

Dundas Valley Secondary School

School Council By-Laws 2024



DUNDAS VALLEY
SECONDARY SCHOOL

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Preamble

School Councils are not required to have a Constitution. In its absence, Ontario Regulation 612 of the Education Act acts as the Constitution. For reference purposes, it is convenient to reinforce the **Purpose of School Council**, as per the Regulation.

Purpose:

(1) The purpose of school council is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.

(2) A school council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations in accordance with the Regulation to the principal of the school and the board that established the council.

Mandate:

- 1) *Place students interest first.*
- 2) *Support school success planning goals.*
- 3) *Encourage Parent and community involvement.*
- 4) *Promote positive attitudes toward public education.*

Dundas Valley School Council Operating and Procedural By-Laws

By-Law 1 - Membership

It is expected that membership will reflect the diversity of the school community and therefore council shall be comprised of the following:

- 1.1 Council membership has been set at a maximum of 24 voting members, minimum of 8 members (maximum 20 parent/guardian (voting) members; minimum 5 parent/guardian (voting) members; plus 4 members from the school (see 1.4 - 1.7). At DVSS this would include the principal, or principal representative, a teacher, a non-teacher from the school, a student, and an optional community representative. All members of the public are allowed to attend meetings as non-voting participants.
- 1.2 Parents/guardians of students enrolled at DVSS, are qualified to be voting members.
- 1.3 Parents/guardians who are employed by HWDSB can be members of the school council provided they reside within the boundaries of the school, or their student

has board permission to attend the school and disclose their employment to the School Council at the first meeting.

- 1.4 Student representative shall be a member of Student Council or delegate.
- 1.5 Principal of the school or delegate.
- 1.6 At least one teacher elected by fellow teachers.
- 1.7 A member of the DVSS non-teaching staff.
- 1.8 The council may include other members as deemed appropriate to reflect the school's community.

By-Law 2 – Nomination and Election Procedures

- 2.1 An election of new parent/guardian members of school council shall be held during the first 30 school days of each school year, on a date that is fixed by the chair/co-chairs after consulting with the principal (Reg. 612).
- 2.2 The principal shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent/guardian members, on behalf of the council, give written notice of the date, time, and location of the election to every parent/guardian of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school (Reg. 612).
- 2.3 A person is qualified to be a parent/guardian member of school council if he or she is a parent or representative guardian of a student who is enrolled in the school (Reg. 612).
- 2.4 A person is not qualified to be a parent/guardian member if he or she is employed at the school or employed elsewhere by the HWDSB, unless he or she takes reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent members of that employment (Reg. 612).
- 2.5 A person is qualified to vote in an election of parent/guardian members of school council if he or she is a parent or representative guardian of a student who is enrolled in the school (Reg.612).
- 2.6 Self-nominations are welcome and encouraged, and previous members of council can re-nominate themselves to remain on council for the school year. Nomination forms will be distributed at the first meeting of the school year. If a parent/guardian is unable to attend, they may request a self-nomination form from the principal and return it prior to the meeting.
- 2.7 The chair/co-chairs will confirm eligibility and interest in participating.
- 2.8 If more than 20 parent/guardian nominations are received, a vote will take place to confirm voting membership. Otherwise, all members are acclaimed.

- 2.9 No individual campaign literature may be distributed or posted in the school. A fact sheet listing qualifications and goals may be distributed to households and/or at the candidates' forum.
- 2.10 If necessary, the election of parent/guardian members shall be by secret ballot (Reg. 612) or on-line survey and a minimum of 2 representatives shall review the ballots/submissions. The principal will hand out the ballots, if the meeting is hybrid or online, online voters will be sent a link to complete a confidential online survey vote via the Teams platform.
- 2.11 Voters must be present at the meeting on the day of the election, during the hours of the election, either in-person or online.

By-Law 3 – Voting Member

- 3.1 Each parent/guardian member of school council can be a voting member for votes taken by council (Reg.612). All other members, except the principal have the choice to become a voting member.
- 3.2 Each parent/guardian member of school council should declare voting intent for the school year by the end of the second meeting held after the school year begins.
- 3.3 Each voting member may lose the privilege of voting if they have 2 or more unexplained absences.
- 3.4 Any HWDSB staff members not attending the meeting as a parent/guardian member of school council are not entitled to vote in votes taken by school council.

By-Law 4 – Voting

- 4.1 Each voting parent/guardian member of school council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by council (Reg.612).
- 4.2 Each voting parent/guardian member of school council is entitled to one written proxy vote in votes taken by council.
- 4.3 Each voting member of a committee (By-Law 6) of school council is entitled to one vote in votes taken by the committee (Reg.612).
- 4.4 Communication via email may be used when school consultation is sought. Topics will be presented electronically or hard copies to members. Members shall vote in accordance with the terms of the communication and within council by-laws.

