



Meadowlane Public School Council

Constitution & Bylaws

Code of Ethics

MEADOWLANE PUBLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I - NAME

The organization shall be known as Meadowlane Public School Council, hereinafter referred to as the School Council or the Council.

ARTICLE II - EFFECTIVE DATE

This constitution shall be effective upon approval by the members at the Annual General Meeting.

ARTICLE III - MANDATE

The School Council is an advisory body, which functions within the parameters of Ministry and Board policy. It will provide parents, staff, students and community representatives with the opportunity and the means to advise the principal and, as appropriate, administrators and trustees of the Board, on the following school-related issues according to priorities set by the School Council:

- Curriculum/program priorities;
- Extracurricular activities in the school;
- School Code of Behaviour;
- School budget priorities and methods and strategies to raise funds to complement said budgets
- Local coordination of services for children and youth;
- The School Council use of school facilities according to Board guidelines;
- Developing and promoting communication strategies among the school, its community, its family of schools and the Board
- The response of the school or board to student achievement in board and provincial assessment programs;
- Sharing School Council information with parents and the community;
- General inquiries to consider in the selection of the principal;
- Review of board policies at the local level;
- School-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreational and nutrition.

ARTICLE IV - ROLE

The School Council shall operate as an advisory body to provide ideas and opinions to help the principal make the school a better place for learning. In its role as a link between the school and community, the School Council shall help to establish and maintain good communication among the school, parents and community and to encourage parents and community members to participate in education.

ARTICLE V - OBJECTIVES

BUDGET AND FUNDRAISING:

The School Council will plan and present an annual budget to the general membership and organize fundraising activities for items and activities as approved in this annual budget.

DIALOGUE:

The School Council is a vehicle for dialogue between parents and educators (staff) at the school, board or provincial level. The School Council shall provide opportunities to discuss educational issues and respond to local educational needs by providing information for parents and community members, getting feedback from them and presenting their views to the school and school board.

INFORMATION:

The School Council will facilitate the opportunity for guest speakers to come to Council meetings and/or to planned events to share about educational issues, as interest dictates.

SOCIAL INTERACTION:

The School Council will organize and promote social functions which provide opportunities for the school community to interact (e.g., Meet the Teacher BBQ, Spaghetti Dinner for families new to Meadowlane, Family Movie Night).

VOLUNTEERS:

The School Council will assist in organizing volunteers for School Council special events.

ARTICLE VI - ORGANIZATION

MEMBERSHIP: All parents/guardians of children attending Meadowlane Public School, the principal, teachers and staff can be members of the Meadowlane Public School Council.

ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS

To amend this constitution, a notice of such amendment shall be made to the general school body in printed form at least two (2) weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting.

Amendments must be passed by a majority vote of people present at the Annual General Meeting.

ARTICLE VIII - ANNUAL REPORT

The School Council shall annually submit a written report of its activities in a format standardized by the Board, to the principal and the Board. The report shall include the goals, activities and achievements of the Council during the year. If the Council engages in fundraising, it shall also include report on these activities.

The report shall be presented at the Annual General Meeting. The report will also be posted on the Meadowlane website under the heading, *School Council*.

ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by approval of a motion by two-thirds majority of members of Council present and voting at a regular or special meeting, provided that at least two weeks notice is given for such a motion and details of the proposed amendments are circulated to all members with that notice.

Dated at Meadowlane Public School, Kitchener, Ontario, on 2014

Respectfully submitted by,

Chair

Chair

Treasurer

Secretary

MEADOWLANE PUBLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL BYLAWS

1. ELECTION PROCEDURES

To elect the parent/guardian School Council representative, a general election shall be held every year within the first thirty days of the start of the school year. The School Council election will be publicly advertised at least 14 days in advance of the election through newsletter or letters sent home and on the school website. A description of the role of each elected position will be included in information sent home and posted on the school website. The voting will be held at a time and place chosen by the existing School Council. To ensure the transparency of Council elections, nominations must be received by a pre-determined date, which will be noted on the nomination form. The names of those running for positions on council will be made public a minimum of 48 hours prior to the election date. Elections are to take place at the first School Council meeting of the year and voting will be done by secret ballot.

To seek election, each parent must:

- be nominated or self-nominated in writing,
- have a child registered at the school and,
- must declare if he or she is employed by the school board.

Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled at the school shall be entitled to one vote for each vacant parent membership position on the Council.

If an insufficient number of people are nominated and /or volunteer for the positions, the nominees/volunteers are acclaimed to the positions and the executive will operate without the proper number of parent/guardians representatives as long as there is still parent/guardian majority.

If a sufficient, but not more than the maximum, number of people are nominated and/or volunteer, they are acclaimed to the positions.

Each School Council representative shall be elected for a 1-year term. If a person wishes to remain a School Council representative after their term is completed they must stand for re-election.

At the first Council meeting of the new Council, the officers, consisting of a chair (co-chairs), secretary and treasurer shall be elected.

