**Walter Perry Junior Public School
School Council By-Laws**

**May 1, 2014**

**Definition of a School Council**

The purpose of school councils is to provide a forum through which parents and other members for the school community can contribute to improving the student achievement, school performance and to enhance the accountability of the education system to the parents. The council builds mutual understanding and interaction between a school and its community resulting in benefits to both.

**Education Act**

Ontario Regulation 612/00 – School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees <http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_000612_e.htm>

 Ontario Ministry of Education: School Council a Guide for Members <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/council/council02.pdf>

**Mission Statement**

The Walter Perry Junior Public School’s, School Council will work in the best interests of the students of Walter Perry Junior Public School to develop and sustain a respectful environment. To ensure that all our students achieve a high level of academic and athletic achievement as determined by our provincial standards. We are committed to developing a comprehensive support system to meet the diverse needs of all our students and their families; promoting a meaningful parental and community involvement and actively seeking the views of the schools community.

**Council Code of Ethics**

* Abide by the legislation that governs School Councils – Ont. Reg. 612/00
* Be guided by the mission statement of the school and our School Council
* Endeavour to be familiar with school policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them
* Practice the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, and integrity
* Recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community
* Apply and adhere to democratic principles
* Foster a positive atmosphere in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued
* Consider the best interests of all students in our decisions and deliberations.
* Support decisions of the majority after honouring each member’s individual right to express opposing views and state their convictions and to disagree without being disagreeable
* Respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the School Council
* Never disclose confidential information
* Use the appropriate communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
* Focus on student learning and the best interests of all students;
* Be actively involved in setting school priorities for improving student achievement
* Promote meaningful parental and community involvement and actively seek the views of the school community
* Have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities
* Include members who represent the diverse views of their school communities;
* Keep well informed about school and board policies and procedures
* Have clear and consistent processes for decision making
* Communicate with the community about our activities
* Maintain high ethical standards
* Ensure members have developed a mutual trust and respect for one another

**Members 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 the 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

**Composition**

The School Council must be comprised of a majority of parents of students actively enrolled at the school. The School’s Principal and at least one member of the Teaching staff must be members. The School Council can also accept non-teaching staff members as well as representatives from the local community. Both the Principal and Teaching staff members and the non-teaching staff and community representatives are non-voting positions.

**Members**

**Parent Members**

Any parent of an actively enrolled student at Walter Perry Junior Public School may be elected to the School Council. All parent members have a voting role on the School Council. All members of the School Council must be nominated and elected to a position within the first 30 days of the school year. Each parent member is entitled to one (1) vote in any School Council issues or elections.

**The Principal**

The Principal is automatically appointed to the School Council. The Principal holds a non-voting position on the School Council.

**School Staff Representatives**

A minimum of one (1) Teacher representative may be appointed by the Principal to the School Council. The Teacher representative(s) hold non-voting positions on the School Council.

**Non-Teaching Staff**

A member of the non-teaching staff of the school may be appointed by the Principal to the School Council. The non-teaching member holds a non-voting position on the School Council.

**Community Representative**

The School Council can vote to extend a position on the School Council to a member of the local community who does not have a child actively enrolled at the school.

**Executive Committee**

The School Council will elect an Executive Committee each school year from among its membership. The Executive Committee is comprised of the following positions and the positions hold no additional voting rights over that of any member of the School Council. All members of the Executive Committee must attend eighty (80%) percent of meetings:

**Chairperson**

The chair/co-chairs of the council are elected by the council members and must be a parent or parents who are not employed by the school board. The chair/co-chairs are voting members who, in addition to performing the same duties as other council members, will:

* Arrange for meetings;
* Prepare agendas;
* Chair council meetings;
* Ensure that minutes of council meetings are recorded and maintained;
* Facilitate the resolution of conflict;
* Participate as ex-officio members of all committees established by the school council;
* Communicate with the school principal on behalf of the council.

**Vice-Chairperson**

The Vice Chairperson is responsible for conducting the meetings of the School Council in the absence of the Chairperson.

