

*Statute regulating Parish Schools under the auspices
of the Australian & New Zealand Diocese of the
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.*

INTRODUCTION

1. One of the main missions of the holy Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia is to care for the education and upbringing of its youth in the spirit of the Orthodox Faith and in its cultural heritage.
2. The best means of implementing this mission is the establishment of parish schools, based on the principles of the holy Orthodox Faith and in the spirit of our Russian culture.
3. In order for a parish school to be successful in its work, it needs to proceed under the aegis of the Holy Orthodox Church and with the active and positive participation of the church community.
4. Parish schools should help children master the rudiments of their Orthodox faith, acquire a love of and competence in the Russian language, history and culture.
5. Parents are encouraged to support the use of the Russian language and Russian way of life within the family, attend church more frequently with their children and send their children to parish schools.
6. Parish schools should exist where possible in all of our parishes.
7. The parish school must comply with food safety regulations.
8. The parish school must comply with all occupational health and safety regulations.
9. Police checks for teachers, parents and anyone generally involved in any parish school activities are to be made in accordance with Australian law.

THE PURPOSE OF PARISH SCHOOLS

10. Parish schools may be established in parishes either by order of Church authorities, or by the expressed desire of the parishioners themselves. Schools are approved by the Diocesan authority (the ruling Bishop or the Diocesan Council). Such schools have as their aim the religious, moral, cultural and linguistic education of Russian children based on principles, directed by the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, in the spirit of the Orthodox Christian Faith.
11. To accomplish these goals, the following should be taught in the parish schools: religious studies, Russian language, history and geography of Russia, Russian literature, Russian art; music should be an integral part of the curriculum. It is desirable that a school choir be organised, with such a choir singing in church and also being encouraged to learn Church Slavonic.
12. It is desirable that children be enrolled in kindergarten or preparatory classes as early as possible.

13. It is recommended that the course of studies in parish schools, excluding kindergarten and preparatory classes, consist of a minimum of six years; however, depending on local circumstances, the length of the course of studies may be changed. In the interest of the students, it is desirable that the length of this course be, if at all possible, increased.
14. Graduates of a parish school receive a certificate of completion of the course of studies of the school in both Russian and English.

ADMINISTRATION

15. The Parish Priest (Rector) is the head of the parish school. As the Principal of the school the Parish Priest may, at his discretion, appoint assistant(s) to act in accordance with his directives.
16. The Principal of the parish school, or, by his direction, his assistant(s), guides the school's curriculum work and its administrative-managerial section.
17. The Principal of the parish school, or by his discretion his assistant(s), invites, appoints and relieves the teaching staff of their duties. Meetings of the teachers are held under the chairmanship of the school Principal (or his assistant(s)). Matters are resolved by a simple majority vote. In the case of a tie, the Principal casts the deciding vote.
18. A School Council would consist of equal numbers of teachers of the parish school and representatives of the parents, elected at the parents' general assembly. The work of the School Council is conducted under the direction of the school Principal or his assistant(s).

ADMISSION OF STUDENTS

19. Our schools exist mainly for the children of the parishioners of our Orthodox churches. Boys and girls are accepted into these schools from the age of four. Children are admitted into the kindergarten or preparatory class without a preliminary exam. For all other classes, beginning from year one, children are examined to determine the class suitable for their level of knowledge. To determine progression from one class to another, yearly and half yearly exams are given by the Class Teacher.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

20. The level of a students' achievement is determined according to prevailing norms of assessment.
21. Students may be given encouragement by the granting of awards of 1st, 2nd and 3rd levels and letters of distinction. All students receive a special annual certificate when progressing to the next grade level.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

22. For the purposes of mastering the Russian language in a practical way, it is imperative to ensure that all students of the parish schools speak to each other and to all the teachers only in Russian, while they are in the school. They are obligated to submit to the school's code of conduct and rules. They must be polite to their teachers and all individuals, including each other. They must always be honest and

truthful, and dressed according to the school code. They must conduct themselves civilly in all public places.

23. Students should be encouraged to attend church services, taking an active part in them: in reading and singing in the choir, boys serving in the altar, girls participating in the church's sisterhood.

24. Students of parish schools are strongly encouraged to take part in regular and the annual confessions and preparation for receiving Holy Communion on days determined by the school.

DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

25. To ensure discipline in the parish school, an agreed code of behaviour must be established with the participation of teachers, parents and students.

SCHOOL UNIFORMS

26. A parish school may wish to introduce a school uniform for its students. It is desirable that the students come in this uniform not only to the school, but also to all school functions and on visits to the church.

TUITION FEES

27. The school community determines the question of tuition fees and their dimensions.

28. Parents support the parish school through fundraising and paying enrolment fees, whilst the Parish Council accepts responsibility for the well being of the school.

TEACHING STAFF

29. The teachers of parish schools must be, first and foremost, persons with religious faith and piety, dedicated to the Russian Church Abroad and its ideals. Teaching in parish schools must be conducted in a spirit of Christian fervour and love, so that the personal example of the teachers may have a positive impression on the souls of the students.

