



Appointment of a Principal

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Policy

1. The Principal of a Marist school is appointed by the National Director of Marist Schools Australia and after the completion of the procedures detailed in this document.
2. The process for the advertising, selection and recommendation for appointment is managed directly by the relevant Regional Director (and not either managed by the school itself or outsourced to a recruitment firm).
3. The process for choosing a school's new principal is consultative and inclusive of the school community.
4. The nature of the advertising process needs to be sensitive to the fact that it serves a twofold purpose: advertising the position itself as well as promoting the profile and character both of school and of Marist education.
5. All costs incurred in the recruitment process are met by the local school.

Procedures

1. Advertising

- 1.1 When a vacancy for a principalship becomes known, and preferably in the first half of the year prior to commencement, the Regional Director shall initiate an advertising campaign. This campaign shall normally include these elements:
 - Feature advertisements over two weekends in print media and their associated on-line media, usually using a local and a national media group, and a suitable Catholic media outlet.
 - An advertisement on the MSA website
 - Email contact with all Marist schools in Australia, with weblink included
 - Email contact with other school networks from which suitable potential applicants may come, e.g. specific dioceses or school associations.
- 1.2 All advertisements shall direct potential applicants to contact the MSA Regional Office for an application package. The Regional Director shall ensure that application packages are ready to be posted out by the time the advertisements are placed. The application package would normally include:
 - A sheet detailing the process and timeline for appointment
 - A standard application form to be completed
 - Some information on the school: its history, its size, its student profile, its strategic plan, its governance, its trends in academic outcomes, any special features
 - The document *The Core Accountabilities of the Principal of a Marist School*
 - A suitable document on Marist education and/or Marist Schools Australia
 - Weblinks that could be followed, e.g. The school, the Marist Association, MSA.
- 1.3 If time and finance allow, the advertising campaign may include a brochure (in a PDF or suitable electronic format) which would normally be graphically designed by the school at the request of the Regional Director. This could be included in the email alert, be on the MSA website, and be included in the application package.

- 1.4 The advertising campaign would not normally last longer than a month.
- 1.5 Costs of the campaign shall not exceed 15% of the annual base salary of the principal.

2. Reference checks

- 2.1 For each applicant being considered for short-listing the Regional Director must contact the two immediate past employers of the applicant, and enquire of them their opinion on the suitability of the applicant for the position under consideration. This contact should be made by telephone or in person.
- 2.2 In addition, the Regional Director may choose to contact other referees nominated by the applicant and/or other people who may be able to speak with authority on the professional and personal background of the applicant.
- 2.3 The Regional Director shall summarise the feedback received from reference checks, and make this summary available to the short-listing panel and the interview panel.
- 2.4 With the approval of the National Director, the Regional Director may delegate some or all of the contacting of referees to another suitably qualified person.
- 2.5 Once an appointment is made, the Regional Director shall ensure that any notes made on unsuccessful applicants are shredded or disposed of securely.

3. Short-listing

- 3.1 As soon as possible after the closing date, a short-listing panel shall meet to consider all applications.
- 3.2 This panel shall normally consist of the National Director, the Regional Director and one or two other suitable people, who may or may not be members of the interview panel.
- 3.3 The short-listing panel shall consider the application according to criteria on which it agrees. These criteria should avoid being unreasonably restrictive but should include:
 - active membership of a Catholic Eucharistic community;
 - suitable background in theology, preferably at the post-graduate level;
 - masters level educational background;
 - proven leadership skills at a suitable level;
 - an apparently good fit for Marist values and style
- 3.4 The panel shall attempt to restrict the short-list to between one and four applicants.
- 3.5 The short-listing panel is entitled to judge that no suitable candidate has applied, in which case the National and Regional Directors shall decide on an alternative path, such as re-advertising, direct secondment of another Marist principal, or the appointment of an acting Principal for a certain period of time.

4. Consultations

- 4.1 Concurrently with the advertising campaign, the Regional Director carries out a series of structured consultations with members of the school community, the focus of which would be to identify their hopes for the school in its next five years and the particular qualities they would hope to see in the next Principal. These consultations normally involve face-to-face meetings and include:
 - the school's staff
 - a parent group
 - the school board if one exists
 - the Catholic Education Office
 - the MSA Regional Council.
- 4.2 In addition, the National Director may choose to contribute.
- 4.3 A summary of all these consultations are made available to the interview panel.