The Vice Chairperson must be a parent of a student actively enrolled at Walter Perry Junior Public School and must not be employed by the Toronto District School Board.

**Treasurer**

The Treasurer is responsible for the financial record keeping and reporting of the School Council.

The Treasurer must be a parent of a student actively enrolled at Walter Perry Junior Public School and must not be employed by the Toronto District School Board.

**Secretary**

The Secretary is responsible for taking, posting, distributing, and maintaining the minutes of all School Council meetings in compliance with Ontario Regulation 612/00 section 16, subsections 1, 2, and 3.

The Secretary must be a parent of a student actively enrolled at Walter Perry Junior Public School and must not be employed by the Toronto District School Board.

**Communications**

**Agendas**

Agendas must be prepared and distributed to the members of the School Council at least one (1) week prior to the scheduled meeting date.

Agendas shall be distributed by e-mail to the members of the School Council.

A copy of each Agenda must be posted in an accessible and noticeably visible location at the school and on the Walter Perry Junior Public School website through a designated member of the school staff as appointed by the Principal at least one (1) week prior to the scheduled meeting date.

Copies of each Agenda must be attached to the approved Minutes of each meeting with a hard copy stored at the school in a binder titled “Minutes of Meetings” for a minimum of four (4) years, and an electronic copy in .PDF copied to a compact disc and stored at the school for a minimum of four (4) years.

**Minutes of Meetings**

Minutes must be taken at each meeting of the School Council.

Minutes must include at a minimum: the date of the meeting, start time, who was in attendance, topics discussed, end time.

Minutes shall be distributed by e-mail to the members of the School Council no later than one (1) week from the date of the meeting for review and approval.

Minutes must be approved by at least two (2) voting members of the School Council no later than one (1) week from the date of the e-mail distribution.

Approval of minutes can be received by e-mail within the specified timeline above, however, a signature from at least two (2) voting members must be placed on a hard copy of the minutes and attached to the agenda for that meeting and stored at the school in a binder titled “Minutes of Meetings” for a minimum of four (4) years, and an electronic scanned copy of the signed minutes must be copied to a compact disc and stored at the school for a minimum of four (4) years.

Approved minutes of each meeting shall be distributed to all members of the School Council by e-mail within two (2) days of approval being received and posted to the Walter Perry Junior Public School website through a designated member of the school staff as appointed by the Principal at the start of each school year.

**Communication to the Parent Body**

Communications from the School Council to the parent body shall be made throughout the school year in the form of a Newsletter produced by the School Council.

All written communications from the School Council must be approved prior to distribution by at least two (2) members of the School Council and the Principal.

Copies of all written communications from the School Council must be kept in hard copy and electronically copied to a compact disc and stored at the school for a minimum of four (4) years.

All written communications from the School Council shall be distributed to the parent body through each student at the school and issued for distribution through the school administration office.

The School Council will provide labour to distribute all communications to the Teachers based on a distribution count by Teacher provided by the school administration.

The cost of all materials and equipment used for the distribution of written communications shall be determined between the School Council and the Principal at the start of each school year.

**Communication to the Community**

All communications from the School Council to the community must be approved by the School Council and the Principal prior to its release.

Media

To be determined on an individual case basis by the council and Principal.

School Website

The School Council shall determine through the Principal at the start of each school year, a designated member of the school staff responsible for the maintenance and posting of information to the Walter Perry Junior Public School website.

E-mail accounts

The School Council’s e-mail account is: walter.perry.parents@hotmail.com

**Meetings**

The School Council will conduct eight (8) meetings per school year held monthly.

The proposed dates of the meetings will be distributed to the parent body once determined at the beginning of the school year in and, posted in an accessible and noticeably visible location in the school, as well as posted electronically to the Walter Perry Junior Public School website within the first thirty (30) days of the school year.

School Council meetings must be attended by the following persons:

 The Principal or their designated representative

 The Teacher representative or a designated alternate

 The Chairperson and or Vice-Chairperson

 The Treasurer

 The Secretary

The Executive Committee members must each attend a minimum of eighty (80%) percent of the scheduled School Council meetings.

