

THE DESIGN:

A Charter for EREA School
Advisory Councils



EDMUND RICE EDUCATION
AUSTRALIA



St. Mary's
School



Peace

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PREAMBLE

1.1 Edmund Rice Education Australia

Edmund Rice Education Australia (EREA) is the system of schools, entities and offices offering a Catholic education in the tradition of Blessed Edmund Rice. Established by the Christian Brothers in 2007, EREA is the owner and proprietor of the schools previously under the ownership of the Christian Brothers, as well as schools established since then. EREA governs all schools belonging to the entity. EREA has its own canonical and civil identity but remains closely connected to the Christian Brothers and their ongoing ministry.

1.2 The Design

The concept and context of the Design is historical. From 1793 to 1796 Edmund Rice developed a framework for managing the future operations of his brotherly community. This framework was known as The Design. The Design was influenced by the 'governance and constitution' of the Presentation Sisters. This Design document has been developed to provide clarity for School Advisory Council members on the role that **School Advisory Councils** play in assisting and advising principals and leadership teams in the smooth running of their school. It acknowledges, guides and supports those who serve on a School Advisory Council in the realisation of Edmund's dream through making clear the authority, responsibilities and accountabilities of those involved in this ministry.

The Design applies to School Advisory Councils of all schools, flexi schools networks and early learning centres governed by EREA.

1.3 Legal Entity

Trustees of EREA is the body corporate. Individual schools do not have a separate identity under either civil or canonical law. Individual schools may not take out loans, sell or buy land, engage in legal action or perform any action that must be performed by a legal entity without the authority of the EREA Executive Director.

