

CONSTITUTION

Article 1: Name and Address

The name of the organization is Cornell Village Public School Advisory Council (herein referred to as the "Council". The address is

Cornell Village Public School
186 Country Glen Road
Markham, ON L6B 1B5

The phone number is (905) 471-1694.

Article 2: Mission Statement

Cornell Village Public School Advisory Council supports collaboration between the students, their families, the school and the community in order to establish and maintain an open, trusting environment that promotes student achievement in our diverse community.

Article 3: Purpose and Objectives

The purpose and objectives of the Council are to:

1. engage parents/guardians to get involved in the education of their children.
2. provide a way for regular communication and dialogue between education partners.
3. participate in the Annual School Improvement Planning Process.
4. provide input into school administration, Board, and Ministry decisions.

Suggested best practices include:

- provide positive and innovative advice to the school
- encourage shared responsibility for student learning among students, parents, and teachers to develop an increased sense of shared accountability for public education
- support school, family, and community partnerships that assist parents in the education of their children
- provide a means of regular communication and dialogue between all partners in education
- fundraise to enhance the educational life of our students
- support and/or coordinate the services of social, health, safety, recreational and nutritional programs that assist in the education and well-being of our children
- promote and maintain contact with other School Advisory Councils

Article 4: Procedures and Operating Guidelines

School Advisory Councils are advisory bodies. A School Advisory Council will provide advice to the school principal and, where appropriate, to the Board on any matter that relates to student learning.

Notwithstanding the above, confidential personnel matters may not be addressed by School Advisory Councils nor are School Advisory Councils to discuss confidential information on individual students.

If confidential information is divulged at a meeting, the chair will instruct Council members to keep the information confidential, request that members of the public keep the information confidential, ensure that the minutes do not refer to the indiscretion, and determine if further action needs to be taken.

The operational procedures of this School Advisory Council comply with the procedures outlined in York Region District School Board (YRDSB) Procedure #262. All recommendations and activities of the School Advisory Council shall comply with all Ministry of Education Acts, YRDSB Policies and Procedures and Staff Collective Agreements.

Article 5: Definitions

When we use the term “parent” in this document, we mean it to include any person who is the parent and/or legal guardian of a student attending Cornell Village Public School.

Article 6: Membership

6.1: Parent / Guardians Members

The number of parent / guardian members on the Council shall be a minimum of eleven (11) and a maximum of nineteen (19) elected parents / guardians of children enrolled in Cornell Village Public School.

There shall be no more than one parent member on the school advisory council from any one household.

6.2: Community Representatives

The number of community representatives shall be a maximum of two (no minimum requirement).

6.3: Teaching Staff Representative

There will be a volunteer teacher representative who may be designated by the principal.

6.4: General (Non-Voting) Membership

All parents / guardians of students who attend Cornell Village Public School, all staff of Cornell Village Public School and all public school ratepayers within the area serviced by the school boundaries have the right to be recognized as members of the Cornell Village Public School community and are welcome to attend Council meetings.

6.5: Other Members

Other members such as a student representative, support staff representative and principal may be appointed.

6.6: Conflict of Interest

If individual Council members perceive themselves to be in conflict of interest, they are honour bound to declare their conflict at the earliest possible opportunity and at the time of the meeting. The minutes of the meeting will reflect this declaration. As a result, the Council member is ineligible to vote on the issue(s) relating to their conflict of interest.

6.7: Remuneration

Council members cannot receive remuneration for their work as a member of council.

6.8: Membership Responsibilities

School Advisory Council Members

- are accountable to the constituents they serve
- maintain a school-wide perspective on issues
- participate regularly in Council meetings
- participate in meetings and information and training programs
- act as a link between the Council and the community
- encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community
- are willing to be an equal member and share in the duties and initiatives undertaken by the Council
- will sit on at least one subcommittee and participate regularly in subcommittee meetings and activities
- will act in a professional manner at meetings, on emails, on the telephone, and while using social media, as well as not abuse tenure or position on Council in anyway.

