

ÉCOLE DICKINSFIELD SCHOOL COUNCIL

Operating Procedures

Adopted by School Council February 16, 2017

Amended June 13, 2018

ÉCOLE DICKINSFIELD SCHOOL COUNCIL OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. DEFINITIONS

In these Operating Procedures:

- A. "School" means École Dickinsfield School;
- B. "Council" means the School Council for the School;
- C. "Parents" means parent, guardian or primary caregiver of any child enrolled in an educational program at the School;
- D. "Regulation" means the School Councils Regulation as provided through Alberta Provincial Legislation;
- E. "Members at Large" means persons other than parents (as defined in 1C above) who have, in the opinion of the majority of the Members of the School Council, an interest in the well-being of the students and the School;
- F. "Operating Procedures" means the governing document serving the same purpose as Bylaws referenced in the Regulations;
- G. "Executive" means the elected members of the School Council and also includes the Past Chair.

2. AUTHORITY

The School Council derives its authority to participate in the education of our students through Alberta Provincial Legislation, hereinafter referred to as "legislation."

Role: The École Dickinsfield School Council will work in partnership with the École Dickinsfield School Parent Association. The School Council is a separate body that has its own Executive and a distinct, separate set of operating guidelines. Both groups provide support for all programs at École Dickinsfield School.

The School Council may, at its discretion:

- A. Advise the principal and the board respecting any matter relating to the school;
- B. Perform any duty or function delegated to it by the board in accordance with the delegation;
- C. Consult with the principal so that the principal may ensure that students in the school have the opportunity to meet the standards of education set by the Minister;
- D. Consult with the principal so that the principal may ensure that the fiscal management of the school is in accordance with the requirements of the board and the superintendent, and;
- E. "Do anything it is authorized under the regulations to do." (From Section 22(4), School Act 2000).

3. MISSION STATEMENT/PHILOSOPHY

Mission: The École Dickinsfield School Council will work as collaborative partners in school based decision making to enhance the quality and success of our children's education.

Vision: The École Dickinsfield School Council will work with the administration and staff to create a safe, supportive environment, which challenges students to be confident and successful intellectually, socially, and emotionally.

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4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the School Council, in keeping with the legislation, are to:

- A. Represent the parent perspective by providing advice to and consulting with the Principal and the School Board on matters relating to the School such as: the School philosophy, mission and vision, policies, improvement plans, programs and directions, and budget allocations to meet student needs;
- B. Foster a positive, collaborative environment with a variety of opportunities for meaningful engagement by members of the School community;
- C. Support special events that will support and enhance student learning, encourage participation and promote the well-being of the School community;
- D. Facilitate a performance evaluation of our School Council and communicate the results of this evaluation to the School Board and the School community;
- E. Develop a communication plan to share information with parents and the community and facilitate communications with all educational stakeholders;
- F. Adhere to School Council's Code of Ethics;
- G. Consult with other School Councils and provincial organizations;
- H. Support an approach to education in which decisions are made collaboratively;
- I. Advise School Boards, Alberta Education or other provincial organizations on broader educational issues;
- J. Support the school in its efforts to achieve the goals detailed in the school education plan;
- K. Provide a forum where emerging issues that affect the school community as a whole may be discussed;
- L. Serve as an advocate or voice for our school community - in cooperation with the principal - before the school board, the community at large and the province;
- M. Support the school in its efforts to ensure that Alberta Education's standards of education are met.

5. GOVERNANCE and MEMBERSHIP

The School Council uses a **Town Hall** Operating Style and/or Model of Governance.

- A. The membership of the School Council shall consist of:
 - 1) All parents, as defined in 1C above;
This includes:
 - a. Executive members, including Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Past Chair;
 - b. Classroom representatives
 - 2) Principal of the School;
 - 3) One or more teachers and staff of the School, elected or appointed by the teachers;
 - 4) Members at Large;
These members will:
 - a. Share their professional knowledge, expertise and life experience;
 - b. Encourage feedback and participation from community groups and individuals;
 - c. Communicate information of interest to the School Council and the School community;
 - d. Share information from School Council meetings with the community;
 - e. Have a clear understanding of the School Council's objectives;
 - f. Attend School Council meetings;
 - g. Identify possible topics for agendas;
 - h. Serve as a liaison between the School Council and their organization of area of responsibility.

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- B. Members must be in attendance in order to have the right to vote in that meeting. The voting Members of the School Council shall consist of:
 - 1) Parents, as defined in 1C above;
 - 2) Principal of the School;
 - 3) Teachers and staff of the School, elected or appointed by the teachers.
- C. The non-voting Members of the School Council shall consist of:
 - 1) Members at Large;
 - 2) Members not in attendance.
- D. The parent/other ratio may vary at times, but the number of parent Members must always exceed the number of administration, staff, students and/or community representatives.

