

THORNHILL SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNCIL

Constitution

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THORNHILL SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNCIL Constitution

Article 1: Name and Address

The organization will be known as the “Thornhill Secondary School Council” or “TSS Council”. The members of the school council shall be responsible for maintaining the constitution.

Thornhill Secondary School
167 Dudley Avenue
Thornhill, Ontario
L3T 2E5
905-889-5453

Article 2: Mission Statement

Our school council is a collaborative and co-operative body of parents, staff, community and students whose mission is to facilitate a partnership between members of the school community whose objective is to achieve the highest possible standards of education in a safe, inviting, motivating and supportive environment.

Article 3: Purpose and Objectives

1. Encourage effective parental and community involvement in the education of **all students.**
2. Enhance lines of communication among parents and/or guardians, administrators, teachers and students in the school community.
3. Improve student achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents through the active participation of parents.
4. Provide advice on the development, implementation and review of the School Plan for Continuous Improvement.
5. Provide input into decisions made by school administration, YRDSB and the ministry
6. **Facilitate the building of an effective school community that works together in the best interests of our students and their education.**
7. **Provide a forum for regular communication & dialogue between all stakeholders in education where ideas and recommendations are raised.**
8. **Raise funds to enhance the school experience and opportunities**

Article 4: Procedures and Guidelines

The operational procedures of this council are outlined in YRDSB Procedure #262, see Appendix 1. All recommendations and activities of the council shall comply with all Ministry of Education Acts, York Region District School Board Policies and Procedures and Staff Collective Agreements. It is the responsibility of the Principal to inform this council if and when this council is in breach of the above. This Constitution shall constitute the Council’s by-law, as referred to in Regulation 612 passed pursuant to the Education Act (Ontario).

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Article 5: Membership

The School Council is composed of parents/guardians, the principal (and vice principals) and representatives of the community, students, teachers and support staff as specified below. Each member of the Council is considered a voting member, with the exception of the principal (and vice principals). The parent/guardian members must constitute a majority of the members of the school council

5.1: Eligibility of Membership

A person is qualified to be a parent member of a school council if he or she is a parent of a pupil who is enrolled in the school. A person who is not employed at the school but is employed by the board and informs the council of that employment is qualified to be a parent member. A person who is employed at the school is not qualified to be a parent member.

5.2: Number of Parent Members

The School Council is composed of parent/guardian representatives, the principal (and vice principals) and representatives of the community, students, teachers and support staff as specified below. Each member of Council is considered a voting member.

- The number of parents on the School Council will be a minimum of 6.
- The parent members must form the majority of Council members (i.e., 50% +1)
- If a parent/guardian works for the Board, but not at the school, they can become a parent/guardian member as long as he/she informs the school community prior to the election

5.3: Number of Community Representatives

The number of community representatives may be up to two if available. Community representation shall be by appointment of the Council.

- A community member cannot be employed at the school with the exception of school (lay) assistants
- If a community member works for the Board, but not at the school, they can become a community member as long as he/she informs the school community prior to the election

5.4: Student Representative

The student representative will be a student who serves as an executive on the Board of Student Senators.

5.5: Other Members

Other members such as teacher representative and staff representative shall be elected / appointed in accordance with YRDSB Policy #262.

Article 6: Elections

6.1: Acclamations

Parent elections shall be by acclamation when the number of candidates is equal to, or less than the number of parent member positions on the council.

6.2: Election Procedures for Parent Members

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1. Each parent/guardian seeking election must be nominated or self-nominated in writing.
2. Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school shall be entitled to one vote.
3. An election of parent members of the school council shall be held during the first 30 days of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the chair or co-chairs of the school council after consulting with the principal of the school.

6.3: Terms of Office

A person elected or appointed as a member of the school council holds office for one year. A member of the school council may be re-elected or re-appointed for additional terms.

6.4: Vacancies in Membership

1. A vacancy in the membership of a school council does not prevent the school council from exercising its' authority.
2. If parent member positions remain vacant on council, after the election, the council may appoint parent members.
3. Positions that become vacant due to resignation or removal **may** be filled as soon as possible.

