



SCHOOL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

2018-2019

Developed by the 2018-2019 Council Review Committee

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Supported by the following documents:

York Region District School Board Policy and Procedure #262.0, School Councils

York Region District School Board School Council Code of Ethics

York Region District School Board School Council Handbook (2015)

The Ministry of Education's School Councils: A Guide for Members (2002)

Approved by the Stonehaven Elementary School Council on May 23, 2019

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SECTION A: OVERVIEW

1. Name and Address

- a. The committee will be known as “Stonehaven Elementary School Council” and may be referenced to as the “Council.”
- b. The mailing address is:
Stonehaven Elementary School Council
C/O Stonehaven Elementary School
875 Stonehaven Avenue
Newmarket, ON L3X 2K3

2. Purpose of School Council

The Stonehaven Elementary School Council, as authorized under Ontario Regulation 612/00, School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees, is an inclusive and active body that serves as a means for improving the academic experiences for all students at Stonehaven Elementary School. The Council, and its members, functions as a bridge – connecting parents, staff and students – in an effort to promote collaboration while celebrating diversity. This is done with the purpose of fostering partnerships that enhance the quality of education for all students.

3. Responsibilities of School Council

- a. As a unified committee, Stonehaven Elementary School Council is responsible for:
 - i. Following the operating guidelines outlined by the York Region District School Board Policy and Procedures #262.0, School Councils
 - ii. Adhering to the York Region District School Board’s School Council Code of Ethics (*See Section D: Addendum, School Council Code of Ethics*)
 - iii. Fulfilling their role as outlined in the York Region District School Board’s School Council Handbook
 - iv. Abiding by all other relevant Board policies and procedures
 - v. Annually signing the School Council Agreement to demonstrate your understanding and commitment to these responsibilities

4. Duties of School Council

As discussed in the School Council Handbook, Section 3.2.12, the members of School Council are responsible to the parents they represent and shall:

- a. Regularly attend School Council meetings;
- b. Participate in information and training programs (if desired);
- c. Act as a supportive link between the School Council and the community;
- d. Encourage and support the engagement of all parents within the community;
- e. Assist with tasks of the School Council;
- f. Participate on sub-committees, if desired;
- g. Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues.

SECTION B: Composition of School Council

1. Membership of School Council

School Council is comprised of the following members, each of whom holds their position for a one-year term. Members may be re-elected. Elections must be held during the first 30 days of the start of the school year. Vacant positions do not prevent the School Council from functioning and may be filled by election or appointment at any time during the academic year. Trustees may not be a member of Council, as per Regulation 612/00 3(1)(6).

Parent Members (eight - sixteen)

- minimum of 8 members, maximum of 16 members
- elected by secret ballot at the first meeting of the year
- are all voting members
- the Executives – Co-Chairs, Secretary and Treasurer – are included in this category and count toward the 16 member quota
- the Co-Chairs, to a maximum of two, must be parents at the school and may not be employed by the York Region District School Board
- parents may be employees of the York Region District School Board, but may not be employed as teachers or support staff at Stonehaven Elementary School (school assistants are exempt from the limitations of this provision as per YRDSB school Council handbook p.32)

Teaching Staff Representative (one)

- elected by the teachers at the school
- voting member

Additional Support Staff Representative (one)

- elected by the additional support staff at the school
- may not be a Principal, Vice Principal or teacher
- voting member

Student Representative (one)

- appointed by the Principal(s) through consultation with the Student Council
- voting member

Community Representative (one)

- elected by secret ballot by members of Council
- cannot be an employee of the school, but may be an employee of the Board provided they disclose their employment before their appointment
- voting member

Principals or Designate (one - two)

- non-voting member(s)

2. School Council Sub-Committees

The School Council Sub-Committees make recommendations to Council as a whole. Sub-committees are designed to support the sustainable operation of School Council while providing greater opportunity for parent involvement. Members of the sub-committees may be self-nominated or appointed. Each sub-committee will have a Chair. Sub-committee members need not be a voting parent member of School Council. The Chair of the sub-committee is responsible for providing updates at Council meetings when needed. See Section D: Addendum, Sub-Committees for Terms of Reference.

- a. **Volunteer Committee** – responsible for the recruitment of volunteers throughout the academic year and assists with the annual election process of Council members. The Principal or designate is a member of this committee.
- b. **Fundraising Committee** – responsible for overseeing the operation of School Council fundraising initiatives
- c. **Inclusivity Committee** – responsible for providing insight, guidance and support with activities, events and procedures designed to increase community involvement and help families understand how valuable they are to our school
- d. **Food Committee** – responsible for overseeing the successful operation of the various lunch programs, as well as the fresh fruit program in the office
- e. **Additional Committees** - may be formed throughout the year, as necessary, with approval from Council and with clearly defined Terms of Reference.

