



MARIST EDUCATION  
AUTHORITY  
SUB MARIAE NOMINE

# **Roles, Responsibilities & Authority**



# Foreword

Jean Claude Colin, founder of the Society of Mary, set a clear and compelling vision for the contribution that Marist schools should offer society. That vision focussed on the central importance of the task of educating young people as Christian citizens and the value of every young person as a unique individual. These values have been at the core of our education mission in Ireland since 1860 with the foundation of St. Mary's College, Dundalk, the foundation of CUS in 1867 and the foundation of Chanel College in 1955.

How we delivered that mission had adapted over the years as education thinking changed and evolved. Up to the 1960's, it was the work primarily of the many Marist Fathers who taught in and managed our schools. Over recent decades this has changed. Today our schools are places of increasing partnership between lay staff, pupils, parents and the Marist community.

As religious congregations diminish in numbers we have all been challenged to confront questions about the future of our mission. The Marist Fathers have been fully involved in this process. Because we value our Marist charism and long tradition in education we have chosen to continue our involvement in this ministry but in a new and what we hope is a sustainable way. The Marist Education Authority is the result of our deliberations and is our way of sustaining and continuing our education mission into the future.

The quality of education that we can offer our young people makes a profound difference not just to them as individuals but also to how our society progresses. Our reflections in collaboration with many others on the future suggest that Marist education principles continue to have great value. The MEA will ensure a dedicated team working with each of our schools as they develop new and creative ways of animating the Marist principles of education to meet the needs of our young people. The MEA has specific roles, responsibilities and authority, set out here, which are designed to support our schools being the very best they can be in the Marist tradition.

The Marists Fathers are happy we have found a way of continuing to be engaged pro-actively in the ministry of education. When we consulted with the Boards, principals, staffs and the wider Marist community about this way forward we were met with enthusiasm and energy and some further searching questions. We believe that this approach will take us in new directions. Education changes, society changes, and as Marists we hope we have risen to this new challenge, just as our Founders responded to the challenges of their time.

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# ***The Marist Education Authority: roles, responsibilities and authority***

## **1. Introduction and Context**

### **1.1 The Marist Education Authority**

The Marist Education Authority is being established by the Irish Province of the Society of Mary as a body dedicated to proactive education trusteeship. Through its establishment, Marists wish to demonstrate their commitment, as owners of the three Marist schools in Ireland, to the long term future of the schools, and the safeguarding, promotion and development of the Catholic and Marist ethos in them.

The Provincial and his Council, as trustees of the schools, recognise that caring for and educating effectively each student within a Catholic and Marist ethos is a core value, and that they have the primary responsibility to create the conditions necessary for this core value to become a reality. This responsibility will be exercised on behalf of the Provincial and his Council by the Marist Education Authority.

In exercising this responsibility, the Marist Education Authority will adopt a partnership approach, recognising that the interdependent relationships and interaction between trustees, management, staff, students and parents are necessary for each school to offer the educational services most suited to its individual circumstances. This approach will take into account that each partner will act at a level appropriate to their influence in the governance of each school depending on their specific mandate, competence and authority.

### **1.2 The Catholic School**

While there is a continuing debate about how the purpose of a Catholic school may be articulated, the following definition from Denis McLaughlin would appear to state the key features in concise and comprehensible language:

*'The purpose of the Catholic school is to proclaim the kingdom through an authentic educational enterprise, by developing within it an ethos and structures that aim to reflect the values that Jesus lived. In practical terms this means the aspiring*

*towards right relationships critiqued by justice, charity, peace and liberty. For many, hopefully, this will be through the growth of a personal, sacramental and communal relationship with Christ.*<sup>1</sup>

This definition provides the basis for the establishment of the principles and criteria outlined in section 5 of this document.

### 1.3 The Marists in Education

Marists believe that the Society of Mary, to which they belong, exists because of the desire of Mary, the mother of mercy, to support the church in every age. Her concern for the church gives them their sense of mission: **to gather in mercy and compassion all God's people**. It calls them moreover to think, judge and act as Mary in all things. This special sense of mission determines their various ministries, of which education has always been regarded as amongst the most important.