By-Law 5 – Term of Office

- 5.1 A person elected or acclaimed as a member of school council holds office from the date he or she is elected or acclaimed until the date of the first meeting of the school council after the elections held in the next school year (Reg. 612).
- 5.2 A member of school council may be re-elected or re-appointed (Reg. 612).
- 5.3 A council member should ideally have served a minimum of one year on council before holding an executive position, unless the council has been newly established, or if it's a co-chair, vice-chair, or secretary position.
- 5.4 Teachers shall be elected annually or appointed monthly by their peers as their representative on school council.
- 5.5 Names of the council chair/co-chairs will be forwarded to the appropriate board official within 30 days of the election results by the principal.
- 5.6 Names of council members will be published to the school community on the DVSS website after the election.

By-Law 6 - Vacancies

- 6.1 A vacancy in the office of chair/ co-chairs and secretary shall be filled by election from its current members.
- 6.2 Member attendance is important and valued and members are expected to attend regularly. Unexplained absences of 2 consecutive meetings may result in loss of voting privileges.
- 6.3 If a teacher or non-teaching representative vacancy occurs, the principal shall arrange for a replacement, where possible.

By-Law 7 – Officers’/Members’ Roles and Responsibilities **Chair/Co-Chairs**

- 7.1 Chair/co-chairs or vice-chair must be parent/guardian members of the school council and shall be elected by the members of council (Reg. 612).
- 7.2 A person who is employed by the HWDSB cannot be a chair/co-chair of council (Reg. 612).
- 7.3 The chair's/co-chairs' primary role is to be the school council's facilitator and community contact person for community-related issues.
- 7.4 The chair/co-chairs shall make every effort to encourage widespread participation of every council member.
- 7.5 The chair/co-chairs must be diligent in ensuring that any views presented in the capacity of chairperson represent the position of the council.

- 7.6 Participate in orientation of new members.
- 7.7 The chair/co-chairs are the mechanism for disseminating information to the other members of council. (e.g., agenda, meeting minutes)
- 7.8 Call to order and chair the council meetings which are open to the public and are held both in-person at the school and/or in a hybrid format.
- 7.9 Prepare the agenda, in consultation with the principal, based on the members' submitted topics, requests and information received and the principal's report.
- 7.10 Have the agenda and all relevant topic materials available at the school and e- mailed to all council members prior to the next scheduled meeting to facilitate proactive discussion and decision making.
- 7.11 Ensure the appropriate facilities and equipment are ready for the start of the meeting.
- 7.12 Consult with executive council members, staff of the school board and trustees, as requested.
- 7.13 Report back to council on any, and all relevant information gained from meetings attended in the capacity of council chair/co-chair.
- 7.14 Attend, or send a delegate to, the board workshop on Effective Meeting Procedures or other Board sponsored school council training.
- 7.15 Communicate regularly with the school principals and school community.
- 7.16 Ensure the school council information is updated and maintained on the DVSS website.
- 7.17 Request posting of the minutes of the meeting, after they have been approved by the council. The chair and the principal should approve the minutes before they are brought forward to the meeting for approval.
- 7.18 Facilitate resolutions of conflict.
- 7.19 Disseminate council by-laws before first council meeting.

Secretary

- 7.20 Record the minutes of the meetings. Send/E-mail minutes of meetings to chair/co-chairs at least 72 hours prior to the next meeting.
- 7.21 Record and audit attendance at meetings.

Council Members (includes all members)

- 7.22 Act as representatives of the entire school community by consulting with parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by council.
- 7.23 Encourage parents/guardians and others within the school community to participate in education in the school.
- 7.24 Bring new community and school related concerns/items to the meetings, promote new people to attend the meeting, advertise through social media to bring your questions and concerns to the meeting.
- 7.25 Act as liaison between the school and the community.
- 7.26 Notify the chair/co-chairs if unable to attend a scheduled meeting.
- 7.27 Become familiar with Council By-laws.

Principal

- 7.28 On behalf of school council, give written notice of the date, time, and location of the election to every parent/guardian of a student who is enrolled in the school (Reg. 612).
- 7.29 On behalf of the council, give written notice of the dates, times, and locations of the meetings of council to every parent/guardian of a student who is enrolled in the school (Reg. 612).
- 7.30 Forward relevant information from HWDSB and the Ministry to the council.
- 7.31 Support and promote the council's activities.
- 7.32 Seek input from the council in areas that affect its purpose and objectives and the school community at large.
- 7.33 Act as a resource on laws, regulations, board policies and collective agreements.
- 7.34 Obtain and provide information required by the council to enable it to make informed decisions.
- 7.35 Communicate with the chair/co-chairs of the council as required.
- 7.36 Ensure that copies of the meeting minutes are kept at the school for 4 years.
- 7.37 Assist the council in encouraging participation of all groups within the school community.

7.38 Co-operatively help plan the agenda with the council chair/co-chairs.

By-Law 8 - Committees

- 8.1 Every committee of school council must include at least one (1) parent/guardian member of council (Reg. 612).
- 8.2 A committee may include persons who are not members of council (Reg. 612).