3. Election of School Council Members

- a. The election process is planned by the Principal(s) or designate with the assistance of the Volunteer Committee (*see Section B: School Council Sub-Committees, Point 2a*)
- b. Elections shall take place within the first 30 days of the start of the school year
- c. Each parent/guardian who would like to be a voting member of Council must be nominated or self-nominated in writing, must have a child registered at the school and must declare if they are an employee of the school board
- d. Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled at the school is entitled to one vote for each vacant position on School Council
- e. Members of the Volunteer Committee may not run for the position of School Council Chair due to potential conflict of interest at the time of election
- f. Elections are conducted by secret ballot

Procedures for Election by Secret Ballot at the First Council Meeting of the School Year:

1. School Council nomination forms will be distributed to students during the first week of school as a part of the “Welcome” package distributed by the school administration.
2. The Principal(s) or designate will follow up with each candidate to confirm their understanding about the duties of the role, thank them for offering to volunteer their time and ask if they have any questions about the election process or School Council (*this step helps ensure the intent of candidates*).
3. Fourteen days prior to the election, an email will be sent to families from the Principal(s) or the designate as a reminder that submissions are due for anyone who may be interested in holding a Council position. The date, time and location of the elections will be included in this email.
4. Elections will be conducted electronically at the first Council meeting of the year by secret ballot using Google Survey which will be created and administered by the Principal(s) or designate.
5. Selection of candidates will follow this order:
 - a. Parent members (minimum 8, maximum 16)
 - b. Co-Chairs
 - c. Treasurer
 - d. Secretary
 - e. Community Representative
6. The parent members will be selected first. Prior to the start of voting, candidates will have an opportunity to introduce themselves and share their reasons for interest to those in attendance.
7. All parents of students at the school who are present at the meeting will cast their ballot via the election survey on one or more school provided computers. Voting is private and anonymous. A list will be cross-referenced to ensure only one ballot was cast per person.
8. Candidates will be listed on the ballot in alphabetical order by last name.
9. If the number of candidates is equal to or less than the maximum number of positions, all candidates shall be acclaimed.
10. Voters must be present at the Council meeting to vote.
11. In the case of a vote, two predetermined members of the Volunteer Committee and the Principal(s) or designate will review the results which the Principal(s) or designate will share at the meeting.
12. Council members elect the executive positions (YRDSB Handbook, 3.2.3.2). The newly appointed parent members and the other voting members will elect the Co-Chairs using a secret ballot. Prior to voting, candidates will have an opportunity to share their reasons for interest in the position. The results of the election will be shared at the Council meeting by the Principal(s) or designate.
13. The Treasurer, the Secretary, and the Community Representative, respectively, will be elected by the voting members following the same procedure used for the selection of the Council Co-Chairs stated in Step 12.
14. The Co-Chairs will share the results with the school community through an email submitted on their behalf by the office (*this email is an opportunity for the Chairs to introduce themselves to the school community, thank the members of Council for their volunteer efforts and highlight upcoming events hosted by School Council*).

4. Executives – Roles and Duties by Position Title

a. Co-Chairs

- i. Working with the Principal(s) or designate, Co-Chairs will call school council meetings, prepare the agenda and chair the meetings *(for a better understanding of the approval process for the agenda or protocols for meetings, please see Section C: Composition of School Council, Meetings)*
- ii. Communicate with the Principals or designate, as required
- iii. Working with the Principal(s) or designate, ensure that minutes are recorded by the Secretary, parents are consulted and fundraising meets Board policies
- iv. Working with the Principal(s) or designate, ensure the by-laws, School Council Constitution and Principal profiles are reviewed by the School Council annually, or sooner if deemed necessary
- v. Co-chairs must work in collaboration to ensure the above roles are fulfilled

b. Treasurer

- i. Working with the Principal(s) or designate to ensure the financial records for the School Council are up-to-date
- ii. Provide financial reports ahead of the Council meeting or when needed
- iii. Explain the financial report at the School Council meetings

c. Secretary

- i. Record minutes for the School Council meetings
- ii. The minutes may be written as notes or following [Robert's Rules of Order](#)
- iii. Provide the meeting minutes to the Executives and the Principals for preliminary review within one week of the meeting date, and then the Council for review the week following. Minutes will be approved at the following Council meeting.
- iv. For a better understanding of the approval process for the minutes, please see Section C: Composition of School Council, Meetings, Minutes

5. Resignation of a Council Member

A vacancy does not prevent Council from exercising its duties. Any Council member, with the exception of the Principals or designate, may resign from their position at any time during their one-year term. Resignations will be accepted in writing and the Letter of Resignation shall be addressed to both the Co-Chairs and the Principal(s) or designate. Should a Co-Chair decide to resign, the letter shall be addressed to the Principal(s) or designate. Vacancies may be filled according the School Council by-laws (*see Section B: Composition of School Council, By-Laws, Point 1, for details*).

