



Westwood
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Westwood Elementary School Council

Code of Ethics

By-laws and Constitution

Contents

School Profile.....	2
Code of Ethics.....	3
Name	3
Objectives.....	3
Membership	4
Executive	4
Duties and Responsibilities	5
Council Members shall:	5
Chair / Co-Chair shall:.....	5
Vice Chair shall:	5
Secretary shall:	6
Treasurer shall:.....	6
Community Representative shall:	6
Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff Representative shall:.....	6
Principal shall:	7
Subcommittee Chair shall:	7
Terms of Office	7
Voting Privileges	8
Non-voting Members	8
Quorum	8
Council Meeting Frequency.....	8
Notice of Meetings.....	9
Minutes	9
Agenda.....	9
Vacancies.....	9
First Meeting of the School Year	10
Annual Meeting.....	10
Purposed Changes to Constitution and By-laws	10
Subcommittees.....	10
Requests for School Council Position or Opinion.....	11
Conflict Resolution By-laws.....	11
Removal of a Member.....	12

School Profile

Westwood Elementary School is located south of Mohawk Road and north of Limeridge Road between Garth and West 5th. Built in the early 1960's, the school is on a one floor plan. However, the school is built on a hill and there are steps between one wing of the school and another. There is a library staffed by a part-time teacher-librarian and a computer lab which can accommodate a class.

The school's capacity is 350. We have grades one (1) through five (5) and a full-day, every-day JK/SK programme. All grades follow a balanced day schedule providing two nutritional breaks and three instructional periods of 100 minutes each. There is also one primary / junior autistic program which is housed in the school. Most of our students will go to Westview School for Grade 6.

School transportation consists of mini buses and taxis for the Special Education class and another bus that transports students that live outside the walking range. The majority of students walk to school.

Westwood is a culturally diverse school community. There are over 30 different languages other than English that are spoken in the students' homes. This represents almost 50% of the school's population. Support for ESL students is given through a dedicated ESL teacher.

At Westwood, we reach for the stars by doing our best, doing what's right and believing that,

“TOGETHER, WE'RE BETTER”

Westwood School's Mission Statement: The mission of Westwood Public School is to work together to provide students with a safe, positive learning environment fostering academic excellence and good citizenship.

Westwood School's Vision: Children of the world gather here to learn and grow.

Code of Ethics

- Promote high standards of ethical practice
- Encourage a positive atmosphere where individual contributions are encouraged and valued while using appropriate communication channels when questions or concerns arise
- Accept accountability for decisions
- Promote positive attitudes towards public education and limit discussions at School Council to matters of concern to the school community as a whole
- Declare a conflict of interest
- Not accept honorariums
- Respect and protect the rights, interests, and confidentiality of students, parents, community members, and board employees

Name

The name of this organization shall be the Westwood Elementary School Council, hereafter referred to as 'the Council'.

Objectives

The Council shall strive to improve pupil achievement by:

- Providing a forum for parents/guardians, students, staff and other community members
- Providing advice and recommendations to the principal and staff in matters relating to education
- Promoting effective educational policies and procedures while operating within the policies of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB)
- Promoting an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect for individual and collective achievement in learning and personal growth
- Maintaining and encourage open communication among all parts of the school community

Membership

The membership of the Council shall be:

- Parents/Guardians
 - Minimum three (3) parents/guardians
 - Maximum twenty five (15) parents/guardians
 - Parents/guardians shall constitute a majority of the council, elected by parents/guardians
- Principal
- Teaching staff members elected by teaching staff
 - Minimum one (1) teaching staff member
 - Maximum three (3) teaching or non-teaching (Educational Assistant, Early Childhood Educator) staff members, representing each Grade Group (Kindergarten, Primary, Junior) with only one vote between them
- Community Representatives
 - 1 YMCA SACC (School Age Child Care) Program Staff (optional)
 - 1 Parenting and Family Literacy Centre Staff (optional)
 - 1 Nutrition Program Volunteer (optional)
 - Other Community Representatives, as appropriate (optional)
 - Parent/guardian from neighbouring school (e.g. Westview, Westmount) (optional)

