

PRIMROSE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL COUNCIL BY-LAWS



MISSION STATEMENT

Our aim is to foster and enrich the learning environment at Primrose Elementary School for students by encouraging the involvement of students, staff, caregivers and the community of Primrose through a cooperative approach and open communication.

PURPOSE

The purpose of Council is:

- To work cooperatively with the school administration, teaching staff, and parents/guardians to build school community.
- to improve student achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system through the active participation of parents/guardians.
- Act as an advisory committee to the Principal and Board.
- to organize parent/guardian community volunteer activities in support of the school and promote a safe, enjoyable learning environment for our students.
- to work together to improve the financial resources of our school to support the Ontario Curriculum. Agreed upon fundraising activities should aim to sponsor programs, events, trips, classroom enrichments that otherwise are not provided for.
- Maintain multimedia communications as required such as School Council Facebook page, Twitter, Monthly School Council newsletter, any input to Principals weekly Newsletter, and maintain school council email account.
- Identify problems and concerns within the school and bring to Council to discuss appropriate action for change and/or improvements.
- to place the overall interests of the students and school first.
- Seek to reach decisions by consensus, with the greater group of stakeholders in mind.

Section A:

BY-LAW REVIEW AND SIGN OFF

These bylaws are made available to the school population and will be provided to Council members at the first meeting of the school year. All Executive members, new or returning are required to read and understand these bylaws and sign-off on them at the beginning of their term on Council. Record of this sign-off shall be kept by the Secretary in the main School Council Binder, which shall be kept in the office.

Section B:

DEFINITIONS AND REFERENCES

The name of the Council shall be Primrose School Council also called School Council or Council (formerly known as Parent Council).

The Council shall operate in accordance with the following Regulations:

- Reg. 612/00: SCHOOL COUNCILS AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/000612#BK5>
- Regulation 298 – OPERATION OF SCHOOLS GENERAL
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/900298>
- Upper Grand District School Board Policy 201 –School Councils and the Parent Involvement Committee
<https://www.ugdsb.ca/board/policy/policy-201-school-councils-and-the-parent-involvement-committee/>

The Council is a non-profit organization and shall operate without financial gain for itself.

'Parent' includes parents and legal guardians of students attending Primrose.

'School' refers to Primrose Elementary School.

'Principal' refers to the Principal of Primrose Elementary School.

'Executive' refers to the Executive of the School Council.

'Board' or 'UGDSB' refers to the Upper Grand District School Board.

'Employee of the Board' is anyone who works for and is paid by the Upper Grand District School Board.

'Community' refers to the neighbourhood served by Primrose Elementary School.

'Ministry' refers to the Ontario Ministry of Education.

Section C:

MEMBERSHIP AND TERM

Membership in School Council shall be open to any parent/guardian of a pupil registered in the school. (An exception to this is the Community Member, see below.)

- All parents/guardians are welcome to attend School Council meetings and have the right to share their ideas and contribute to discussions. To avoid sweeping directional changes that may not support Ministry guidelines and Board and Administration policies, parents/guardians will not be permitted to vote on official School Council matters, except for Parent Members who meet minimum attendance requirements.
- The elected and appointed Council members shall serve a term of one year, starting the first meeting of one school year, and ending the first meeting of the following school year.
- Each term is one year in length and the number of terms served is unlimited.
- School Council members will be provided with orientation material via web-posting/electronic links or hard-copies, as required.
- Orientation materials shall include relevant documentation that may become available as well as:
 - Ontario Ministry of Education, Education Act, Ontario Regulation 612/00
 - Ontario Ministry of Education, Education Act, Ontario Regulation Regulation 298
 - Ontario Ministry of Education, School Councils A Guide for Members (current version).
 - Upper Grand District School Board Policy 201, School Councils and the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC).
 - Upper Grand District School Board 201-A, School Councils and the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)- Procedures Manual
 - Upper Grand District School Board 201-A, Appendix A; OSBIE Risk Management Advisory School Councils/Parent Groups
 - OPHEA Healthy School Certification Website - <https://www.ophea.net/healthy-schools-certification>
 - Ontario Ecoschools Certification Website- <https://www.ontarioecoschools.org/>

Section D:

CODE OF ETHICS

Adapted from the Ontario Ministry of Education document – School Councils: A Guide for Members, 2001, Revised 2002

- 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 principles 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 council involvement.

Section E:

COMPOSITION OF SCHOOL COUNCIL

School Council shall be composed of the following members (as taken from School Council Regulations 612/00):

(Detailed descriptions including eligibility, roles and responsibilities in the following section)

- Executive Members (who are Parent Members):
 - Chair and Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
- Voting and non-voting Parent Members
- Principal and/or Vice Principal
- A Teacher Representative
- A Non-Teaching Representative of staff
- A Community Member

If the aforementioned positions are not filled, they may remain vacant at the discretion of the School Council Executive and the Principal. (Refer to Election Procedures and Filling Vacancies for additional information.)

