

School Council Operational Constitution and/or By-laws

Section 1: Name and Address

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAW(S)
Lake Wilcox PS
80 Wildwood Avenue
Richmond Hill, ON L4E 3B5
905-773-5381

Revised January, 2024

This is the operational constitution and/or By-law of Lake Wilcox PS. The members of the school council shall be responsible for maintaining the constitution.

Section 2: Mission Statement

Our school council believes that collaborative partnership among the school, the family, and the community is essential to improving student achievement and well-being, and increasing a shared sense of accountability for public education.

Section 3: Purpose and Objectives

The purpose and objectives of our school council include but are not limited to:

- Fostering and encouraging effective parental/guardian/family involvement in the education of their children;
- Providing a means for regular communication and dialogue between all partners in education;
- Participating in the School Improvement Process; and
- Providing input into decisions made by the school administration, the Board, and the Ministry.

Section 4: Procedures and Operating Guidelines

The operational procedures of this Council are outlined in the Board's school council policy and procedure.

All recommendations and activities of the Council shall comply with Ministry of Education Acts, York Region District School Board Policies and Procedures, and relevant Staff Collective Agreements.

Section 5: Norms of Behaviour and Practice

The School shall develop norms of behaviour at meetings on an annual basis through discussion, activity, and consensus:

- Agenda set by members and circulated in advance
- Meetings begin and end on time
- Consensus decision-making
- All speakers and opinions are respected
- Individual students, parents/guardians/families, and staff are not discussed
- Be open-minded and objective
- Refer parent/guardian/family or student issues to the teacher or school principal

Section 6: Membership

The majority of members of the Council shall be parents/guardians/families of students enrolled in at Lake Wilcox PS in the year in which they are members:

Parent/Guardian/Family Representative

Any parent/guardian/family with a child enrolled in the school are eligible:

- For election to school council;
- For acclamation to a position on the school council when the number of candidates is equal to, or less than the number of parent(s)/guardian(s)/family(s) member positions on the council;
- To be appointed to the school council if additional vacancies exist;

Student Representatives

The student representative is a member of the school council and will be:

- Named by the student council in secondary schools;
- Appointed by the school principal after consulting with the school council, where applicable, in elementary schools.

Community Representative

The community representative will be:

- Appointed by school council members;
- The representative cannot be employed at the school as a member of a bargaining unit, an administrator or a manager;
- If the individual is employed as a member of a bargaining unit, an administrator or a manager elsewhere in the Board, they must inform other members of the council of this before the appointment.

The School Principal

Teacher Representative

The teacher representative is a member of the school council. This representative must be employed at the school and is elected by teachers employed at the school.

Support Staff Representative

The support staff member representative is a member of the school council. This representative must be:

- Employed at the school;

- Not be the school principal or vice-principal; and
- Elected by support staff members employed at the school.

All members of the school council are accountable to the school community they represent and shall:

- maintain a school wide perspective on issues
- regularly attend school council meetings
- participate in information sharing and training programs
- act as a communication link between Council and the community
- encourage the participation of parents/guardians/families and other people in the school community
- participate on Sub-Committees and assist with tasks of the Council as required

Section 7: Elections & Voting

Election Notice

- Public notice of the annual elections and nomination forms shall be given to the school community at least fourteen (14) days before the date of the election.
- Notice of the annual election shall include date, time, and location of the election.
- Written notice (paper and/or electronic) shall be given to all parents/guardians/families of registered students at Lake Wilcox PS.