2. VACANCIES

If a School Council representative wishes to resign during his/her term, a letter stating this intent shall be forwarded to the Chair (Co-Chairs). If any School Council position becomes vacant, the remaining members shall form the Council unless the parent/guardian majority is not maintained. If the majority of the parents on the Council is not maintained, the successful candidate with the next highest number of votes in the most recent election will take the vacated position. If there are no other candidates, the School Council shall send out nomination forms for the position and hold an election if necessary.

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Each School Council member shall avoid situations that could result in an inconsistency between the overall goals and vision of the School Council and a personal or vested interest, that arise in connection with his or her duties as a School Council member.

Members of the Council shall declare a conflict of interest in matters that they, members of their families, or business entities in which they may have an interest, stand to benefit either directly or indirectly by decision of the Council.

A member shall exclude him or herself from discussion when or if;

- A conflict of interest is likely to result;
- The member's ability to carry out his or her duties and responsibilities as a member of the School Council may be jeopardized;
- The Council member, his or her relatives, or a business entities which the member may have an interest, may benefit either directly or indirectly as a result of actions that may be taken by the principal or board in response to advice that the Council provides to the principal or to the board.

4. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Every School Council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her opinion or concern about the issue being presented, within the time allotted for an individual item. Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption for a maximum of 5 minutes. Speakers will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times. If a longer period of time is required to discuss a particular issue, the issue may be scheduled again the next meeting.

If a Council member or members become disruptive during the meeting, the Chair will call for order. The Chair's responsibility is to clarify the statement made by all speakers, to keep speakers to their allotted time, to identify the common ground among the points of view raised, and to set out the joint interests of all members.

If all efforts to restore order fail or the unbecoming behavior continues, the Chair may direct the individual Council member(s) to leave the meeting, citing the reasons for the request.

When the Chair has requested the removal of a member or members from a meeting, the Chair may request that disputing members of Council participate in a special meeting, the purpose of which is to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute. Such a meeting will be a private meeting, and shall not be constructed as a meeting of the Council. The school principal will be invited to attend this meeting.

If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the Chair shall request the intervention of a superintendent or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.

Any resolution reached at the meeting to resolve the conflict shall be signed and respected by all parties to the agreement.

DISCRETIONARY BYLAWS

5. SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The members of the School Council should reflect the diversity of the community and shall include but no be limited to:

Between 9 and 15 parents/guardians with a child/children attending Meadowlane Public School;

The principal;

1 teacher or rotating teacher representative;

1 or 2 community members, as selected by the School Council executive representatives (School Council will operate without representation of community members if no members come forward)

The parents/guardians must form the majority of School Council.

6. DUTIES OF SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

Participate in School Council meetings, committees, and information and training programs as required;

Act as a liaison between the School Council and the community;

Become informed of the function and duties of the School Council;

Be responsible for encouraging parents and others within the community to participate in education in the school;

Observe the Council's Code of Ethics and established Bylaws.

7. PRINCIPAL

Facilitate the establishment of the School Council and assist in its operation;

Support and promote the Council's activities;

Seek input from the Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibility by the local School Board;

Act as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies and collective agreement;

Obtain and provide information required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions;

Communicate with the Chair(s) of the Council as required;

Ensure that copies of the minutes and the Treasurer's Report of the Council's meetings are kept at the school (are posted on school website)

Assist the Council in communicating with the school community;

Encourage the participation of parents within the school community;

Encourage the participation of teachers to support the Council's activities;

Has signing authority for School Council funds.

8. OFFICERS OF SCHOOL COUNCIL

The School Council shall have a Chairperson that must be a parent member of the School Council and be elected by the members of Council.

In the event that one person is not willing to Chair the Council or there is interest in Co-Chairing, Co-Chairs may be elected.

The School Council shall also elect/appoint a Treasurer and a Secretary from among the parent members.

Vacancies in the office of the Chair, Co-Chairs or any officers of a School Council shall be filled in accordance with the bylaws of the Council.

- A) CHAIRPERSON (CO-CHAIRS): In addition to performing the duties of a Council member, the chair:
- Calls Council meetings;
 - Prepares the agenda for Council meetings;
 - Chairs Council meetings;
 - Ensures that minutes of Council meetings are recorded and maintained;
 - Communicates with the school principal;
 - Ensures that there is regular communication with the school community;
 - Consults with senior staff members of the school board and trustees as required;
 - Organizes future elections;
 - Facilitates the resolution of conflict;
 - Participates as an ex-officio member of all committees established by the School Council;
 - Monitors Treasurer's reports for School Council funds;
 - Completes the Annual Report as required;
 - Attends Waterloo Region Assembly of Public School (WRAPSC) meetings as able or designates an alternate
- B) SECRETARY: In addition to performing the duties of a Council member, the Secretary:
- Ensures that minutes of Council meetings are recorded and maintained;
 - Keeps a record of all proceedings of the Council during the current school year;
 - Gives notice of all meetings and keeps a file of all records and documents;
 - Attends to all correspondence and communications, including ensuring accurate representation on the school website
- C) TREASURER: In addition to performing the duties of a Council member, the Treasurer;
- Prepares a budget for the school year, including projected fundraising revenue and a disbursement plan;
 - Reviews and authorizes the deposits and expenditures for School Council activities;
 - Coordinates the deposits and expenditures with the Secretary or Principal of the School and the School Council members;
 - Obtains from the Principal or School Secretary any additional updated financial information or the Council each month;
 - Reconciles the Council spreadsheet from the School with the documentation from the Council members;
 - Presents a statement of the accounts at every meeting;
 - Prepares an annual statement of accounts for presentation at the Annual General meeting.

9. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

It is the duty of a parent/guardian member to attend 70% of the regularly scheduled meetings of the School Council to maintain voting privileges, from the time elected or joined.

Additional responsibilities of each parent/guardian member are to:

- Participate in discussions at meetings;
- Attend School Council events;
- Work co-operatively to develop common goals at the Board and school level;
- Serve as an advocate and voice for the members of the school community and maintain confidentiality;
- Volunteer to assist with Council activities.

School Council may, if necessary, ask for the resignation of a Council member if the member does not fulfill his or her duties as outlined in the bylaws, does not adhere to the Code of Ethics or does not act in the best interests of the Council, the school and the children.

10. COMMITTEES

The School Council will form committees to focus on issues as outlined in the School Council objectives. At least one School Council representative must be a member of each committee. Other parents will be encouraged to be members of the committees. Some committees will be on-going (Fundraising, Social, etc.,) while others may be formed and deemed necessary by the School Council. Committees will report to School Council at meetings.

11. MEETINGS

There shall be a minimum of four and a maximum of nine meetings per school year not including the Annual General Meeting. The new School Council shall meet within the first 35 days of the school year after the elections are held.

All meetings shall be open to the public and shall be held at a location accessible to the public. The School Council is entitled to hold their meetings at the school.

12. VOTING

School Council decisions will be made by consensus of the attending members with the exception of the following:

1. Motion will be made on financial and appointment issues and recorded in the minutes;
2. A School Council member may request, at any time, that a decision be made through a motion.

A vote on an action during a meeting cannot be held unless:

1. A majority of the current members of the Council are present at the meeting, and
2. A majority of the members of the Council who are present at the meeting are parent members.

Majority shall be considered to be two-thirds.

Principals are not entitled to vote in votes taken by the School Council or by a committee of the School Council.

13. REQUIREMENTS FOR SIGNING OFFICERS

The Treasurer's approval of all expense reimbursements and requests for cheques, will be obtained prior to a cheque being issued. The signing officers shall be the School Principal, the School Secretary, and the School Council Treasurer. Two signatures are required on all School Council cheques.

14. MINUTES AND FINANCIAL RECORDS

The School Council shall keep minutes of all meetings and records of its financial transactions. The minutes and records shall be available at the school for examinations by any person.

This shall apply only to minutes that are less than four years old.

15. REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

A budget line, not to exceed \$500 (as set out by W.R.D.S.B.), may be established specifically for the operation of School Council. This money can be used for newsletters, meeting expenses, retirement gifts for staff, etc., but may not be used for honorariums or reimbursement of personal expenses for School Council members.

16. SCHOOL COUNCIL AND HANDLING OF MONEY

The following guidelines are intended to clarify School Council responsibilities for managing the funds of the School Council and to ensure financial accountability and transparency.

All monies collected by the School Council should be counted immediately in the presence of another School Council member (preferably 2 members); monies should never leave school premises.

Monies will be kept within the designated lock box at the school until the Treasurer can deposit the funds into the School Council account, within 3 business days.

All deposits must be entered into the School Council account receipt book along with the deposit slip.

A tracking sheet (provided by the Treasurer) is to be used to record monies received, as well as money spent. Receipts must be provided and attached to the tracking sheet for accuracy and accountability.

Receipts for expenses must be submitted to the Treasurer, in order to be reimbursed.

If a particular event or expense has a potential to go over the agreed-upon budget, the sub-committee and/or individual who has identified the risk must notify the School Council Chairs and Treasurer immediately. The Chairs and Treasurer will review and determine if the potential amount over budget is minimal/reasonable (ie. less than 10% increase of the original budgeted amount) and will approve the increase on School Council's behalf; Otherwise, the Chairs will immediately communicate to the School Council members the potential over-budget expenses and gather the School Council's approval to proceed or deny any further increases in the event's budget. The Treasurer will update the Treasurer's report accordingly.

MEADOWLANE PUBLIC SCHOOL CODE OF ETHICS

A Member shall:

- Consider the best interests of all students.
- Be guided by the School's and the School Board's goals and values.
- Act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a School Council, as identified by the School's operating guidelines, the School Board, and the Ontario Ministry of Education.
- Become familiar with the School's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- Maintain the highest standards of integrity.
- Recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- Treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
- Encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- Acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the Council.
- Respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the School Council.
- Not disclose confidential information.
- Limit discussions at School Council meetings to matters of concern to the School community as a whole.

- Use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- Promote high standards of ethical practice within school community.
- Declare any conflict of interest.
- Not accept any payment or benefit financially through School Council involvement.