Note: Parent/ guardian representatives must have a child enrolled in Westwood Elementary School during their term of office. If during a Council year a student no longer attends the school, the parent/guardian is welcome to attend meetings but will no longer be allowed to vote. If this parent/guardian is a part of the executive, and if the school is in its last term, the Council must vote at the next Council meeting on whether this person can remain in his/her present position to the end the Council year. If this situation arises before the last term, the position must be vacated and an election held. **There will not be more than 1 voting member from any single household.** If a parent/guardian moves out of the catchment's area but the student(s) continue to attend Westwood Elementary School the parent/guardian has the same rights as parents/guardians within the catchment area.

Executive

The Executive of the School Council shall be elected to the Council and selected by the Council members at the first meeting of the School Year. It shall be comprised of the following members:

- Chair
- Vice-Chair (optional)
 - two Co-Chairs may stand in place of Chair and Vice-Chair
- Principal
- Secretary (optional)
- Treasurer (optional)

Duties and Responsibilities

Council Members shall:

- Obtain a Police Check in accordance with Board Policy when interacting with students
- Participate in information and training programs as necessary
- Act as a link between the Council and the Community
- Encourage the participation of parents/guardians from all groups and of other people within the community
- Be willing to attend the majority of the meetings for a term of one (1) calendar year

Chair / Co-Chair shall:

- Follow the roles of the Council members and;
- Organize and supervise the election process in collaboration with the Principal
- Be elected to the Council and selected by Council members at the first meeting of the year
- Call Council and Executive meetings
- Attend subcommittee meetings whenever possible
- Prepare the meeting agendas in consultation with principal one (1) week prior to a meeting
- Chair meetings
- Ensure minutes are recorded and maintained
- Participate in information and training programs
- Consult with school principal on matters pertinent to School Council
- Ensure that topics considered are relevant and dealt with appropriately
- Ensures that Council stays on task
- Ensure that there is regular communication with the school community
- Consult with senior Board of Education Staff and Trustees as required.

Vice Chair shall:

- Follow the roles of the Council members and;
- Be elected to the Council and selected by Council members at the first meeting of the year
- Attend subcommittee meetings whenever possible
- Be available to consult with Chair on matters pertinent to School Council
- Fulfill the responsibilities of the Chair at the request of the Chairperson
- Participate in information and training programs
- Consult with the Chair

Secretary shall:

- Follow the roles of the Council members and;
- Be elected to the Council and selected by Council members at the first meeting of the year
- Record, distribute and maintain Council and Executive minutes including attendance
- Copies of the minutes will be given to the Chair and the Principal within ten (10) days and then distributed to the other members within fifteen (15) days of the related meeting
- Post minutes **after** they are approved at the **following** Council meeting
- Additional copies must be available at the office after approved. An electronic copy must also be kept in the office
- Prepare other Council documents as necessary and appropriate
- Participate in information and training programs as appropriate
- Be willing to commit to and participate in Council meetings

Treasurer shall:

- Follow the roles of the Council members and;
- Collect moneys collected at the school
- During fundraising events, the Treasurer does not have to be present for all collections and counting of moneys but must verify the amount collected before deposit.
- A minimum of two (2) people must be present to count collected moneys on school property
- Transfer money to Westwood Office Administrator for deposit into the school safe
- Record funds collected, prepare a balance sheet, and provide to the Westwood Office Administrator within seven (7) days of the event closing

Community Representative shall:

- Follow the roles of the Council members and;
- Represent the school community in community affairs
- Participate in information and training programs as appropriate
- Be willing to commit to and participate in Council meetings

Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff Representative shall:

- Follow the roles of the Council members and;
- Represent the teaching/non-teaching staff and present reports on behalf of the staff at Council meetings.
- Participate in information and training programs as appropriate
- Be willing to commit to and participate in Council meetings

Principal shall:

- Facilitate the establishment of the School Council in accordance with Regulation 612 of the Education Act and Board policy and direction
- Support and promote approved Council's activities
- Seek input from the Council in areas in which it has been assigned advisory responsibility
- Act as a resource on laws, regulations, Board of Education policies, and collective agreements
- Obtain and provide information required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions
- Communicate with the Chair and/or Co-Chairs of the Council as required