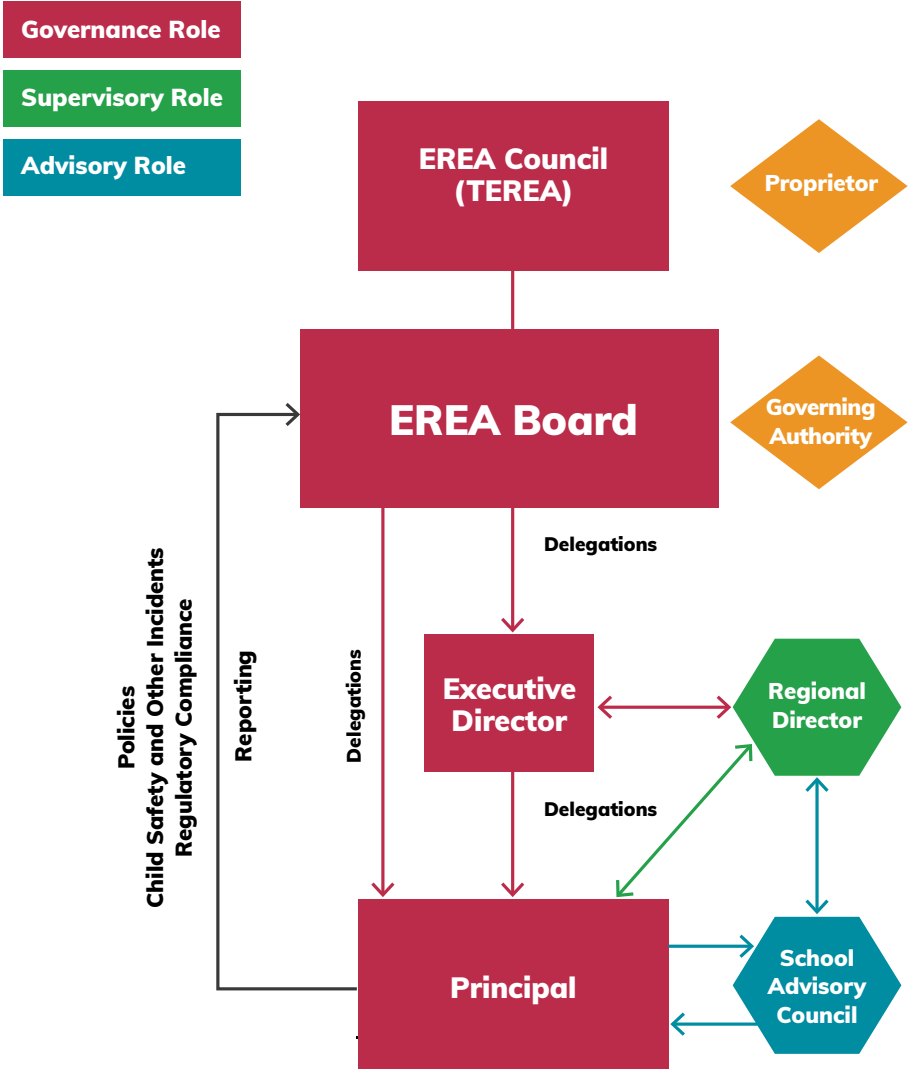
1.4 Delegations

Where the Design refers to Executive Director, Principal or Council Chair, their designated delegate may fulfil this responsibility.



1.5 EREA Governance Structure

EREA Governance and Management



SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCILS

2.1 Statement of Purpose

School Advisory Councils work collaboratively with Principals and with the EREA Executive to support faithfulness to the Charter for Catholic Schools in the Edmund Rice Tradition and quality stewardship aimed at offering the best possible learning communities for students and young people attending EREA schools. School Advisory Councils provide rich sources of wisdom and insight as well as a means of strengthening community links.

2.2 Principles

The role of School Advisory Councils is based upon these principles:

- EREA has a commitment to subsidiarity and a priority for collaborative leadership.
- The obligation of School Advisory Councils is to EREA as a whole, with responsibility to the Executive Director and through their work with the individual school. The EREA Board delegates to the Executive Director the responsibility for management of schools. The Executive Director has delegated the operational management of the School to the Principal and particular roles as listed here to School Advisory Councils.
- The Principal and School Advisory Council will collaborate in meeting their responsibilities.
- The expertise of School Advisory Councils is manifested through collaboration, advice, support and endorsement.
- School Advisory Councils and Advisory Council members (other than the Principal), are not involved in the day to day operations of schools.
- School Advisory Council members are not official spokespeople for the School.
- In all its work, the School Advisory Council is faithful to the Charter and shares the responsibility of enhancing the School's authenticity as a Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition.

2.3 Role of School Advisory Councils

The School Advisory Council:

- Encourages and supports the Principal.
- Advises the Principal.

Advisory Council members should inform themselves of, and seek, the necessary information required to assist them in the discharge of their duties. Their role is to:

- (i) Advise and support the Principal on the implementation of strategies for monitoring and enhancing the School's identity and culture as a Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition.
- (ii) Advise and support the Principal in maintaining and improving the School's strategies for safeguarding children and young people.
- (iii) Contribute to and endorse formal submissions to EREA that support and ensure the School's long-term sustainability, including in the areas of:
 - Strategic Planning;
 - annual budget and financial statements; and
 - capital works and master planning;
- (iv) Review and advise the Principal on the School's risk profile and risk 'culture' in line with EREA Risk Framework.
- (v) Support the Principal in their role to implement school policies and procedures in line with guidelines set by the EREA Policy Framework.
- (vi) Contribute to and endorse submissions to EREA as requested from time to time including for the purposes of supporting line of sight to the governing body.
- (vii) Provide representation on the EREA selection panel for the appointment of Principal, Deputy Principal, Business Manager, School Advisory Council members and Committee members.
- (viii) Participate in EREA School Renewal and Senior Leader appraisal processes.
- (ix) Provide advice and support to the Principal on any matter referred to it by the Principal.

2.4 Key Relationships

Key relationships for School Advisory Councils include, but are not limited to:

- The School / Network Principal
- The EREA Regional Director
- The EREA Executive and National Directors
- The EREA Board
- Members of the School community

EREA values and encourages the relationship between School Advisory Councils and the EREA National Office and Board. In addition to formal opportunities for engagement, the first point of contact between the School Advisory Council and EREA is the Regional Director.

