

Victoria Square Public School



School Council Constitution

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ARTICLE I: Name and Address

The school council shall be named the Victoria Square School Council or 'The Council', in the Province of Ontario, Region of York. The members of the Council shall be responsible for maintaining the constitution.

Victoria Square Public School
50 Prince of Wales Drive
Markham, Ontario
L6C 0K2

ARTICLE II: Mission Statement

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

ARTICLE III: Purpose and Objectives

The purpose and objectives of the Council include but are no limited to:

- Fostering and increasing parental contact and participation in their children's education
- Assisting in identifying local conditions that need to be addressed in the school's efforts to educate its students
- Advising in the allocation of school level resources
- Advising in the allocation of council-generated resources
- Advocating for the school in the community
- Advising on opportunities for parent education
- Linkages with community resources
- Supporting school code of conduct
- Responses of the school or school board to achievement in provincial and board assessment programs
- Providing input for criteria to assist the Board in the appointment of the principal
- Methods of reporting to parents and community
- Supporting extra-curricular activities in the school
- School-based services and community partnerships
- Development, implementation and review of board policies at the local level

Council members are to maintain a school-wide focus on all issues. Council meetings are not a forum of discussion about individual parents, students, staff, trustees or other council members.

ARTICLE IV: 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 all Ministry of Education Acts, York Region District School Board Policies and Procedures and Staff Collective Agreements.

ARTICLE V: Norms of Behaviour and Practice

The School Council 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, and staff are not discussed
- Be open-minded and objective
- Refer parent or student issues to the teacher or principal

ARTICLE VI: Membership

- There shall be no more than one member on the school council from any one household

Section 6.1 Parent Representatives

- The number of parent representatives forming The Council shall not exceed more than TEN (10) members – including the executive positions
- A parent representative shall not be employed by the Board at Victoria Square Public School
- A parent representative may be employed by the Board at another location providing the parent discloses such employment on declaring interest in joining The Council

Section 6.2 Teacher Representatives

- There shall be ONE (1) teacher representative on Council
- The teacher representative must be employed at Victoria Square Public School, selected by the teaching staff of the school in accordance with Board's School Councils policy and procedure
- This position may be shared by more than one teacher

Section 6.3 Support Staff Representatives

- There may be ONE (1) support staff representative on Council
- The support staff representative must be employed at Victoria Square Public School, selected by the support staff of the school in accordance with Board's School Councils policy and procedure
- This position may be shared by more than one support staff

Section 6.4 Community Representatives

- Community representatives—not parents of students at the school, but interested community partners-- may apply for membership in writing to Council or be invited by Council

- The number of community representatives on Council shall not exceed ONE (1)
- A community representative shall not be employed by the Board at Victoria Square Public School
- A community representative may be employed by the Board at another location providing the individual discloses such employment on declaring interest in joining the Council

Section 6.5 Student Representatives

- The Principal may appoint ONE (1) student representative at his/her discretion

Section 6.6 Principal of the School

- The Principal/Vice-Principal of Victoria Square Public School

Section 6.7 Council Structure

The number of parent representatives forming The Council shall not exceed more than TEN (10) members – including the executive positions.

At the first meeting of the year, The Council members at council meeting will elect or appoint the following officers:

Council Executives:

- ONE (1) Chair (executive position)
- ONE (1) Co-Chair (executive position)
- ONE (1) Treasurer (executive position)
- ONE (1) Secretary (executive position)

Chair, Co-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary are executive positions of the council. Members holding these executive positions shall declare any potential conflict of interest before taking positions (e.g. school board employees, family members). All remaining council members will be known as the Members-at-large.

Section 6.8 Vacancies in Council

- A vacancy in the membership of the Council—even a vacancy of an executive of the Council— does not prevent the Council from functioning
- Should an elected parent/guardian council position become vacant before the next election, the remaining council shall fill the vacancy by appointment from the non-elected candidates from the previous election (Members at large).
- If none of the previous candidates remain interested in becoming a council member, the council may request that interested parents/guardians from the school community submit their names for consideration. The executive 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.
- In the event of an executive position becoming vacant, the position must be decided by way of an election, by secret ballot, of all voting members of the Council

Section 6.9 Council Roles and Responsibilities

Chair/Co-Chair of the School Council is responsible for:

- Attending and chairing all School Council meetings
- Attend Budget Meetings
- Setting an agenda for all School Council meetings in consultation with the Principal/Vice Principal
- Delegating tasks and ensuring the completion of objectives
- Maintaining a liaison relationship with the appropriate YRDSB personnel
- Providing financial and budget oversight
- Entitled to ONE (1) vote

Treasurer

- Attends all School Council and Budget planning meetings and/or provides report
- Manages budget planning cycle at the beginning and end of the school year
- Recommend policy and procedure towards accountability and transparency
- Ensures all monies collected from fundraising activities are secured on school premises
- Monitors School Council fiscal budget and oversees expenses with the Sub-Committee Chairs and members of the council
- Ensures that monthly financial statements are current
- Ensures that all disbursements of funds are accompanied by an authorized Reimbursement Request Form
- Ensures proper record-keeping is maintained
- Entitled to ONE (1) vote

Secretary

- Attends all School Council meetings
- Records meeting minutes (including attendance)
- Sends minutes of meetings to Administration for review
- Provides a copy of reviewed minutes to be approved at subsequent meeting
- Provides meeting minutes to be posted to the Victoria Square Public School Web Site
- Maintains a record of all minutes.
- Entitled to ONE (1) vote

Members-at-large

- Attends School Council meetings
- Contributes by being a member of the Council or may lead an initiative assigned from The Council
- Each member-at-large is entitled to ONE (1) vote