6. Removal of a Council Member

An elected member cannot be revoked of their position or voting status. According to the Ministry of Ontario, School Councils: A Guide for Members, Section 5.6, “It is important to remember that Ontario Regulation 612/00 contains no provision for the discretionary removal of a duly elected or appointed school council member before the end of his or her term. By-laws created by a school council, or policies established by the board, must not conflict with the provisions of the regulation. A school council member is, therefore, entitled to hold his or her position until the term expires.” In instances where a Council member fails to fulfil their duties and responsibilities, the Code of Ethics and Dispute Resolution process outlined below will be implemented.

Code of Ethics and Dispute Resolution

(as per The Ministry of Education’s School Councils: A Guide for Members, Section 5.6)

- All Council members are encouraged to be familiar with their Council’s expectations of members and be prepared to make a commitment to conduct the Council’s business in a professional manner
- If there is a breach of Code of Ethics, or failure to adhere to policies and procedures and/or failure to perform the duties as outlined by position title, the Principal(s) or designate and Co-Chairs will speak with the member to ensure they understand the expectations of their role
- There may be instances when an elected member fails, on a regular basis, to attend School Council meetings, leaving the Council without the quorum required to hold a meeting. To deal with this possibility, the Co-Chairs and Principal(s) may speak with the individual member to help them determine if they are able or willing to continue to serve on the School Council. In many cases, the member may not be aware that their absence is affecting the Council’s ability to carry out its mandate under the regulation. On being made aware of this consequence, the member may be willing to make regular attendance a priority. In other cases, the individual may decide to resign from the Council, thereby creating a vacancy in its membership.

By-Laws:

1) Filling Vacancies on School Council

- a) Should an elected School Council position become vacant before the next election, the Council shall fill the vacant position by appointment from the non-elected candidates from the previous election.
- b) If the previous candidates are no longer interested in the vacant position, Council will notify the school community about the opening and request that parents/guardians who may be interested submit their name for consideration. An election by secret ballot will occur at the next Council meeting and the newly elected candidate will hold that position until the following elections, when Council is dissolved. Every attendee with a student at the school, as well as the Council members in attendance, have a vote for this election.
- c) Quorum will exclude vacancies; however, the minimum number of parent members on Council must still be met for Council to operate (see Section B: Composition of School Council, Point 1, for details).

2) Conflict of Interest

- a) 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 may arise in connection with his or her duties as a School Council member.
- b) A conflict of interest could be actual, perceived or potential.
- c) Should an issue or an agenda item arise during a Council meeting where a council member is in a conflict of interest situation, he or she shall declare conflict of interest immediately and decline from the discussion and resolution.

3) Conflict Resolution during a Council Meeting

- a) Council members and attendees will demonstrate respect for each other at all times. If any person becomes disruptive during a meeting, the Co-Chairs, Principal(s) or designate will ask for order.
- b) If all efforts to resolve order fail, the Co-Chairs and/or Principal(s) or designate may ask the person(s) to leave the meeting, citing the reasons for the request.
- c) The removal of a council member or attendee from one meeting does not prevent them from participating in future meetings.
- d) The incident shall be recorded and submitted to the Superintendent of Schools within one week of the meeting date.
- e) When someone has been removed from a meeting, the Co-Chair and/or Principal(s) or designate shall request that a private meeting be held to help resolve the issue of concern.
- f) An independent third party, such as a Board official or other mutually agreed upon party, may be called upon to help mediate the private meeting.
- g) The agreed upon conflict resolution shall be put in writing, signed and respected by all parties to the agreement.