AMUSEMENTS

30. Gatherings are beneficial and are to be encouraged; however, these events should never be held on the eves of Sundays or other Church feasts. Students should learn from their childhood to fulfil God's commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day... to honour it."

SUPERVISION OF PARISH SCHOOLS

31. The Diocesan Authority can appoint an Inspector of parish schools, whose purpose would be to visit all the schools within the Diocese, inspect their activities, and report back to the Diocesan Authority.

PARTICIPATION OF PARISH COUNCILS

32. The Parish Council must exercise care for its parish school. It must seek funds and establish a material basis for the existence and development of the school.

The above-listed regulations are mandatory for the teaching personnel and students of parish schools.

Statute regulating Parents' Committees

GENERAL REGULATIONS

33. Parents' Committees exist and are active in parish schools. The Parents' Committee assists the school in all its financial and household matters. Parents should exhibit an active interest in all the undertakings of the school and assist in achieving its goals in a practical manner.
34. Parents should attentively observe that their children complete their school homework and bring their children to school without delays, in time for the common prayers before the beginning of classes.
35. Bearing in mind the brevity of time allotted to classroom study, the Parents' Committee should strongly encourage parents to assist children with homework, especially with regard to lessons in Orthodox Faith as well as practicing the Russian language.
36. The Parents' Committee is subject to the canons of the Church and accepts the directives of the Diocesan authority and directives of the Rector of the parish unconditionally. This includes ensuring the school observes all Lenten/fasting periods and ensures that children, as well as adults, are dressed appropriately.
37. The Parents' Committee provides a wide range of assistance to the school by way of procuring necessary finances, and by way of organising fundraising events throughout the year. These events are organised in accordance with school rules and regulations as well as the Regulations, Statutes and Laws of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, ensuring that the principles and educational goals of a Russian Orthodox school are met to the best of its ability.
38. A Parents' Committee may not interfere in pedagogical-educational matters or pedagogical meetings, which is in the competence of the administration of the school; however, the Diocese strongly encourages the Teachers and Parents' Committee to come together in establishing a mutual understanding and addressing the needs of a present day academic program while maintaining the highest educational standard possible. Should concerns arise with regards to educational matters and the academic structure of a school parents must handle the situation in the following manner:
 - a. Matters should initially be discussed at an Annual, General or Extraordinary Meeting of the Parents' Committee. This gives an opportunity for parents to provide each other with positive personal experiences that may assist others in working out solutions to an existing problem.
 - b. If suggestions from the Annual, General or Extraordinary Meeting of parents do not provide positive results, the President of the Parents' Committee has the right to voice the concerns of the parents with the School Administration.

- c. At the beginning of the staff meeting, the President presents the matters at hand. Having presented the matters at hand, the President may be asked to leave the meeting. This will allow the teachers to review the matter(s) in greater detail. Should the teachers wish, with the blessing of the Principal/Parish Priest, Deputy Principal and/or Head Teacher, the President may remain at the meeting; however, he/she may only voice additional opinions and/or suggestions if requested by staff members.
 - d. The Principal, having discussed the matter in further detail at a staff meeting, must address these issues and any possible changes/improvements to the program at an Annual, General or Extraordinary Meeting of the Parents' Committee.
39. The Parents' Committee accepts the responsibility for organising special events such as commemorative days, school feasts, graduations/presentation day, preparation for Holy Communion, Christmas concerts and other events, by preparing refreshments on such days and distributing presents, etc.
40. The Parents' Committee maintains a bank account and utilises funds in accordance with decisions of an Annual, General or Extraordinary Meeting, informing the administration of the school concerning such matters. In cases where the Parents' Committee cannot resolve a conflicting matter by means of voting, the Principal/Parish Priest, to which the school is attached, can cast the final/deciding vote.

ANNUAL, GENERAL & EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

41. A Parents' Committee is elected by the Annual General Meeting of the parents of children attending the said school and confirmed by the Ruling Bishop of the Diocese and/or the Director/Parish Priest of the church at which the school is located.
42. A Parents' Committee consists of a President, Treasurer and Secretary all of whom must be elected at the Annual General Meeting. The Committee has the option to request the assistance of 2-3 additional members of the Parents' Committee, all of whom should also be elected at the Annual General Meeting. The Parent's Committee may choose to assign a title to these roles/positions (e.g. Vice President).
43. The participants of an Annual, General or Extraordinary Meeting and the members of the Parents' Committee must be parents of the pupils of the school or friends of the school approved by the Principal/Parish Priest.
44. Parent's whose children did not attend school, without sufficiently reasoned excuse, in the course of a month before an Annual, General or Extraordinary Meeting, or were expelled from the school for specific reasons, may attend a the meeting, but lose their right to vote.
45. A Parents' *Annual General Meeting* is convened:
- a. at the beginning of the school year, within one month following the commencement of school classes.
- (OR)

b. at the end of the school year.