5. Interview panel

- 5.1 The Regional Director, with the approval of the National Director, shall appoint a panel to interview the short-listed applicants. The panel shall normally be five or six people, and include:
- the Regional Director (as Chair)
 - a Principal of another Marist school
 - a person from the diocese in which the school is located (usually from the local Catholic Education Office or equivalent)
 - a parent (chosen by the Regional Director who may opt to ask the outgoing Principal and/or the Chair of the school's board for advice)
 - a priest from one of the parishes served by the school.
- 5.2 The interview panel shall convene in a location quite separate from the school to conduct the interviews. The local Catholic Education Office may often be a suitable place.
- 5.3 The Regional Director shall provide the interview panel (at least three days ahead of the interviews) with these materials:
- the standard application form completed by each interviewee
 - any written references supplied by each interviewee
 - a summary of the consultations
 - a schedule for the day, including the time and venue for gathering, a list of interview times, the likely closing time.
 - A set of suggested questions for each panel member, and an invitation for them to give some consideration to one or more of the questions
- 5.4 Before the interviews commence, the Regional Director shall spend at least 30 minutes with the panel during which these topics will be addressed:
- the recruitment process to this point
 - the priorities for the school and the qualities needed to lead it in the immediate future
 - clarification on the interview process, including the questions to be asked
 - clarification on the role of the panel
- 5.5 At the conclusion of the interviews, the Regional Director facilitates a panel discussion with a view to developing a consensus. Whether or not consensus is achieved, each panel member individually completes a form indicating his or her personal recommendation.

6. Appointment

- 6.1 The Regional Director immediately passes on to the National Director the recommendations from the Interview Panel.
- 6.2 The National Director may seek further advice from members of the Association Council and/or from other sources as he wants.
- 6.3 The National Director makes a decision to accept or decline the recommendation, based on the advice he has received.
- 6.4 Before confirming an appointment the National Director consults the Bishop of the Diocese on the proposed appointee.
- 6.5 Once the Bishop has been consulted, the National Director advises the Regional Director who makes contact with the successful applicant and makes a verbal offer of appointment.
- 6.6 Once the person has verbally accepted, the unsuccessful interviewees are contacted by the Regional Director. The Regional Director shall also offer them feedback on their applications and advice for future applications, if they want it.

- 6.7 The National Director then writes to the successful candidate, by either letter or email, indicating the broad terms of the offer and seeking a written acceptance of these.
- 6.8 Later, and usually within a month, a formal employment agreement is mutually agreed and signed by the Principal and the National Director of Marist Schools Australia. This process is managed by the Regional Director in consultation with the Association's Business Office.

7. Announcement

- 7.1 The Regional Director advises the outcome of process and the date of the public announcement to:
- the MSA Regional Council
 - the local Bishop and Director of the CEO
 - the outgoing Principal
- Before this date, knowledge of the appointment is embargoed.
- 7.2 The National Director prepares a letter to the school community and, if judged appropriate, a media release.
- 7.3 The Regional Director organises with the outgoing and incoming Principals a suitable date for the announcement. This would normally be within a fortnight of the interviews. On the day of the announcement, the Regional Director (or another MSA representative) would attend the school to make the announcement in person to the school staff. If possible, the new Principal would be in attendance. If not, then the new Principal would be introduced to staff by the Regional Director at a later date. The National Director's letter would be sent to parents and the school community (organised by the school) and put on the school's website. The school would organise for the media release to go to appropriate Catholic and secular media outlets.
- 7.4 On the same day, the Regional Director organises for the National Director's letter to go out to all Marist schools and ministries, the membership of the Marist Association, and the Brothers' Province.

APPENDIX 1

APPLICATION FORM FOR PRINCIPAL APPLICANTS



PRINCIPAL OF [COLLEGE]
APPLICATION FORM

Name

Christian/Given Names	Surname

Parish or Eucharistic community in which you regularly worship

Parish/Community
Name of Priest
Contact Phone Number / Email

Contact Postal Address

	Postcode

Contact Phone Numbers

Home	Business	Mobile
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Email and Fax

Email	Fax
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Tertiary Qualifications

Degree/Qualifications	University/Institution	Area of focus/Major	Year Awarded

Current Study

Degree/Qualification	University/Institution	Area of focus	Anticipated year of conclusion

Relevant Experience

School/College/Institution	Position held	Year(s)

Written References

Name of referee(s)	Current Position	Contact Phone Number / Email

Referees for contact (at least three)

Name of referee(s)	Current Position	Contact Phone Number

Health

<i>Please outline your health condition</i>

APPENDIX 2
Referee form

Applicant's Name:	
Referee's Name, position and relationship to the applicant	

1 – Poor or underdeveloped; 2 – Not a strength; 3 – Adequate; 4 – Good; 5 – Outstanding. Leave blank if unable to comment.

