

SPENCER AVENUE  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

SCHOOL COUNCIL BY-LAWS

Adopted October 2014  
Amended October 13, 2015  
Amended October 6, 2016  
Amended October 10, 2017

## **Spencer Avenue School Council**

Our goal is to promote the involvement of parents/guardians in the education of our children. School Council intends to provide the support needed to achieve these ends by fostering a strong base for open communication between students, staff, parents/guardians and the community of Spencer Avenue Elementary School.

The name of the Council shall be Spencer Avenue School Council

The Council shall operate in accordance with the Ontario Regulation 612-00 – School Councils, and the Upper Grand District School Board Policy #201- School Councils, and under the auspices of these by-laws.

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

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of school council is to work co-operatively with the school administration, teaching staff, and parent community to improve student learning.

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

The Council will organize parent/community volunteer activities in support of the school and promote a safe, enjoyable learning environment for our students.

The Council will work together to improve the financial resources of our school to support the Ontario Curriculum.

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

- . A member shall consider the best interests of all students.
- . A member shall be guided by the school's and the 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 recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- . A member shall treat other members with respect and allow 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.

Code of Ethics was adapted from – School Councils: A Guide for Members, 2001

## **BY-LAW REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS**

These by-laws will be available to Council members at the first meeting of the school year.

By-laws are to be reviewed and amended, where necessary, every 3 years or at an earlier time if necessary and at the discretion of School Council.

These By-laws may be amended by majority (2/3) vote of the Council.

## **COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL**

School Council shall be composed of the following people;

- 1) A minimum of three Executive Members.
- 2) The number of Parent Members as specified under Parent Members.
- 3) The Principal or Vice-Principal (Non-Voting)
- 4) One teacher who is employed at the school, other than the Principal or Vice-Principal (Teacher Representative-Non Voting)
- 5) One person who is employed at the school, other than the Principal, the Vice-Principal or any other teacher. (Non-Teaching Staff-Non Voting)
- 6) One Grade 8 student may be appointed by the Principal
- 7) One community member who doesn't have a student in the school, but lives in the catchment area. (Community Member-Non Voting)

## **PARENT MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in School Council shall be open to any parent/guardian of a pupil registered in the school.

- 1) **Executive Members**-all members have the right to hold office. The executive consists of the following: Chair, Co-Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.
- 2) **Parent Member**-all parents are welcome to attend meetings and have the right to share their ideas and to participate in discussions. Everyone in attendance is considered to be a member.
- 3) **Voting Member** - in order to ensure that important decisions are made in an informed manner, in the event that consensus cannot be reached and a vote is needed, a decision will be made by voting members. A voting member is one who has attended 3 of the past 6 consecutive meetings, up to and including the meeting at which the vote is taking place.

***All members are encouraged to serve on committees and participate in School Council activities.***

## **ELECTION PROCEDURES for the Executive Members**

The Executive members shall be selected each year at the first meeting in September. The Executive members shall serve a term of a minimum one year.

The Principal and Chair 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.

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.

Parents/guardians may be acclaimed to a position on School Council.

## **PARENT MEMBERS**

A person is qualified to be a voting parent member if he/she is a parent or guardian of a student enrolled in the school. If a person is an employee of the school he/she is not qualified to be a voting parent member. If a person is not an employee of the school, but of the board, he/she must inform parents (voters) of that employment.

## **MEETINGS AND QUORUM**

A quorum of Council shall be a minimum of five members of Council including two 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. In certain situations where members cannot be present an on-line, face time or video conference call may be allowed. There shall be no less than eight (8) council meetings during the school year.

## **SUB-COMMITTEES**

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

## **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.

### **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.

### **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 3 meetings of the past 6 consecutive school council meetings, including the meeting at which the vote in question takes place. This may extend into the previous school year for example, when a vote is required within the first half of a school year.

In the event that school council cannot come to a decision an executive member will refrain from voting.

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.

## **EXECUTIVE POSITIONS**

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

Executive members shall hold the same position for no more than three consecutive school years at a time. Every effort shall be made to recruit new members at the end of the three year term. However, an exception can be made if there are no other nominees in a given year. Should no nominee be found at the first council meeting of the year, it is acceptable for the position to remain open until the second council meeting of the year, during which time the existing executive members along with the principal shall make efforts to recruit suitable replacements.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Chair**

- 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
- Assist with and provide leadership to school council events and initiatives
- Consult with and assist subcommittee chairs 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

### **CO-CHAIR**

- Assumes duties of the Chair in his/her absence
- Assist Chair in executing responsibilities

### **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 and principal to provide information for the school newsletter.

- Collect and maintain an email list of council members, and distribute emails to the list for approved council matters including volunteer requests, email votes etc. as required.
- Assist in the preparation of any written communication and offer final approval for any written communication distributed to the school community.
- Assist other executive members in preparing annual reports

## **TREASURER**

- Maintain an accurate, ongoing summary of current council funds in addition to the bank records kept by the school administrative staff.
- Prepare and present a written monthly financial report at School Council meetings which highlights the month's debits and credits and current bank balance.
- 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.
- Collect, count and deposit all monies collected by council
- Prepare an annual financial report for the school community.