From the very beginning, Jean-Claude Colin, Founder of the Marist Fathers, regarded education as "entrusted by Providence to the Society of Mary". From him, Marists have inherited two keynotes of his educational inspiration: the high importance of the educational task, and the personal value of the individual pupil. Education is understood by Marists as a work of "formation of heart, mind, character and virtue", in short, the formation of the whole person, which prepares the young to be not only disciples but citizens as well: Christian members of society.

As in other ministries Marists derive a particular style and approach in education from their fundamental conviction that their's is the work of Mary. In schools they see themselves called to be, in Colin's words, "instruments of mercy", reflecting Mary's maternal concern for all, especially the weak and disadvantaged. From this concern emerges a school community based on the ideal of family spirit where listening, respect, patience and a caring approach guarantee justice and dignity for all.

Contemporary Irish society provides the context of the Marist mission. Society is more secular and pluralist than ever, where traditional values and customs co-exist with new and sometimes opposing values and practices. This constitutes substantial social change involving both positive and negative dimensions. Most importantly, it opens up an immense task of evangelisation, providing an urgent sense of purpose and hope in our

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1 McLaughlin D, The Catholic School: paradoxes and challenges, Australian Catholic Commission for Industrial Relations, 2000

ministry to Irish youth. In this challenging context, our schools seek to provide a persuasive experience of Christian community.

## 2. General Principles

### **Guiding Principle:**

Authority is exercised in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity where decisions are made at the appropriate level. A higher level body will take action only if and insofar as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by a lower level authority.

The Provincial, Provincial Council, Marist Education Authority, Board of Management, Principal, teachers, parents and pupils will act within the terms of their respective mandates, competence and authority and at a level appropriate to their influence in the governance of each school.

## 3. The Provincial and his Council

The Provincial and his Council, as the trustees of our three schools:

- a) have the ultimate responsibility for Marist education matters and for the actions of the persons and bodies working on its behalf;
- b) will delegate all the functions of trusteeship to the Marist Education Authority except the following:
  - the appointment of the Marist Education Authority Director
  - the appointment of the Marist Education Authority members, following consultation with, and the receipt of advice from, the Director
  - the approval of annual capital expenditures of €50,000 or more, over and above the annual income, following a recommendation by the Marist Education Authority
  - any proposed changes in the status and/or form of trusteeship of any of the schools.
- c) will delegate to the Marist Education Authority all school negotiations concerning proposed capital expenditures.

#### **4. The Marist Education Authority**

The Marist Education Authority shall

- a) act with full authority, on behalf of the Provincial and his Council, in all trustee matters except where it is indicated otherwise (see detailed list of trustee functions in section 6 below);
- b) safeguard and promote the Catholic and Marist ethos in Marist schools;
- c) be accountable to the Provincial and his Council for its work when it is requested but not less than once every trimester. This accountability will be exercised through a written and oral report from the Marist Education Authority on the state of the Marist Education Authority and each school. Reports in relation to each school will contain particular references to matters of ethos, pastoral care, RE, catechesis, academic achievement, discipline, finance and financial management, the condition and maintenance of the school plant, school planning and development, staff issues, and partnership;
- d) act on behalf of the Provincial and his Council in Marist education matters, proper to its authority, within Marist schools and with all other bodies involved in education;
- e) establish principles, criteria and conditions for the existence and development of Marist schools (see section 5 below), and exercise its functions in a proactive manner;
- f) appoint, from among its members, a representative to the Board of Management of each Marist secondary school (the effectiveness of this provision to be reviewed after one year of operation);
- g) adhere to, in policy and action, the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Management and school Principal as outlined in the current Manual for Boards of Management of Catholic Secondary Schools (AMCSS, 2003) and the Education Act 1998;
- h) after six years, conduct a review of the trustee arrangements for Marist schools and make a report with recommendations for the future, to the Provincial and his Council;
- i) carry out any other appropriate duties delegated to it by the Provincial and his Council.

