

**RICHMOND HILL HIGH SCHOOL
SCHOOL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION**

REVISED March 25, 2019

**RICHMOND HILL HIGH SCHOOL SCHOOL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION
SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND CHANGES**

DATE	CHANGE	Initiated by
Jan. 21, 2019	Section 5.01 item (i)	K. Asmono A. Xu

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Article I. Name and Address

The organization will be known as Richmond Hill High School School Council (hereinafter known as the “Council” or “School Council”). The members of the School Council shall be responsible for maintaining the constitution.

Richmond Hill High School
201 Yorkland St.
Richmond Hill, ON
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(905) 884-2131
www.richmondhill.hs.yrdsb.ca

Article II. Mission Statement

The Council will promote and facilitate parental engagement by collaborating with administration, teachers, support staff, students and the community with the goal of providing educational excellence to every student enabling them to acquire the skills and attitudes to prepare them for life-long learning in an ever-changing global society.

Article III. Purpose and Objectives

The Council will:

- i) Provide a forum for communication among partners.
- ii) Focus on the best interests of all students.
- iii) Support school improvement initiatives
- iv) Participate actively in the support of the School Plan for Continuous Improvement.
- v) Encourage effective parental involvement in the education of their children.
- vi) Provide input into decisions made by the school administration, the Board and the Ministry of Education

Article IV. Procedures and Operating Guidelines

The operational procedures of this Council are outlined in YRDSB Policy #262. All recommendations and activities of the Council shall comply with all Ministry of Education Acts, York Region District School Board Policies and Procedures, Ontario Regulations 612/00 and 298, and Staff Collective Agreements. The School Council members will adhere to the constitution and will be responsible for maintaining the constitution document.

Article V. Membership

The School Council is composed of parent members, the principal (and vice principals) and representatives of the community, students, teachers and support staff as specified below. Each member of the Council is considered a voting member, with the exception of the principal (and vice principals).

Section 5.01 Number of Parent Members

- i) The number of parents on the School Council will be a **minimum of 6 and no more than 15**. In the event that the number of volunteers significantly exceeds the number of places set out in the constitution, then the Council may consider reviewing their

structure for that school year. The parent members must form the majority of Council members (i.e., 50% +1).

- ii) There shall be no more than one member on the School Council from any one household. Other members of the same household may attend meetings as a non-voting participant.
- iii) A parent member cannot be employed at the school with the exception of school (lay) assistants.
- iv) If a parent works for the Board but not at the school, he/she can be a parent member as long as he/she informs the school community prior to the election.

Section 5.02 Number of Community Representatives

- i) The number of community representatives, if available, will be at least one and no more than four appointed by the Council.
- ii) A community representative cannot be employed at the school with the exception of school (lay) assistants.
- iii) If a member of the community works for the Board but not at the school, he/she can be a community representative as long as he/she informs the school community prior to the election.

Section 5.03 Student Representative

- i) There will be at least one student and no more than two, appointed by the Student Council.

Section 5.04 Other Members: Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff Representatives

- i) Principal (ex-officio). In the absence of principal, a vice principal shall attend the meeting.
- ii) One teacher representative (elected or appointed in accordance with YRDSB Policy #262)
- iii) One support staff representative if available (elected or appointed in accordance with YRDSB Policy #262).

Section 5.05 Roles and Responsibilities of all Council Members

All Council members will:

- (a) Regularly attend and participate in Council meetings;
- (b) Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues;
- (c) Help to achieve the goals established by the Council;
- (d) Encourage the participation of all parents and of other people within the school community;
- (e) Participate in one or more of Council's standing committees (see article 8), and assist with tasks of the committee(s) and of Council as required;
- (f) If a Council member misses two (2) consecutive meetings, the Council may choose to remove his or her name from the active list, unless they have made a request to the Chair or Co-Chairs that they remain active, and such request is accepted as valid.
- (g) All parents are invited to attend Council meetings as guests of Council and speak to issues, but voting will be restricted to active Council members.
- (h) Support all council initiatives
- (i) Send regrets to the secretary and the co-chairs if they cannot attend the council meeting.

