

The Education Act and Ontario Regulation 612/00/613 states that “school councils shall create by-laws that govern parent election procedures and the filling of vacancies in the membership of the council, establishes rules for participation in council proceeding in cases of conflict of interest and outlines a conflict resolution process for internal school disputes.

These by-laws are for the establishment of the George Syme CS School Council and are declared in effect from March 2019.

1 Name

The name of this organization shall be George Syme CS School Council (herein referred to as School Council)

2 Membership

Council shall be composed of:

- a) Nine parents/guardians of children in the school who are elected to the Council.
- b) One teacher employed in the school, to be elected by the teaching staff of the school.
- a) One administrative/support staff who is employed at the school, other than the principal or vice-principal or any other teacher.
- b) The Principal or his/her designate.
- c) Two-community representatives appointed by the elected Council.
- d) One student representative, where feasible.
- e) One person appointed from the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, where feasible.

3 Objective

In addition to the mandate of school Councils as defined by the Education Act, and in accordance with Ontario Regulation 612/00 regarding school Councils, the objectives of the Council shall be to:

- a) Engage parents/ guardians through outreach and other initiatives to create a strong school community.

- b) Contribute to the improvement of student achievement and school performance and enhance accountability of the education system to parents.
- c) Promote mutual understanding between the home and school by providing a meaningful forum for discussion of topics of interest to all parents and teachers.

4. Election of Parent /Guardian Members

- a) Elections shall occur within the first 30 (school) days of the school year in accordance with Ontario Regulation 612/00.
- b) The Principal on behalf of the Council shall at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent/guardian members, give written notice of date, time and location of the election to every parent/guardian of a student in the school.
- c) Each parent/guardian seeking election must be a parent/guardian of student in the school to be nominated or self-nominated and Toronto District School Board employs him/ her, and summarize their reasons for seeking election.
- d) Nomination forms will be supplied by the school/council. All parent/guardian candidates should complete the forms and return them to the school **one week** prior to the election. Nominations will only be accepted after one week prior to the election, and will only be accepted from the floor on the day of elections if there are vacant positions.
- e) Information about each candidate supplied by the candidate themselves shall be made available to the school community at least one week prior to the election.
- f) If the number of declared candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates will be acclaimed at the first Council meeting of the academic year.
- g) If the number of declared candidates is higher than the number of positions, then an election will be called.

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- h) Elections for School Council shall be supervised by the Principal (or designate) and parent/guardian member(s) of council not seeking election.
- i) Candidate names shall be listed on ballots in alphabetical order.
- j) Voting shall be by secret ballot and neither proxy nor absentee voting is permitted.
- k) Only parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student enrolled in the school shall be entitled to one vote for each vacant parent/guardian position on the Council.
- l) Voting shall take place on the day of the first Council meeting
- m) Only the names of the successful candidates shall be made public (in the school's newsletter).
- n) Elections for teaching and non-teaching staff representative on council will be held during the first 30 days of each school year.
- o) A vacancy in the parent membership of the council shall be filled by election using the process outline in 3(a-n).

5 Term of Office

- a) The term of office for all school Council representatives is one academic year, (September until end of June) and any member may, if qualified, seek re election or re appointment.
- b) A person elected or appointed to council will hold office until the first meeting of the school council after elections.

6 Executive Officers

- a) The following executive officer positions are elected at the first meeting of the school council:
 - A Chair (Must be a parent member)
 - A Co Chair (s) (Must be parent members)
 - A Treasurer (Must be a parent member)
 - A Secretary (Must be a parent member)
 - o In the event that no parent member is available to fill secretary position, a staff member from the school may perform duties of secretary until a parent member is elected to fill the position

- b) Voting shall be by secret ballot and neither proxy nor absentee voting is permitted.
- c) Vacancies in the position of any officer shall be filled by election of another Member of Council.

7 Role of Council Members

a) Role of Chair/Co-Chairs

- Arrange for Council meetings;
- Chair Council meetings;
- Ensure that minutes of Council meetings are recorded and maintained;
- Facilitate conflict resolution;
- Communicate with the Principal on behalf of the Council;
- Communicate with school staff on behalf of the Council to assess student needs
- Consult with senior board staff and trustees as required on behalf of the Council;
- Act as joint signing officer;
- Chair, or their representative, shall sit on school committees, not limited to but including: School Budget Committee; School Improvement Plan Committee; School Staffing Committee; and School Safety Committee.

b) Secretary

- Complete records of all meetings in a timely manner;
- Prepare agendas for Council meetings in consultation with Council executives.
- Assist the Chair in the distribution of minutes to all Council Members, posts minutes, (once approved) on the Council bulletin board, and have them available to the parent body;
- Responsible for upkeep of all Council social media and communications to the parent body; (e.g. blog, twitter, email, newsletters etc.)