The Marist Education Authority will be funded in part by the Marist Fathers and in part by Marist schools.

A diagrammatic representation of the roles and responsibilities is outlined as an Appendix.

## 5. Principles and criteria for the existence and development of Marist Schools

The purpose of this section is to establish some general principles about the operation and development of Marist schools, which are consistent with Marist thinking on education and on the establishment and functions of a Marist Education Authority, and which can be applied by the Marist Education Authority to each school.

### 5.1 Developing the principles

The following are suggested as general principles/ criteria on which the Marist Education Authority will base its operation in respect of the continued support and development of Marist schools.

That each school is or becomes identifiable as:

- ***A Catholic school in the Marist tradition:*** reflecting the Marist education and religious philosophy;
- ***A purposeful school:*** having a firm understanding of its purpose and a vision for its development;
- ***An effective school:*** using all its resources effectively, together with tools of diagnosis, planning and evaluation to ensure the effectiveness of the educational experience offered to its students;
- ***An educational community:*** developing and maintaining effective communication and mutual respect between trustees, management, staff, students and parents;
- ***A responsive school:*** responding to and catering for the particular spiritual, personal, social, academic and vocational needs of its students and potential students.

### 5.2 Applying the principles

While the principles outlined above are broad in nature, they provide a firm basis for the formulation of a set of criteria for the establishment of enabling and development conditions for each school, as the following table demonstrates:

A. Principles/ criteria	B. How would we know that we have achieved this goal
<p><b>A Catholic school in the Marist tradition:</b> reflecting the Marist education and religious philosophies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● an agreed set of values which drive the education philosophy of the school</li> <li>● its mission statement</li> <li>● the way people relate to each other in the school</li> <li>● its way of making decisions and implementing them</li> <li>● liturgical events</li> <li>● symbols and signs</li> <li>● its emphasis on spiritual development, RE, fostering mutual respect, pastoral care, links with the home, etc</li> </ul>
<p><b>A purposeful school:</b> having a firm understanding of its purpose and a vision for its development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● a concise, meaningful and effective mission statement which reflects Marist thinking and the realities of the school</li> <li>● a mechanism for creating a vision for its development and for re-visiting this vision</li> <li>● target-based plans and agreement on how to implement them, especially through the school development planning process</li> </ul>
<p><b>An effective school:</b> using all its resources effectively, together with tools of diagnosis, planning and evaluation to ensure the effectiveness of the educational experience offered to its students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● an explicit commitment to school planning and evaluation as integral elements in the operation of the school</li> <li>● effective staff management and development</li> <li>● effective financial management</li> <li>● a curriculum which reflects the needs of the students in the school</li> </ul>

<p><b>An educational community:</b> developing and maintaining effective communication and mutual respect between trustees, management, staff, students and parents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● effective opportunities for education partners to meet and to collaborate in the operation of the school</li> <li>● a clear understanding of the respective roles of the educational partners</li> <li>● clear channels of communication between the educational partners</li> </ul>
<p><b>A responsive school:</b> responding to and catering for the particular spiritual, personal, social, academic and vocational needs of its students and potential students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● knowing the needs of its students</li> <li>● organising teaching and learning in such a way as these needs are being met</li> <li>● catering effectively for differing abilities and intelligences</li> <li>● counselling and spiritual accompaniment</li> <li>● a caring atmosphere and a structured pastoral care system</li> <li>● policies and procedures which focus on the needs of the students</li> </ul>

### 5.3 Establishing the enabling and development conditions for each school

The Marist Education Authority will work with each school to rapidly establish enabling and development conditions based on the above principles. This will be done by working with the Board of Management, the Principal and Deputy Principal, the staff, parent bodies and the other education partners as appropriate, to identify issues which need to be addressed. This work will centre around the following question:

What needs to happen in each school in relation to each of the items in column B above, in order for the school to be recognised as a Catholic school in the Marist tradition, a purposeful school, an effective school, an educational community, and a responsive school?