The Principal

- supports and promotes the Council's operations and activities as an equal member of the Council
- seeks input from the Council in areas which it has identified as priorities and is prepared to provide a rationale for decisions made
- provides or gathers resources on laws, regulations, Board policies and collective agreements required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions
- ensures that copies of the Council constitution and by-laws, financial reports, and minutes of meetings are kept at the school and available for everyone to see
- ensures all contacts and information are forwarded to the chair
- assists the Council in communicating with the school community
- encourages the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the community
- lends support to school community organizations which operate separately from the Council, and serves as an effective liaison between the Council and such organizations

Article 7: Elections

7.1: Non-Council Election Committee

If an election is required, the Council/Principal shall appoint a Non-Council Election Committee to plan the election process, gather nominations, and run the election. No one standing for election or the spouse of anyone standing for election shall be a member of the election committee.

The election committee shall

- provide nomination forms for distribution within the first week of September in the new school year
- once nominations are confirmed, a list of nominees must be distributed to the school community with notification of election procedures, election date(s), location, and time, at least fourteen days in advance of election
- forums will be provided for the school community to either meet the nominees (if there are more than nineteen (19) nominees) in preparation for the election, or meet acclaimed Council members (if there are nineteen (19) or less nominees) if no election is warranted
- ensure that the school community is notified of election procedures and election date(s), location, and time, at least fourteen days in advance of election
- make ballots and a ballot box available in the school office for parents who want to vote but cannot attend the September Council meeting
- conduct the elections by secret ballot
- count both the ballots cast at the Council meeting and through the office ballot box
- help the principal notify all candidates of the results
- keep all the results and related information confidential
- release only the names of successful candidates
- notify all individuals standing for election of the results before the results are released to the school community

A list of candidates and the vote results will be kept on file for use in the event of vacancy on the council.

7.2: Date

Elections for Council membership shall take place annually, no later than the September Council meeting. At least fourteen (14) days' notice shall be given to the general school population that the election process will take place on the designated date.

7.3: Election Procedures for Parent Members

Each parent / guardian seeking election must be nominated or self-nominated in writing, must have a child registered at Cornell Village Public School, and must declare if they are employed by the Board.

Each parent / guardian of a student enrolled in Cornell Village Public School shall be entitled to one vote for each vacant parent / guardian member position on the Council.

7.4: Acclamation

Parent elections shall be by acclamation when the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of parent member positions on the Council.

7.5: Election of the Executive

Once the parent members are elected, the newly elected Council votes on its Executive for the year. (See Article 8 for list of positions.)

7.6: Terms of Office

Council members serve a one-year term of office. There are no restrictions to the number of times a member can be re-elected.

7.7: Resignations

Anyone who is a Council member, except the principal, may resign by writing a letter of resignation to the Chair. If someone resigns, the Council will fill the position according to Article 7.8: Vacancies.

7.8: Removal

The Council may choose to remove from the Council any member who misses three (3) consecutive meetings and shall undertake to replace that person according to Article 7.8: Vacancies.

7.9: Vacancies

A vacancy in the membership of Council does not prevent the Council from exercising its authority.

The Council should fill positions that become vacant due to resignation or removal as soon as possible by

- offering the person with the next largest number of votes who was not elected the opportunity to accept the position,
- notifying all parents of the vacancies and requesting application by interested volunteers,
- calling an election if there are more applications than positions,
- appointing a parent member when no more candidates are available, or
- choosing not to replace the vacancy if Council membership continues to exceed the minimum of eleven members.

The Council will fill vacancies only until May of the current year, after which time Council will fill the vacant positions through the annual September election.

Article 8: The Executive

8.1: Executive

The Executive is elected from the newly elected parent members of the Council and shall consist of:

- Chair (customarily filled by the Vice Chair when re-elected to the Council)
- Vice Chair
- Past Chair (customarily filled by retiring Chair when re-elected to the Council)
- Secretary
- Treasurer

In the event that the retiring Chair and Vice Chair cannot fulfill their duties as Past Chair and Chair respectively, the Council membership shall elect a new Past Chair and Chair.

8.2: Chair

An employee of the Board cannot be Chair.

