

School Council Constitution

Article 1. Name

1.1 The organization shall be known as Viola Desmond Public School Council. Hereafter, it will be referred to as the Council.

Article 2. Purpose and Scope of Council

2.1 The Council will support student success and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents by making recommendations to the Principal and the school board.

2.2 Council will advise on the following:

- school and learning environment
- curriculum and program
- communication and promotion of school activities
- school code of conduct
- school improvement plan
- school dress code
- fundraising activities
- school leadership and inclusion
- school-community communication strategies
- extra-curricular activities
- school-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreational and nutritional programs
- community use of school facilities
- co-ordination of local services for children and youth
- Board policies.

Article 3. Membership

3.1 Members of the School Council shall/can include:

- parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school
- community representatives
- a student
- a teacher
- a support staff member

3.2 Parents and guardians shall form the majority of the Council.

3.3 The Council should be composed of a minimum of 3 members and a **maximum of 6**. If these numbers are not possible, Council may continue to function so long as parents form the majority of the membership.

Article 4. Roles

4.1 The Principal shall:

- attend all meetings unless unable to do so by reason of illness or other cause

- assist in the establishment and operation of School Council
- support and promote School Council activities
- distribute and post information from the school, the Board and the Ministry of Education
- seek input from Council on school policies and guidelines, new initiatives, improvement plans and communication
- consider recommendations made by Council and advise Council of actions taken
- act as a resource and provide, where reasonable, information requested by Council
- maintain on-going communication with the Chairperson.

4.2 The Chairperson(s) shall:

- call School Council meetings
- prepare the agenda for meetings in collaboration with the Principal
- chair School Council meetings
- ensure that minutes and financial records are recorded and maintained
- maintain on-going communication with the Principal
- encourage community representation
- facilitate communications with parents and community
- ensure representation at Regional School Council meetings.

4.3 The Vice-Chairperson shall:

- fulfil duties of the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.

4.4 The Secretary/Treasurer shall:

- record and report, without prejudice, the proceedings of the Council
- distribute the minutes and agenda to Council members prior to the meetings
- prepare correspondence on behalf of the Council
- receive and bank monies owed to the Council
- keep full and accurate accounts of monies received/disbursed on behalf of the Council
- present a completed financial statement at the final School Councils meeting of a school year
- act in accordance with the Guidelines For School Generated Funds document

4.5 All members shall:

- attend and participate in Council meetings
- participate in information and training programs as needed
- act as a link between the Council and the community
- welcome the participation of parents/guardians from all groups and of other people in the community
- follow Board policies and procedures and comply with applicable legislation
- act in good faith.

Article 5. Election Procedures

5.1 Elections shall occur within the first thirty days of the start of each school year.

5.2 Each parent/guardian seeking election 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 school board.

5.3 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.

5.4 An Election Committee shall be struck by the Council to help plan the election process, the gathering of nominations, and the running of the election. No one standing for election, or the spouse of anyone standing for election, shall be a member of the election committee.

5.5 The Election Committee shall:

- provide nomination forms
- ensure that the school community is notified of election procedures and election date, location and time at least fourteen days in advance of the election
- request a profile from candidates and make these available to voters
- conduct the elections by secret ballot
- help the Principal notify all candidates of the results
- keep all results and related information confidential.

5.6 Only the names of the successful candidates shall be made public. A list of candidates and the vote results will be kept on file by the Council for use in the event of a vacancy.

5.7 All individuals standing for election shall be notified of the results before the results are released to the school community.

5.8 The School Council shall help the Principal ensure that the names of new members are publicized to the school community within thirty days of the election.

5.9 At the first meeting of the new School Council at the beginning of the year, the Council shall set dates, time and locations for its meetings throughout the year.

Article 6. Filling Vacancies

6.1 Should an elected parent/guardian 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.

6.2 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 Council shall then appoint one of those who indicate an interest.

6.3 When a vacant spot on Council is filled, the new member's term shall expire at the time of the next election.

Article 7. Conflict of Interest

7.1 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 a vested interest, stand to benefit either directly or indirectly from decisions of the Council.

7.2 A member shall exclude him or herself from discussions and resolutions in which:

- a conflict of interest is likely to result

- the member's ability to carry out his or her duties and responsibilities as a member of the Council may be jeopardized
- the Council member, his or her relatives, or a business entity in which the member may have an interest, may gain or benefit directly or indirectly as a result of actions that may be taken by the Principal or Board in response to advice that the Council provides to the Principal or to the board.

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

Article 8. Conflict Resolution

8.1 Every Council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her concern or opinion about the issue at dispute.

8.2 Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.

8.3 Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.

8.4 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.

8.5 If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the Chair shall request the intervention of a superintendent or other Board administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.

Article 9. Quorum

9.1 A quorum shall consist of 50 per cent of the voting members plus one.

9.2 In the absence of a quorum, any business requiring decisions either by consensus or vote must be deferred to the next meeting.

Article 10. Governance

10.1 The Council shall act in a transparent manner.

10.2 The Council will always endeavour to consider the needs and best interests of students before making decisions.

Article 11. Decision Making

11.1 The Council shall make every attempt to reach decisions by consensus.

11.2 If a consensus is impossible, Roberts Rules of Order will be used for decisions requiring a vote. All School Council members/designates present at the meeting will be eligible to vote.

Article 12. Communications

12.1 Within 30 days of election of a new Council, the new Council will create and follow a communications plan to raise awareness of Council activities and increase parental involvement.

Article 13. Financial Accountability

13.1 The Council shall become familiar with and act in a manner consistent with the Ontario Association of School Business Officials Finance Committee Guidelines for School Generated Funds document.

Article 14. Making Amendments

14.1 From time to time, amendments may be necessary to the Council's constitution. Any amendments to this Council's constitution must have a minimum of two-thirds ($2/3$) of the Council in favour of the amendment. Notice of the intent to amend the constitution along with specific details of the amendment must be provided at least one meeting prior to any vote.