6.5: Resignations

Any council member except the principal may resign their position by writing a letter of resignation to the chair. **If the resignation of a member results in the decrease of the number of parent members to less than six (6) the position vacated will be filled by appointment by the School Council**

6.6: Removal

The executive may choose to remove from council any member who misses two (2) or more meetings without advising a member of the executive and authorizing their proxy vote for scheduled council business. If the removal of a member results in the decrease of the number of parent members to less than six (6) the position vacated will be filled by appointment by the School Council

Article 7: Executive

7.1: Chair / Co-Chair

The school council shall have a chair or two co-chairs. Any Chair / Co-chairs must be the parent of a currently enrolled student in the school. A person who is employed by the board cannot be the chair or co-chair of the council.

7.2: Officers

At the first meeting of the school year, the council will elect or appoint the secretary and treasurer. The Treasurer must be a parent of a currently enrolled student at the school. **The Council may choose to create co-chair positions for both officer functions each year.**

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7.3: Vacancies in Office

Officer vacancies will be filled as soon as possible.

- **A vacancy in the membership of the School Council does not prevent the Council from exercising its authority.**
- **If at any time during the school year, due to resignation or removal, the parent/guardian majority falls below six (6), the Council shall recruit additional members to restore the majority.**

Article 8: Sub-Committees

8.1: Establishment

The council will form sub-committees as the need arises.

8.2: Sub-Committee Membership

Each sub-committee must contain at least one parent member of the council.

Persons, who are not members of council, may be members of sub-committees.

8.3: Chairs of Sub-Committees

Each sub-committee will appoint its chair.

Article 9: Meetings

9.1: Timetable

1. A timetable will be created prior to the beginning of the school year.
2. A copy of these dates will be included in communication(s) to the families of the school.
3. It is recognized that the timetable may change at any time.
4. A copy of the list of dates and times of meetings will be sent to the local trustees.

9.2: Quorum

A scheduled meeting will have quorum if **at least six (6) voting parent members are present AND these six (6) voting parents are the majority of the total members in attendance** AND the combination of parent/guardian members present and with proxy exceed 50% A meeting of council can be held if there is no quorum but all voting will be deferred.

9.3: Decision-Making

1. The preferred method to resolve issues on council is by consensus, the collective opinion or general agreement by ALL the council members.
2. In the case where a decision cannot be reached through consensus, the chair may decide on one of the following:
 - a. To have a vote by way of a show of hands or a silent vote by those present in which a 51% majority shall carry the vote.
 - b. To defer the issue to the next meeting.
 - c. To defer the issue to a special meeting.
 - d. To defer the issue to a sub-committee.

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9.4: Conflict of Interest

If individual council members perceive themselves to be in conflict of interest, they must declare their conflict at the earliest possible opportunity and at the time of the meeting, the minutes may reflect this declaration. Council members cannot receive any remuneration for their work as a member of council.

9.5: Conflict Resolution

The council will undertake to resolve all internal conflicts within its' mandate in a timely manner. **The council will abide by any conflict resolution policy issued by the Board.**

Article 10: Financial

10.1: Signing Authorities

The chair, two co-chairs, treasurer and principal will have signing authority. Two of the four signatures are required on the account.

10.2: Disbursement and Allocation of Funds

All money must be collected by the end of the year. Funds should be disbursed or allocated to a specific purpose by the end of the year. A fundraising committee shall be established every year with a minimum mandate to raise enough funds to support the School Council Scholarship award.

10.3: Annual Audit

Each year there will be an independent audit of the school council books performed by the head of the Business Department of Thornhill Secondary School.

Article 11: Agendas and Minutes

11.1: Agendas

Agenda items should be submitted to the chair **one week** prior to the council's next meeting. The executive will set the agenda with the principal, prior to the meeting.

11.2: Minutes

Minutes will be distributed to each member of the school council prior to the next meeting of the council. The minutes shall include motions, decisions and actions to be taken. Members of the council must inform the chair if they are going to be absent from a council meeting.

Article 12: Constitutional Amendments

1. The school council will review the constitution every two years or as the need arises. A sub-committee can perform the review and bring proposed amendments to the school council for voting.
2. Amendments to the constitution must be presented to the council, at a regularly scheduled meeting.
3. Constitutional amendments need a 2/3 majority to be passed.