### 5.4 Establishing action plans and targets for each school

The Marist Education Authority will then work with each school to establish specific action plans and targets in relation to the identified issues. Each action plan will be formulated in such a way as to specify the following:

Purpose	
Desired outcome	
Objectives	
Tasks and targets	
Individual or group responsible for developing plan	
To whom this individual or group is accountable and how	
Individual or group responsible for implementing plan	
To whom this individual or group is accountable and how	
Date by which the development of the plan will be completed	
Date for implementation	
Date for completion, if appropriate	
Date for evaluation	
Methodology for evaluation and reporting	
Individual or group responsible for evaluation	
Support and intervention strategies to be employed if targets are not being met	

## 6. Trustee functions performed by the Marist Education Authority and the Provincial/ Provincial Council

The following functions will be performed by the Marist Provincial, the Provincial Council, and the Marist Education Authority in developing and applying the principles and criteria for the existence and development of Marist Schools outlined in the previous section:

### 6.1 Trustee functions in which the Provincial and Provincial Council have a direct role

- Visiting schools (Provincial)
- Approving Trustee nominees to Boards of Management
- Deploying Marist personnel in the schools
- Managing any amalgamations/ closures of schools run by Marists
- Approving procedures for the proper management of the capital expenditure of each school
- Approving capital projects the estimated cost of which will exceed €50,000
- Approving procedures for the proper management of school debts and specific guidelines on debt service

### 6.2 Trustee functions performed by the Marist Education Authority (MEA) and the Provincial/ Provincial Council (P/PC)

	MEA	P/PC
<b>General Trustee functions:</b>		
■ safeguarding the Catholic nature and ethos of each school	x	
■ ensuring that there exists a precise statement of the Marist religious and educational philosophy in a form accessible to its partners and the public	x	
■ creating a vision based on Marist education philosophy	x	
■ formulating processes which will enable the Marist Education Authority to revisit its vision in a systematic and coherent manner	x	
■ formulating evaluation procedures to ensure that its policy and plans are guided by its vision and philosophy	x	
■ evaluating its own effectiveness	x	

■ managing any amalgamations/ closures of schools run by Marists	x	x
■ communicating the role of the Marist Education Authority at regular intervals	x	
■ ensuring ongoing communication with the key partners in the school communities regarding school and trustee developments	x	
■ creating a schedule of regular meetings with key partners in each school, in accordance with procedures agreed with the Board of Management	x	
■ promoting networks between schools owned by the Marists	x	
■ adjudicating on matters referred to it by Boards	x	
■ identifying and preparing Trustee nominees for service on Boards of Management	x	
■ carrying out any functions delegated to it by the Provincial and his Council	x	
<b>In relation to individual schools:</b>		
■ maintaining an operational relationship with each school	x	
■ having a sound knowledge base about each school	x	
■ It is recognised that the CUS preparatory school is an integral part of CUS, even though its management structures differ from the secondary school. For the purposes of this document, the preparatory school is deemed to come within the remit of the MEA.	x	
■ visiting schools (in addition to regular visits by Marist Education Authority personnel, the Provincial will also be encouraged to visit each school at least once annually, on which visits he may be accompanied by the Marist Education Authority Executive Director)	x	x
■ being visible and known by key school personnel	x	
■ developing links with past pupils' bodies with a view to fostering co-operation in appropriate ventures	x	