Section C: Meetings, Financial Documents and Communication

1. Meetings

Council will hold at least four meetings per year in a meeting place that is open and accessible to the public. The first meeting will be held within the first 30 days of the school year and all activities at the meeting must be in compliance with Board policies. Each meeting will begin with a reading of the Meeting Norms and the Purpose of School Council (*see Section A: Overview, Point 2*). Following best practices, Robert’s Rules of Order may help School Councils work effectively together (*YRDSB, School Council Handbook, 25*) and “often expedite a meeting as voting takes less time to reach” a decision (*Ministry of Education: School Councils, A Guide for Members, 8.9*). Agendas, minutes and meeting dates will be shared with the school community.

a. Agenda

- i. The Co-Chairs and Principal(s) or designate will set the agenda 10-days prior to the meeting date and, when possible, will meet with the Executives to review the agenda
- ii. Requests for items to be added to the agenda may be made in writing to the Co-Chairs up to two weeks prior to the meeting date and will be reviewed by the Executives and Principal(s) or designate at the Agenda Setting meeting to ensure the requested item meets the Council criteria as a school-wide topic
- iii. An electronic copy of the agenda will be posted on the School Council webpage (paper copies will be made available by request)

b. Quorum

- i. Decisions are made only when quorum is met (50% + 1 of the voting members are present and the majority of those present are parent members)
- ii. If quorum is not met, decisions must be deferred until the next Council meeting or, in extreme circumstances, voting may occur via email when decisions are needed prior to the next meeting date
- iii. A meeting may still proceed as planned even if a quorum is not met, provided no decisions are made

c. Minutes

- i. Minutes shall be prepared by the Secretary and submitted to the Executives and Principals or designate for preliminary review within one week of the meeting date
- ii. Following review by the Executives and Principals or designate, the minutes will be shared electronically with the Council to ensure accuracy
- iii. Approval of the minutes will take place at the following Council meeting and once approved, posted on the School Council webpage (3.7.2)
- iv. Minutes shall be written as an overview of the topics discussed at the meeting and shall include the motions, decisions and actions taken by Council
- v. The Principal(s) will ensure the minutes are accessible to the public and will remain on file for four years

2. Financial Documents

Ownership of School Council funds belong, legally, to the Board (*see School Councils: A Guide for Members published by The Ministry of Education*). All fundraising activities and expenditures must be conducted in accordance with Board policies. Particular attention needs to be paid to policies on purchasing and conflicts of interest.

a. Financial Records

- i. The Treasurer is responsible for keeping financial records during their term of office
- ii. The Treasurer is responsible for the information contained within the financial records and for this reason, shall be the only one with editing rights to all financial documents
- iii. The Executives, School Council electorate and school community members may have viewing rights to the financial documents
- iv. The Treasurer will obtain current financials from the school and present a report ahead of the Council meeting, or when needed.
- v. The Treasurer will present the financial documents at the School Council meetings and share the documents with the office administration so they can be posted publicly on the school webpage
- vi. At the end of the year, the Treasurer will submit an annual report which will be posted publicly on the school webpage
- vii. The Principals will ensure that hard copies of the financial records are accessible to the public in the school office where they will remain on file for seven years
- viii. Copies of the financial documents shall be made available at no cost for review by parents/guardians of students enrolled at Stonehaven Elementary School
- ix. All financial records are to be transferred to the newly appointed treasurer

b. Signing of Cheques

- i. Cheques must have two signing officers, one of whom must be the Principal(s)
- ii. The Treasurer must be notified in writing when a cheque is signed without their presence
- iii. Council members are not permitted to sign cheques.

c. Financial Allocations

- i. All allocations are to be recorded on the financial records and in the minutes
- ii. A listing of all allocations made throughout the year will be posted at the bottom of the treasurer's reports as a continuous record of appropriations and shared with the administrative assistant as they arise.
- iii. Should an allocation be considered outside of a Council meeting, voting may occur via email and then recorded in the financial records and minutes accordingly
- iv. In the rare instance where funds are required and there is not enough time to wait for Council's approval, all of the Executives and Principal(s) may agree to approve the funds temporarily until permission can be obtained from the Council. The value is nominal and

will be established by Council at the first meeting of the year by vote. In this case, the Principal(s) or designate must agree in writing to cover the funds with the school money, in the event that Council does not approve the allocation.

- v. All funds collected by School Council should be spent in that academic year. Funds may remain in the account during transition from one year to the next if they are allocated to a project or cause that will require funding in September or October of the following year. This exception is done with the understanding that Council may not have the ability to raise the monies necessary to support the project, if these funds were not carried forward from the previous academic year.

