



ÉCOLE DEWSON SCHOOL COUNCIL BYLAWS

June 2022

1. OVERVIEW

The purpose of the school council is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.

School council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations in accordance with [Ontario Regulation 612/00](#) of the *Education Act* to the principal of the school and the board that established the council.

Ontario Regulation 612/00 sets out the mandate and roles and responsibilities for school councils. In effect, the regulation serves as the constitution for the school council.

Dewson has a diverse and socially responsible school community with a long-standing history of parent/caregiver involvement prioritizing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Council should reflect the diversity of the families, ensure all voices are heard and the events and activities planned by council and the various committees respond to the needs and healthy development of the students of the Dewson community.

The following Dewson School Council Bylaws serve as governance for the conduct of its affairs and as framework to help council work effectively.

In the event that any provision of these bylaws conflict with the provisions of Ontario Regulation 612/00 and 330/10 takes precedence.

2. DEFINITIONS

“Community Representative” means a voting member not employed at the school who is appointed to the School Council in accordance with Section 4 of these bylaws. This person contributes to the discussion of the school council; represents and voices the community’s perspective; may participate on any committees established by the school council; and, helps build partnerships and links between the school and the community.

“Parent/Caregiver Member” means, a voting member not employed at the school who is a parent or guardian of a child enrolled at the school and elected to the School Council in accordance with Section 4 of these bylaws; or, who fills a vacancy created by a parent/caregiver member ceasing to hold office.

“School” means, Dewson Street Junior Public School

“School Board” means, the Toronto District School Board

3. MEMBERSHIP AND DUTIES

The School Council is composed of the following voting members:

- 1) A minimum of Fifteen (15) Parent/Caregiver Members elected in accordance with Section 4 of these bylaws who form the majority of the School Council membership. At the first meeting of each school year all parent/caregiver present can increase the number of Parent/Caregiver Members by a majority vote of the parent/caregiver.
- 2) One (1) Teacher who is employed at the school, other than the Principal or Vice-Principal, elected in accordance with Section 4 of these bylaws
- 3) One (1) Non-Teaching Representative who is employed at the school, other than the Principal or Vice-Principal or any other teacher, elected in accordance with Section 4 of these bylaws
- 4) Two Community Representatives may be appointed in accordance with Section 4 of these bylaws, as the need arises, while ensuring parents members form the majority of the member of the School Council.

The school Principal is a non-voting member of the School Council. The Principal may delegate their duties with respect to School Council participation to the Vice-Principal.

Duties of members of the School Council include:

- 1) Attend all scheduled meetings or notify the Co-Chairs of their absence
- 2) Participate on at least one committee established by the School Council, as selected or requested
- 3) Contribute to the discussions of the School Council
- 4) Solicit the views of other parents/caregivers, teachers, non-teaching staff and members of the community to share with the School Council
- 5) Communicate School Council information and decisions back to parents/caregivers, teachers, non-teaching staff and members of the community
- 6) Observe the School Council's Code of Ethics and established bylaws

4. ELECTION PROCEDURES

The Coordinating Committee shall:

- 1) Provide nomination forms at least fourteen (14) days prior to the election.
- 2) Ensure that the school community is notified by the Principal of election procedures and election date(s), location, and time, at least fourteen (14) days prior to the election
- 3) Ensure that no individual campaign literature for School Council elections are distributed or posted in the school and that school resources, both human and material, are not used to support particular candidates or groups of candidates.
- 4) Ballot are count in the presents of at least two (2) parents/caregivers who are not candidates in the election and are sworn in a Returning Officers.
- 5) Ensure that there are two (2) Returning Officers appointed to run the election whose responsibilities are:
 - a. Ensure the election is fair and transparent.
 - b. Ensure the election is conducted in accordance with the bylaws and election procedures.
 - c. Conduct the election by secret ballot
 - d. Report the results to each candidate. All candidates shall be notified of the results before the results are released to the school community.
 - e. Ensure the names and contact information of the new members are publicized to the school community within seven (7) days of the election.
 - f. Ensure the only the names of the successful candidates shall be made public.
 - g. Ensure a list of candidates and the vote results are provided to the incoming Coordinating Committee. Administrative Officer will keep on file on behalf of the School Council for use in the event that a vacancy on the School Council occurs.
 - h. Keep all results and related information confidential
- 6) At the first meeting of the School Council, following the election, Parent/Caregiver Members will select a Coordinating Committee in the order listed below.
- 7) Consult the Principal to make the necessary arrangements for the teaching staff representative to be elected. Any teacher of the school (full- or part-time) other than the Principal or Vice Principal may be a candidate.
- 8) Consult the Principal to make the necessary arrangements for the non-teaching staff representative to be elected. Any non-teaching staff of the school (full- or part-time) may be a candidate.
- 9) Ensure all appointments of community representatives to the School Council are to be by majority vote at a meeting of the School Council.