Subcommittee Chair shall:

- Receive mandate approval and direction from The Council
- Prepare agenda for subcommittee meetings
- Chair the subcommittee meetings and ensure minutes are recorded, maintained, and communicated to The Council Chairs
- All meetings must be open to the school community
- Copies of the minutes will be given to the Chair and the Principal within ten (10) days and then distributed to the other members within fifteen (15) days of the related meeting
- Post minutes **after** they are approved at the **following** Council meeting
- Consult with the Principal and the Council Chair / Co-Chairs before presenting ideas for voting to Council members
- Members of the subcommittee **do not** have to be Council Members

Terms of Office

- Members of the Council shall remain in office for a period of at least one (1) calendar year or until the first meeting of the subsequent school year - September to September or until replaced
- Council elections shall take place in accordance with the time lines and procedures established by the Board, Regulation 612 of the Education Act and the School Council regulations

Voting Privileges

- All members of the Council, regardless of position and role within the school, shall have a vote with the exception of the following:
 - Principal (cannot vote),
 - Teaching/non-teaching staff - one (1) vote between staff members, if more than one member is present,
- Council Chair also does not vote
 - when two Co-Chairs are acting in place of a Chair and Vice-Chair only one vote between the two
 - Co-Chair member may not vote on their own agenda items
 - Co-Chair votes may not break a tie
- Votes will be done by a show of hands or if requested or the need arises, by secret ballot
- Ballots will be counted by the Principal and one of the following:
 - Teacher/Staff Representative, or
 - Community Representative
- Immediately after the vote, only the decision will be presented, either approved or not approved
- Decision making is by majority and a tie is considered a lost vote

Non-voting Members

- Non-voting members are all parents/guardians or legal guardians of any Westwood student
- Are welcome to attend all meetings
- May make a presentation by contacting the principal and/or chair/co-chair prior to the meeting. Presentations will have a maximum length of ten (10) minutes. If time does not allow for closing of the issue it will be deferred to a future meeting.
- May ask questions, or participate when addressed by an Executive member.

Quorum

- 51% of the Council memberships, provided parents/guardians are in the majority
- No issues can be voted on without a quorum

Council Meeting Frequency

- All Council meetings will take place at Westwood school
- The Council may establish its meeting schedule at the first meeting of the school year or schedule accordingly throughout the year
- Meetings may occur up to once a month during the school year and/or at the discretion of the Chair/Co-Chair but, must meet a minimum of four (4) times per year as stipulated in Regulation 612 of the Education Act
- Additional or special meetings of the Council shall be at the call of the Chair/Co-Chair and can be requested by any Council member

Notice of Meetings

- The meeting schedule shall be published in the School newsletter and will be posted on the Westwood School web site and the School Bulletin Board five (5) days prior to the meeting
- All Council meetings are open to all parents/guardians and the school community
- All subcommittee meetings will be open to all parents/ guardians and the school community but do not have to be held at the school

Minutes

- Shall be recorded by the Secretary or designate at every Council meeting
- Copies of the minutes shall be presented and approved by the Council prior to publication.
- Copies of the approved minutes must be made available to the school community
- An electronic copy of the minutes must be kept by the school

Agenda

- All agenda items shall be submitted in writing to the Chair/Co-Chair at least ten (10) days prior to the next Council meeting
- The Agenda shall be established by the Chair/Co-Chair in consultation with the Principal
- Agendas for all meetings shall be posted five (5) days prior to the meeting

Vacancies

- Council members are required to regularly attend meetings.
- The Chair/Co-Chairs and the Principal shall review Membership of those individuals who miss more than 50% of the regularly scheduled meetings
- Council members may be removed from their positions by a 2/3 majority vote of the Council when their presence is felt to be detrimental to the welfare and positive operation of the Council
- Executive members may be removed from their position by a 2/3 majority vote of the Council on issues which are contrary to the positive and effective functioning of the Council and the moral tone of the school.
- Parents/guardians shall form the simple majority and must reside within the boundaries of the school or have Board permission to attend the school
- If any School Council positions become available because of resignation, inability of a member to fulfill his or her roles and responsibilities, or other cause, the remaining members shall constitute the School Council, unless the parent/ guardian majority is not maintained. If the majority of parents on the School Council are not maintained, the Council shall send home nomination forms for the vacant position(s) and hold an election to fill the vacancies
- Vacancies that occur during the school year will be filled within one (1) month by appointment of Council **only** when there is **less than the minimum** number of parents/guardians outlined in the constitution - three (3)
- Council members will vote elected position replacements into their positions