Article VI. Sub-committees

At the first meeting of the school year, or as needed during the school year, sub-committees may be formed to:

- i) Conduct more detailed or in-depth work than is possible during council meetings
- ii) Make recommendations to the council
- iii) Keep the council informed of issues and developments in its' particular area

Section 6.01 Sub-Committee Membership

Each sub committee shall include at least one member of School Council and shall have a majority of parent members. Persons, who are not members of School Council, may be members of sub-committees.

Section 6.02 Chair of Sub-Committee

The chair of the sub committee shall be elected at the first meeting.

Article VII. Elections

Section 7.01 Acclamations

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.

Section 7.02 Election Procedures for Parent Members

- i) Within the first two council meetings of the school year, a parent/guardian must indicate in written form that he/she intends to participate in regular School Council meetings as a voting member.
- ii) Each parent/guardian seeking to be a member must be nominated or self-nominated in writing, have a child registered at the school, and declare if he or she is employed by the Board.
- iii) Voting will only occur if the number of interested parents/guardians exceeds membership capacity outlined in Section 5.01 above. Then, a maximum of one parent/guardian in attendance at the election meeting of one or more students enrolled at the school shall have one vote for each of the candidate positions available.
- iv) The election committee, composed of the previous year's council members, shall:
 - Provide nomination forms
 - 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
 - Conduct the election, if needed, by secret ballot
 - Count the ballots in the presence of the school principal
 - Help the principal notify all candidates of the results
 - Keep all the ballot counts and related information confidential
 - Only release the names of successful candidates. A list of candidates and the vote results will be kept on file for use in the event of a vacancy on the Council.
 - Notify all individuals standing for election of the results before the results are released to the school community.
- v) If there is a tie for the final position for a representative on the school council, the winner shall be determined by lot.
- vi) School Council elections shall occur during the first or second formal School Council meeting.

Section 7.03 Election of Officers

- i) The Executive shall be comprised of the following:
Chairperson(s)
Treasurer
Secretary
- ii) Once Council members have been determined and where consensus is not achievable for all positions then a secret ballot election will ensue by all council members attending the first council meeting.
- iii) In the event of a vacant position, the School Council Executive may fill the vacancy by appointment

Section 7.04 Appointment/Election of the Student Representative

The principal will consult with council to determine if there is to be a student representative on the council. If a positive decision is reached, the Principal appoints a student representative to the council.

Section 7.05 Selection of Community Representative

All appointments of community representatives to the school council are to be by majority vote at a meeting of the school council.

Section 7.06 Election of Teaching Staff Representative

- i) The Principal will make necessary arrangements for the teaching staff representative to be elected.
- ii) Anyone assigned to the teaching staff of the school (full or part-time), other than the principal or a vice- principal, may be a candidate.
- iii) Only teachers employed at the school may vote for the teacher member.

Section 7.07 Election of the Non-teaching Staff Representative

- i) The Principal will make necessary arrangements for the non-teaching staff representative to be elected.
- ii) Anyone assigned to the non-teaching staff of the school (full or part-time) may be a candidate.
- iii) Only support staff employed at the school may vote for the non-teaching staff member.

Section 7.08 Terms of Office

- i) A person elected or appointed as a member of School Council holds office from the later of:
 - a. The date he or she is elected or appointed; and/or
 - b. The date of the first meeting of the School Council after the elections held in the current school year.
- ii) Elected and appointed members will serve 1 term. One term is equivalent to one school year and continues until the date of the first meeting of the school Council in the next year after elections.
- iii) Elected and appointed members may seek additional terms of office. Any parent member expressing this intention must comply with Section 7.02 above.
- iv) To promote succession, the position of Chairperson may not be held by the same member for more than 4 consecutive terms. When the Chairperson is in the 4th year of their term, Council will promote the election of a Co-Chairperson.