ARTICLE VII: Elections and Voting

Section 7.1 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 of registered students at Victoria Square Public School

Section 7.2 Election Procedure of The Council

- School Council elections shall occur during the first formal School Council meeting and are to be completed within 30 days of the commencement of the school year.
- Each parent/guardian seeking a Council position must be nominated or self-nominated in writing, must have a child registered at the school, and must declare if he or she is employed by the Board.
- Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school shall be entitled to one vote for each vacant parent/guardian membership position on the council up to the maximum as stated in section 6.1 Parent Representatives.
- Victoria Square Public School Administration shall:
 - Provide nomination forms
 - Contact nominees to confirm nomination status
 - Send a nomination form to each family during the first regular week of school
 - Ensure nomination forms are returned to the school prior to the first School Council meeting
- The Secretary shall:
 - Maintain all election results
- Voting
 - Where there is more than TEN (10) candidates for council position, then secret ballot elections will ensue with all parents attending the first council meeting
 - Where there is more than ONE (1) candidate for an executive position then secret ballot elections will ensue with all elected council members attending the first council meeting
 - In the event of a vacant position, the Council Executives may fill the vacancy by appointment

Section 7.3 Vacancies in Membership

- A vacancy in the membership of a school council does not prevent the council from exercising its authority

- If parent member positions remain vacant on council, after the election, the Council may appoint parent members
- Positions that become vacant due to resignation or removal shall be filled by appointment

Section 7.4 Resignations

- Anyone who is a council member, except the principal, may resign his or her position by writing a letter of resignation to the chair
- If someone resigns the position vacated will be filled according to Section 7.3 Vacancies in Membership

Section 7.5 Removal

The council may choose to remove from council any member who misses more than three meetings and shall undertake to replace that person according to Section 7.3 Vacancies in Membership. Any member subject to removal shall be notified by the Chair, in writing, of the Council decision.

Section 7.6 Voting on Motions

While decision of the Council are best decided through consensus, when voting is necessary:

- Each member of the Council (excluding the 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
- Parent representatives, not in The Council, does not have voting privileges but is encouraged to voice their opinions during the council meetings.

ARTICLE VIII: Sub-Committees

Section 8.1 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 Sub-Committee Chair

Section 8.2 Sub-Committee Membership

- Each subcommittee shall include at least one Parent member of Council or an individual appointed by Council
- Persons who are not members of the Council may be members of a Sub-Committee

Section 8.3 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

Section 8.4 Fundraising for Sub-Committees

- Any fundraising conduction by a Sub-Committee must be approved by the Treasurer and must be monitored by the Council
- 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

ARTICLE IX: Meetings

Section 9.1 Timetable of Meetings

- There will be a minimum of FOUR (4) general and/or executive School Council meetings a school year
- A copy of these dates and times will be included in communication(s) to the families of the school and posted on the school website
- The principal will notify the trustee of all scheduled meetings
- Special meetings of the Council may be held upon the written request submitted to the School Council Executive
- Special meetings shall have a minimum notice of seven days
- Sub-Committee meetings will be held as needed
- It is recognized that the timetable may change at any time
- A copy of the list of dates and times of meetings will be sent to the local trustee

Section 9.2 Quorum

A meeting will have quorum if:

- The majority of voting council members (see Section 6.7) are present AND the total voting members is equal or greater to 50% +1
- A meeting of council can be held if there is no quorum but all voting will be deferred
- In the absence of a Chair or Co-Chair, another executive of the council may chair

Section 9.3 Decision-Making

The preferred method to resolve issues on council is by consensus. Consensus is a collective opinion or general agreement by ALL the council members.

In the case where a decision cannot be reached through consensus, the chair may decide on one of the following:

- To defer the issue to the next meeting
- To defer the issue to a special meeting

- To have the motion voted upon; in which a 51% majority shall carry the vote. See Section 7.6
- At any point, a Member may call for a ballot vote on a motion under discussion
- In cases of a tie, the Chair may allow a single tie-breaking vote from the Principal or Vice-Principal.

Section 9.4 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 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

Section 9.5 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 his or her concern or opinion about the issue at dispute and how the dispute has affected him or her
- 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 the Superintendent responsible for School Councils, or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict

ARTICLE X: Finances

Section 10.1 Allocation (Budgeting)

- The annual budget should be prepared by the Treasurer. 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

Section 10.2 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

Section 10.3 Receipts

- All cash receipts should be handled, collected, counted and totaled in the presence of at least one other Council member 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 Principal

Section 10.4 Fundraising

- Fundraising must take place in accordance with School Fundraising and Administration of School Generated Funds policy and procedure

ARTICLE XI: Agendas and Minutes

Section 11.1 Agendas

- Agenda items should be submitted to the chair one week prior to the council's next meeting
- The chair will set the agenda with the Principal or Vice Principal prior to the meeting and it will be forwarded to Council by the end of the school day prior to the meeting

Section 11.2 Minutes

- Minutes shall be made available for the school community prior to the next meeting of the council
- The minutes shall include motions, decisions and actions to be taken

ARTICLE XII: Annual Report

The Executive/Chairpersons will prepare a report, at the end of the school year, highlighting the activities, goals, and achievements of Council.

ARTICLE XIII: Incorporation

The Council shall not be incorporated

ARTICLE XIV: Constitutional Amendments

- The Council shall review the constitution every year via a sub-committee of the Council, and bring proposed amendments to the Council for approval
- Amendments shall be presented to the Council as motions for approval at a regularly scheduled meeting
- Constitutional amendments require a 2/3 majority to be passed