



Chairo
Christian School

Governance at Chairo

Last Revision: January 2020



As a large and complex independent school operated by a not-for-profit incorporated association, good governance is vitally important to us at Chairo Christian School. This brochure contains useful information about how Chairo is structured, who governs and how, and some ways in which members of the school community can contribute.

THE ASSOCIATION

Chairo is owned and operated by the Warragul District Parent Controlled Christian School Association Incorporated.

The use of 'parent controlled' in the name is sometimes misunderstood and really just means that the Association is *governed* by a Board of Directors whose members are Chairo parents.

Chairo parents/guardians and staff members automatically become *associate members* of the Association and a small annual membership fee (currently \$22) is payable.

FULL MEMBERS

Chairo parents who are Christians and fully supportive of our *Articles of Faith*, and have been *associate members* for at least six months, are able to apply to become *full members* of the Association.

Full members are eligible to vote at general meetings and to serve on Board committees, and they can also be nominated for election to the Board, or nominate others for election to the Board.

While all members of the Association are welcome and encouraged to attend general meetings of the Association, full members are expected to attend such meetings, exercise their right to vote and engage in the overall process of governing the school.



THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board elections are held annually at a general meeting in November, with directors generally elected for three-year terms. Board members are elected from and by the Association full members.

Board members set the mission and vision of the school; make strategic, governance-level decisions; and oversee the implementation of initiatives that relate to finances, resources and future-direction.

The Board is directly responsible for employing executive staff (i.e. Executive Principal, Business Manager, Principals), who then take care of the day-to-day running of the school.

GENERAL MEETINGS

Two general meetings are held each year and all Association members are invited to attend. Related documents (e.g. agenda, annual reports, past meeting minutes) are distributed prior to meetings.

The Annual General Meeting is held in late May. At this meeting, the audited financial statements for the previous year are considered, other reports are presented and an interesting guest speaker addresses the meeting.

A further general meeting is held in November each year — again including a guest speaker and reports (financial, developments, staffing, etc.). Board elections are conducted at this meeting.

THE RULES

As part of the enrolment process, new parents are provided with a copy of the *Statement of Rules*, which contains information about membership, general meetings, the Board and other matters.

As a minimum, we recommend that new parents and staff members read through Sections 5 (Articles of Faith), 8 (membership), 13 (annual general meetings) and 23 (the Board).

The *Rules* contain our *Articles of Faith*, a summary statement of the underlying, fundamental doctrinal or biblical principles that we believe and ascribe to as a Christian organisation.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can I become an associate member of the Association before I have a child at Chairo?

Yes, it is possible to submit an early application to the Board for associate membership. While this rarely happens, it does have the advantage of triggering early commencement of the six-month qualifying period before you can apply to become a full member.

Why do I have to be an associate member for six months before applying for full membership?

This qualifying period is required by our *Statement of Rules* and provides time for you to get to know and understand Chairo and our governance structure before you commit to the rights and responsibilities that come with full membership of the Association.

What is the process in order to apply to become a full member of the Association?

You can obtain an application form by contacting the office at any Chairo campus. Your completed form will be passed to the Board, following which a Board member will make a time to meet with you. The Board will then consider your application at their next meeting.

Why can only Christian parents apply to become full members of the Association?

The parents who founded Chairo in the early 1980s were committed to the school being genuinely Christian in all aspects and never losing that focus. Today, we still believe that the best way to achieve that is for the school to be governed by Christian men and women.

Can I continue to be a full member of the Association if I don't have children at Chairo?

Yes, while most parents (assuming they are not continuing staff members) conclude their active involvement with the school when their children have graduated, the *Statement of Rules* does provide for full members to continue as such for up to five years.

Why is it important that parents apply to become full members of the Association?

For Chairo to continue as a parent-governed school, a strong Association is essential. The Association owns and operates Chairo, and it is the full members of the Association who are able to vote in relation to all key decisions regarding our future direction and development.

Why can only current Chairo parents apply to be full members or serve on the Board?

Chairo is operated by a parent-controlled Association and is a member of CEN (Christian Education National), whose member schools all have similar structures to Chairo. As a parent-controlled Association, it is important that a clear majority of full members and Board members are current parents.

Can people who are not current Chairo parents also contribute at a governance level?

Yes, past-parents are able to continue as full members (and on the Board in some cases) for up to five years if they wish. There are also opportunities for other people with particular experience or expertise to serve on committees or even provide assistance to the Board.

Why should parents and staff members attend general meetings of the Association?

General meetings are always encouraging and informative, and allow Association members to contribute to the decision-making process. Reports help raise awareness about finances, facilities, strategic planning, new initiatives, campus developments and more.

Where are the general meetings held and what time do they usually start and finish?

Most general meetings are held at the Drouin Campus, which is the campus that is most central for Chairo families. These meetings start at 7.30 pm and finish by 9.30 pm at the latest, following which there is always an opportunity for a time of fellowship over supper.

How can I get access to a copy of the Statement of Rules and/or the Articles of Faith?

The *Articles of Faith* is part of the *Statement of Rules*, and all families should have received a printed copy during the enrolment process. However, you can also find this document on the school website (there's a link in several places, including on the Association page under Community) and also on Linc.

What time commitment is expected of Board members (meetings, committees, etc.)?

Board members attend about ten Board meetings per year (including one all-day Saturday planning day) plus the two general meetings. Most also serve on a committee or two. Naturally, there is a quantity of reading and preparation to be done prior to Board meetings.

How can I become a Board member or nominate someone else to be a Board member?

Full members can be nominated for election to the Board and can also nominate others. Nomination and application forms can be obtained by contacting the office at any Chairo campus. Completed forms are passed to the Board, and the full Board then conducts an interview with each Board nominee. The Board election occurs at the November general meeting.

Are there also some Board committees that operate and who serves on these?

In addition to ad-hoc committees and panels, the main Board committees include Board Development Committee, Finance Committee and Board Education Committee. Board members, staff members and other members of the school community serve on these.

What are the main differences between the responsibilities of Board and management?

The Board's governance role includes strategic planning, vision setting, financial oversight, employment and review of executive staff and policy development. Responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school and implementation of the Board's strategic plan is delegated to those staff members in management positions.