Election Procedure for parent/guardian/family Representatives

- Nomination. Each parent/guardian/family seeking election must:
 - Be nominated or self-nominated in writing
 - Have a child registered for that school year at Lake Wilcox PS
 - Declare if they are he/she is employed by the Board
 - Parent/guardian/family election shall be by acclamation when the number of candidates is equal to, or less than the number of parent(s)/guardian(s)/family(s) member positions on the council
 - If the number of candidates exceeds the number of spots, an election must take place (see Section e)
 - An election Committee of the Council and the School Principal shall:
 - Ensure nomination forms are provided to all parents/guardians/families (as in through the opening day Book of Forms)
 - Ensure the school community is notified of election date/date/location, at least fourteen (14) days in advance of election
 - Require a written profile of all candidates for distribution at the election meeting
 - Ensure the election takes place within the first thirty (30) calendar days of the school year
- Voting
 - Each parent/guardian/family of a student enrolled at Lake Wilcox PS may cast a ballot for each vacant parent/guardian/family representative position on the Council
 - When the number of candidates exceeds the number of positions, a single ballot

shall be prepared containing the names of all candidates. This list shall be distributed to all parent/guardian/family at the opening voting meeting

- Voting for the (maximum) ten spots shall occur by parents/guardians/families selecting (maximum) ten names on the ballot
 - The election shall be conducted by secret ballot
 - Counting is conducted by a non-voting attendee (administration, non-member staff, etc.)
 - Only release the names of successful candidates to the school community, AFTER the candidates have been informed of their success or lack thereof in being elected
- Term of Office
 - A person elected or appointed as a member of the Council holds office from the date of the first meeting of the Council after the election until the date of the first meeting of Council after the elections held in the next school year. Elected and appointed members may seek additional terms of office.
 - Vacancies
 - A vacancy in the membership of the Council—even a vacancy of an officer of the Council— does not prevent the Council from functioning.
 - Should an elected parent/guardian/family council position become vacant before the next election, the council shall fill the vacancy by appointment from the non-elected candidates from the previous election.
 - If none of the previous candidates remain interested in becoming a council member, the council may request that interested parents/guardians/families from the school community submit their names for consideration. The council shall then appoint one of those who indicate an interest.
 - When a vacant spot on council is filled, the new member’s term shall expire at the time of the next election.
 - The position may be filled, by election of Council, of a parent/guardian/family who expresses interest,
 - In the event of an officer position becoming vacant, the position must be decided by way of an election, by secret ballot, of all voting members of the Council.
 - Removal due to lack of attendance
 - A Member who misses three (3) Council meetings shall be removed from Council and replaced according to the process in Section 4 (above).

- Voting on motions
 - While decisions of the Council are best decided through consensus, when voting is necessary:
 - Each member of the Council (excluding the School Principal/Vice Principal—but including the Teacher, Support Staff, Community, and Student representatives) is entitled to one vote.
 - Voting may take place on motions via a show of hands, unless a written vote is called for.
 - Each member of a Committee is entitled to one vote on all decisions of the Committee.

- Remuneration
 - A person shall not receive any remuneration for serving as an officer or member of a school council.
 - Reimbursement for expenses incurred as members or officers of the Council shall be in accordance with relevant procedures established by the Board.

Section 8: Executive/Officers

- Eligibility
 - All parent/guardian/family representatives on the school council should be eligible for executive positions regardless of previous experience.

- At the first meeting AFTER the election/acclamation of members, the Council representatives shall elect a Chair or two Co-Chairs:
 - Candidates for the position of chair/co-chair must be parent/guardian/family members and not employed by the Board.
 - All voting must be conducted by secret ballot.
 - In voting for co-chairs, the “list ballot”, described in Article VII, shall be used, with voters selecting two names from the list.

- Other officers which may be elected or appointed by the Council include (but are not limited to) Communications Officer, Treasurer, Secretary/Minute Taker, Fundraising Committee Chair, Active School Travel Committee Chair.

- Responsibilities
 - Chair/Co-Chair shall carry out the following tasks in accordance with the Board’s school council policy and procedures:
 - Call a minimum of four (4) meetings per year in consultation with the School Principal;
 - Consult with Council representatives prior to scheduled meetings regarding topics under consideration;