1. Spiritual Leadership

CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	5
Provides effective leadership of the school as an evangelising community, through its culture and priorities, its worship and prayer, its religious education program, its youth ministry initiatives, its community outreach					
Develops the school, as a vital faith community that is a genuine expression of Church.					
Gives witness and articulation to a personal faith in Jesus Christ, practised within the Catholic tradition.					
Is able to articulate the message of the Gospel with credibility and effect					
Ensures the school is integrally involved in the life and mission of the local Church.					
Has developed sense of the mission of the Catholic school					
Is able to speak and write with authority concerning theology, Scripture, and Church teaching					
Appreciates the value and potential of a spiritual family of the Church such as the Marists.					
Nurtures the spiritual development of staff as a key priority					
COMMENT					

2. Community Leadership

CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	5
Knows the students					
Works effectively to ensure that the College is marked by a 'family spirit' as this term is customarily understood in the Marist tradition.					
Exercises a leadership style that is open and collaborative, and sees the Principal personally present to all members of the school community.					
Strives to model the qualities that are identified as the ideal for the Marist educator					
Provides for the effective pastoral care of students by guiding the processes for identifying and responding to students' needs.					
Ensures enrolment and employment practices are just, inclusive and consistent with Catholic social values.					
Ensures school expectations of staff and students are clearly articulated, and standards and values of the school are maintained.					
Maintains sensitive and close links with the resident Marist Brothers' community, seeking to involve members of the Community in the life the school in appropriate and welcoming ways.					
COMMENT					

4. Strategic Leadership

CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	5
Thinks strategically and is able to translate this into effective strategic planning.					
Can lead and manage change					
Maintains enrolments at the desired levels.					
Prioritises need					
Works effectively with parents, ex-students and advisory groups.					
Promotes the profile of the school in the wider community.					
COMMENT					

5. Administrative Leadership

CRITERIA	1	2	3	4	5
Ensures the school is conducted smoothly and efficiently.					
Shows prudent financial management and wise stewardship of the school's properties and resources.					
Ensures effective processes for communicating, planning, scheduling, record-keeping, budgeting, accounting and attending to ongoing maintenance.					
Ensures all members of staff have effective role descriptions and appropriate means of performance review.					
Plans and manages capital works in accordance with expectations.					
COMMENT					

Further Comments

1. What are the strengths of the applicant?

2. Any Concerns?

3. Readiness for the Position

Signed:

APPENDIX 3

GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEW PANEL

1. The interviewing of applicants is an important step in the process of appointment of a college principal. Other aspects of the appointment process include:
 - a. The discernment of each applicant to proceed with an application, having reflected on the documentation and expectations provided by *Marist Schools Australia*
 - b. Short-listing of applicants, usually done by the Leadership Team of Marist Schools Australia
 - c. Reference checks on short-listed applicants, usually done by the Regional Director of *Marist Schools Australia*
 - d. Consultation with the school community regarding its hopes for its next principal, usually done by the Regional Director of *Marist Schools Australia*
 - e. Consultation with other key stakeholders, such as the Bishop of the diocese in which the college is located, the Director of the Catholic Education Office, and the Provincial of the Marist Brothers – usually done by the Regional Director and/or the National Director of *Marist Schools Australia*.
2. The role of the panel is to consider the written applications of the short-listed applicants, the hopes of the school community, the expectations of the *Marist Schools Australia*, and the performance of each short-listed applicant at interview, and to make a recommendation regarding appointment of the principal to the National Director of *Marist Schools Australia*.
3. *Each* member of the panel makes his or her own recommendation on *each* of the interviewees to the National Director, whether or not consensus has been achieved by the panel. The National Director considers all of this advice, along with advice from the other consultations, and makes a decision on the appointment.
4. It is most important for the integrity of the process, and the privacy of all applicants, that panel members observe absolute confidentiality. In accepting a place on the panel, they agree not to discuss the applicants or their relative merits outside of the panel deliberations, not to divulge the names the number of interviewees, and not to share any information that is contained in the applications, the comments of referees, the content of panel discussion, or the their own recommendations.
5. Panel members are not there to represent any group or constituency, but rather to bring a range of perspectives and insights. The distinction is a subtle but important one.
6. Panel members are advised that research suggests that the interview on its own not always a reliable predictor of later success of a candidate. While an applicant's performance at interview may reveal much about suitability for the position, it is to the applicant's *record* that the panel should most attentive, and also to comments of referees. In framing questions, panellists should try to elicit responses that allow the interviewees to give evidence and specific examples of how, when and why they have acted in past situations.

APPENDIX 4

SCHEDULE FOR INTERVIEWS

Position:	
Interview Date:	
Time:	
Venue:	

Panel Members:	Name:	Position:

AGENDA

Time	
	1. Prayer
	2. Discussion of process and interview questions based on essential desirable criteria
	3. Interview1: (Applicants name)
	4. Interview 2: (Applicants name)
	5. Break
	6. Interview 3: (Applicants Name)
	7. Discernment

APPENDIX 5

PANEL RECOMMENDATION

Dear [NAME OF NATIONAL DIRECTOR]

Having interviewed the short-listed applicants for the position of Principal of [NAME OF SCHOOL] and having considered other information available to me, I make these recommendations to you.

Name of Applicant	Recommendation			Rank
	<i>Highly suitable</i>	<i>Suitable but with some qualification</i>	<i>Not suitable</i>	

My further comments:

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 6

FEEDBACK TO APPLICANTS

1. Strengths and suitability to the position:

2. Issues / Concerns:

3. Other Comments / Career advice:

Signed: _____

(CHAIR)

Dated: _____