Section F:

MEMBERSHIP AND DEFINITION OF ROLES

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS:

All members have the right to hold a position within the Executive. The executive consists of the following: Chair/ Co-Chairs, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer (descriptions follow).

Executive members are voting members. The executive members will be voted in by secret ballot by all voting and general parent/guardian members in attendance at the first School Council Meeting. The outcome of each vote will be determined by a majority (50% +1) vote. More information is detailed under Election Procedures below.

In the interest of time and efficiency, it is suggested that the first School Council meeting of the year be limited in scope to this electoral process, and that the first follow-up meeting to discuss business is scheduled in the near future and will then include only those committee members required to be present.

All Executive members who serve on School Council are required to attend a minimum of four meetings.

All Executive members must observe the Council's Code of Ethics and established By-Laws.

All Executive members shall contribute to the discussions of the school council.

CHAIR and CO-CHAIRS

- Prepare meeting agendas in consultation with the Principal or designate
- Facilitate and lead school council meetings.
- Contribute to and maintain a positive climate within the school council and between the school council and the school and local community at large.
- Consult regularly with the principal.
- Be responsible that all School Council initiatives that are voted on are carried out as per the outcome of the vote.
- Assist with and provide leadership to school council events and initiatives.
- Consult with and assist subcommittees with projects as needed.
- Attend and participate in school council training and information programs offered by the school board.
- Participate in joint council associations where available.
- Complete an annual report to the school community and any other documentation required by the school board.
- Core skills: strong organizational skills, strong ability to multi-task, ability to lead meetings and facilitate discussions, good interpersonal skills with a high degree of diplomacy.

VICE-CHAIR

- The Vice-Chair will assist the Chair/Co-Chairs in carrying out their responsibilities.
- The Vice-Chair assumes the duties of Chair in their absence and in the event the Chair is unable to fulfill any of their responsibilities.
- The Vice-Chair shall act as the Chair's designate.
- Core skills: strong organizational skills, strong ability to multi-task, ability to lead meetings and facilitate discussions, good interpersonal skills with a high degree of diplomacy.

SECRETARY

- Collect and maintain attendance for school council meetings
- Record minutes for all school council meetings or appoint a designate in their absence.
- Distribute draft copies of all minutes to council members for approval and correct where necessary.
- Ensure that copies of all approved minutes are provided to the school principal and filed in the school council binder.
- Collaborate with the Chair(s) and Principal to provide information for distribution (newsletters, emails, Facebook posts etc.
- Ensure bylaws are signed off by all executive members and keep current copy of current by-laws in master file. Distribute by-laws to any parent/guardian who is interested in knowing the function of School Council.
- Assist in the preparation of any written communication and offer final approval for any written communication distributed to the school community including the website information maintained by council.
- Assist other executive members in preparing annual reports
- Core skills: proficiency with word processing software, strong organizational skills, ability to take notes and summarize detailed discussions

TREASURER

- Collect, count and deposit all monies collected by council with at least one other council member as a witness.
- Work in partnership with the front office staff to coordinate transactions made via SchoolCash Online.
- Keep an accurate and detailed record of all financial activities of School Council and be responsible for ensuring best accounting practices are followed for School Council generated funds.
- Prepare and present a written monthly financial report at School Council meetings which highlights the month's debits and credits and current bank balance. Ensure this report is made available to any parent or guardian upon request.
- Communicate regularly with school administrative staff to ensure that banking information is accurate and up to date
- Receive all receipts or invoices for reimbursement from council members and ensure that they meet the requirements outlined in the Financial Policies for reimbursement.

- Collect a financial summary of income and expenses for each event or initiative sponsored by school council, from the council member responsible for that particular event and share those results as part of their monthly report.
- Prepare an annual financial report for the school community.
- Core skills, knowledge of excel, strong organizational skills, some budgeting and accounting skill or background, ability to be at school during school hours on occasion.

PARENT MEMBERS:

All parents are encouraged to attend meetings, and participate in discussions. There may be both voting and non-voting parent meetings present at any meeting. In order to be a Parent Member, you must be a parent or guardian of a student enrolled in the school. If a person is a Board employee who works in the school, he/she is not qualified to be a Parent Member. If a person is an employee of the Board but does not work in their child's school, he/she must inform qualified voters before the election for parent members of their employment by the Board, but can be a Parent Member.

A Voting Parent Member has the right to vote on School Council matters.