c) Treasurer

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- Act as custodian of the funds of the Council;
- Handle receipt and disbursement of Council monies;
- Keep proper records of all financial transactions;
- Arrange for verification of the Council's financial records in June of each year;
- Act as a Joint Signing Officer
- Prepare annual Public School Accounting Board (PSAB) report

d) Principal

- Provide guidance to Council;
- Facilitate and support its operation;
- Provide such information and advice as would enable members to function effectively in their respective roles.
- Post any materials distributed to members of the school council in the school, in a location that is accessible to parents/guardians/caregivers.
- Shall consider each recommendation made to the Principal by the school council and advise the council of the action taken in response to the recommendation in a timely manner.
- Shall solicit the views of the school council with respect to school action plans for improvement based on EQAO results and communication of those plans to the parent/guardian community.
- Act as alternative signing officer.

e) Elected Council Members

- All elected Members of Council represent the views and opinions of the parent community and are encouraged to attend and participate in all meetings;
- All elected Members are encouraged to participate in sub-committees, such as fundraising;
- All elected Members are encouraged to participate and facilitate any events that the Council holds during the school year.

8 Meetings

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- a) A minimum of six meetings per year and meet within the first 30 days of the school year.
- b) An Annual Meeting of the Council prior to the end of the school year.
- c) All committees including the fundraising Committee will meet as required throughout the year to carry out the strategic plans for Council's objectives and will make recommendations to, and report to Council, on its activities.
- d) Should a member of Council miss three consecutive meetings without sufficient notification to council, the executive may call a meeting with the member to determine the member's interest in the council.
- e) All Council members are required to attend a majority of the Council meetings.
- f) All council members are expected to arrive to meetings by the scheduled start time.
- g) A meeting of the Council cannot be held unless:
 - A majority (51%) of the current elected Members of the Council are present at the meeting including the principal or his/her designate.
 - A majority of the Members (51%) of the Council who are present in the meeting are elected parent/guardian Members
- g) All meetings of the Council shall be open to the public and be held at a location that is accessible to the public.

9. Decision-making

- a) All Council decisions will be made by majority vote, following Robert's Rules of Order.
- b) To ensure everyone on the council is be well informed prior to a vote, meeting agendas will be circulated to Council Members and the parent/guardian community at least **one week** prior to council meetings.
- c) Council will be given an opportunity to discuss all of the implications before a vote is called by the chair.

10. Voting

- a) Each elected member of the School Council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the Council.
- b) Each elected Council committee/sub committee member is entitled to one vote in votes taken at the committee/sub committee level.
- c) The Principal or VP of the school is not entitled to vote in votes taken by the Council or by a committee of the school Council.

- d) Approvals for expenditures to support Council/ School activities that occur in a limited time frame (i.e. end of year, or to meet an immediate deadline) can be approved through an email poll of the Council Members, copied to the Principal.

11 Quorum

Quorum will be a simple majority (51%) of elected Council Members.

12 Finances

- a) All expenditures of the Council require prior approval of the Council.
- b) All expenditures or account balances are to be reported and/or made available at each council meeting.
- c) All reports and summaries of expenditures and account balances should be kept in an accessible location within the school, and be made available to any parent/guardian member of the school community for review.
- d) The Council will not borrow funds or enter into any financial commitment for which funds are not already in hand.
- e) The Council shall maintain a bank account to which Council funds shall be deposited and from which payments by the Council shall be made. Cheques drawn on the bank account of the Council shall require the signature of two-elected member of the executive; two of the three must be the treasurer and Chair/Co-Chair.
- f) The signatures of any **2** of the following are authorized to sign cheques from the School Council bank account(s): the treasurer, the two co-chairs.
 - i. In the event that only **1** of either the treasurer or the two co-chairs is available to sign a cheque from the School Council Bank account(s), the Principal may sign, along with **1** of either the treasurer or the two co-chairs.

13 Committees

- a) The Council may establish committees as required to make recommendations to Council and to carry out projects of Council on an as need basis.
- b) Council shall have a fundraising and parent outreach/engagement standing committee, that will be Chaired by an elected Member of the Council and will

- recommend and report to Council on fundraising and parent engagement activities and expenditures to meet the objectives of the Council.
- c) All committees must be chaired by an elected Member of the Council and are open to parent/guardians of the school.
 - d) Standing Committee meetings like the Fundraising Committee must be open and accessible to the public.
 - e) Each member of a Committee is entitled to one vote at Committee meetings.

14 Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived or potential. Members of Council shall declare any 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 Council.