All School Council meetings must be attended by a majority of Parent Members.

All School Council meetings will contain a “Principal’s Report” on the performance of the school as it relates to the Toronto Board of Education and across the Province as well as events and initiatives being undertaken at the school.

**Consensus**

In trying to reach consensus, members have to put much effort into trying to find alternatives to which everyone can agree. Because everyone helps reach, and must agree to, the final decision, all members have the chance to influence and understand the decision. As a result, the final decision may be reached with less conflict than with a formal vote and should receive everyone’s support. One caution: the chair should ensure that everyone is heard equally and that quieter or less assertive members are not overshadowed by more vocal or assertive members.

Once a decision is reached by consensus, your council may choose to formalize it through a motion. The result of the vote should be unanimous.

***Decisions by consensus that are null and void***

Any decisions that contradict provincial laws and regulations, local policy, or school council bylaws are out of order and invalid.

**Voting**

Decisions reached by voting often expedite the business of a meeting as they usually take less time to reach.

If your council chooses to reach decisions by majority vote, everyone on the council should be well informed, and the council as a group should discuss all of the implications before a vote is called by the chair.

**Making a motion**

1. An individual must be recognized by the chair before “obtaining the floor” to make a motion. This means that the chair must let a person know that it is his or her turn before that person can speak to the council and formally propose a course of action.
2. Once an individual has the floor, he or she may make a formal proposal, or motion, beginning with the statement “I move that . . . ”.
3. Before the motion can be considered, another individual must second the motion by saying “I second the motion”. This does not necessarily indicate that he or she agrees with the proposal, only that he or she believes that it is worthy of discussion.
4. Once a motion has been made and seconded, the chair restates the motion (“states the question”) so that everyone clearly understands what is being proposed. From this point on, until the motion is voted on, all discussion must focus solely on the question.
5. If members of the group wish to discuss the motion, the chair opens debate. Each participant may speak to the question twice, but no one may speak a second time until everyone has had the chance to speak once.
6. If no one wants to speak further to the issue, the chair may ask the council if it is ready for “the question” (ready to vote on the proposal). The chair then repeats the motion and conducts the vote by asking for those in favor and those opposed. (The vote may be conducted by a show of hands, by standing, or by secret ballot.)
7. The majority needed to pass a motion should be stated in the school council bylaws. In case of a tie, the motion is defeated.

**Amending a motion**

Until the chair states the question (repeats the motion) for a final vote, the person who made the motion may change it, although the original seconder may wish to withdraw, requiring another seconder. Once the question has been stated, however, the motion can be amended in one of the following ways:

1. The person making the motion may ask to change the original wording. The chair will ask if anyone objects. If no one objects, the wording of the motion is changed. Debate continues on the motion as amended.
2. If someone does object, the question of whether to allow a change in the wording of the motion is put to a vote. If the group consents to the change, debate continues on the motion as amended.
3. Someone else may move to amend the motion by saying, “I move to amend the motion by...”. If so, the normal process for a motion, as outlined above in the “Making a Motion” section, is followed.
4. An amendment to the amendment may also be proposed, but a third amendment is out of order.
5. If the amendment has been defeated, discussion returns to the original motion.

**Withdrawing a motion**

1. At any time before a vote, the person making the original motion may ask to withdraw it. The motion to withdraw does not require a seconder. Once the question is withdrawn, it is as if it never existed.
2. If the chair has already stated the question and a request to withdraw the motion is made, the chair asks if there is any objection. If there is none, the motion is withdrawn. If someone objects, the request to withdraw the motion is put to a vote.

**Tabling a motion**

A motion to table a motion means to set it aside for discussion at another time so that more pressing business can be discussed or more information about the issues can be obtained. The following rules apply to tabling a motion:

The motion to table a motion takes precedence over the discussion of the motion.

The motion to table a motion requires a seconder. There can be no debate on a motion to table.

***Motions that are null and void***

Any motions that contradict provincial laws and regulations, local policy, or school council bylaws are out of order and invalid, even if voted on and passed by a majority vote.

