

## **SECTION I - INTRODUCTION**

This, the constitution of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School Student Parliament, is the *official legal text of the responsibilities and duties of the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School Student Parliament*. This elected council shall represent the population of St. Thomas Aquinas to the administration of the school, to the Board of Education and to the community.

## **SECTION II - PREAMBLE**

The Student Parliament of St. Thomas Aquinas shall be a self-governing council which shall derive its duties and responsibilities from this, its Constitution and the Duties and Obligations set out in the GPP30 Course.

## **SECTION III - PURPOSE OF THE PARLIAMENT**

The purpose of the Student Parliament shall be to regulate the various student activities and to take special responsibility in connection with the programs of the school. Furthermore, it shall represent the students of St. Thomas Aquinas in all matters of legitimate interest to them, and where the interests, rights, privileges, and Christian growth of individual students are involved.

## **SECTION IV: THE STUDENT PARLIAMENT**

### **MEMBERS**

The parliament's membership shall consist of the *executive cabinet* [the *Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister* and *Ministers* of: *Finance* (1), *Sports and Recreation* (2) - (1) *Male Athletic Conference* ; (1) *Female Athletic Conference, Culture* (1), *Red and Black/Spirit* (2), *Communications* (2) and *Arts* (1)], the *Members of Parliament (Class Reps.)* and the *major committees* headed by an executive member.

### **THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT**

The Parliament shall:

- act in co-operation with the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School administration, the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School Council and the London District Catholic School Board engage in any financial undertaking necessary to achieve the purposes of the parliament and yet remain a non-profit organization over the course of the school year. Any funds not allocated by the final parliament meeting will be incorporated into the budget of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School general account.
- be the major policy making body of the students
- recommend legislation to the school administration on behalf of the electorate.
- exercise at its discretion, disciplinary jurisdictions over the students in such activities which may involve a breach of parliamentary law.
- oversee the operation of all clubs and committees to ensure the success of all extra-curricular activities.
- receive, consider, and act upon all matters referred to the parliament on behalf of a Member of Parliament, and where necessary, condone or condemn the actions.
- to act on behalf of the students as their elected representatives

#### **A. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT:**

**D) DUTIES** - Each first period class shall have one Member of Parliament and one alternate, equal in power. Their duties shall be:

- to report the proceedings of the parliament to the students he/she represents, (ie homeroom).
- to represent the class as a group and not as an individual

- to express the views of the students to the parliament, on matters concerning the parliament
- to ensure one MP is present at each parliament meeting. All MPs shall have one vote in all parliamentary business.

## **II) ELECTIONS OF THE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT**

- election of MPs shall take place no later than the third week into the semester.
- Nominations shall occur in each home room according to the ‘Rules Governing Home Room MP Elections’ provided to each home room teacher prior to the MP elections.
- each person in the class shall cast one vote , and the persons receiving the two highest totals of votes shall be the Members of Parliament.
- the conductor of the election shall immediately submit the names of the MPs to the cabinet and the school Administrative Team.

### **B. THE EXECUTIVE CABINET ( 12 Ministers in total):**

#### **I) PRIME MINISTER:**

- shall rank the chief officer of the student body and of the student parliament.
- shall serve as the official representative of the students on all occasions, at the school and in the community.
- shall serve as the chairperson at parliament meetings
- will call and give all meetings of the parliament and the cabinet.
- shall decide on agenda points for meetings.
- will act on matters as approved by the parliament
- shall be an unofficial member with a vote on all committees
- shall be a member of the School Council.

#### **II) DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER:**

- shall rank the second executive of the student body and of the student parliament
- must serve as the official representative of the students in the absence of the Prime Minister and perform all the duties pertaining to that office.
- shall be an unofficial member with a vote on all committees.
- will execute fund raising campaigns (i.e. Cancer Campaign)
- shall work in conjunction with the Minister of Finance in all financial matters.
- responsible for running MP meetings.

#### **III) MINISTER OF FINANCE:**

- shall rank the third executive of the school and the school parliament.
- must keep records of government funds in conjunction with the school administration.
- will recommend to the parliament the budget for the year.
- must prepare financial statements at regular intervals and for parliament meetings
- must pay bills on time

**IV) MINISTERS OF SPIRIT ( 2 Ministers ) :**

- will have two ministers responsible for spirit within the school
- work closely with Culture Minister and with Sports and Recreation Ministers
- will work in co-operation with the Arts Department in the preparation and presentation of school entertainment assemblies.

