

Devonshire School Council Constitution

Devonshire Community Public School

1.1 Name

The name of the school council for Devonshire Community Public School in Ottawa, Ontario is Devonshire School Council.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of a school council is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. The Devonshire School Council will function as an advisory body to the Principal and the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (“Board”).

1.3 Scope & Objectives

The Devonshire Community Public School Council (hereinafter referred to as the “Council”) may discuss and make recommendations on all school matters and engage in activities aimed at contributing to the quality of education and the overall experience of students at Devonshire Community Public School.

1.4 Normal Business

The Council will aim to be innovative in the ways in which it delivers on its objectives. It is expected, however, that some key themes will be relevant on an ongoing basis. In particular, the Council will normally consider, as required:

- Facilitating communication between the School, parents and the broader community;
- Discussing education issues, Board policies and procedures and school practices;
- Identifying, studying and responding to matters that require community input;
- Determining which school population needs that are not met by Board budgets require fundraising efforts;
- Planning activities, hosting events and raising funds;
- Approving and overseeing the Council’s own annual budget;
- Providing advice to the Principal on the school year calendar; school policies, practices and codes; school budget priorities; extracurricular activities; community use of school facilities; and,
- Providing advice to the Board on criteria for selection of a Principal.

1.5 Affiliations

The Council may seek affiliation with other organizations that have similar or complementary purposes, such as the Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC).

MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Composition

The Council shall include:

- 1) The Principal or Vice-Principal of the school;
- 2) One teacher employed in the school, other than the Principal or Vice-Principal.
- 3) One non-teaching employee of the school, if there is interest;
- 4) One or more community representatives appointed by the Council; and
- 5) A minimum of five parent members, elected as per the procedures detailed in Bylaw 2: Election/Aclamation Procedures for Parent Members. A parent member is any parent or legal guardian of a student enrolled in the school.

The composition of the Council shall at all times be consistent with the Education Act and Regulations and all Policies of the Board. The number of Council members is determined at the election meeting each year by the parents present.

Term of Office

All Council members are elected, appointed or acclaimed for a one-year term, from the September election meeting of one year to the next. There is no limit to the number of terms that a Council member may serve provided he or she is duly re-elected or re-appointed each year. Co-chairs may serve for 2 years with an optional 1-year extension upon re-election.

Persons elected by the school community must continue on the Council for the duration of the year as an elected member of the Council. Members who find themselves in a position where they must resign are to follow the process as outlined in Bylaw 2: Resignations.

New/replacement persons serving in a Council position must seek election from the school community at the next election. The filling of vacancies within the Council is to follow the process as outlined in Bylaw 2: Vacancies.

Executive Members

The following Executive Member positions shall be elected or acclaimed by the Council:

1. Chair or Co-Chairs;
2. Treasurer;
3. Secretary.

Executive Members may meet as required to enable the success of full meetings of Council. They are the only Members authorized to speak on behalf of Council or to delegate this authority as required.

Their roles and responsibilities are:

Chair or Co-Chairs

- Presides over Council meetings
- Prepares the agenda for Council meetings
- Reports regularly on Council activities to the school community, and prepares a written

report on Council activities for the Board in cooperation with the Treasurer

- Represents the Council to outside bodies and authorities
- Acts as a signing officer
- Is an ex-officio member of all subcommittees
- Generally exercises such authority as is usually associated with the office
- Where Co-Chairs are elected, they jointly and severally perform the duties of the office of Chair

Treasurer

- Is responsible for oversight of the finances of the Council in accordance with the policies and procedures of the OCDSB
- Prepares a draft of the annual budget of Council for discussion with Members
- Provides financial report updates to the Council at every meeting
- Provides advice to Council on financial matters, e.g., the affordability of initiatives
- Provides an accounting of Council finances at least annually and serves as liaison with auditors as required
- Performs such other related duties as may be assigned by the Chair from time to time
- Cooperates with the Chair or Co-Chairs in preparing a written report on Council activities for the Board
- Acts as a signing officer for Council