- Ensure that all fundraising activities, management of the proceeds of fundraising, and all expenditures are in accordance with Board School Fundraising and Administration of School Generated Funds policy and procedure;
 - Establish agendas for Council meetings with School Principal (including current financial statements for review at meetings);
 - Share agenda with Council members by the end of the school day prior to the scheduled meeting;
 - Chair Council meetings following the agenda;
 - Ensure minutes of meetings are duly recorded;
 - Communicate on an ongoing basis with school administration;
 - Communicate with trustee, Board staff as required;
 - Assist and act on behalf of the other co-chair; and
 - Ensure the Council Constitution is reviewed regularly.
- Communications Officer may carry out the following tasks:
 - Collect school council mail and communicates with Chair/Co-Chair
 - Photocopies and distributes necessary information; and
 - Provides School Council updates for the school newsletter
- Treasurer may carry out the following tasks:
 - Manage Council finances as outlined in Article Ten (X); and
 - Present written financial reports and statements including those required for each school council meeting.
- Secretary/Minute Taker may carry out the following tasks:
 - Conduct formal attendance and record same in an official record;
 - Take notes during meetings including topics under discussion, motions, and all decisions rendered; and
 - Prepare written minutes for inclusion in the Council record and distribution to Council members.
- Fundraising Officer may carry out the following tasks:
 - Chair fundraising Sub-Committee;
 - Oversee all fundraising efforts of the Council;
 - Identify fundraising targets and purpose for fundraising initiatives; and
 - Deposit funds promptly with the School Budget Secretary.

Section 9: Sub-Committees

- Establishment
 - Sub-Committees may be formed to conduct more detailed or in-depth work than is possible during Council meetings, to make recommendations to Council

- and to keep Council informed of issues and developments in particular areas.
- Sub-Committees may include, but are not limited to: fundraising, elections, volunteer, constitution, health and safety, capital improvements.
 - Each subcommittee shall appoint its own Chair or Co-Chairs.
- Sub-Committee Membership
 - Each subcommittee shall include at least one parent/guardian/family member of Council or an individual appointed by Council.
 - Persons who are not members of Council may be members of a Sub-Committee.
 - Reports
 - Sub-Committee Chairs or designates shall present a report to Council while the Sub-Committee is active.
 - The brief reports shall outline the matters decided by the Sub-Committee and are not a forum for discussion by the Council on the whole.
 - Fundraising for Sub-Committees
 - Any fundraising conduction by a Sub-Committee must be approved by the fundraising Officer and must be monitored by the Fundraising Committee.
 - All individuals in charge of fundraising activities/events must disclose to Council any financial relationship, benefit, or reward of any kind offered or received as a result of the affiliation with an outside organization.

Section 10: Meetings

- Timetable of Meetings
 - On the second meeting of the school year—following the Election meeting—a calendar of Meetings for the year shall be established in consultation with the School Principal.
 - Council shall meet a minimum of four (4) times throughout the school year. ○ Established dates and times shall be shared with the school community via paper and/or electronic communication. Communication regarding the date, time and place of each meeting must be shared with the community 14 days prior to the meetings.
 - It is recognized these dates may change at any time.
 - All meetings shall be open to the public (in the school community).
- Quorum
 - A meeting will have a quorum if a majority (50% plus one) of council members are present, and the majority of those present are parents/guardians/families.

- A meeting may be held in the absence of a quorum, but all voting must be deferred to a later date.
- In the absence of a Chair or Co-Chair, another Officer of the Council may chair in their stead.
- Decision-Making
 - The preferred method of decision-making is through consensus, a collective opinion or general agreement by all Council Members.
 - In the absence of consensus, the Chair may decide by way of a show of hands or silent vote by those present with a 50% plus one majority carrying the vote.
 - At any point, a Member may call for a ballot vote on a motion under discussion.
- Conflict of Interest.
 - Any time the school council does business with the potential for monetary gain/loss with any person, agency, or company, and a member of the school council has a personal or vested interest in any way with that particular person, agency, or company, that member shall declare a conflict of interest.
 - If any individual Council Member perceives themselves to be in conflict of interest they are required to declare their conflict at the outset of the relevant discussions at the time of the meeting, and the minutes are to reflect this declaration.
 - Council members are not to receive any remuneration for their work as a member of Council Conflict of Interest.
- Conflict Resolution
 - The Council will undertake to resolve all internal conflict within its mandate in a timely manner
 - Every school council member will be given an opportunity to express concern or opinion about the issue at dispute and how the dispute has affected them.
 - Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
 - Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
 - The chair's responsibility is to clarify the statements made by all speakers, to identify common ground among the points of view raised, and to set out the joint interests of all members.
 - If no common ground can be identified, the chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
 - 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.