First Meeting of the School Year

- Must occur within 30 calendar days of school commencement.
- Executive members must be voted in at the first meeting

Annual Meeting

- The Financial and Annual Reports shall be presented at the Annual Meeting held before the end of the school year
- All parents must be given a copy of the Annual Report including a Financial Report outlining the usage of moneys generated through the Council during the school year

Purposed Changes to Constitution and By-laws

- The articles of this Constitution and By-laws are governed by Provincial Legislation and Board policy. There may be situations where amendments are required prior to the second meeting of the school year. Any such amendments shall be made as required, then announced and ratified at the second meeting of the year.
- Proposed changes to the Constitution must be brought forward in the Chair/Chairs/Principal form of a motion a minim of 10 days prior to the second meeting
- If the motion is denied it must be noted in the meeting minutes
- A majority vote carries the motion

Subcommittees

- The need for subcommittees will be determined by Council (i.e. fund raising, special events)
- Consists of a minimum of two (2) people not from the same family
- Council Chair/Co-Chair will be invited to all subcommittee meetings
- These committees will meet at the discretion of the Chair of the Subcommittee
- All subcommittees will present an update at each Council meeting and will provide a report and/or meeting minutes to be distributed with the Council minutes
- Council must approve all recommendations brought forth by the subcommittees before they are implemented
- Discussion and voting will take place at Council

Requests for School Council Position or Opinion

- A request may be made to School Council for their position or opinion from the media or member of the public. These requests often require a timely response.
- All School Council members are free to offer their own thoughts on any questions but must be very clear in stating that “this is their own opinion and does not reflect the opinion of School Council”.
- All official requests for comment will be answered by the School Council Chair or designate in written form only. The statement released by the Chair/Co-Chair will only be made after consultation with School Council members and Principal (where applicable) and a formal agreement reached. Agreement may take the form of a motion either by email or within the regular proceedings of a scheduled School Council meeting.
 - School Council must take into consideration HWDSB policy and Ministry guidelines when taking a formal position on a topic of interest.
- If School Council is misquoted, a formal request will be made for correction.

Conflict Resolution By-laws

- Every School Council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her concern and/or opinion about the issue at dispute and how the dispute has affected him or her
- Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone while seeking clarification and understanding at all times
- Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption at the discretion of the Chair/Co-Chair
- The Chair/Co-Chairs’ responsibility is to clarify the statements made by the speakers, to identify common ground among the points of view raised, and to set out the joint interests of all members
- If no common ground can be identified, the Chair/Co-Chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further
- If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the Chair/Co-Chair shall request the intervention of the Principal. If the conflict involves the Principal, the Council member can request the involvement of the Superintendent or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict
- If a Council member or members become disruptive during a meeting, the Chair/Co-Chair shall ask for order. If all efforts to restore order fail or the unbecoming behaviour continues, the Chair/Co-Chairs shall ask for the individual Council member(s) to leave the meeting, citing the reasons for the request

Removal of a Member

- A Council member may be removed temporarily or permanently due to a conflict within the Council
- If a Council member is failing to follow the Code of Ethics, the Chair/Co-Chair shall request that the member(s) of Council participate in a special meeting, the purpose of which will be to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute. Such a meeting will be a private meeting involving the member, Council Chair/Co-Chair(s), Principal, and a neutral party and shall not be construed as a meeting of the Council
- If a member continues to fail to abide by the Code of Ethics or if their position is detrimental to the welfare and positive operation of the Council, he or she may be removed by majority vote, done by secret ballot
- Only the result of the vote will be announced

Created April 25, 2016

Amended