Secretary

- Prepares and distributes documents necessary for meetings
- Prepares and distributes minutes of Council meetings
- Drafts correspondence resulting from specific decisions made by the Council
- Keeps a file of official documents

Other Positions

Other positions may be created each year as required by the agenda of Council. These may include, but are not restricted to:

- Ottawa Carleton Assembly of School Councils (OCASC) Representative
- Fundraising Coordinator
- Communications Coordinator
- Member(s) at Large

Subcommittees

The Council may set up subcommittees made up of interested persons and at least one Council parent member to:

- Conduct more detailed or in-depth work than is possible during Council meetings,
- Make recommendations to the Council, or
- Keep the Council informed of issues and developments in its particular area.

Each Committee Chair is appointed by the Council. The Committees established by the Council shall report their activities to the Council at each Council meeting and shall respond to any questions from the Council or parents in attendance at the meeting.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee acts on behalf of the Council when necessary between regular Council meetings. It consists of:

- Principal or Vice-Principal
- Chair or Co-Chairs
- Treasurer
- Secretary

Council Meetings

Meetings of the Council shall be held no less than four times per school year, to be determined by the Chair. The first meeting of Council must be held within 35 days of the start of the school year. All regular meetings of the Council are open to the public and no one may be excluded from the meeting except for disruptive behavior.

The quorum for regular meetings of the Council is seven. These seven members shall include the Principal or Vice-Principal, the Chair or one Co-chair, two Executive Members, and three parent members.

Special or unscheduled meetings of the Council may be held at the call of the Chair or Co-chair, on the written request of three or more members of the Council.

See Bylaw 1: Meeting Procedures for further details.

Executive Committee Meetings

The quorum for an Executive Committee meeting is three, one of which must be the Chair/Co-Chair, and one the Principal or Vice-Principal. Any decision or action taken as a result of the Executive Committee meeting must be reported at the next School Council meeting.

Constitutional & Bylaw Amendments

Any proposed changes or additions to the Constitution or Bylaws of the Devonshire Community Public School Council must be broadly communicated to the parent community two weeks in advance of the meeting at which a vote will be held.

Effective date

This Constitution takes effect on the date on which it is adopted by the Council.

Adopted by the Devonshire Community Public School Council on May 31, 2011.

Resources

The Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.E-2
School Councils: A Guide for Members (Revised 2002)
Ontario Regulation 612/00, School Council Regulation
Ontario Regulation 613/00, Operation of Schools
OCDSB Policy P.014.SCO: School Councils

OCDSB Procedure PR.509.SCO: School Council Elections, Constitution and By-laws
OCDSB Procedure PR.540.SCO: Fund-raising in Schools
Devonshire School Council Bylaws

BYLAW 1 – Meeting Procedures

Notice of the Council meetings will be given at least one week in advance. The Chair or Co-Chairs shall set agendas.

Both the minutes of the last meeting and the agenda for the upcoming meeting shall be available to all Council members. Minutes and agendas can only be approved and seconded by Council members.

All parent/guardian attendees are encouraged to participate in the decision-making process, and their views will be considered along with those of Council members.

Wherever possible, decisions at the meetings shall be made by consensus by attending Council members and parents. However, in those instances where consensus cannot be attained, and wherever possible, a decision should be deferred to the next meeting. In the intervening period, the Chair/Co-Chairs should work with members and other parents to build the consensus. If unattainable at the next meeting, any Council member or other parent in attendance may propose a motion. The Chair shall call for a seconder for the motion, and invite discussion prior to the vote being taken.

A vote other on an amendment of the Constitution or a Bylaw shall be decided by a 2/3 majority while all other votes are decided by a simple majority of the Council members and parents/guardians present.

Upon request by any voter in attendance, votes shall be cast by ballot.

Where doubt exists as to procedural issues, the most recent Roberts Rules of Order shall govern.