Notwithstanding this relationship there may be exceptional occasions where the School Advisory Council Chair may wish to consult directly with the EREA Executive Director or Chair of the EREA Board.





MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Size & Composition

- Each School Advisory Council will have a minimum of seven (7) members and a maximum of eleven (11) members. School Advisory Councils wishing to extend the total number of members beyond 11 must have the written approval of the EREA Executive Director.
- The Principal is an ex officio member of the School Advisory Council and cannot hold any office of the School Advisory Council.
- Members of School Advisory Councils are chosen to meet the expertise needs of the Advisory Council, not as representatives of any body.
- The composition of School Advisory Councils should, as far as possible, reflect a commitment to diversity, i.e. gender, external members as well as parents, old collegians and others more directly associated with the School.

3.2 Appointment Process

- Appointments to School Advisory Councils are recommended by the Advisory Council Chair and Principal, through a Nominations Committee, to the EREA Regional Director for approval.
- Recommendations are contingent on prospective members having completed the online induction module.
- Prior to commencing appointment, all School Advisory Council Members are required to:
 - agree to adopt the School Advisory Council Members' Code of Conduct;
 - agree to abide by the provisions of The Design;
 - supply a current Working With Children (however named) clearance;
 - agree to participate in induction and ongoing EREA formation activities in their new role, including Child Protection training.
- Chairs of School Advisory Councils are appointed by the EREA Executive Director on advice from the Principal and Regional Director and after such consultation with the local community as the Executive Director considers appropriate.

3.3 Legal Status

- School Advisory Council members are volunteers working collaboratively with the Principal in the stewardship of the School within the context of EREA.
- Trustees of EREA will ensure that, to the fullest extent that the law will allow, every member of a School Advisory Council, committee or working party is indemnified against civil liability (including liability for legal costs) for everything that they do in good faith in the course of discharging their role. (EREA Indemnity Policy).

3.4 Selection Criteria

A person appointed to a School Advisory Council will:

- demonstrate an understanding of, and a commitment to, the ethos of a Catholic school in the Edmund Rice tradition;
- be willing to support and uphold EREA values;
- have the capacity to contribute skills and knowledge to the School Advisory Council that complement those of other Council members, resulting in a School Advisory Council with skills that align with the needs of the School;
- have completed EREA School Advisory Council induction;
- be willing to participate in ongoing School Advisory Council formation and mandatory child protection training.

In addition to the criteria for School Advisory Council Membership, a person appointed to the position of Chair of a School Advisory Council will commit to:

- participating in Regional and National School Advisory Council Chair gatherings;
- participating in formation, reflections and reviews as Chair;
- building of a good relationship with, and pastoral support for, the Principal.

3.5 Tenure of Appointment

- School Advisory Council Members may be appointed for an initial term of three (3) years, which can, by mutual agreement, be extended for a further three (3) years, for a maximum term of appointment of six (6) years.
- Within this maximum total allowable period of Advisory Council membership, School Advisory Council Chairs may be appointed for a term of three (3) years, which can, by mutual agreement, be extended for a further three (3) years, for a maximum term of appointment of six (6) years.
- In some circumstances, it is acceptable that the Chair may have served some time (up to two (2) years) as a member of the School Advisory Council prior to appointment and still serve the maximum six (6) years as Chair.
- In some exceptional circumstances, a further appointment beyond the 6 years for an Advisory Council member or Chair may be considered by the EREA Executive Director, upon recommendation of the Principal and the Advisory Council Chair or the Advisory Council, as appropriate. The further appointment should be for a maximum of two (2) years.

3.6 Termination of Membership

The EREA Executive Director may terminate the membership of a School Advisory Council Member, including a Council Chair, where there has been a breach of the School Advisory Council Members' Code of Conduct, disregard for The Design Principles or a lack of active participation in Advisory Council meetings. Prior to such action, the EREA Executive Director will advise the EREA Board Chair and will consult the School Advisory Council Chair and the individual concerned in collaboration with the Principal and EREA Regional Director.

