



# Sherwood Secondary School

PROUD SCHOOL OF HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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## SHERWOOD SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNCIL BY-LAWS (Adopted January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022)

### Introduction

In its publication *School Councils: A Guide for Members, 2001* the Ministry of Education clearly outlines the role, responsibilities and regulations that guide school councils.

Ontario Regulation 612/00(no amendments) and 298(amended to O. Reg. 613/00) guide School Councils. Ontario Regulation 612/00 sets out the mandate and roles and responsibilities for School Councils and is in effect our constitution.

School Councils are advisory bodies. The purpose of a School Council is to improve student performance and to enhance the accountability of the education system to the parents/guardians by making recommendations to the Principal and the School Board. The School Council will promote positive interaction between the school and the community.

### Membership and Voting Status

- The School Council membership extends to all parents/guardians of the students of Sherwood Secondary School.
- Parent/Guardians must make of the majority of the School Council.
  - A minimum of 4 parents/guardians up to a maximum of 25 parents/guardians will be voting members of the Council. If more than 25 parents/guardians wish to be a voting member, then an election will take place (see election procedures below).
- The Principal and Vice-Principals will also be members of the School Council but do not vote.
- The staff will select one person to represent them at the School Council and will be a voting member.
- One (maximum two) student(s) will be appointed from the Student Council and will be voting members.
- A community member may be appointed and this person will be a voting member determined by the School Administration and the Officers of the School Council (Chair/Co-Chairs, Executive Assistant).

- A Board employee who works at their student's school is not allowed to be a parent/guardian member. This person may serve as the teaching member, and is a voting member.
- A Board employee who does not work at their child's school can be a parent member but must inform School Council of their employment at the first meeting.
- Quorum is 50% plus one of the voting membership (the Principal/Vice-Principals do not vote)

### **Parent/Guardian Membership Election Procedures**

1. Elections (if needed) must take place within the first 30 calendar days of the school year.
2. An elections committee shall be established in May of each school year to prepare for the potential for an election. The process to manage Sherwood School Council elections is as follows:
  - a. The Elections Committee will consist of the Principal (or designate) and a maximum of two additional current School Council members.
  - b. The Elections Committee will create an elections plan, which will include:
    - i. Determining if an election is needed by preparing a communication (email and school social media) to all parents/guardians in late August asking for who would like to be a voting member of School Council to email the Principal.
    - ii. If more than 25 parents respond as per the communication that they would like to be a voting member, then proceed through the election procedures.
    - iii. Inform all of those who expressed an interest that a vote will take place and that they must submit a brief biography and rationale that will be shared with the broader parent/guardian community for voting purposes.
    - iv. Schedule a communication regarding School Council Elections (when and how it will be done electronically) to the broader parent/guardian community, before September 10<sup>th</sup> (at least 14 days before the election).
    - v. Post-election communication, including the names of elected members and the first School Council meeting date (within the first 35 calendar days of the school year).

### **Officers of the School Council, Duties and Voting Process**

- The School Council will determine the Officer of the School Council positions to be filled annually.
- School Council may have a Chair, Vice-Chair, or Co-Chairs who are not employees of the school board.

The Chair/Co-Chairs duties are:

- i) Arrange and chair meetings.
- ii) Prepare meeting agendas (in consultation with the Principal).
- iii) Post the agenda on the school website and to School Council membership 48 hours before the meeting.
- iv) Ensure meeting minutes are recorded and maintained.
- v) Ensure quorum at meetings

- vi) Facilitate conflict resolution.
- vii) Ensure the minimum of 4 required meeting dates are set
- viii) Communicate with the Principal on behalf of the Council using the School Council Chair Board provided email address.
- ix) Terminate School Council for the year if the minimum of 4 meetings have been held and the quorum of voting members agree.
- x) A member may put forth a request to the Principal for reinstatement. If this occurs, School Council shall be reinstated for the year if the quorum of voting members agrees.

- Sherwood School Council will also have an Executive Assistant.

The Executive Assistant will be responsible for:

- i) Taking the minutes.
- ii) Sharing the minutes with Chair/Co-Chair and the Principal for approval
- iii) Share with the larger Council membership at the subsequent meeting for approval
- iv) Share with the larger school community on the school website via the Principal

In the case of multiple nominees for the Officer Positions:

- An allotted time of five minutes shall be given to each nominee to present their reasons for seeking this position.
- Voting shall be by secret written ballot and all present voting members of School Council may vote.
- A clear majority, being one vote more than one-half of voting members present, shall be required to win. If no nominee receives this on the first ballot, the nominee receiving the lowest number of votes shall be dropped, and a further ballot or ballots taken until a clear majority is received by one nominee who shall be declared the winner.
- The election will be facilitated by the Principal (or designate) and one non-parent member selected by the Principal.

### **Member Attendance**

There is an expectation of attendance for School Council members, but a member is entitled to hold their position for the term of that year's Council unless they cause harm (refer to Conflict Resolution).

- School Council members will endeavor to attend monthly meetings. When absent, regrets should be made to the Chair.
- Members must attend at least one of the first two meetings, with the first meeting taking place in September or October, to maintain voting member status.
- After two consecutive missed meetings, the Principal or designate will contact the member and inquire about their ability to fulfill their commitment.
- If the member resigns, the position will be filled according to the Filling Vacancy section of the by-laws.