- i. *Note: At this meeting a Profit and Loss Statement for the prior school year should be distributed/made available to all parents. The Profit & Loss Statements must be submitted to the Parish Council and a copy sent to the Diocesan Office for ratification by the ruling bishop.*
- ii. *Note: The Minutes of this meeting must be submitted to the Parish Council and a copy sent to the Diocesan Office for ratification by the ruling bishop. Minutes of all meetings must be made available to the Parish Council upon request.*
- iii. *An Annual General Meeting is not limited to one matter and therefore can address a number of issues.*

46. A Parents' *General Meeting* can be convened at any time at the request of the Executive Board of the Parents' Committee and with the approval of the Principal/Parish Priest of the school.

- i. *Note: A General Meeting is considered to be one of a working nature. It does not require review of financial statements, is not limited to one matter and therefore can address a number of issues.*

47. An *Extraordinary Meeting* may be convened at any time in the case of a special need, at any other time, by the directive of the Principal/Parish Priest of the school or at the written request made by 1/5 of all the school parents.

- i. *Note: The agenda of the Extraordinary Meeting must indicate clearly the matter(s) to be addressed. No matter(s), other than those listed on the agenda, are to be considered at an Extraordinary Meeting.*

48. The Annual, General or Extraordinary Meeting will be considered competent/lawful with the presence of any number of parents, on condition that the entire Parents' Committee is present, as well as the Director/Parish Priest and/or his assistant(s).

- a. *Note: If all the parents of the students do not arrive at the time appointed on the agenda, the meeting will be delayed for 30 minutes, and a new meeting, with any number of parents present, will convene and be considered lawful.*

49. Notification of the convening of an Annual, General or Extraordinary Meeting is to be given to all parents of students a minimum of three weeks before the meeting and is to include the agenda of the meeting.

50. The Principal/ Priest of the parish school is ex officio the chairman for any Annual, General or Extraordinary Meeting convened. If the Principal/ Priest is unable to attend the meeting, he may appoint a replacement or request that the President of the Parents' Committee run the meeting in his absence.

51. At either the Annual General Meeting at the beginning of the school year or at the end of the school year, a new Parents' Committee is elected or the existing Parents'

Committee is re-elected. The newly elected Parents' Committee begins to fulfill its duties at the beginning of the school year. The former Parents' Committee draws to a close the current meeting and when possible, assists the newly elected members in becoming acquainted with their responsibilities. If elected in November/December, then the newly elected Parents' Committee begins to fulfill its duties for the school year beginning February.

52. If the Annual General Meeting is held at the end of the school year, the work completed during the past school year is assessed and a plan of action for the future school year is discussed during the course of the summer holidays.
 - a. Note: In the event that the entire Parents' Committee is unable to assemble in its entirety during the summer holidays, all necessary issues/concerns may be addressed by the following individuals: the President, Secretary and Treasurer and any other parents elected at the Annual General Meeting.

AUDITING COMMITTEE

53. An Auditing Committee, 1) comprised of two people, may be elected at the Parents' Annual General Meeting, 2) may be referred to the Parish Auditing Committee, or 3) may be referred to a professional auditor.
54. The Auditing Committee will review the financial records of the school no less than once a year.
55. The verification of the Treasurer's accounting and any findings or recommendations by the Auditing Committee must be reported at the Parents' Committee Annual General Meeting.
 - a. Note: The President, Treasurer/Assistant Treasurers and Secretary are not eligible as members of the Auditing Committee. Individuals nominated to sign the school cheque book(s) are likewise not eligible to be members of the Auditing Committee.
 - b. Note: It is customary to have two of the following individuals sign the school cheque book(s): Principal/Parish Priest, Assistant Director, Treasurer, President of the Parents' Committee or Secretary.

RULES FOR DISMISSAL OF AN ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL OR ANY TEACHER (IF A LAYMAN)

56. In the case that any Assistant/Teacher does not fulfil his/her duties and obligations, the right to release the Assistant Director or Teacher of his/her duties is decided by the Principal/Parish Priest in consultation with the Teaching Staff and Parents' Committee.
57. If this matter cannot be resolved, all parties have the right to request the Ruling Bishop of the Diocese to assist in deciding this matter.

RULES FOR DISMISSAL OF AN ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL (IF A CLERGYMAN)

58. In the case that the Assistant Director does not fulfil his duties and obligations, the right to release the Assistant Director of his duties is decided by the Ruling Bishop

of the Diocese and the Principal/Parish Priest. The Ruling Bishop of the Diocese and/or the Principal/Parish Priest may wish to consult with the Teachers and/or the Parents' Committee on this matter.

DISSOLVING A PARENTS' COMMITTEE

59. A Parents' Committee may be dissolved by decision of an Annual or Extraordinary Meeting of parents, with the approval of two thirds of those present, or in extreme cases, by order of the Diocesan Administration.

DISSOLVING A PARISH SCHOOL

60. Upon the dissolution of a Parish School, all its assets are transferred to the parish of which it is an integral part. In consultation with and approval of the ruling Bishop, the parish decides how to distribute/make use of the funds and assets. If the school is not attached to a parish but to the Diocese, then its funds must be transferred to the Diocesan Administration. The Diocesan Council/Administration, in consultation with the school, will decide how best to distribute the funds in question.