■ ensuring that structures are in place to provide liturgical/ social/ educational events	x	
■ considering reports from schools (with particular reference to matters of ethos, pastoral care, RE, catechesis, academic achievement, discipline, finance and financial management, the condition and maintenance of the school plant, school planning and development, staff issues, and partnership)	x	
■ developing a procedure so that the structures are in place to fairly negotiate and resolve areas of dispute between the Marist Education Authority and each school	x	
■ initiating and supporting school programmes which reflect and promote the priorities of the Marist Fathers	x	
■ providing particular supports and opportunities relating to the education of disadvantaged students	x	
<b>In relation to the Board of Management of each school</b>		
■ selecting Trustee nominees to Boards of Management, following consultation with each Principal, with the approval of the Provincial and Provincial Council	x	x
■ appointing school Boards of Management	x	
■ nominating the chairpersons of the Boards of Management	x	
■ ensuring that a member of the Marist Education Authority is a member of each Board	x	
■ meeting with and providing training for incoming Boards of Management	x	
■ providing continuous training and support to members of the Boards of Management	x	
■ preparing a directory of personnel with relevant expertise who can provide support and advice	x	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ establishing a pattern of regular structured meetings (at least once a term) with each Board of Management, in order to consider matters, including ethos, pastoral care, RE, catechesis, finance and financial management, the condition and maintenance of the school plant, school planning and development, staff issues, and partnership</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ providing feedback to the Board of Management in accordance with procedures to be agreed with each school</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ keeping the Boards of Management and partners fully briefed on the operation of the Marist Education Authority</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ de-briefing position holders at end of terms of office</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ dissolving a Board of Management under the terms of the Education Act, if necessary</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ managing directly a school whose Board of Management had been dissolved (see Education Act)</li> </ul>	x	
<b>In relation to the Principal/ Deputy Principal</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ developing an effective working relationship with the Principal and Deputy Principal of each school</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ holding regular meetings (at least one per term) with the Principal and Deputy Principal of each school with a view to discussing such matters as ethos, pastoral care, RE, catechesis, academic achievement, discipline, finance and financial management, the condition and maintenance of the school plant, school planning and development, staff issues, and partnership</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ arranging for regular meetings (at least one per term) between the Principals and Deputy Principals of all Marist schools</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ arranging for each Principal and Deputy Principal to receive the in-service training necessary to carry out his/ her functions effectively</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ working with the Principal and Deputy Principal of each school to establish mechanisms whereby the agreed enabling and developing conditions may be implemented</li> </ul>	x	

<b>In relation to school development planning</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ conducting continuous and in-depth reviews and regular structured evaluations of the progress of each school in its general development, and in meeting particular targets set for the implementation of the agreed enabling and development conditions</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ in collaboration with the school Principal and the chairperson of the Board of Management, ensuring that the Board of Management will cover all the business proper to its function within a school year (annual plans and targets etc)</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ initiating and taking a lead role in the school development planning process in each school, agreeing a timescale of targets to be reached in the overall planning process, particularly in relation to meeting the enabling and development conditions in respect of each school</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ with the Board of Management, the Principal and Deputy Principal of each school, reviewing progress in relation to meeting particular targets set for the implementation of the agreed enabling and development conditions</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ establishing procedures and protocols for intervention if the Marist Education Authority believes that such targets are not being met (these will be the subject of on-going discussion by the Marist Education Authority, but may range from the provision of targeted supports to, in extreme circumstances, a recommendation to the Provincial and Provincial Council for Marist withdrawal from, or closure of, the school [see section7])</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ being involved in the formulation and approval of a mission statement for each school</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ considering and approving the school development plans in each school</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ influencing and approving school policies on Religious Education and catechetics, pastoral care, special needs education, home-school liaison, academic achievement, enrolment/ admissions, curriculum, behaviour code etc</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ initiating Board of Management reporting procedures</li> </ul>	x	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ receiving, analysing and responding to minutes and reports from the Board of Management of each school</li> </ul>	x	
<b>In relation to staffing</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In relation to the deployment of Marist personnel in the schools, the Marist Provincial, who has the ultimate authority in these matters, will consult annually with the Marist Education Authority Director and the Principal of each school</li> </ul>	x	x
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ promoting in-service training of personnel and the induction of new staff in Marist schools in order to assist in their professional and personal development and their familiarity with the Marist ethos and traditions, with the equivalent of at least one day per year on the school calendar being devoted to the latter</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ advising schools on appropriate procedures and criteria for the recruitment of staff</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ appointing trustee representatives on selection panels for Principal, Deputy Principal and for other appointments, as appropriate</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ being acquainted with, and involved in, any proposal to dismiss a teacher, in accordance with any agreed procedures</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ considering an appeal from any dismissed teacher</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ meeting with staff in each school at least once a year, and at least twice in the first year of the Marist Education Authority's operation</li> </ul>	x	
<b>In relation to finance/ property</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ investigating sources of funding for the maintenance and development of the schools</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ formulating appropriate structures and mechanisms for the financial accountability of each school</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ retaining the right to attend meetings of the Board of Management Finance Committee in each school</li> </ul>	x	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ establishing protocols for access to, discussion of, and the promotion of transparency in, each school's accounts and other relevant financial information (this will include having access to bank records and the views of any accountant or other finance professional retained by each school)</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ examining and deciding on proposals relating to excess of expenditure over income</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ having procedures for dealing with and vetting the current budgets and general financial management systems in each school, having regard for any procedures already in place in the school, which are deemed by both the Marist Education Authority and the Board of Management to be effective</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ having access to expertise relating to contracts and hire purchase agreements</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ issuing specific guidelines on insurance</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ ensuring the maintenance of the property and plant of each school</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ being aware of all details relating to property held and the contents therein</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ issuing guidelines on alterations and renovations to property</li> </ul>	x	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ approving procedures for the proper management of the capital expenditure of each school</li> </ul>	x	x (projects over €50,000)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ approving procedures for the proper management of school debts and issuing specific guidelines on debt service</li> </ul>	x	x
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ issuing guidelines on the use of a school by outside groups</li> </ul>	x	