3. Correspondence

- a. Copies of formal correspondence written on behalf of School Council will be kept on file in a centrally available place for the Executives, Principals or designate to access, and may be made available to all members of the School Council upon request
- b. A contacts file will be maintained by all members of the Executives to ensure suppliers and/or stakeholders can be easily reached by members of the Council, sub-committees or office administration
- c. Confidential information may be redacted under MFIPPA
- d. Formal and/or official correspondence should be done whenever possible using the School Council email address provided by the Board

4. Constitutional Amendments

- a. The School Council Constitution shall be reviewed at least once during the academic year and may be reviewed more often if the need arises
- b. An interim sub-committee will be formed to conduct the review
- c. The sub-committee must consist of at least two parents and the Principal(s), but may consist of more members (parents/members need not be on Council)
- d. Proposed amendments to the Constitution will be shared with the Council for ratification
- e. Notice of the motion for an amendment will be made at the meeting and voting for that motion will occur at the next meeting
- f. Approval of ratification is made by a motion and requires quorum (50% + 1) to be passed
- g. A special Council meeting may be called to review the proposed changes, or a discussion may occur during a regular Council meeting, if time permits

SECTION D: Addendum

1. School Council Code of Ethics

The following code of ethics, derived from Ministry guidelines, privacy and legal consultations made by the Board, may be used by school councils in an attempt to outline expectations for members and as a guideline for behaviour.

- 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.
- A member shall 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 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.

2. School Council Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

a) Volunteer Committee

Type	Standing
Purpose	Assist with the recruitment and retention of volunteers throughout the academic year and assist the Principals with the annual election process of School Council members.
Scope	This committee has the ability to recruit volunteers for school council events and initiatives, to contact volunteers to request their assistance with various events and/or tasks, and to work with the Principals on the election.
Authority	Makes recommendations to the Council and implements the agreed to plans
Membership	Principals or designate Parent volunteers (may, but need not be, Council members)
Meeting Arrangements	As determined by the Volunteer Committee - the agreed to meeting schedule will be shared with Council at the second Council meeting of the year
Reporting	Reports to the committee as a whole during School Council meetings
Resources and Budget	Provided on an as-needed basis through approval from Council
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain a volunteer database - Ensure volunteers are available for the various events and/or initiatives - Increase outreach to include new volunteers - Identify new opportunities for prospective volunteers who work full-time - Work in partnership with the other sub-committees to ensure they have volunteer support for their initiatives

b) Fundraising Committee

Type	Standing
Purpose	Responsible for overseeing the operation of School Council fundraising initiatives
Scope	This committee has the ability to source fundraising ideas, make recommendations to Council regarding fundraising initiatives, and assist with the implementation of the agreed-to fundraising plans

Authority	Makes recommendations to the Council and implements the agreed to plans
Membership	Anyone
Meeting Arrangements	As determined by the Fundraising Committee - the agreed to meeting schedule will be shared with Council at the second Council meeting of the year
Reporting	Reports to the committee during School Council meetings
Resources and Budget	Provided on an as-needed basis through approval from Council
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oversee the successful operation of School Council fundraising initiatives - Provide feedback regarding the various initiatives (i.e., a SWOT analysis) - Source and suggest new fundraising ideas

c) Inclusivity Committee

Type	Standing
Purpose	Responsible for providing insight, guidance and support with activities, events and procedures designed to increase community involvement and help families understand how valuable they are to our school
Scope	This committee has the ability to recommend and, with approval from Council, plan and implement communication collateral, activities and events that celebrate our school community's diverse culture
Authority	Makes recommendations to the Council and implements the agreed to plans
Membership	Anyone
Meeting Arrangements	As determined by the Inclusivity Committee - the agreed to meeting schedule will be shared with Council at the second Council meeting of the year
Reporting	Reports to the committee as a whole during School Council meetings
Resources and Budget	Provided on an as-needed basis through approval from Council
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create initiatives that foster greater community involvement - Create initiatives that celebrate and acknowledge diversity - Increase the sense of belonging and value amongst all cultural, religious, gender and ethnic backgrounds

d) Food Committee

Type	Standing
Purpose	Responsible for overseeing the successful operation of the various lunch programs, as well as the fresh fruit program in the office and popcorn fundraiser
Scope	This committee has the ability to speak with suppliers to coordinate meals and submit orders, answer questions from parents regarding the food programs, source and suggest new food suppliers if the school is looking to change a vendor, monitor the popcorn inventory and order more popcorn when needed, monitor the fresh fruit program in the office and, working with the Volunteer Committee, ensure volunteers are available for the preparation and/or distribution of food (i.e. pizza, popcorn, fruit, etc.)
Authority	Makes recommendations to the Council and implements the agreed to plans
Membership	Anyone
Meeting Arrangements	As determined by the Food Committee - the agreed to meeting schedule will be shared with Council at the second Council meeting of the year
Reporting	Reports to the committee as a whole during School Council meetings
Resources and Budget	Provided on an as-needed basis through approval from Council
Deliverables	- Ensure smooth operation of food programs