Section 11: Finances

- Allocation (Budgeting)
 - The annual budget should be prepared by the Council Executive. It should be presented, reviewed and approved by Council, before the beginning of each school year in September or at the inaugural meeting for the respective school year.
 - Any unforeseen changes to the annual budget should be presented for review and approval at the next scheduled Council meeting.
- Expenditures for events/activities wholly or partially funded by the Council are to be presented in budget form for approval by the Council in October for the current school year
 - All fundraising activities must be in accordance with the Board's School Fundraising and Administration of School Generated Funds policy and procedure.
- Disbursement (Expenses)
 - All expenses should be school related and at a reasonable cost.
 - All non-budgeted items require Council approval.
 - All expenses incurred should be supported with original receipts. Cheque requisition and payment are arranged through the school office.
- Receipts
 - All cash receipts should be handled, collected, counted and totaled in the presence of at least two (2) Council members or volunteers.
 - Receipts should be deposited promptly by the school or stored in the school safe and recorded accurately.
 - As Per the Board's School Fundraising and Administration of School Generated Funds policy and procedure, the school is to have one school generated funds account through which all school generated funds flow, the allocation of said funds being under the responsibility of the School Principal.
- Fundraising
 - Fundraising must take place in accordance with School Fundraising and Administration of School Generated Funds policy and procedure.

Section 12: Agendas and Minutes

- Agendas
 - Agendas shall be printed for each meeting.
 - Agenda items should be submitted to the chair one week prior to the council's next meeting.
 - The chair/co-chairs co-develop the agenda with the school principal prior to the meeting and it will be forwarded to school council members and school community by the end of the school day prior to the meeting.
- Minutes
 - Minutes that are translatable/accessible should be written up and distributed to

committee members in draft format within two weeks of the meeting and kept in the office for anyone to see.

- The minutes shall include motions, decisions and actions to be taken.

Section 13: Annual Report

- The school council shall submit a written report on its achievements to the school principal and to the York Region District School Board following the established guidelines for such a report that includes fundraising activities, must be submitted to the school principal and the Board. The annual report template will be available on the Board website in the spring each year.
- The Annual School Council Report and a year-end summary on the school council's activities and funds collected and allocated must be made available and shared with the school community including making the report available (via distribution, public display, or electronic posting) to all parents/guardians/families and students enrolled in the school.

Section 14: Incorporation

The school council shall not be incorporated.

Section 15: Constitutional Amendments

- The school council shall review the constitution every year via a sub-committee of the Council and bring proposed amendments to the Council for approval. Amendments should include opportunities for members of the school community to provide input.
- Amendments shall be presented to the Council as motions for approval at a regularly scheduled meeting. Changes may be introduced at one meeting and decisions/voting on the recommended changes at the next meeting.
- Constitutional amendments require a 2/3 majority to be passed.

Constitution History:

Reviewed and Amended: January, 2024

Reviewed and Amended: May, 2010

Reviewed and Amended: April, 2008

Reviewed and Amended: March, 2006

Reviewed and Amended: December, 2003

Reviewed and Amended: January, 2003

Reviewed and Amended: October, 2001

Appendix A: Conflict of Interest Guidelines

Any time the school council does business with the potential for monetary gain/loss with any person, agency, or company, and a member of the school council has a vested interest in any way with that particular person, agency, or company, that member shall declare a conflict of interest and shall not discuss or vote on any such resolution relating to the matter.

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 their duties as a school council member. Should an issue or agenda item arise during a council meeting where a council member is in a conflict of interest situation, they shall declare conflict of interest immediately and decline from the discussion and resolution.

Source: Ontario Ministry of Education, School Council: A Guide for Members,

2002 1. A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential.

2. 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 decisions of the council.

