising officer	Approval date	Effective date	Change history / superseded documents	Next review date
3.0	PMSA Board	8/3/2021	By Sept 2021 (pending implementation plan)	Revised responsibilities to advisory Council	Sept 2024
4.0	PMSA Board	16/8/2021	17/8/21	Revised membership to include CEO attendance. Revised role of council and principal. Revised powers of council.	Sept 2024
5.0	PMSA Board	2/8/2022	2/8/2022	Revised entire document to align with governance structure changes.	July 2023

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 School Advisory Council Chair's Playbook
- Appendix 2 School Advisory Council Sample Agenda
- Appendix 3 School Advisory Council Sample Meeting Outcomes
- Appendix 4 School Advisory Council Sample Business Paper