

ROGER NEILSON SCHOOL COUNCIL
CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
(Established May 2005: Revised September 2023)



The official name of this organization shall be Roger Neilson Public School Council. Hereafter is will be referred to as the Council.

1) Purpose and scope of Council

- 1.1 The Council will provide support to the school for implementation of programs, communication of activities and promote the best interest of the school community, under the leadership of the principal.
- 1.2 As an advisory group, the Council will provide advice to the school Principal and, where appropriate to the school board on any matters that the Council has identified as priorities.
- 1.3 Council will advise on the following;
 - School and learning environment
 - Communication and promotion of school activities
 - School code of conduct
 - School improvement plan
 - Fundraising activities
 - School leadership
 - School – community strategies
 - Extra-curricular activities
 - School based services & community partnerships related to social, health, recreational and nutritional programs
 - Co-ordination of local services for children and youth

2) Administrative Regulations

- 2.1 The Principal shall be responsible for organizing and fostering an active School Council and for assisting with the participation of parents or guardians of students in the school.
- 2.2 The Principal will seek advice from the Council and when relevant senior administration and the board will seek advice from the School Council's Association or Regional Council's.
- 2.3 The board recognizes the principal as the board's representative at the school.
- 2.4 The Principal shall ensure that all actions and/or recommendations are in accordance with the Education Act and Regulations, board policies and duties and responsibilities of principals and staff, and any other applicable laws, statutes or collective agreements.
- 2.5 Members of the council shall be covered under the board's liability insurance, if the activity or action is done in good faith, is within the parameters of this policy and such activity/action adheres to the appropriate Acts, Regulations or board policies. The council cannot be signatories to agreements/contacts on behalf of the school or the board.

3) Voting for council members

3.1 Election for the members of council shall occur within the first 30 days of the new school year.

3.2 Staff representatives will be elected within the first 30 days of the new school year.

3.3 Voting will take place at the first council meeting of the new school year under the supervision of the principal.

3.4 Results of the elections will be announced in the first newsletter following the elections and posted to the school website.

4) Membership

4.1 Members of the council shall include;

- a) Parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school (recommended maximum of 12 members) and may include community representatives who are not parents or guardians of students in the school (recommended maximum of 2 members).
- b) the school principal
- c) a teacher
- d) a support staff member

The majority of the council shall be parents or guardians of students in the school and all members of the council shall be equal voting members.

4.2 Membership in the council shall be determined as follows;

- a) elected members with the exception of student representatives shall be public school ratepayers. This provision does not apply to appointed members.
- b) parents and guardians shall be elected by parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school.
- c) the teacher representative shall be elected by members of the teaching staff.
- d) the support staff member shall be elected by members of the support staff.
- e) the principal shall be a designated member.
- f) community representatives who are not parents or guardians may be appointed by the council and each council is encouraged to include community representation.
- g) the chairperson of the council shall be a member who is also a parent or guardian and shall be elected by the council.

5) Terms and Membership

5.1 The term of office for elected and appointed members is one year. Elected and appointed members may seek additional terms of office

5.2 There will be no honoraria paid to members for serving on the council.

5.3 Trustees and supervisory officers of the board shall not be a council member, but may serve as a resource to the council.

5.4 Members who are absent from three consecutive meetings of the council shall be replaced for the remainder of their term. In exceptional circumstances, as determined by the council, a leave of absence may be granted beyond three meetings.

6) Vacancies/Filling vacancies

6.1 If there are vacancies on a council:

- a) due to lack of interest to fill a position after a demonstrated effort, then the council may operate with up to three vacant positions pending a repeat recruitment process within one school year.
- b) due to resignations or inability to fulfill roles and responsibilities the vacancy may be filled by the council.
- c) the new member's term shall expire at time of the next election.

6.2 A position may be vacated upon submission of a written letter of resignation.

7) Roles of Council

7.1 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 the council
- support and promote 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 communications with the chairperson

7.2 The chairperson shall;

- call council meetings
- prepare the agenda for meetings in collaboration with the principal
- chair 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 council meetings

7.3 The secretary shall;

- record and report, without prejudice the proceedings of the council
- distribute the minutes to council members prior to the meetings
- prepare correspondence on behalf of council

7.4 The Treasurer shall:

- work in conjunction with the school secretary to keep full and accurate records of monies received or committed on behalf of the council.
- Present monthly financial records to the council.

8) Guidelines for handling money

8.1 The council shall keep records of all financial transactions in accordance with the policies of the board.

8.2 All money received should be opened and verified in the presence of two people, one of whom must be a council member

8.3 The financial records shall be kept at the school at all times

8.4 The financial records shall be stored at the school for 4 years

9) Conflict of interest

9.1 A conflict of interest includes any actual or perceived pecuniary interest as well as personal relationship with a person who will be affected by a specific not generic council decision.

9.2 Any council member who has a conflict of interest must disclose their conflict to the council.

9.3 A council member who has disclosed a conflict of interest is prohibited from participating in discussions regarding the matter for which they have a conflict of interest.

9.4 The council member, if a voting member is prohibited from voting on the matter for which they have a conflict of interest. The council member may remain as a member of the public during the discussions of the council and during the voting by the council.

10) Conflict Resolution

10.1 The council will follow a 4-stage approach when dealing with a conflict.

- a) **Acknowledge the conflict:** as a group acknowledge when a conflict exists and determine the source of the conflict
- b) **Plan how to deal with the conflict:** once the source of the conflict is defined, decide how to deal with it. This may be done by the chair, another individual on the council or the entire council. At this stage all council members should reflect on the problem and be prepared to state their concerns and viewpoints.
- c) **Provide time for discussion:** the chair or whoever is facilitating the discussion should introduce the problem and ask each member for input so that the nature and a source of the conflict is clear.
- d) **Seek the best solution:** as viewpoints and solutions are described, the individual facilitating the discussion deals with them one at a time.

10.2 Every council member will be given an opportunity to express their concerns or opinions about the disputed issue.

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

10.4 Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.

10.5 The chair or person facilitating the meeting '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.

10.6 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.

11) Principal's authority

Any meeting may be cancelled by the principal before or during the meeting, if in the principal's sole opinion, the meeting should be cancelled to protect the well-being or interests of the school, a staff member or members, a student or students, a parent or parents or community member or members.

11.1 The principal shall have authority to ask any council member or person in attendance at the meeting to leave the meeting at once where in the principal's sole opinion the well being or interests to any of the above-named parties is being threatened.

12) Quorum

12.1 Quorum shall consist of 60% of the voting members

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

13) Fundraising

13.1 The council may fundraise for the purpose identified by the board or school and in accordance with board policies.

13.2 The council must disclose the purpose for all fund-raising activities to all parents, students and members of the public providing funds, resources or effort for the purpose or benefit of the fund-raising activity.

13.3 All fund-raising initiatives undertaken on behalf of council must be presented to and voted on by council

13.4 Funds raised by the council (and any assets purchased with those funds) belong legally to the board.

ROGER NEILSON SCHOOL COUNCIL
CODE OF ETHICS

- A member shall consider the best interests of all students.
- A member shall be guided by the school's and the school board's mission statements.
- A member shall 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.
- 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 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 principals 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 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 community involvement.