The Chair shall

- call and chair Council meetings
- prepare an agenda for meetings, in consultation with other Council members and the principal
- ensure that the minutes of the meetings are recorded and maintained
- coordinate the activities of the Council and subcommittees of the Council
- communicate with the principal
- ensure that there is communication with the community
- sign any contracts, minutes of meetings, this constitution and other documents which the Council has authorized
- prepare the Council Annual Report as required by the Board
- liaise with the Trustees and Board as required
- ensure that the Council constitution and by-laws are reviewed each year

8.3: Vice Chair

The Vice Chair shall

- provide support for the Chair as required
- act as Chair in the absence of the Chair
- review meeting minutes with the Secretary prior to distribution

8.4: Past Chair

The Past Chair shall

- act as a resource to the Chair on past activities of the Council
- advise the Chair on proper procedure for the Council
- act as advisor to the Council

8.5: Secretary

The Secretary shall

- record attendance and the minutes of the meetings of the Council
- ensure the minutes are posted by the school within 14 days of the meeting
- distribute the minutes by email to all Council members
- distribute reminders by email to the Council members about upcoming meetings along with the agendas for that meeting
- ensure that all records are kept in a safe place

8.6: Treasurer

The Treasurer shall

- prepare a Treasurer's report and share with attendees at each Council meeting

- prepare the Annual Council Treasurer's Report as required by the Board

8.7: Vacancies in Office

The Council will fill Executive vacancies as soon as possible according to Article 7.8: Vacancies.

Article 9: Subcommittees

9.1: Establishment

Ongoing subcommittees of the Cornell Village Public School Advisory Council are

- Parent Engagement and Communication
- Fundraising
- Sustainability
- Staff Appreciation & Support
- Constitution Review

As the need arises, Council will form ad hoc subcommittees—subcommittees appointed to deal with a specific issue, report on it and disband.

9.2: Purpose

The purpose of each subcommittee is to

- conduct the detailed, in-depth work that is not possible during Council meetings,
- make recommendations to the Council, and
- keep the Council informed of issues and developments in its particular area.

9.3: Membership

Subcommittees will draw their membership from the members of the school community. Each subcommittee must contain at least one parent member of Council and may include parents who are not members of the Council.

9.4: Chair

Each subcommittee will appoint its own Chair. The subcommittee Chair does not have to be a member of the Council.

9.5: Meetings

Subcommittees, except Constitution Review, will meet regularly between Council meetings to ensure they conduct their business in a timely manner.

9.6: Updates and Recommendations

All subcommittee chairs are required to provide updates at the Council meeting when indicated on the agenda. If they cannot attend the Council meeting, they will submit a written update.

All subcommittees shall report to the Council to obtain final approval of the subcommittee's recommendations.

Article 10: Meetings

10.1: Timetable

At the first meeting of the new school year, the Council will create a timetable of meeting dates for the current school year. The Council will publicize these dates to the families of the school. It is recognized that the timetable may change at any time. The Council will publicize changes to the meeting timetable to the families of the school.

The Principal or Chair will send a copy of the meeting timetable to the local trustee.

The Council will meet a minimum of four times each year.

10.2: Attendance

Members of the Council must either send regrets to the Chair directly or via another Council member if they are going to be absent from a Council meeting.

10.3: Quorum

A meeting will have quorum if the majority of Council members are present representing at minimum half plus one of the Council members (i.e., Council membership equals eleven, must have six members present to have a quorum). The Council can meet if there is no quorum, but will defer all voting.

10.4: Decision-making

The preferred method to resolve issues on Council is through consensus. Consensus is a collective opinion or general agreement by all the members present. Comments and opinions from all meeting attendees are welcome, regardless of membership status.

In the case where a decision cannot be reached through consensus, the Chair may decide to

- call for a vote by way of a show of hands or a ballot by those present in which a 51% majority shall carry the vote
- defer the issue to the next meeting
- defer the issue to a special meeting, established subcommittee or ad hoc subcommittee for continued deliberation

A Council member may request a ballot vote on any issue.