4.1 ELECTION AND TERM

Elections for Parent/Caregiver Members shall occur within the first thirty (30) days of the start of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the Coordinating Committee after consulting with the principal of the school.

Each Parent/Caregiver seeking election must self-nominate in writing, must have a child registered at the school, and must declare if they are employed by the School Board prior to the election.

Each Parent/Caregiver of a student enrolled in the school shall be entitled to one (1) vote for each vacant Parent/Caregiver Member position on the School Council.

If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, then all candidates shall be acclaimed.

In the event of any ties lots will be drawn to determine the winner(s).

The term of office for Parent/Caregiver Members, Teaching Staff Representative, Non-Teaching Staff Representative and Community Representatives shall be from the date on which they are elected or appointed until their successors' election or appointment.

5. COORDINATING COMMITTEE ROLES

The Coordinating Committee will consist of the following positions:

- 2 x Co-chair
- Treasurer
- Administration Officer
- Communications Officer
- Any other position that the Council creates with a majority vote. The position expires at the end of the Council's term (i.e. just prior to the first meeting of the School Council each school year).

School Council's first order of business after the election of the School Council is the appointment of the Coordinating Committee positions in the order listed above. A majority vote is required for each appointment. In the case of more than two School Council Members putting themselves forward as a candidate for the position and no one candidate receives a majority of the votes, a run-off vote between the two candidates receiving the most votes will occur. In the event of any ties lots will be drawn to determine the winner.

For the Co-Chair position, a member of the school council may be re-elected or re-acclaimed for two (2) consecutive terms (school years) after which at least one (1) school year must elapse before they may be elected or acclaimed for Co-chair position. In the event that two Co-chairs are not elected or acclaimed then the a co-chair who has already served the past two-consecutive terms (school years) can put themselves forward to be re-acclaimed.

5.1 Co-Chair

Ideally, one Co-Chair of the School Council should be a returning member of the Coordinating Committee, preferably the Co-chair who has completed 1 term (1 school year).

The Co-Chair cannot be employed by the school board.

The Co-Chairs perform additional duties to those noted in Section 3 of these bylaws including:

- 1) Arrange for and ensure School Council meetings occur
- 2) Chair Coordinating Committee and School Council meetings
- 3) Ensure response to requests, comments and any other communication directed at School Council
- 4) Facilitate the orientation of members to the School Council
- 5) Facilitate the resolution of conflict
- 6) Sit as ex-officio members of all committees established by the School Council
- 7) Communicate with the school Principal on behalf of the School Council
- 8) Coordinate with the school Principal to send out regular updates on School Council news and initiatives

- 9) Ensure communication with the School Board, Ward 9 Council and the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC)

5.2 Treasurer

The Treasurer performs additional duties to those noted in Section 3 of these bylaws including:

- 1) Ensure that School Council funds are kept separate from personal funds
- 2) Ensure that proper accounting records are maintained for all revenues and expenses
- 3) Monitor and report to school council members the status of the funds in conjunction with School Council meetings by reviewing and signing the Bank Reconciliation Summary Report and Cash Flow Report
- 4) Ensure that any investments of surplus funds not immediately required are:
 - a. Under the name of the School Council referencing the school and board
 - b. Controlled through the School Council Treasurer
 - c. Invested for no longer than one year
 - d. Invested in non-risk investments (Canada Savings Bond, term deposit, G.I.C.)
- 5) Sit as a parent/caregiver member of the school's Budget Committee
- 6) Lead of School Council's Finance Committee