Section 7.09 Vacancies in Membership

- i) A vacancy in the membership of School Council does not prevent the Council from exercising its authority. If positions remain vacant after the election, the Council may appoint parent members.
- ii) Positions that become vacant due to resignation or removal shall be filled as soon as possible in the following order:
 - a. By offering the person with the next largest number of votes who was not elected, the opportunity to accept the position.
 - b. Where there are not enough candidates to fill the vacancies, notice will be sent to all parents informing them of the vacancies and application by interested volunteers sought.
 - c. If there are more applications than positions, an election will be called.
 - d. When no more candidates are available, the Council may appoint parent members.
- iii) If there are more applications than positions, an election will be called according to Section 7.02 above.

Section 7.10 Resignations

- i) Anyone who is a council member, except the principal, may resign his or her position by writing a letter of resignation to the chair.
- ii) If someone resigns, the position vacated will be filled according to Section 7.09 above.

Section 7.11 Removal

- i) Should any Council member be absent from 2 Council meetings, the Chair will approach the member and discuss his/her absences and intention to fulfill his/her duties on Council.
- ii) Subject to i) above, should the council member be absent 3 meetings, the Executive may choose to remove him/her from Council and shall undertake to replace that person according to Section 7.09 above.
- iii) Within reason Council members should be present for the entire meeting or they will be viewed as absent and subject to i) and ii) above.
- iv) Any member subject to removal shall be notified in writing of the School Council Executive's decision.

Article VIII. Meetings

All members of the school community are invited to attend any and all school council meetings.

Section 8.01 Timetable of Meetings

- i) There will be a minimum of four (4) general and/or executive School Council meetings
- ii) At the last meeting of the school year, tentative meeting dates and times for the following year will be agreed upon.
- iii) At the first meeting of the new school year, the new Council shall review and approve the proposed meeting dates for that school year. A copy of these dates and times will be included in communication(s) to the families of the school.
- iv) A copy of the list of dates and times of meetings will be sent to the local Trustee.
- v) Special meetings of the Council may be held upon written request submitted to the School Council Executive.
- vi) Special meetings shall have a minimum notice of seven days
- vii) Sub-Committee meetings will be held as needed.

- viii) It is recognized that the timetable of meetings may change at any time.
- ix) The first meeting must be within 30 days of the commencement of school.

Section 8.02 Quorum and Majority

- i) Quorum is defined as 50% +1 of the optimal number of voting School Council members as outlined in Section 5.01 above. A meeting of Council can be held if there is no quorum but all voting will be deferred.
- ii) For the purpose of voting, Majority is defined as 50% + 1 of the voting School Council members in attendance at the meeting during which the vote occurs.

Section 8.03 Decision-making

- i) The preferred method to resolve issues on council is by consensus. Consensus is a collective opinion or general agreement by ALL the council members.
- ii) In the case where a decision cannot be reached through consensus, the chair may decide on one of the following:
 - a. To defer the issue to the next meeting
 - b. To defer the issue to a special meeting
 - c. To defer the issue to a sub-committee who will report at the next meeting
 - d. To have a vote by way of a show of hands or a silent vote by those present in which a Majority (Section 8.02 above) shall carry the vote

Section 8.04 Absenteeism

Members must inform the Chair if they will be absent from a Council meeting and provide the Chair with any reports that the Chair will present on their behalf.

Regular, punctual meeting attendance is expected of all members. Inability to participate can result in removal according to Section 7.11 above.

Section 8.05 Voting

While decisions of the council are best reached by consensus, when voting is necessary the following applies:

- i) Each member of School Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by School Council.
- ii) Each member of a sub-committee on School Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the sub-committee.
- iii) The Principal of the school is not entitled to vote in votes taken by School Council or by a committee of School Council.
- iv) Outside of a school council meeting, electronic voting by means of e-mail or other online tool shall be permitted as needed.