**Election procedure By Laws**

**Timing of elections**

Elections for membership on the School Council must be held within the first thirty (30) days of the school year. With the election being conducted on the thirtieth (30) day or the last school day preceding the thirtieth (30) day.

1. *School council election committee.* The current school council will establish a school council election committee. The committee must ensure that a new council is in place within thirty days of the start of the school year in September. The committee should have representation from parents, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, and students.
2. *Considerations for the school council election process.* In any given year, the term of office for all school council positions is one year. Appeals related to the school council election process or results shall be resolved by the school council election committee. If the situation is not resolved, the school principal and the chair of the outgoing council shall jointly make a ruling.
3. *Election of parent/guardian representatives*

a)  Parents/guardians of a student enrolled at the school are eligible both to vote for and to run as parent candidates. Self-nomination will suffice. No additional qualifiers or quotas may restrict eligibility either to vote for or to run as a parent candidate (e.g., child’s program, grade, location of home). Candidates should be prepared to summarize their reasons for running for the school council. They must also declare if they are employed by the school board.

b)  Nomination forms shall be filed by all parent-candidates for elected positions on the school council. Parents may nominate themselves or other parents.

c)  Information about candidates shall be made available to the school community at least one week before the election.

d)  If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates shall be acclaimed.

e)  No individual campaign literature for school council elections may be distributed or posted in the school.

f)  School resources, both human and material, may not be used to support particular candidates or groups of candidates.

g)  The election day proceedings shall be publicized by the principal at least fourteen days prior to the election.

h)  The election day proceedings shall be supervised by the principal.

i)  The principal shall conduct a lottery to determine the ballot position for each candidate.

j)  Elections for school council shall be conducted by secret ballot. Voters must be present at the school on the election day(s) during the preset hours for voting (to include both daytime and evening hours).

 k)  All eligible voters shall be entitled to cast one vote for each of the candidate positions available. Casting more than the maximum number of votes permitted in the category spoils the ballot.

l)  Ballots shall be counted by the principal in the presence of at least two parents who are not election candidates.

m)  If there is a tie for the final position for a representative on the school council, the winner shall be determined by lot.

1. *Election of the non-teaching staff representative*

*a)  The principal, in consultation with the election committee, will make the necessary arrangements for the non-teaching staff representative to be elected.*

*b)  Anyone assigned to the non-teaching staff of the school (full- or part-time) may be a candidate.*

1. *Appointment or election of the student representative*

*a)  For elementary schools. The principal will consult with other members of the school council to determine if there is to be a student representative on the council. If a positive decision is reached, the principal appoints a student representative to the council.*

*b)  For a secondary school. If the school has a student council, it will appoint a student representative to the council. Otherwise, the principal, in consultation with the election committee, will make the necessary arrangements for the election of the student representative.*

1. *Selection of community representatives.* All appointments of community representatives to the school council are to be by majority vote at a meeting of the school council.

**Filling Vacancy By Laws**

1. Should an elected parent/guardian council position become vacant before the next election, the council shall fill the vacancy by appointment from the non-elected candidates from the previous election.
2. If none of the previous candidates remain interested in becoming a council member, the council may request that interested parents/guardians from the school community submit their names for consideration. The council shall then appoint one of those who indicate an interest.
3. When a vacant spot on council is filled, the new member’s term shall expire at the time of the next election.

**Conflict of Interest By Laws**

1. A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential.
2. Members 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 conflict or interest is likely to result;

The members’ ability to carry out his or her duties and responsibilities as a member of the school council may be jeopardized;

The school member, his or her relatives or a business entity in which the member may have an interest, may gain or benefit directly as a result of the actions that may be taken by the principle or board in response to advice the council provides to the principal or to the board.

1. A member shall not accept favors or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

**Conflict Resolution Bylaws**

1. Every school council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her concern or opinion about the issue at dispute and how the dispute has affected him or her.
2. Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
3. Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
4. The chair’s 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.
5. If no common ground can be identified, the chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
6. If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the chair shall request the intervention of a superintendent or other senior administrator to facilitate a resolution to the conflict.