**V) MINISTER OF CULTURE AND SOCIAL SERVICES:**

- will work to promote cultural diversity in major clubs and committees of the school.
- will be responsible for the planning and coordinating of all parliament sponsored social activities and work in cooperation with the Spirit Ministers to organize social events.
- shall act as the chairperson of the Prom Committee.
- will work to promote and recognize a variety of cultures within our school, (ie Cultural Specific Food Days, cultural theme days, etc)

**VI) MINISTERS OF SPORTS AND RECREATION ( 2 Ministers - 1 Male and 1 Female):**

- both the Male and Female Athletic/Recreation Minister shall work with teachers in the physical education and athletics departments to promote fitness and health by organizing athletic and recreational activities, (ie Staff vs Student competitions)
- will aid in the planning and coordinating of all athletic assemblies.
- work in cooperation with the Spirit Ministers and Minister of Culture and Social Services in the organization of pep rallies and sport team recognition assemblies.

**VII) MINISTERS OF COMMUNICATIONS ( 2 Ministers):**

- must be responsible for all minutes and records of the student parliament.
- must prepare all agendas, minutes and reports.
- will be responsible for any and all correspondence to students, staff, the Board, and community agencies.
- will contact/book and confirm all necessary parties associated with any school function, (ie Police, Security, Teachers/Chaperones, etc).
- will file all communications received and copies of communications sent and all other documents.
- assist with the co-ordinating of Morning Announcements.

**VIII) MINISTER OF THE ARTS:**

- will be responsible for promoting the art-related events such as Music Nights, Cabaret and School Drama Productions.
- works as liaison between the Arts Department and Student Council
- responsible for establishing new ideas to bring involvement of students into art-related events.

**VIX) MINISTER OF FAITH:**

This position will be APPOINTED POSITION . After a consultation between the school chaplain, the Administration Team, the candidate's parish priest and the Student Council Moderator (Staff Rep.), this post will be filled. This member must be able to model and promote all aspects of the Catholic Faith in daily interactions.

- develops a schedule for weekly prayer over the PA system. One day each week will be designated for the Student Council. This member must ensure all prayers are in keeping with the expectations of the Catholic Faith.
- must be an active member of the Chaplaincy Team.
- must belong to a local Catholic Church.
- serves as a liaison between the Chaplaincy Team, the Administration and the Student Council, on all items related to spiritual development and enhancement.
- ensures there exists a regular infusion of Catholic Church teachings in all Student Council led activities.

## **VX) MINISTER OF MULTIMEDIA**

This position will be **APPOINTED POSITION** . After a consultation between the Administration Team, and the Student Council Moderator (Staff Rep.), this post will be filled.

- this member must have knowledge on setup operations of special events.
- will work in co-operation with the Arts Department in the preparation and presentation of school entertainment assemblies.

## **C. MAJOR COMMITTEES**

- committees set up by the parliament shall be accountable for their progress to the parliament.
- committees set up by the parliament shall be chaired by an appointed member of parliament (Cabinet member or MP).
- it is the duty of the parliament to assist in setting up major committees made up of students for large and/or abstract goals.
- the purpose of the committee shall be outlined at its creation and shall be approved by the Administration.
- committees may be dissolved by vote of the assembled parliament after its goal has been reached.

## **SECTION V - MEETINGS AND PROCEDURES**

- All parliament meetings shall be called by the Prime Minister and will, unless otherwise stated, be open to all members of the Cabinet and all Members of Parliament. The Prime Minister may conduct cabinet meetings at his/her discretion.
- Parliament meetings shall be called at least once every two weeks.
- Official meetings require a showing of at least 50% of the total number to be represented (at least four cabinet members and one half of all MPs). Legislation requires the approval of at least one-half of the total MPs. If there is insufficient turnout to have an official meeting, no legislation may be passed.
- It is the cabinet's responsibility to ensure the parliament meetings are well-advertised.
- An agenda shall be prepared for each meeting and a copy must be given to each participant.
- Bills passed through the parliament must be sent to the administration of the school for final approval. Once approval has been received, then can the legislation be acted upon.
- Veto power is exercised by the administration of St. Thomas Aquinas and by one-half of the cabinet.