5.3 Administration Officer

The Administration Officer performs additional duties to those noted in Section 3 of these bylaws including:

- 1) Ensure the preparation of agendas and their posting/distribution one (1) week prior to meetings
- 2) Record School Council meeting minutes in accordance with Section 7 of these bylaws
- 3) Maintain a list of action items
- 4) Provide an opportunity for comment on draft minutes in accordance with Section 7 of these bylaws
- 5) Post approved meeting minutes for review by the school community and file a copy with the school
- 6) Ensure the posting of School Council meeting agendas and minutes

5.4 Communication Officer

The Communication Officer performs additional duties to those noted in Section 3 of these bylaws including:

- 1) Support the communication needs for all the committees and School Council
- 2) Assist with the drafting of school-wide communications in collaboration with council and the Principal and/or vice-principal
- 3) Update and maintain the School Council's website, social media and school grounds communication boards

6. VACANCIES

A vacancy in the membership of School Council does not prevent it from exercising its authority, so long as there is quorum and the majority of School Council members are parents/caregiver.

6.1 FILLING VACANCIES

Should an elected Parent/Caregiver Member position become vacant before the next election, the School 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 Parent/Caregiver Member, the School Council may request that interested parents/caregivers from the school community submit their names for consideration. The School Council shall then appoint one of those who indicate an interest.

When a vacant spot on School Council is filled, the new Parent/Caregiver Member's term shall expire at the time of the next election.

If a Coordinating Committee Member position becomes vacant, then School Council can appoint a new member as part of regular business.

6.2 NON-PERFORMANCE/RESIGNATION

In the event that a Coordinating Committee Member of the School Council resigns or is not able to attend two (2) consecutive School Council meetings for any reason whatsoever or does not perform the duties of their office, a motion may be brought by any Parent/Caregiver Member of School Council to have the office vacated. A two-thirds majority is required to pass the motion of School Council may be brought to School Council to vacate that position and elect or acclaim another interested Parent/Caregiver Member to serve the remainder of the term.

7. MEETINGS

School Council meetings are to be open to the whole school community and the general public.

Through collaboration between voting members of the School Council and the Principal, meetings should focus on the interests of all students through school improvement plans, improving student achievement and promoting meaningful parental and community involvement.

Issues raised for approval at School Council meetings must be put forward by a member of School Council and seconded by another member. Any member of the School Council can table a newly raised motion to the next School Council meeting unless items has been circulated whole school community 5 days in advance of the meeting.

A vote on an issue will be taken by a show of hands, unless otherwise specified and approval shall be granted upon a majority vote by School Council. An member can request a recorded vote prior to the vote.

7.1 SCHEDULING OF MEETINGS

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

The School Council will meet within the first thirty-five (35) days of the school year, after the elections are held in accordance with Section 4.

School Council shall meet at least six (6) times during the school year.

Every reasonable effort will be made to avoid scheduling meetings in conflict with religious days of significance.

7.2 MEETING MINUTES

School Council shall keep minutes of all of its meetings available at the school for examination without charge by any person for a minimum period of four (4) years.

Meeting minutes shall be an unbiased and impartial record of the items discussed and the decisions made by the school council.

The minutes should include:

- Date, time, and location of the meeting
- List of attendees as recorded on the attendance sheet distributed at School Council meetings
- Name of the person recording the minutes

- Summary of discussions at School Council meetings, including decisions, future plans, reports, and responsibility for action items. School Council minutes should note discussion areas but should not include the discussions themselves.

The Administration Officer will provide an editable electronic copy of the meeting minutes to the Coordinating Committee within seven (7) days of the School Council meeting.

The Coordinating Committee will provide comments on draft meeting minutes to the Secretary within seven (7) days of receiving them.

Within twenty-one (21) days of School Council meeting, draft meeting minutes approved by the Coordinating Committee shall be distributed to the school community at large.

8. QUORUM

Parent/Caregiver Members must form the majority of attendees at a School Council meeting.

The principal or their delegate must be in attendance at a School Council meeting for the meeting to proceed.

A minimum of 25% plus 1 Parent/Caregiver members must be in attendance to achieve quorum for a school council meeting to proceed. If quorum is not achieved, decisions or votes may not be taken. Parent/Caregiver Members who have been absent from the previous school council meetings are not considered for quorum purposes unless they are present.