PROCEDURES

4.1 Meetings

- School Advisory Councils meet at least six times each year at a time and date determined by the Chair of the School Advisory Council in consultation with the Principal. Meetings attended in person are preferable although meetings held via teleconference will be considered valid.
- The quorum for a School Advisory Council meeting will be a simple majority of all members, except that no quorum exists if the Principal (or their delegate) is absent. There will be no meeting of the School Advisory Council without the knowledge, agreement and input of the Principal.
- Following each School Advisory Council meeting, a copy of all approved, signed (by Chair) Advisory Council minutes are to be forwarded by the Advisory Council secretary to the EREA Regional Director for information.
- Original School Advisory Council minutes and papers are to be stored at the School in a manner approved by the Principal.

4.2 Committees

- Each School Advisory Council is required to establish such Standing Committee arrangements, however named, to ensure the Advisory Council's attention to:
 - Finance
 - Identity
 - Governance (including nominations, communications);
 - Risk; and
 - Property.
- Other committees and working parties of the School Advisory Council may be established at the discretion of the Chair of the School Advisory Council and Principal.

- Membership of the School Advisory Council Finance and Identity Committees must include at least two School Advisory Council Members (one of whom is to be the Committee Chair), not including the Principal who is an ex-officio member of these committees, or School Business Manager (non-voting), and others as deemed appropriate by the Chair of the School Advisory Council and Principal.
- Non-School Advisory Council Members may be appointed as members of Advisory Council committees and working parties. Such appointments are made by the Principal in consultation with the Chair. Non-School Advisory Council members of Advisory Council committees are also appointed for a maximum initial term of three (3) years and may be appointed for a further term of a maximum of three (3) years, for a maximum term of appointment of six (6) years.
- The Chair of the School Advisory Council and Principal have a right to attend any committee or working party of the Advisory Council, but are not obliged to attend such meetings.
- The quorum for a committee meeting is a simple majority, except that there must be one School Advisory Council Member and a delegate of the Principal present.

HANDBOOK

Every School Advisory Council is required to ensure that the online EREA School Advisory Council Members' Handbook is reviewed and updated annually. The online Handbook provides information to support and guides the work of the School Advisory Council.

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

Members of EREA School Advisory Councils should apply ethical principles and act in good faith, with care and diligence in the interests of EREA and comply with the School Advisory Council Members' Code of Conduct.

They are therefore expected to:

- Acknowledge that EREA Schools operate as part of the educational mission of the Catholic Church within the Edmund Rice tradition and subsequently function within that relationship;
- Develop a deeper understanding of, and commitment to, the mission of Catholic education and the Edmund Rice charism, and promote them within the relevant community;
- Develop an understanding of the core EREA documents of Foundations, Charter, Formation and School Renewal;
- Engage in continuing formation and education about the responsibilities of School Advisory Council Members;
- Remain faithful to the mission of EREA and support EREA's goals and strategic direction.
- Engage in reflection and review of performance as a School Advisory Council Member;
- Exclude themselves from making public statements on any matter which could be perceived as reflecting the position of the School. Such public statements will be made by the Principal or EREA Executive Director;
- Undertake the reading and preparation required for each meeting;
- Undertake School Advisory Council committee work as required;
- Demonstrate Council solidarity by being loyal to School Advisory Council decisions, even if personally opposed to the final recommendations and decisions;

- Respect the confidentiality of School Advisory Council matters, and not misuse information or their position;
- Keep an open mind and be willing to enter into dialogue through being alert to alternative solutions;
- Maintain clarity between the role of the School Advisory Council, EREA National and Regional Office, and not intrude into the Principal's direct management of the School;
- Prior to discussion and decision making, declare any actual or perceived conflict of interest and consult with the Chair regarding possible implications;
- Support colleagues on the School Advisory Council through reflection, prayer, courteous and respectful relationships, and
- Protect the good name and reputation of EREA, the School and its community, the School Advisory Council, and EREA staff.



Edmund Rice



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*Edmund Rice Education Australia offers
a liberating education, based on a gospel
spirituality, within an inclusive community
committed to justice and solidarity*