## **7. Specific interventions to assist schools to meet their agreed targets**

In section 6.2, under the sub-heading 'School Development Planning', reference is made to agreement between the Marist Education Authority and each school in relation to setting planning targets which will help them to fulfil their enabling and development conditions. It is intended that the Marist Education Authority will initiate a process with the management and staff of each school, designed to identify specific priority areas of development, and to formulate action plans and targets to address them.

The Marist Education Authority will help and support schools to reach these targets in a variety of ways, including:

- providing specific advice;
- providing for advice and/or consultancy from independent source(s);
- providing targeted support(s) such as grant aid and/ or training, in response to particular identified and verified needs;
- re-scheduling targets and/or deadlines if particular circumstances dictate: this re-scheduling would be directed by the Marist Education Authority following consultation with the Board of Management of the school.

It is hoped that these interventions would give each school the best opportunity possible to meet their agreed targets. However, where the Marist Education Authority believes that all avenues of collaboration and support have been exhausted and have failed to assist an individual school to meet their agreed targets, the MEA will consider the following interventions:

- verbal and written communication expressing dissatisfaction and possible consequences
- meeting of the Board of Management with the MEA to discuss the Board's plans to address the concerns raised
- a formal visitation to the school to evaluate progress on the agreed plan followed by a formal report to the Board
- withholding of grants and/ or other supports

- the dismissal of the Board of Management and the imposition of direct management by the Marist Education Authority, in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998
- a recommendation to the Provincial and his Council for withdrawal of Marist recognition from the school
- closure of the school following a decision by the Provincial and his Council.

## **8. School Finances and Financial Management**

While the Board of Management of each school is responsible for the day to day financial management of the school, these responsibilities and their associated powers are exercised under the 'general supervision and control of the trustees' (Articles of Management, 1989, article 2(a)).

Three reasons for this provision are supplied in 'The Trusteeship of Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools: a handbook for the leaders of religious congregations' (CORI:1996), as follows:

1. As legal owners of the school, trustees retain authority in relation to the building and plant and, therefore, in relation to capital expenditure;
2. Trustees bear the ultimate responsibility for any debts incurred by the school that have been approved by the trustees;
3. Trustees must, in a general way, seek to ensure that the school's resources are deployed in a manner consistent with the congregation's religious and educational philosophy.

The Marist Education Authority will develop policies and procedures through which this general supervision and control may be exercised, having regard for any procedures already in place in each school, which are deemed by both the Marist Education Authority and the Board of Management to be effective. These policies and procedures will be based on examples of good practice in the education system and elsewhere. The following is an outline of the policies and procedures to be included:

## **Principles**

School finances are to be managed in accordance with best practice, with effective records, and transparent reporting.