BYLAW 2 – Election Process

Election/Acclamation Procedures for Parent Members

The Council shall be established at the first meeting, which shall be held within 35 days of the start of the school year. At that meeting, the number of elected Council members will be set for the year.

Each parent or legal guardian seeking election must be nominated or self-nominated, must have a child registered at the school, and must declare if he or she is employed by the Board.

Parent member 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.

If voting is required, 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 Student Council.

If voting is required, the election committee, composed of some or all of the previous year's Council members, shall:

- Ensure that the school community is notified of nominees, voting procedures and date(s), location, and time, at least fourteen days in advance of voting; and
- Conduct the voting process.

Appointments

The Council may appoint community representatives who will best serve the needs of the school. Community representatives may be appointed from business and/or labour groups, community support groups, not-for-profit organizations, neighbourhood associations, senior citizen, religious or ethno cultural organizations. Parents of students may be appointed to the Council as community representatives.

Resignations

Any member of the Council may, upon written notice, resign from membership in the Council. Any Council member who can no longer fulfill their responsibilities has an obligation to resign from the Council. Absence of any Council member for three or more consecutive scheduled meetings without due cause satisfactory to the Chair, shall constitute a vacancy.

Vacancies

A vacancy in the membership of the Council does not prevent the Council from exercising its authority. If parent member positions need to be filled in order for Council to function in accordance with the applicable regulations, a replacement may be appointed or elected at a meeting of Council.

BYLAW #3 – Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential. Conflicts of interest occur in matters that they, members of their families, or business entities in which they may have an interest, stand to benefit financially either directly or indirectly by decision of the Council. This includes the acceptance of favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

Voters should be reminded at each meeting of their responsibility to declare any conflict of interest.

Where a conflict of interest is identified, that participant may not engage in any related deliberations or votes.

BYLAW #4 – Conflict Resolution

The Council will undertake to resolve all internal conflicts within its mandate in a timely manner.

The Council believes that its operation can be conducted based on mutual respect in the interest of students and the school community.

All participants are encouraged to follow the Code of Ethics as listed in Appendix A. All participants are expected to exercise their role with positive attitude in a democratic manner to minimize conflict.

From time to time a dispute may arise. It is expected that the Council will make every effort to resolve it. The Council will abide by any conflict resolution policy issued by the Board. It is the responsibility of the Chair/Co-chairs to facilitate the resolution of conflict.

BYLAW #5 – Fundraising & Financial Matters

The Council must disclose the purpose for all fundraising activities to all students, parents and members of the public who provide funds, resources or effort for the purpose or benefit of the fundraising activity.

Money raised through fundraising, sponsorships and donations will be deposited into the Council's bank account by the Treasurer or designate.

Annual financial statements will be prepared each September. If appropriate and with Council's approval, the Treasurer may invest some of the Council's funds in secure, short-term securities.

All cheques will be signed by two of the Treasurer, the Chair/Co-Chair and the Principal at the time the expense is being paid. Other officers of the Council may have signing authority on the accounts as back up as determined by the Chair. Blank cheques will not be signed in advance.

All expenditures over \$1000 paid out of funds raised by the Council should be decided at a School Council meeting. The Treasurer shall report on the issue at the next regular meeting.

In an emergency and between regular meetings, the Executive Committee may approve the expenditure of Council funds up to \$1000. The Treasurer shall report on the issue and decision at the next regular meeting.

The fiscal year shall be from September 1 to August 31 of the following year.

APPENDIX A

Devonshire School Council Code of Ethics

Members of the Devonshire Community Public School Council 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.
- 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 accept the consensus of the council.
- Respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect the limitations this may place on the operation of the Council.
- Not disclose confidential information.
- Limit discussions at Council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- Promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
- Declare any conflict of interest.
- Not accept any payment or benefit financially through Council involvement.

Council members shall become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices with respect to school councils and act in accordance with them.