- a) A Member shall exclude themselves from discussions in which:
 - A conflict of interest is likely to result.
 - The Member's ability to carry out his/her duties and responsibilities as a Member of school Council may be jeopardized.
 - The Council Member, their 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 given by the Council.
- b) A Member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individual organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

15 Conflict Resolution

a. General Principles

The intent of this section is to provide a process for resolving conflict between school council members, members and chairs/co-chairs, school council and administration that affects the function and/or the physical or social environment of the council at George Syme CS.

It is the intent of this process to encourage school council members to resolve conflicts and foster good will through direct dialogue whenever possible, before following this formal resolution procedure.

It is also the intent of this process to keep relations at the school and school council constructive so that council members can carry out their purpose.

This policy is intended to work in tandem with existing TDSB laws/policies including the Employment Standards Act and the Human Rights Act, and not to supersede those laws or any policies of the TDSB.

b. **Definitions**

Conflict: A strong disagreement or a dispute between school council members, members and chairs/co-chairs, school council and administration or between parents and the school council resulting from.

- Differences of opinion, belief or understanding, or
- Differences of personality or behaviour, or
- Violation of council by-laws/school code of conduct.

Council Member: Any parent/guardian of the school who has been elected/identified as a member of the school council.

School Council Chair/Co-Chair: Member of the school council elected by membership as chair/co-chairs of the council.

Administration: The principal or his/her designate.

Mediation: A process where a neutral third party assists two conflicting people to come to agreement. This could involve the mediator speaking individually to the two people but ultimately must include the mediator facilitating a meeting between both of the conflicting people (s).

Resolution: An agreement by parties that solves the conflict.

c. **Procedure**

- (i) In light of a conflict between school council members, members and chairs/co-chairs, school council and administration council members the chair/co-chairs with support of administration will:

- (ii) Request a private meeting with the parties to try and resolve the conflict
- (iii) If conflict is within the entire council a special meeting will be called by the chair/co-chairs with the support of administration to mediate the conflict. At such a meeting:
 - Every Council Member and Member at Large will be given an opportunity to express his/her concern or opinion about the issue and impact of the dispute.
 - The Chair's/co-co-chairs responsibility is to clarify the statements made by all 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 will seek to clarify preferences from all members before proceeding.
 - If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the Chair shall request intervention of an independent third party to assist in achieving a resolution.
 - An independent third party may be a board official or another individual mutually agreed on by the parties involved in the dispute.
- (iv) If the conflict is with or between the chair/co-chairs and council then an executive member will lead the outlined process.
- (v) If the conflict is with the administration and the school council the chair/co-chairs will lead the outlined process.
- (vi) If the conflict is with the chair/co-chair members of the executive, beginning with chair/co-chairs, followed by Treasurer and secretary, the administrator may identify an external mediator to lead the process
- (vii) If the conflict occurs at council meeting and a Council Member or meeting attendee become disruptive during a meeting, the Chair after unsuccessfully asking for order, shall seek council approval for removal from the meeting, citing reasons for the request. This does not prevent the Member(s)/attendee from participating in future meetings of Council.
- (viii) When the Chair has requested the removal of a Member(s) from the meeting, the Chair shall request that the disputing Members 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 may be a private meeting, and shall not be construed as a meeting of the Council.

15 Annual Report

- a) The Council shall annually submit a written report of its activities to the Principal of the school and the Toronto District School Board.
- b) If the school Council engages in fundraising activities, the annual report shall include a report of those activities.
- c) The Principal shall, on behalf of the Council, give a copy of the report to every parent of a student who is enrolled in the school.
- d) Subsection (c) may be complied with by:
 - Giving the report to the student for delivery to their parent, and
 - Posting the report in the school in a place that is visible to the parents

16 Social Media/on-line communication

Council at its discretion will utilize any social media (twitter; Facebook; Instagram etc.) that will assist in fulfilling its purpose. All social media and on-line communication will:

- Be coordinated and managed by the secretary and co-chairs only; Adhere to all Anti-spam legislation and TDSB on-line Code of Conduct; Not compromise privacy of any student, staff member, parent/guardian of council or the school; and Be shut down at the discretion of council.

17 By-law Reform

Amendments to this by-law require a two thirds majority of elected Members present at a meeting of the Council.

Any proposed amendments are to be circulated in writing and/or electronically to Council members no less than 14 days prior to the meeting.

18 Ethics

All elected council members and members at large, will conduct themselves in accordance the attached Code of Ethics (APPENDIX A) and with the TDSB Operational Procedure PR585, the BOARD CODE OF CONDUCT

19 Effective Date



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These By-laws are effective as of April, 10, 2019.

APPENDIX A

GEORGE SYME COMMUNITY SCHOOL

SCHOOL COUNCIL

CODE OF ETHICS

- A member shall consider the best interests 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 council bylaws, school 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.



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- 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.