

Catholic School Board Trustee Election Protocol in Parishes

No. 1101

Policy Statement: Candidates wishing to campaign on church property are to meet with, or otherwise contact the parish priest of each church where they expect to campaign or circulate election material.

Intent of Protocol: This protocol is intended to assist candidates as well as parish priests and other parish personnel in working together to support the election of Catholic school trustees.

Guiding Principles:

1. We strongly encourage Catholics to vote in Catholic school board elections.
2. The sanctity of worship and church space is to be honoured and safeguarded at all times, including during election campaigning.
3. As a Catholic community we have a responsibility to support and promote Catholic education.
4. We understand Catholic school trusteeship as a call to service and want to support it.
5. As we strive to facilitate their campaigning, we wish to ensure equal treatment of candidates.

Procedure:

a) Nominations

No candidate is to initiate campaigning in parishes before the nomination process is closed.

Pastors are not to sign nomination applications for prospective candidates.

Those intending to run in an upcoming election campaign are not to present themselves as possible candidates or seek support for their nomination in the context of the parish Masses or parish activities.

b) Candidate Availability

Once the nomination process is completed prior to the school board election date, the parish priest may grant permission to the candidates to be present before and after Mass, provided they do not interfere with the coming and going of parishioners. It is expected that the candidates will approach parishioners in a discreet and respectful manner. The exact location for candidates, in and around the church, will be determined in consultation with the parish priest. In addition, the parish priest and parishioners may hold an all-candidates forum on parish property to allow voters to meet and discuss issues with potential trustees.

c) Circulation of Electoral Campaign Materials

1. Candidates or their representatives may circulate campaign literature to parishioners from locations agreed to by the parish priest. Once again, this is to be done in a discreet and respectful manner, so that parishioners do not feel harassed.
2. As an alternative, parish priests may wish to include brochures from all candidates as an attachment to the parish bulletin.
3. No candidate literature is to be placed on the windshields of parishioners' vehicles.
4. No candidate's election signage is to be placed on church property.

d) Ministries

Candidates currently serving in church ministries are permitted to continue this work while standing for election as a Catholic school trustee.

e) Communication

Candidates wishing to campaign on church property should meet with, or otherwise contact the parish priest of each church where they expect to campaign or circulate election material.