10. COMMITTEES

Any member of the School Council may propose the establishment of an Ad-hoc Committee to focus on specific areas of interest within the school mandate to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.

Ad-hoc Committees will be struck upon a majority vote of School Council for their establishment and remain in existence unless ended by a majority vote of School Council. Each Ad-hoc Committee will adhere to its mandate as agreed upon by the School Council.

Each Committee shall be made up of a least one (1) Parent/Caregiver Member and a minimum of three (3) members.

Each Committee will elect a Co-leads or, Lead and Vice-lead amongst its members who will lead and report to Council its recommendations and activities. The Coordinating Committee can help facilitate this if necessary (ie. assist with an election).

Each Committee will meet at least once (1) per year by any means that permits every member to participate in the meeting to communicate with each other simultaneously.

The Lead of the Committee will notify each member in writing of the place, time and agenda for a Committee meeting five (5) days before the meeting.

A quorum on a Committee is 3 members.

Decisions may be made in Committee by a simple majority of votes cast by members present at the meeting. If there is an equality of votes, the decision will be for the negative.

A person appointed to a Committee shall be a member of the Committee until the first meeting of the new School Council.

All Committees will report back verbally, unless otherwise requested to the School Council of their activities and recommendations at all scheduled School Council meetings.

11. CODE OF ETHICS

A member shall:

- consider the best interests of all students.
- be guided by the school's and the school board's mission statements.
- 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.
- become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- maintain the highest standards of integrity.
- recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
- encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- acknowledge democratic principles and be respectful of the decisions of the council.
- respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council.
- not disclose confidential information.
- limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
- declare any conflict of interest.
- not accept any payment or benefit financially through school council involvement.

12. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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

Members of the School 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 School Council.

A member shall exclude themselves from discussions in which:

- A conflict of interest is likely to result
- The member's ability to carry out their duties and responsibilities as a member of the School Council may be jeopardized
- 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 Principal or board in response to advice that the School Council provides to the Principal or to the board.

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

13. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Every School Council member will be given an opportunity to express their 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 put the matter on hold and request the intervention of a superintendent or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.

14. FINANCIAL MATTERS

The banking business of the School Council shall be transacted with any financial institution chartered under the *Bank Act* (Canada) as the School Council may designate, appoint or authorize.

All of the School Council's banking business shall be transacted on the School Council's behalf by any two (2) of the signing officers, including the Treasurer and Co-Chair of School Council and the Principal of the school.

The Coordinating Committee has the authority to spend up to two thousand dollars (\$2,000) between meetings of the School Council. An accounting of this spending will be disclosed at the next School Council meeting.

Copies of financial statements must be available for review by any member of the school community at any time.

School council shall keep records of all of its financial transactions available upon request for examination without charge by any person for a minimum period of four years.

School Council will maintain insurance coverage. The intent of the coverage is to cover activities typically undertaken by School Councils, such as: fundraising, regular meetings, and end of year fun fairs, recreational family or student games organized by the School Council.

14.1 Finance Committee

The Treasurer will sit as chair of the Finance Committee.

The School Council will appoint three (3) of its members to the Finance Committee.

The Finance Committee will monitor and report to Council on the financial activities of the School Council; solicit, review and seek approval as necessary for budget requests and recommend an annual budget for the School Council.

The Finance Committee will adhere to the financial policies established by the School Council.

15. AMENDMENTS

Where there is an amended or new statute which may affect these bylaws, the School Council will make amendments to these bylaws to reflect and incorporate such statutory requirements.

Any proposed amendments to these bylaws are to be circulated to the school community fourteen (14) days prior to the School Council meeting at which they will be discussed.

Amendments are approved upon a 2/3 majority vote of the School Council; and, take effect immediately, unless otherwise specified.

These bylaws will be reviewed by the School Council every three (3) years and amended and updated if School Council decides it is appropriate to do so.

16. REFERENCES

Education Act, **Ontario Regulation 612/00**, School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees

Ontario Ministry of Education, **School Councils: A Guide for Members 2001 (Revised 2002)**, Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2001, ISBN 0-7794-1841-7