## **GENERAL PARENT MEMBER – Unlimited Members**

- . Participate (generate and share ideas) in Council meetings
- . Volunteer time

## **COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE – Shall;**

- . 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

## **TEACHER REPRESENTATIVE – Shall;**

- . Be elected by members of the teaching staff as their representative
- . Be a liaison between teaching staff and school council to voice concerns and ideas as well as to provide feedback

## **NON-TEACHING REPRESENTATIVE – Shall;**

- . Serve on school council and be a voice for non-teaching staff
- . Be a liaison between school council and non-teaching staff

## **GRADE 8 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE – Shall;**

- . Be selected by the principal or vice-principal as their representative
- . Be a liaison between students and school council to voice concerns and ideas as well as feedback
- . Provide input and advise school council through a student's perspective and encourage open communication

## **PRINCIPAL/VICE-PRINCIPAL – Shall;**

- . Ensure that the Teacher Representative, Non-Teaching Representative and Grade Eight Student Representative positions are filled by the first meeting in September 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.

## **Financial Policies**

### **Approval of Funds**

1. All expenditures must be discussed and pre-approved at school council meetings.
2. In the event that it would be detrimental to postpone an expenditure until after the next meeting, and the expense is less than \$100, a vote may be held via email amongst all current executive council members. This may be done no more than twice (2) in any given school year. The results of the vote and the approval of funds must be entered into the minutes of the following meeting.
3. In the event that it would be detrimental to postpone an expenditure until after the next meeting, and the expense is more than \$100, a vote may be held via email amongst all active parent members, providing at least 24 hours for response. The results of the vote and the approval of funds must be entered into the minutes of the following meeting.

### **Reimbursement of Funds:**

1. School Council members will be reimbursed for approved monies spent on behalf of School Council provided that:
  - a. Funds were pre-approved.
  - b. An original receipt or invoice is presented dated on or after the date of approval.
  - c. No other items are on the receipt presented.
  - d. The appropriate "School Banking – Request for Cheque" form is completed and attached.

Failure to meet the above requirements may result in funds not being reimbursed.

2. Council members may request reimbursement for more than one receipt at the same time provided all receipts submitted meet the above criteria and are all pertaining to the same school council event or initiative. Receipts from different events or from different types of expenditures may not be reimbursed together in a lump sum and must be handled in separate cheques to avoid confusion in accounting or reporting.
3. All requests for reimbursement must be signed by the school treasurer and one other executive member of council before being submitted to school administrative staff. In the event that the request for reimbursement is being made by the treasurer herself, then two other executive signatories are required.
4. It is the sole responsibility of the School Council Treasurer to submit all receipts and accompanying request forms to the school administrative staff. School administrative staff may not accept receipts from any other council members.

### **Handling of Funds:**

1. It is the sole responsibility of the School Council Treasurer to be present for any deposit of funds made to the school administrative staff. School administrative staff may not accept deposits from any other council members. In the event that the treasurer cannot be physically present at a deposit, a designate must be identified in advance.
2. All financial deposits for a given school council event or initiative must be handled separately from monies for other events or initiatives. Lump-sum deposits are not to be made that pertain to more than one fundraising event as this can lead to inaccurate financial reporting.
3. All monies collected by School Council are to remain on school premises and be locked securely in the school council safe after being counted. A second council member or an administrative staff member must be present to assist the treasurer with counting monies and to double check balances for accuracy.
4. Council members who are in charge of an event that involves money are obligated to keep accurate paper records of all expenses and incomes using the Financial Summary form provided and to provide this form to the council Treasurer upon completion of the event. It is also their responsibility to ensure that all expenses related to that event are appropriate and fall within the approved budget.
5. For any council fundraising event that involves items being ordered, a paper copy for every order must exist and be stored in the school office for staff or council members to access it.
6. School council safe:
  - a. School council shall own and operate their own physical safe, kept in a secure location within the school as deemed fit by the principal and any relevant board guidelines.
  - b. All executive council members and the school principal shall have the access code.
  - c. The code is to be changed after any change to the executive roles.
  - d. The code to the safe may only be changed in the presence of the school principal and promptly thereafter shared with any executive members not present.
  - e. When accessing the safe, one executive member as well as any one other council member or the principal must be present.
  - f. Any council member in charge of an event that generates funds may deposit funds to the school council safe through the drop slot, in a sealed and labelled envelope or similar.

## **MINUTES AND FINANCIAL RECORDS**

The Chair shall keep a copy of all its School Council minutes and Treasurer records of all its financial transactions in a master binder.

Minutes of the meetings of School Council shall be kept for four years. Financial records for the operations of the School Council must be retained for a minimum of seven years.