## SECTION VI - ELECTIONS

- Elections for the members of cabinet for the following year shall take place one week after Education Week and the actual *debating of candidates* shall take place on the Friday of Education week, through a one time FNN Video Series Presentation or an Election Assembly.
- Any full-time student of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School entering either grade 11 or 12, who is scheduled to return for a **full year, (during the year of their candidacy)**, with an average over 75% at the time of the *Nomination Process* is eligible to run for Student Parliament, regardless of gender, race or creed.
- A time limit of four minutes shall be allotted to each candidate on the day of the election to make a campaign speech. The PA system, the STA Newsletters, or any other form of media shall **not be used for campaigning**. FNN shall ONLY be used on the election date to present the candidates 'Election Video Campaign', subject to scrutiny by the Administration Team.
- A vote shall be taken by the entire student body, with each person casting **one** vote.
- In the event of a vacancy in the Cabinet (through resignation, impeachment or some other unforeseeable event) a MP will be elected by the assembled parliament into the position. The exception to this rule is the office of Prime Minister, which shall be occupied by the Deputy Prime Minister. At this point an election will occur to place an **MP** in the position of Deputy Prime Minister. In the event of the loss of an MP the class involved will hold an election and would place a new student in the vacancy.

## SECTION VII - MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS OF ALL POTENTIAL MINISTERS

**Grade Level:** All candidates **must** be entering into either **grade 11 or 12** and be enrolled as a **full time student** for the **entire school year** in which their term will be served to be considered as a potential candidate.

**Academic Average:** Candidates are required to have a **minimum academic average** of at least **75 %** at time of "*Application for Consideration to the Student Council*". All candidates are expected to **maintain a 75% average through completion of the application school year, as well as the semester they are serving as Student Council**. Students **failing to maintain a 75% average** may be **subject to ineligibility or dismissal from Student Council**. All candidates **must** submit a **copy** of their **Semester 1 Final Report** AND a **copy of their Semester 2 Mid-Term Report** at time of application.

**Completed 40 Hours Community Service Form:** All candidates must submit a copy of their **Community Service Hours** indicating full completion of the Ministry of Education Required 40 Hours of Community Service. Only candidates possessing a completed form will be considered.

**Teacher Reference Form :** Candidates **must** submit a completed **Teacher Reference Form** with their **Application**. This form indicates support from a **Teacher currently employed at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School**.

**Administrator Reference Form:** Candidates **must** submit a completed **Administrator Reference Form** with their **Application**. This form indicates support from an **Administrator currently employed at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School**. The Administrator will verify the following for each candidate: a) Academic Record ; b) Attendance Record, and c) Student in 'Good Standing' record. Only candidates receiving

a successful Administrator's Reference Form will be considered.

***Attendance:*** Only students with an acceptable ***attendance record*** will be eligible for the ***Application*** process. Students with a questionable current or past attendance record and/or students, who are or have been on, an ***Attendance Contract*** may not be eligible. Students who have received the ***Principal's Platinum Award*** will be deemed to have an excellent attendance record.

***Student in 'Good Standing':*** Only students in 'good standing' will be accepted. "Good Standing" indicates that this student does not have any disciplinary records which would prevent them from demonstrating exemplary service in their school and local community.

***Promotion of Catholicity*** : All candidates are expected to maintain an "***openness to the promotion of the Catholic faith***". While council members need not specifically be Catholic, they must be open to the views of the Catholic faith and be able to actively serve to ***promote*** strong ***Catholic Values*** in all they do. One of the roles of the Student Council is to actively promote Catholicity both in word and in deed as they willingly maintain an active involvement in all school activities as a ***St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary Student***.

***Important Notice*** : All members of Student Council ***must*** conduct themselves according to the highest moral standards at all times. Honesty in speech and behaviour, respect for fellow-students, faculty, administration, staff, parents and the common good of the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School community are the standards to which each member of the Student Government will be held accountable. The Principal reserves the right to remove any member of the Student Council deemed to have violated any standards as set forth in the Constitution and/or the Minimum Requirements.

## **SECTION VIII - OATH OF OFFICE**

The following oath of office is to be taken by newly elected members of the cabinet

***I, \_\_\_\_\_, DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR TO PERFORM THE DUTIES TO WHICH I HAVE BEEN ELECTED AS BEST I CAN. I WILL TRY TO UPHOLD THE RESPONSIBILITIES BESTOWED UPON ME AS \_\_\_\_\_ WITH VIGILANCE AND DISCRETION.***

## **SECTION VIII - TERMINATION OF THE YEAR**

The new cabinet takes control immediately following the conclusion of the exams in June. At that time the parliament of the previous year is dissolved and no longer holds any official capacity.

This, the constitution of the students of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School, ensures the rights and freedoms of the students to elect their representatives to the administration and to the community.