Section 8.06 Conflict of Interest

- i) 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, so the minutes may reflect this declaration.
- ii) Council members cannot receive any remuneration for their work as a member of council. Reimbursement for expenses incurred as members or officers of school Council shall be in accordance with relevant procedures as outlined in Article X below.
- iii) If a School Council member finds him- or herself in a conflict of interest position in terms of some issue under consideration by the council, the member should declare such and either leave the room or refrain from participating in the discussion relating to that subject. The member should not vote on any decision made on the issue.

Section 8.07 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.**

- i) The Council believes that its operation can be conducted based on mutual respect in the interest of students and the school community.
- ii) All members are encouraged to follow the Code of Ethics as listed in Appendix A.
- iii) All members are expected to exercise their role with positive attitude in a democratic manner to minimize conflict.
- iv) From time to time a dispute may arise amongst the members of the Council. It is expected that the members of the Council will make every effort to resolve it themselves. It is the responsibility of the Chair/Co-chairs to facilitate the resolution of conflict.
- v) Should an internal dispute require outside intervention to achieve resolution, the Chair/Co-chairs in consultation with the principal shall agree on a mediator. The mediator can be the school trustee or a community representative who is not a member of the Council.
- vi) In the event of unsuccessful mediation, the matter will be taken to the Superintendent of Education who will assess the situation and determine an appropriate approach. In the event that a dispute is between a parent member and a staff member, the Superintendent may ask other Board executives to get involved.

Article IX. Agendas and Minutes

Section 9.01 Agendas

- i) Agenda items should be submitted to the chair one week prior to the Council's next meeting.
- ii) The chair will set the agenda with the principal, prior to the meeting and arrange for it to be sent out to the parent community prior to the meeting.

Section 9.02 Minutes

- i) The Council Secretary shall take minutes. In the case of his/her absence, the Secretary must find a replacement parent member or member at large to take the minutes.
- ii) Minutes shall be posted on the school website prior to the next meeting of the Council.
- iii) The minutes shall include motions, decisions and actions to be taken. All decisions involving funding need to include a dollar amount.
- iv) Members of the council must inform the chair if they are going to be absent from a council meeting. Regrets are to be noted in the minutes.
- v) Minutes are kept for a four-year period and made available at the school.

Article X. Financial Records

Section 10.01 Signing Authorities

The Principal along with Chair or Treasurer will be signatories for disbursement of funds from School Council account.

Section 10.02 Disbursement and Allocation of Money

- i) 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.
- ii) A receipt must accompany all expenditures eligible for reimbursement.

Section 10.03 *Annual Report*

- i) It is Council's responsibility to publish a financial statement when it files its year-end report with the YRDSB.
- ii) Records are kept for a four-year period and made available at the school.

Article XI. *Constitutional Amendments*

- i) The School Council will review the constitution at a minimum every two years or as the need arises. A sub-committee may be formed to review and bring proposed amendments to the School Council for voting.
- ii) Amendments to the constitution must be presented to the council, at a regularly scheduled meeting.
- iii) Constitutional amendments require the approval of a 2/3 Majority (Section 7.02, Quorum and Majority) of voting School Council members present at the meeting in question.
- iv) Ministry of Education mandated items, as stated in Regulations #612/613, may not be changed within Council constitution.

REFERENCES:

- i) York Region District School Board Policy #262.0 (School Councils)
<http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/pdfs/p&p/a/policy/262.pdf>
- ii) Ontario Regulation 612/00 (School Councils)
http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_000612_e.htm#Top
or
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/council/council02.pdf>
- iii) Ontario Regulation 298, Amended to O. Reg. 613/00 (Operation of Schools – General)
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/council/council02.pdf>

ARTICLE 15: PROTECTION OF SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS SCHOOL COUNCILS THAT ARE ACTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH MINISTRY LEGISLATION AND ALL RELEVANT BOARD POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND ARE PROTECTED LEGALLY BY THE BOARD.

APPENDIX A - CODE OF ETHICS

- *A member shall* consider the best interests of all students.
- *A member shall* be guided by the school's and the school board's mission statements.
- *A member shall* 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.
- *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* 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.
- *A member shall* not disclose confidential 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.