A non-voting Parent Member is a parent who may just wish to listen in on discussion, provide feedback to council as they wish, but may not vote unless they have attended the 50% of the meetings to date.

The number of voting parent members will form the majority of members of the School Council. Ideally, the Parent Members will reflect the diversity of the Primrose community.

He/she shall provide input and a voice in school happenings and provide representation for concerns brought forward by others.

A Parent Member is expected to regularly attend Council meetings. At minimum, a Voting Parent Member shall attend at least half (50%) of the required meetings per school year. If at any point in the year, a voting parent member has attended less than half of the total meetings, that parent member will no longer be able to vote, and the total Quorum numbers will be adjusted accordingly.

Parent Members shall serve on sub-committees, and contribute to the discussions of the School Council.

All Parent Members should make an effort to be part of at least one of the major events planned throughout the year.

PRINCIPAL/VICE-PRINCIPAL – Required

Ensure that the Teacher Representative, Non-Teaching Representative are filled by the first meeting for the new school year and communicated to the Chair.

Be present at all school council meetings or arrange for a representative

Provide guidance to school council on issues to be decided.

Act as a resource to the council on laws, regulations and board policies

Work with school council to improve learning potential and environment for students and support for teaching staff.

Maintain regular communication with the Chair of school council through scheduled monthly meetings.

Provide opportunities and channels for the Chair to speak with Staff and Parents.

Consider each recommendation made by school council and provide feedback to council about action taken

Solicit the views of the school council on any matter when he/she deems appropriate

Solicit views on matters pertaining to the establishment/amendment of school policies and guidelines relating to student achievement, accountability of the education system to parents and the communication of those plans to the public.

TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE – Required

This is a volunteer position and is outside of the Teacher's Regular duties.

Be a liaison between teaching staff and school council to voice concerns and ideas as well as to provide feedback from Council to the greater group of teaching staff.

NON-TEACHING REPRESENTATIVE - Required

This is a volunteer position and is outside of the ECE/EA duties

Serve on school council and be a voice for non-teaching staff

Be a liaison between school council and non-teaching staff

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE - Required

Be the liaison between school and corporate, private, and commercial enterprises

Promote communication between schools in the community

Promote, endorse, and enhance school profile in the community

Support communication to teachers, parents and other council members

Section G:

ELECTION PROCEDURES FOR EXECUTIVE

At the first meeting of each year, the Primrose School Council elects a new School Council Executive as detailed above. Each year, these positions are open to any parent or guardian of a child at Primrose. The Chair, Co-Chairs, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary positions are crucial to the functioning of School Council. The Executive members shall be selected each year at the first meeting in September. The Executive members shall serve a term of one year. Elections happen every year.

The Principal shall indicate in writing to the entire school community that elections are being held and that parents are welcome to volunteer or be nominated to fill positions at least 14 days prior to the meeting.

If vacancies are not filled at the beginning of the school year, the Principal and Chair shall indicate in writing to the entire school community that there are vacancies and that parents are welcome to volunteer or can be nominated to fill positions.

Nominees must be willing to speak about why they would like to hold the Executive position for which they are running. Nomination forms will be available at the school for parents/guardians who would like to nominate themselves for an executive position but are unable to attend the

first meeting. Absentee nominations must include a written statement detailing why they would like to hold the position for which they are running. If there is more than one nominee for any position, the election of Executive Members shall be done by secret ballot. Elections of the Executive shall be managed by the Principal. A person is qualified to vote in the election of Executive Members to School Council if they are a parent or guardian of a child attending the school. Each Parent/Guardian is entitled to 1 vote per representative role. You must be present at the meeting to vote.

The School Council will collaborate with the Principal to ensure the names of the new members of council are communicated to the school community within 10 days of the election. The term is for that school year.

ELECTION PROCEDURES FOR ALL OTHER MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

The election of the other members of council shall be held during the first 30 days of the school year. The Principal shall ask for a Teacher Representative or hold an election if necessary, at the first staff meeting of the year to officially fill this position. A person is qualified to vote in an election for the Teacher Representative if he/she is a teacher, other than the principal or vice principal, who is employed at the school. The principal may appoint a representative if necessary. Likewise, the principal shall solicit a Non-Teaching Staff Representative.

The Principal shall communicate the names and contact information to the executive promptly following this process.

Section H:

MEETINGS AND QUORUM

Meetings are scheduled between School council and the Principal at least 30 days in advance. The agenda of the meeting should be time-based, as to give each agenda item a reasonable amount of time/focus. Time of the meeting shall be no greater than two (2) hours. If more time is required, a subsequent meeting should be scheduled. It may be necessary for a sub-committee to take an agenda item offline and return to Council at a later date.