6. DECISION MAKING

Decisions at School Council meetings will be made by consensus as much as possible.

- A. A decision made by consensus must be stated clearly and recorded as such in the minutes of the meeting.
- B. If a decision is made by a vote, the motion must be moved, seconded and passed by the majority of School Council voting Members present at the meeting at which the vote was taken.

7. QUORUM

- A. Quorum will be attained when the majority of voting Members present at any School Council meeting are parents as defined in 1C above, and the Principal or designate is present.
- B. In the absence of a quorum, the parents and School Council Members present may agree to proceed as a Committee of the Whole to conduct business provided that:
 - 1. No motions shall be approved;
 - 2. No decisions by consensus shall be reached;
 - 3. Any resolution made is approved by Members at the next open meeting at which quorum is present.

8. EXECUTIVE and TERMS OF OFFICE

The positions of the Executive shall consist of, but are not limited to: Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary and Past Chair.

- A. All Executive positions must be filled by parents as defined in 1C above.
- B. Every parent is eligible to be elected to an Executive position on the School Council.
- C. The terms of office are from the close of the Annual General Meeting to the close of the following Annual General Meeting. Any elected member may serve two consecutive terms in the same position. If no one is willing to take on the role then the position can be taken on for more than two terms as long as a vote is taken to confirm that everyone is in agreement.
- D. The Executive of the School Council will be elected by parents attending the Annual General Meeting or in the event of vacancies after the Annual General Meeting, elected by the voting Members present at a subsequent School Council meeting.
- E. Any Executive Member may resign his/her position by providing written notice to the Chair and Principal.
- F. Any Executive Member may be removed from the Executive at any time with cause by a majority vote of the Executive whenever, in its judgment, the best interest of the School Council will be served.

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- G. The Executive will carry out the day-to-day operation of the School Council.
- H. All persons serving as Executive Members of the council must be willing to contribute time and effort to fulfilling the role and objectives of the council. Executive Members will be required to regularly attend all meetings of council and serve on some ad hoc committees. Executive Members must work constructively towards achieving consensus on issues before the council. Executive Members must declare any potential conflicts of interest for review by those members present before voting on any issue. Executive Members shall receive no remuneration but may be reimbursed for expenses incurred while conducting council business.
- I. An Executive Member must resign from council if they cease to qualify as a member of the council.

9. DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

A. Chair

It is expected that the School Council Chair will be a parent of a student enrolled in the School. Unless otherwise delegated, the Chair of the School Council will:

- 1) Chair all meetings of the School Council;
- 2) Coordinate with the Principal to establish meeting agendas;
- 3) Communicate with the Principal on a regular basis;
- 4) Decide all matters relating to rules of order at the meetings;
- 5) Ensure that School Council Operating Procedures are current and followed;
- 6) Be the official spokesperson of the School Council;
- 7) Ensure that there is regular communication with the whole School community;
- 8) Review any communication to the School community prior to distribution and include the Principal in same;
- 9) Stay informed about School Board policy that impacts School Council;
- 10) Comply with the School Councils' Regulation by providing the School Board with an annual report that summarizes the School Council's activities for the previous School year, no later than June 30th;
- 11) Assume responsibility, in consultation with the School Council, for communicating with the Fundraising Association (PAC) and other parent groups within the School;
- 12) Have general responsibility for all activities of the School Council.

B. Vice-Chair

Unless otherwise delegated, the Vice-Chair of the School Council will:

- 1) In the event of resignation, incapacity or leave of absence of the Chair, fulfill the Chair's responsibilities;
- 2) In the absence of the Chair, supervise the affairs and preside at any meetings of the School Council;
- 3) Work with and support the Chair in agenda preparation;
- 4) Ensure the appropriate management, in compliance with PIPA, of any personal information collected on behalf of the School Council;
- 5) Promote teamwork and assist the Chair in the smooth running of the meetings;
- 6) Stay informed about School Board policy that impacts School Council;
- 7) Assist the Chair and undertake tasks assigned by the Chair;
- 8) In collaboration with the Chair, review School Council Operating Procedures on an annual basis in order to maintain in a current and relevant state;
- 9) Attend and/or report on School Board meetings relevant to School Councils (Networks) when required.

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C. Secretary

Unless otherwise delegated, the Secretary of the School Council will:

- 1) Act as a recorder at each meeting and ensure that the minutes are prepared accurately to reflect the directions agreed to at the meeting;
- 2) Keep minutes, correspondence, records and other School Council documents, and ensure that all relevant documents (as per legislation) are available to the public in an accessible location in the School, for a period of 7 years;
- 3) Maintain a dated record of all the Members of the School Council who have knowingly provided their contact information, in compliance with PIPA;
- 4) Distribute, as determined by the School Council, agendas, minutes, notices of meetings and notices of other events.