## **Structures**

The Board of Management of each school is responsible to the Marist Education Authority for the effective financial management of school resources. Each Board of Management shall establish a finance committee which, inter alia, will perform the following functions:

- a) formulate draft budgets
- b) monitor income and expenditure including an examination of all bank statements at least every term
- c) establish effective financial management systems and controls
- d) advise on corrective measures to be taken if necessary
- e) provide a full report on each and all school accounts detailing income, expenditure, comparison with budgets, cash flow and so on to each meeting of the Board of Management, assisted, as appropriate, by the school's accountant

The Principal will be responsible for the day-to-day financial management of the school in accordance with the budgets agreed by the Board of Management.

## **Budgets**

Each Board of Management will prepare a budget for the forthcoming year prior to the start of the accounting year. This budget is to cover each area of the school's activities and must be accompanied by an estimate of cash flow. This budget is to be submitted to the Marist Education Authority for approval.

Any proposals for special projects or initiatives which will bear a cost must be submitted to the Marist Education Authority for their approval.

Any proposed capital projects must be submitted to the Marist Education Authority for their approval.

## **Reporting**

Each Board of Management must submit to the Marist Education Authority, at the end of each school term, a comprehensive financial report incorporating the full accounts.

Each school must submit to the Marist Education Authority and to the Provincial and his Council a set of audited accounts not later than three months following the close of the accounting year.

## **Purchasing**

All school purchases must be approved by the Principal. Each purchase order must be entered into an Order Book.

Quotations should be obtained for all purchases of equipment, services and other items.

The cost of day-to-day items should be checked and compared to other suppliers periodically to ensure that the best value is being obtained.

For items or services which exceed an annual value of €5,000, tenders should be obtained from three suppliers and submitted to the Board of Management for approval.

## **Payments**

Payments by cheque and cash will be covered by strict policy guidelines. Each school cheque will be signed by any two of four people designated (and minuted) as cheque signatories by the Board of Management. Blank cheques will not be pre-signed.

Payments should only be made when an invoice has been received and passed for payment by the Principal.

Invoices for goods and services received should be signed off for payment by the Principal only when the goods/ services have been received (signed delivery docket required), and checked against the order book and any quotation received.

Where a payment is to be made for which an invoice has not been received, a 'Request for Payment' form should be completed and approved by the Principal before payment is made.

All petty cash transactions must be authorised by the Principal and must be accounted for by way of a receipt attached to a petty cash docket.

### **Receipts**

All monies received not relating to an invoice previously raised, must be receipted, and a duplicate of the receipt retained for record purposes.

### **Financial controls, records and management systems**

Each school must have an effective manual or computerised book-keeping system in place to accurately record all transactions. Separate books should be kept for receipts, payments and petty cash.

All invoices raised and payments received must be recorded in the Sales Ledger.

All purchase invoices received and payments made must be recorded in the Purchases Ledger.

An effective manual or computerised payroll system must be in place to record wages and salaries.