A quorum of Council shall be a minimum of 5 members of Council including 2 members of the executive. Meetings cannot be held unless a quorum is present, including at least 2 members of the Executive. In the case where quorum is not met, motions and decisions will be deferred until quorum may be met. There shall be no less than six (6) council meetings during the school year.

Section I:

SIGNING OFF OF BYLAWS ANNUALLY

Every member of the Executive Council shall read and sign off on the bylaws preceding taking office. The secretary will make available copies of the bylaws both at school and at every council meeting, as well as keep the current signed off documents.

School Council wishing to make changes to the existing bylaws shall:

- Advertise to the school community, via the school website and newsletter, their intent to make changes to the existing bylaws.
- Advertise the changes to be made to the existing bylaws
- Advertise the School Council meeting in which the changes will be voted on, as to give opportunity for input and voting approval.
- Raise the bylaw changes during the School Council meeting. A majority vote of the parties present at the meeting must be reached to pass the changes to the existing bylaws.

Section J:

SUB-COMMITTEES

If warranted a sub-committee may be formed to address special projects, for example a fundraising initiative. The Sub-Committee must include a member of Council.

Section K:

FILLING VACANCIES

Should an elected Executive Member position become vacant before the next election, the Chair and School Principal shall fill the vacancy by appointment from the non-elected candidates from the previous election.

If none of the previous candidates remains interested in filling the vacancy, the Council may request that interested parents/guardians from the school community submit their names for consideration. The Chair and School Principal shall then appoint one of those who indicate an interest.

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

The school community will be informed that the vacancy has been filled and by whom.

Section L:

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Each School Council member shall avoid situations that could result in an inconsistency between the overall goals and vision of the School Council and a personal or vested interest, that arise in connection with his/her duties as a School Council member. Should an issue or agenda item arise during a council meeting where a council member is in a conflict of interest situation, he/she shall declare their conflict immediately and excuse themselves from attendance during discussion and voting on said matter. The minutes of the meeting shall record the declared conflict.

Whenever School Council is doing business, or is considering doing business, with a member of School Council (including the member's relatives, or the member's employer or business enterprise), the member shall declare the conflict of interest and shall excuse themselves from attendance during discussion and voting on said matter. The minutes of the meeting shall record the declared conflict.

The Chair of the meeting may, with just cause, direct a member to declare a conflict of interest.

Executive membership will be terminated if the member is proven to have mismanaged or misappropriated funds controlled by the School Council.

Executive membership will be terminated if the member is proven to have committed an illegal act or if the member has conducted him/herself in a manner that is inappropriate.

In the event a member of school council is alleged to have committed an illegal act, that membership will be suspended for the period of the investigation. The membership will be reinstated or terminated dependent on the outcome of the investigation.

Section M:

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The council will strive to make decisions through group discussion and consensus. All present are entitled to listen and speak freely and to have their input considered. When matters are deemed to be weightier or when a clear group consensus does not exist, a formal vote will be taken.

In order to ensure that council votes are made with due consideration and context, formal votes will be restricted to voting members.

A voting member is defined as any parent member who has attended at least 50% of the meetings to date, including the meeting at which the vote in question takes place. In order to vote, Council shall make sure all voting individuals are well-informed on the matter being voted upon. If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the Chair shall request the intervention of a superintendent or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.

Section N:

FINANCIAL POLICIES AND RECORD RETENTION

No amount exceeding the limit of fifty dollars (\$50) shall be spent without the prior consent of the Executive, or the Principal and Treasurer together. All expenditures shall be discussed at a meeting of School Council.

On occasion there may be a funding request of School Council that is time sensitive (e.g., to secure a presentation, to purchase items for an event) and as a result can not wait until the next scheduled School Council meeting. The School Council executive can approve funding up to \$1 000. The majority of the executive must agree, and the funding decision must be shared at the next scheduled full School Council meeting.

Per Board policy, all financial records must be maintained for seven (7) years.

Per Board policy, all School Council meeting minutes must be maintained for four (4) years.

Copies of finalized meeting minutes and financial statements will be stored in the School Council binder held in the main office at Primrose at the end of the year. These are available for review upon request to the Principal/Vice-Principal. Finalized electronic versions of the minutes including monthly financials will also be maintained electronically by the Secretary.

Each School Council will submit a written report on its activities to the Principal of the school and the School Board on an annual basis. The Annual Report will include a report on fundraising activities. A copy of the Annual Report will be provided to every parent of a student enrolled in the school if requested.

Any groups wishing funding from council must provide a minimum of three written estimates to be presented to the executive in advance of the council meeting. The Executive Council will then determine if the item is to be brought forward for discussion at the Council meeting.

All items related to distribution of funds must abide by the School Generated Funds Policy.