In the absence of the Secretary, the School Council shall choose a recording Secretary for the meeting.

D. Past Chair

The Past Chair of the School Council will:

- 1) Serve in an advisory capacity to the new School Council;
- 2) Act in the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair.

10. VACANCIES

With the exception of the School Council positions filled by the Principal and teacher representative, any vacancy of the School Council will be advertised to the parent community. Elections for a vacant position will be held at subsequent meetings of the School Council until the vacancy is filled.

The Executive Members may fill any vacancies in the council occurring in midterm with a by-election. It is not necessary for a vacancy to be filled if:

- A. The remaining Executive Members agree to share the duties of the position(s) left vacant and,
- B. The majority of the remaining Executive Members on the council are parents of students enrolled in the school and,
- C. A minimum of three Executive Members remain on the council.

11. MEETINGS

A. Annual General Meetings

Where the School Council has not been operational the year prior, an Establishment Meeting will be held in accordance with legislation, otherwise an Annual General Meeting of the School Council will take place once each School year.

- 1) The Annual General Meeting of the School Council will be held in the month of June or at an appropriate time during the School year as determined by the School Council. The meeting will be advertised throughout the School and the community no less than 2 weeks beforehand and will state the business to take place at the Annual General Meeting.
- 2) All parents as defined in 1C above are eligible for election.
- 3) All parents as defined in 1C above are eligible to vote at the Annual General Meeting.
- 4) The business of the Annual General Meeting shall include:
 - a. The election of School Council Executive Members;

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- i. Each candidate shall be asked to introduce himself or herself to the council membership in attendance at the election/by-election meeting. If more candidates are standing for election than there are vacancies to be filled, a secret ballot shall take place in which all council members present may vote. The Past Chair shall tally the votes and those candidates receiving the greatest number of votes shall be declared elected.
- b. Any proposed amendments to the Operating Procedures;
- c. Determination of when the following regular School Council meeting will occur;
- d. Other optional items:
 - i. Plans for the upcoming year;
 - ii. Discussion of any major issue in which all parents should have input such as changes to the Vision or Mission of the School or School Board, School policy or other major changes in the School program or focus;
 - iii. Evaluation of the School Council.

B. Special General Meetings

- 1) The School Council Executive may at any time give notice of a Special General Meeting of the School Council. Notice will be given at least 5 days before the meeting. The notice will state the time, date and place of the meeting, and describe the matters to be dealt with. At any Special General Meeting, all parents in attendance shall have the right to vote.
- 2) Any School Council member may be suspended or expelled for the duration of the School year from attendance at any Regular School Council meetings, if, upon a majority vote of voting Members present at Special General Meeting called for that purpose, it is determined to be in the best interests of the School Council to do so.

C. Regular Meetings

A minimum of 6 Regular School Council meetings will be held per School year or as called by the Executive. It will be decided when these meetings will take place at the Annual General Meeting. The meetings will take place at the School, unless otherwise advertised.

- 1) The School Council shall meet monthly or as required, on the call of the Chair. These meetings will be open to all members of the Council.
- 2) The first open meeting of the School Council shall be held within forty-five (45) days of the first day of school. If any executive positions need to be filled, they will be elected at this time. The executives of Council shall be published in the next school newsletter.
- 3) The Council shall identify their key focus and planned activities for the year within two months of the school year start-up. These discussions will take place in open meetings and the resulting decisions will be published in the school newsletter.
- 4) All open meetings shall be called with a minimum of two weeks' notice to all members; this may occur via email or, when timing permits, via the school newsletter or other school-wide means of communication.
- 5) Executives of the Council may conduct closed meetings on an as needed basis with a minimum forty-eight (48) hour notice. These meetings cannot be considered to replace the regularly scheduled open meetings.
- 6) Significant issues should be presented for decision at a specially promoted open meeting. Some examples of significant issues for which a broad base of input should be sought include:
 - changes to the vision or mission statement of the school/School Council
 - changes to student evaluation policy

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- changes to student discipline policy
 - major changes in the school program or focus
 - a request for resignation
 - any other issue the council deems appropriate or that has been requested in writing by two executives
- 7) Meetings shall be operated with a semi-formal structure based on Robert's Rules. Any member of Council may raise an issue or concern at any open meeting and will be allowed to speak to it. Any member of the Council may propose a motion, which may then be seconded by any other member. All voting members of Council may vote on the proposed motion.