10.5: Notice of Motion

Notice is a means of showing an intention to discuss and/or vote on something at a particular meeting. An advantage of giving notice is that Council members and other interested community members become aware of the motion and have time to consider its implications.

Any Council member may submit a Notice of Motion for consideration at any meeting of the Council. Such Notice shall be in writing and delivered to the Chair at a Council meeting approximately one month prior to the Council meeting at which the motion is to be considered. This ensures that the Notice can be distributed to all Council members and community members. The chair will print the motion in the agenda of the Council meeting at which it will be considered.

Notice is not mandatory and need not be given on every issue discussed and/or voted on by the Council. Rather, it is intended to ensure adequate input and attendance on important issues such as constitutional amendments and major funding decisions.

10.6: Communication

The Council will publish a timetable of current school year Council meetings at the beginning of the school year.

The Council shall announce its meetings in advance of the meeting date.

10.7: Agenda

Agenda items should be submitted to the Chair two weeks prior to the Council's next meeting.

The Chair sets the agenda with the principal at least one week ahead of the meeting. Time limits are set for each agenda item. The agenda is distributed to Council members and interested parents by email no later than one week prior to the upcoming meeting. It is also published on the Council page of the school website. This affords Council members and interested parents and community members the chance to come to the meeting prepared for meaningful discussion.

The Executive may consider additional items for the final agenda up to the day before the meeting. Attendees may not add agenda items at the meeting

Next meeting draft agenda items are noted at the end of the meeting.

10.8: Structure

When necessary, the Council will use Robert's Rule of Order.

Council meetings will adhere to the following structure:

- Welcome and Introductions
- Review format of meeting, including voting process, quorum, and structure
- Review of minutes of preceding meeting and acceptance by motion and vote
- Acceptance of current agenda by motion and vote
- Principal's Report
- Treasurer's Report and acceptance by motion and vote
- Old business items
- New business items
- Subcommittee updates, including next meeting date, time and location
- Meeting adjourned

10.9: Minutes

The school will be responsible for maintaining a copy of all Council Minutes.

Minutes must be saved by the school, and posted on the Council page of the school website within 14 days of the meeting. The Secretary will distribute the minutes by email to all Council members and interested attendees and parents.

Minutes shall include attendance, a synopsis of discussions, motions, decisions and actions to be taken.

10.10: Conflict Resolution

The Council will undertake to resolve all internal conflicts within its mandate in a timely manner. The Council will abide by any conflict resolution policy issued by the Board.

Article 11: Financial Management

11.1: Signing Authorities

- Money will be held in a separate line of the school account.
- Release of funds will occur based on the decision of the Council.
- School officials are the final signing authority for release of funds.

11.2: Disbursement and Allocation of Money

- All funds raised by the Council shall be collected for the purpose of enhancing the educational experience of students at Cornell Village Public School.
- All money must be collected by the end of the year.
- Funds should be dispersed or allocated to a specific purpose by the end of the year or allocated to the Council Reserve Fund.
- Council will commit to publishing how raised funds were spent annually.

11.3: Audit

The Treasurer will meet with the Principal/Council annually to review documentation related to the Council's monies in the school account and to prepare an annual treasurer's report to be submitted to the York Region District School Board.

The Council's monies are audited by an independent accountant as part of the audit of the school's accounts.

The year-end for the Council's financial records shall be August 30th in any given year.

11.4: Reporting

The Treasurer will present a written update of the financial record to the Council at each meeting.

Article 12: School Advisory Council Constitution

12.1: Review

The Council will review the constitution every year or as the need arises. The constitution subcommittee will perform the review and bring proposed amendments to the Council for voting.

12.2: Amendments

Amendments to the constitution must be presented to the Council at least 30 days in advance at a regularly scheduled meeting.

Constitutional amendments need a 2/3 majority to be passed.

Article 13: Protection of School Advisory Council Members

The York Region District School Board holds liability insurance undertaken on behalf of all Councils and, as such, members of the Cornell Village Public School Advisory Council are not personally liable for decisions and activities undertaken in relation to the Council, with the exception of any willful, destructive or dishonest act or neglect, performed by a particular Council member for which that person will be held accountable.