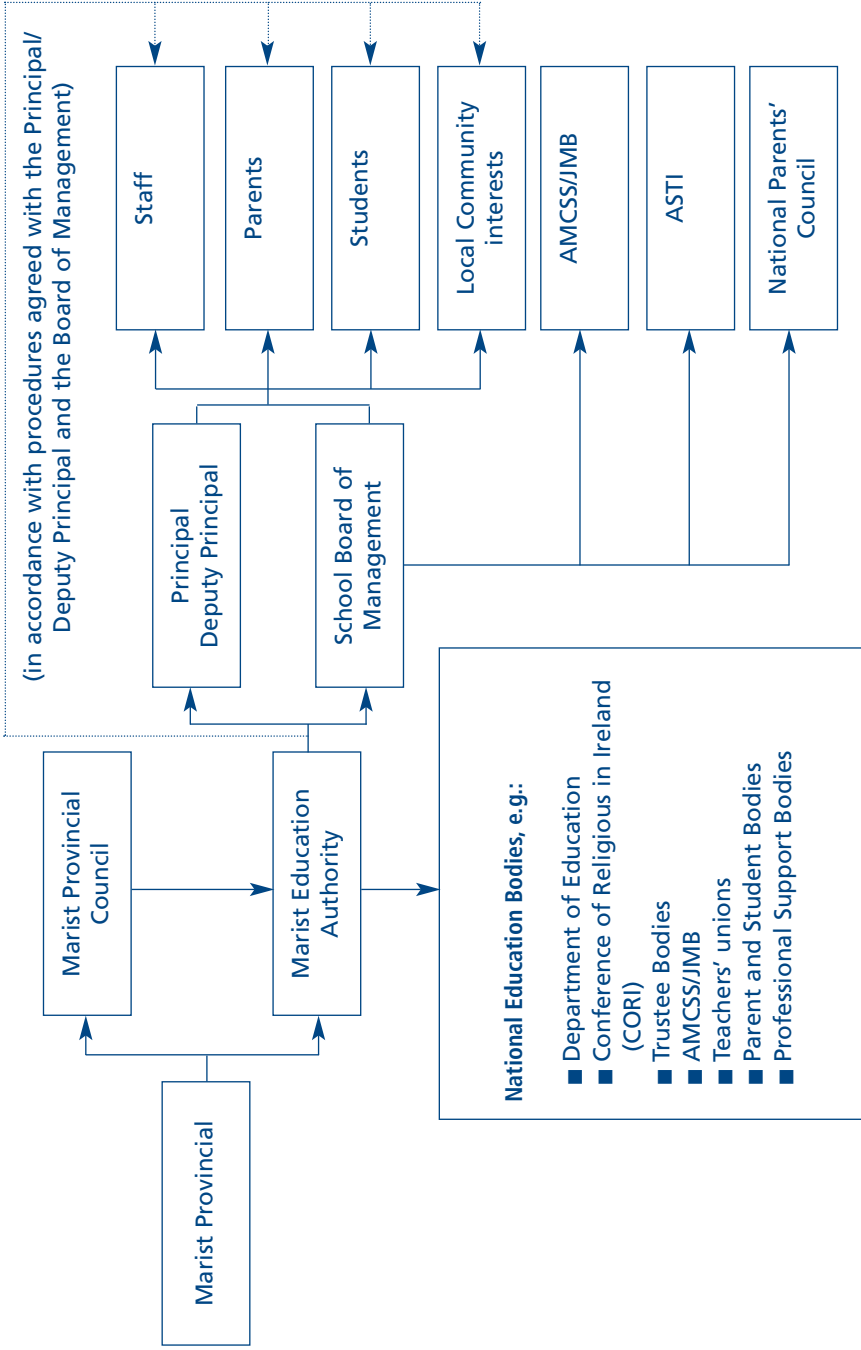
A record of school assets and stock must be maintained.

Cash flow is to be monitored and reported on monthly in order to ensure that adequate funds are available to effectively and efficiently operate the school.

Bank reconciliations for all bank accounts held by each school are to be completed each month.



## Appendix: Diagram of roles and relationships



## Acknowledgments

Many have contributed to the publication of this document - in particular Brian Keenan, provincial of the Irish province of Marist Fathers. He gave dedicated and imaginative leadership to the development of the Marist Education Authority over his six years in office (1997-2003). He and the provincial leadership team established the Education Task Force who over three years and more worked on the development of this initiative – Martin Daly, Brian Dooney, John Hannan, David Meredith (consultant) and Luke Monahan (Chair). There was regular engagement with the membership of the province during this time. Over the past year John Hannan and Luke Monahan with the assistance of David Meredith completed the work in particular the extensive consultation phase with Boards of Management, principals and deputy principals, staffs and the wider school communities. This consultative phase was critical to the final shaping of not only this publication but also to the overall initiative that is the Marist Education Authority.

### **The membership of the Marist Education Authority:**

Luke Monahan, *Director*;  
Siobhan Foster-Ryan;  
Tony Hanna and  
Ferdia Kelly.



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