13. MEETING AGENDAS

The Chair will work in partnership with the Principal to establish the agendas for all meetings. Agenda item requests must be made through the Chair, who will, if necessary, consult with the Executive and Principal as to the appropriateness of the item requested.

14. COMMITTEES

The School Council may appoint committees that consist of School Council Members and/or School community members. Committees meet outside of School Council meetings to complete their assigned tasks as per the direction of the School Council and present a report of their activities at School Council meetings.

Members shall receive no remuneration but may be reimbursed for expenses incurred while conducting council business.

15. POLICIES

Subject to any provincially or School Board-mandated policies and/or regulations, the School Council may make and implement policies that it considers necessary to carry out its functions.

- A. The policies of the School Council will be reviewed at the beginning of every new School Council term to decide if each policy will be implemented for the new School Council and its term.
- B. Topics on which School Council may wish to develop guiding policies include, but are not limited to: Elections, Communication (Internal and External), Record Keeping, Privacy, Location of Meetings, Official Correspondence Address, New Member Orientation, School Council Evaluation, and Social Media.

17. FUNDRAISING ASSOCIATION and OTHER GROUPS OF PARENTS

The School Council recognizes and appreciates the efforts of other groups of parents striving to support and enhance the educational opportunities in the School.

- A. The School Council will communicate regularly with the École Dickinsfield School Parent Association and/or other groups of parents to support their activities and to solicit support for School Council activities.
- B. The School Council may develop policies to promote a productive, open and transparent relationship with the École Dickinsfield School Parent Association and/or other groups of parents.

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18. CODE OF ETHICS

All School Council Members shall:

- A. Abide by the legislation that governs them;
- B. Be guided by the mission statements of the School and School Council;
- C. Endeavour to be familiar with the School's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them;
- D. Practice the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, integrity and truth;
- E. Recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the School community;
- F. Declare any conflict of interest;
- G. Encourage a positive atmosphere in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued;
- H. Apply democratic principles;
- I. Consider the best interests of all students;
- J. Respect the confidential nature of some School business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the School Council;
- K. Not disclose confidential information;
- L. Limit discussions at School Council meetings to matters of concern to the School community as a whole;
- M. Use the appropriate communication channels when questions or concerns arise;
- N. Promote high standards of ethical practice within the School community;
- O. Accept accountability for decisions;
- P. Not accept payment for School Council activities.

19. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The School Council shall abide by the Conflict Resolution Procedures outlined in the School Board's policies and regulations. If none exist, the School Council shall apply every effort to resolve internal conflicts using the steps outlined in these Operating Procedures.

If at any time, ten parents, or five parents and 50% of the Executive Members of the School Council, are of the opinion that the School Council is in a state of conflict such that its operation is significantly impaired, they may deliver a signed written letter to all Executive Members and the Principal requesting a Special General Meeting, and the following will apply:

- A. The Chair will call a Special General Meeting of the School Council.
- B. The Secretary will provide a minimum of five days' written notice to all parents and School Council Members of the date, time, place and purpose of the Special General Meeting.
- C. At the Special General Meeting, all parents and School Council Members present will have an opportunity to hear and discuss the issues causing conflict.
- D. On motion, a vote shall be taken respecting a proposed resolution to the conflict.
- E. If the majority of voting Members present vote in favor of the resolution proposed, the School Council will immediately act upon it.

20. PRIVACY

The School Council shall adhere to the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA), and shall not use or share personal information for purposes other than those of School Council business.

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21. DISSOLUTION

As per Alberta Provincial Legislation, only the Minister of Education has the authority to dissolve a School Council. If the School Council is dissolved, the Principal may choose to establish an advisory committee to perform some or all of the duties of the School Council until the next School year. The Principal will perform the duties as outlined in Alberta Provincial Legislation with respect to the re-establishment of the School Council within forty-five (45) school days after the start of the next School year.

22. REVIEWS and AMENDMENTS

Subject to any provincially or School Board-mandated policies and/or regulations, the School Council may make any changes to these Operating Procedures deemed necessary to carry out its functions.

- A. The Operating Procedures will be reviewed for their relevance and effectiveness annually by the School Council Executive or by a committee established expressly for that purpose.
- B. The Operating Procedures of the School Council may be amended by a majority vote of the voting Members present at any scheduled meeting of the School Council.
- C. Notice of proposed amendments to the Operating Procedures will be provided to the School community no less than five days before a meeting.

These Operating Procedures have been accepted by a majority of the Members entitled to vote at a General meeting of the School Council.

Date _____

Chair's Name

Chair's Signature

Secretary's Name

Secretary's Signature

Principal's Name

Principal's Signature