Article 13: Protection of School Council Members:

School councils that are acting in accordance with Ministry legislation and all relevant Board policies and procedures and are protected legally by the Board.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1: YRDSB Policy and Procedures #262

Appendix 2: Ministry of Education, *The Election for Use by School Councils*, June 2001

Appendix 3: Code of Ethics

- A member shall consider the best interest 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.

Appendix 4: Conflict of Interest

Definitions:

Actual: When a school council member has a private interest that is sufficiently connected to his or her duties and responsibilities as a council member that it influences the exercise of these duties and responsibilities.

Perceived: When reasonably well-informed persons could reasonably believe that a school council member has a conflict of interest, even where, in fact, there is no real conflict of interest.

Potential: When a school council member has a private interest that could affect his or her decision about matters proposed for discussion.

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1. A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential.
2. Member of the council shall declare a conflict of interest in matters that 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.
3. A member shall exclude him- or herself from discussions in which:
 - a. A conflict of interest is likely to result;
 - b. The member's ability to carry out his duties and responsibilities as a member of the school council may be jeopardized;
 - c. The council member, his or her relatives, or 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:
4. A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

Appendix 5: Election Procedure

1. Elections shall occur within the first thirty days of the start of each school year. The Election Day shall be publicized by the Principal at least fourteen days prior to the election.
2. Each parent/guardian seeking election must be nominated or self-nominated in writing, must have a child registered at the School, and must declare if he or she is employed by the school board.
3. Each parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the School shall be entitled to one vote for each vacant parent/guardian membership position on the Council.
4. No individual campaign literature for school council elections may be distributed or posted in the School.
5. School resources, both human and material, may not be used to support particular candidates or groups of candidates.
6. The Election Committee, as established by the Council, shall work with the Principal to:
 - Provide nomination forms;
 - request a profile from all candidates and make these available to the electorate;
 - conduct the elections by secret ballot;
 - count the ballots;
 - help the Principal notify all candidates of the results;
 - keep all results and related information confidential.
7. A list of candidates and the vote results will be kept on file by the Principal for future use in the event that a vacancy on the Council occurs.
8. All individuals standing for election shall be notified of the election results before they are released to the school community.

Election Forms:

Election Ballot

Nomination Form

You may vote for up to ____*[insert number]* candidates on this ballot.

If more than ____ votes are cast on this ballot this ballot will be considered a spoiled ballot and will not be counted.

[illegible]

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PARENT NOMINATION FORM

I wish to nominate _____ (name of nominated person), the parent/guardian of _____ (name of student), who is currently registered at this school.

I wish to declare my candidacy for an elected position as a parent/guardian member on the Thornhill Secondary School Council.

NOMINEE'S NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE #: _____

BUSINESS PHONE #: _____

E-MAIL: _____

I am the parent/guardian of _____ (name of student), who is currently registered at this school.

Nominator's Signature: _____

Date: _____

ACCEPTANCE OF NOMINATION BY NOMINEE

I, _____, confirm that I have read and understood the Responsibilities of Council Members, (from Board Procedure P262.0), as set out on the reverse hereof, and accept the above nomination.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

_____ Please check here if you are an employee of the York Regional District School Board. If an employee of the Board, please describe your role and primary location: _____

_____ All candidates are asked to please include a brief (no more than 75 words) profile of themselves on the back of this form, to be distributed to the parents/guardians as part of the Election Process.

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RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Members of Council are accountable to the members of the school community who they represent and shall:

1. Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues.
2. Regularly attend Council meetings.
3. Act as a communication link between the Council and the community, by encouraging the participation of all parents and of other people within the school community.
4. Participate on at least one committee of Council and assist with initiatives of the Council as appropriate; however, the teachers, staff and community representatives on Council, while encouraged to participate in committees of Council, shall not be required to serve on a committee.
5. Make every effort to give at least 24 hours' notice to the Chair, if they are going to be absent from a Council meeting.
6. Solicit input from parents on issues facing Council.
7. Adhere to this Constitution.
8. Initiate fund raising activities each year for the purpose of funding the scholarship and any other items as decided by council.