3. A member shall exclude themselves from discussions in which:

a. A conflict of interest is likely to result.

b. The member's ability to carry out their/his/ her duties and responsibilities as a member of the school council may be jeopardized.

c. The council member, their relatives, or a business entity in which the member may have an interest, may gain or benefit either directly or indirectly as a result of actions that may be taken by the school principal or Board in response to advice that the council provides to the school principal or to the Board.

4. A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

Appendix B: Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics for Lake Wilcox PS School Council includes, operating in a non-judgmental manner, employing constructive discussions and reaching decisions through consensus. Council meetings are to remain free of discussion about individual parents/guardians/families, students, Board employees, trustees or other council members.

- A member shall consider the best interests of all students.
- A member shall be guided by the school and the Board's [mission, vision and values](#).
- A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council, as identified in the Education Act, its regulations, and the applicable constitution and/or by-law(s)

and procedures.

- A member shall become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- A member shall maintain the highest standards of integrity.
- A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- A member shall conduct themselves in accordance with the Board's [Equity and Inclusive Education policy and procedure](#).
- A member shall treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
- A member shall encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- A member shall acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council.
- A member shall respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council and not disclose confidential information.
- A member shall act in accordance with relevant laws, including Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), and relevant Board policies and procedures.
- A member shall advise the school principal immediately if the member believes that there may have been a privacy breach.
- A member shall abide by applicable laws and policies with respect to access, use or disclosure of Board data and information.
- A member shall limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- A member shall use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- A member shall promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
- A member shall declare any conflict of interest.
- A member shall not accept any payment or benefit financially through school council involvement

Appendix C: Conflict Resolution Process

Source: YRDSB School Council Handbook - Revised 2023

The Conflict Resolution Process for Lake Wilcox PS School Council includes a five-step approach to resolving internal conflict and other difficult matters:

1. Acknowledge the conflict. As a group, acknowledge when a conflict exists and determine the source of the conflict. For example, is it related to facts? Goals? Processes? Values? Personal preferences? Beliefs? Communication? Personal Bias?

2. Plan how to deal with the conflict. Once the source of the conflict is defined, decide how to deal with it. This may be done by the chair, the school principal, another individual on the council, or the entire council. (In particularly difficult times, it may be best to engage the Superintendent of Education to facilitate discussion and problem solving.) At this stage, all council members should reflect on the problem and be prepared to state their concerns and viewpoints.

3. Provide time for discussion. The chair or whoever is facilitating the discussion should introduce the problem and ask each member for input so that the nature and source of the conflict are clear. Acknowledging each person by listening attentively sets the tone for problem solving and opens the council to a variety of solutions. Emotions should be accepted and dealt with since they are a part of conflict.

4. Taking an inclusive approach. Members need to see solutions that reflect their needs and who they are. Taking a culturally responsive and relevant approach which recognizes that all members work and learn in ways that are connected to background, language, family structure, and social or cultural identity promotes understanding and ensures members feel part of the solution. Practicing culturally responsive and relevant approaches supports building positive environments, improving responsibility and success, encouraging relationships, and building strong community connections. It also emphasizes that it is important for all members to examine their own biases and to analyze how their own identities and experiences affect how they view, understand, and interact with each other. This can help to prevent discrimination, harassment, and the creation of poisoned environments.

5. Seek the best solution. As viewpoints and solutions are described, the individual facilitating the discussion deals with them one at a time. Following the discussion, the facilitator may use a process for building consensus to arrive at a new solution. Council members will be asked the following questions: Can you live with this solution? Will you support the solution? Depending on the nature of the conflict, it is sometimes best for council members to have time to reflect on the proposed solution, with the decision to be finalized at a future meeting.

If after following the above steps, your school council still feels strongly that the situation requires further consideration you may engage the Superintendent of Schools, the Director's Office or Board and Trustee Services. The matter will be reviewed and may be directed to a staff member for action.

Remember, you are welcome to speak with your local trustee at any time to share concerns or make suggestions. Depending on the circumstances, however, there is a possibility that you will be asked to follow the above steps in order to best meet your needs.