## **Meeting Locations and Voting**

School Council meetings will take place at Sherwood Secondary School unless it is necessary to meet by video conferencing (e.g., Microsoft Teams) due to extenuating events.

All members in attendance by video conferencing are deemed to be present at that meeting, and as such, any votes cast will be considered valid.

## **Filling Vacancies**

- A vacancy is created if:
  - a. A member resigns.
  - b. A member is unable to fulfil the roles and responsibilities, e.g., illness.
- Vacancies will be filled only if the majority of voting members are not parents/guardians.
- Council may continue to meet and make decisions if there is quorum, and the majority of voting members are parents/Guardians.
- If the parent/guardian majority is not maintained, the Council shall instruct the school to send nomination forms for the vacant position(s) to the broader parent community and hold an election for the purpose of filling the vacancy. Vacant positions, other than for parent representatives, may be filled by appointment of the Principal and the Officers of the School Council.

## **Conflict of Interest**

- A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential.
- Members of the Council shall declare a conflict of interest in matters where they, members of their families, or business entities in which they may have an interest, stand to benefit either directly or indirectly by decisions of the Council.
- A member shall exclude themselves from discussions in which:
  - a. a conflict of interest is likely to result;
  - b. the member's ability to carry out their duties and responsibilities as a member of the School Council may be jeopardized;
  - c. the Council member, relatives, or a business entity in which the member may have an interest, may gain or benefit either directly or indirectly as a result of actions that may be taken by the Principal or Board in response to advice that the Council provides to the Principal or to the Board.
- A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

## **Conflict Resolution**

- Individuals may have different viewpoints which can lead to conflict. In most cases, conflicts can be resolved informally.

- If there is conflict, often the most effective resolution method involves the individuals discussing the matter privately. Describe to the individual the behaviour causing the conflict, request the behaviour cease, and obtain a commitment the behaviour will stop.
- Each party must engage in active listening to resolve any issues.
- In situations where an individual may feel unsafe or uncomfortable meeting privately, they should discuss alternatives with the Chair/Co-Chairs and/or the Principal.
- If the two parties involved have been unable to resolve an issue, one or both parties may ask the Chair or Principal to help resolve the outstanding issue.
- The goal is to identify practical solutions, which will allow the parties to continue to co-exist in a positive and productive atmosphere.
- The parties may agree upon a confirmed resolution in writing signed by both parties involved.

The Sherwood Secondary School Council recognizes that the HWDSB's Human Right's Policy serves as an anchor to related policies and furthers HWDSB's commitment to foster and maintain a culture of respect for human rights that permeates all HWDSB learning and work environments, so that:

- Everyone is treated with dignity and respect
- Everyone is supported and accepted
- Everyone is free from discrimination and harassment and different forms of oppression

If a member of School Council has harmed another member of Council by behaving/communicating in a manner that violates the HWDSB Human Right's Policy, that harm may be repaired through conflict resolution. If the harm cannot be repaired through conflict resolution, the member that caused the harm may:

- Be asked to resign voluntarily
- If unwilling to resign voluntarily, will be asked not to speak at further meetings on the topic that caused harm, or
- If unwilling to resign voluntarily and the harm is deemed extensive, two voting members may make a motion to remove the member that caused harm, which can be passed by a clear majority, being one vote more than one-half of voting members present
- If there is no compliance with the above, in an effort to cease further harm, the Chair/Co-Chairs may invoke article viii of their duties and Terminate School Council for the year with the quorum of membership agreement.

### **Standards of Behaviour**

In fostering a safe and accepting environment for all members, the School Council has adopted the HWDSB's Standards of Behaviour as set out in its Code of Conduct. The HWDSB Code of Conduct Policy sets out the expectations for behavior consistent with the Provincial Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct Policy applies to persons on school or board property, on school buses, at school, related events or activities, or in other circumstances that could have an impact on school climate.

Respect, Civility and Responsible Citizenship: All members of the school community must recognize that a whole school approach is required and that everyone including trustees, Board employees, students, parents/guardians, Home and School, School Council, visitors, volunteers, contractors, community members on school premises, while on school buses, at school-related events or activities, or in any other circumstances that could have an impact on the climate of the school must:

- Respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws.
- Comply with the Equity and Inclusion Policy and other Board policies.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity
- Respect differences in people, their ideas, and their opinions.
- Treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement.
- Respect and treat others fairly, regardless of, for example, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, creed, sex, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, family status or disability
- Respect the rights of others
- Seek assistance from a member of the school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully
- Respect all members of the school community.

#### **Communication**

- Sherwood School Council will not represent/speak for the school when dealing with the media or through any communication (emails, letters etc.) without approval from the Principal, Chairs/Co-Chairs, and/or Board's Communication Department.

#### **Amending the By-Laws**

These Sherwood Secondary School by-laws shall be reviewed and amended from time to time. An annual review will take place following the first meeting, with the first meeting being held in September or October, to determine if amendments are warranted.

All by-law amendments shall:

- Give voting members advance notice of the proposed amendments.
- Be adopted by a clear majority, being one vote more than one-half of voting members present.