By-Law 9 - Delegations

- 9.1 Individuals may approach the chair/co-chairs or the principal to have an issue placed on the agenda. This request must be received at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.
- 9.2 Delegations will be limited to 10 minutes unless otherwise approved by council members.
- 9.3 Whenever possible delegations and guest presenters will be scheduled to present after the approval of minutes (at the beginning of the agenda).
- 9.4 Any items brought to the meeting should be tabled to the next meeting at the discretion of the chair/co-chairs, especially if it will extend the meeting excessively or requires further review.

By-Law 10 - Quorum

- 10.1 For the purpose of a vote, quorum will be met if 50% + 1 of the parent/guardian and student council (voting) members of council are present or have given prior notice to the chair. No proxy or absentee votes are permitted without prior notice to the chair/co-chairs.
- 10.2 If it is known that a vote will be taken at the council meeting, votes may be emailed to the chairs/co-chairs or principal in advance of the meeting.
- 10.3 No council business shall be transacted without a quorum.

By-Law 11 – Conflict Resolution

- 11.1 Every School Council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her opinion/concern about a topic without interruption.
- 11.2 Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.

- 11.3 If a council member or members become disruptive during a meeting, the chair/co-chairs shall ask for order.
- 11.4 If all efforts to restore order fail or the unbecoming behavior continues, the chair/co-chairs may direct the individual member or members to leave the meeting, citing the reasons for the request.
- 11.5 When a member of council has a complaint regarding the actions of one or more members of council, or the By-Laws and procedures, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the chair/co-chairs in writing.
- 11.6 The chair/co-chairs shall allow the complainant to voice their concerns at the next meeting of council. Prior to the meeting, the chair/co-chairs should provide the council with a copy of the complaint.
- 11.7 After the complainant has voiced his or her concerns and all other representations have been heard, council shall vote to resolve the matter.

By-Law 12 – Conflict of Interest

- 12.1 Should a council member, including the executive, find that he or she has a conflict with regards to council business, that member shall declare such conflict at the beginning of the meeting and absent themselves from discussion and voting.
- 12.2 Every declaration of conflict and the nature thereof shall be recorded in the minutes.

By-Law 13 – Meeting Procedures

- 13.1 DVSS council schedules 7 meetings a year. Each newly elected council may decide to adjust the number of meetings at the first meeting of the year but must ensure that the mandatory minimum of 4 meetings are met.
- 13.2 Meetings are open to the entire school community.
- 13.3 The agenda, last meeting minutes and relevant topic materials are to be distributed to members via email at least 24 hours prior to the next scheduled meeting.
- 13.4 The agenda shall have the following: a) item number; b) topic; or c) person responsible.
- 13.5 Previous meeting minutes shall be reviewed and adopted first, advertised agenda issues second and any new business items shall be discussed last. Meeting minutes must be approved prior to public posting.

- 13.6 If there is a disagreement concerning procedures used during meetings, then “Roberts Rules of Order” will apply.
- 13.7 Accepted meeting minutes are to be recorded, maintained, and posted on the DVSS website and made available to the community members upon request.
- 13.8 Council members can call an emergency council meeting at the request of three members.

By-Law 14 - Amendments

- 14.1 Any proposed change or addition to the constitution or by-laws must be submitted in writing to the chair/co-chairs prior to the next scheduled meeting and be placed on the agenda. The change must be presented in motion form and passed by a 2/3rd majority of voting members.
- 14.2 The constitution and its by-laws shall be posted to the website and reviewed annually and updated every 5 years at a minimum, or when deemed necessary, or when the Ministry of Education or the HWDSB necessitate a change.

By-Law 15 – Annual Report

- 15.1 Every school council shall annually submit a written report on its activities to the principal of the school and the HWDSB (Reg.612).
- 15.2 If the council engages in fundraising activities, the annual report shall include a report on those activities (Reg.612).
- 15.3 The principal shall, on behalf of school council, post the report on the school’s website. (Reg.612).

Appendix A – Definitions

1. **Robert’s Rules of Order:** Provides common rules and procedures for deliberation and debate in order to place the whole membership on the same footing and speaking the same language. The conduct of ALL business is controlled by the general will of the whole membership - the right of the deliberate majority to decide. For a complete explanation of Robert’s Rules, please refer to this website: <http://www.robertsrules.org/>

2. **Quorum:** the minimum number of members necessary to conduct the business of that group; in our case, 50% + 1 of voting members.
3. **Voting members:** those allowed to vote on School Council business, to include all elected/acclaimed parent/guardian members.

Appendix B – Communications and Announcements

School Council Meeting dates and times should be communicated to the membership and school at large via a **variety of methods** which can include:

1. Include details in the monthly calendar on the **school newsletter**.
2. Direct email or **School Messenger** facilitated by the principal.
3. Include on the **school sign**.
4. **School website** – highlight meetings as well as council’s activities and accomplishments, facilitated by the principal.
5. Caregiver **engagement events** based on areas of interest identified by caregivers.
6. Set up **table at school events** (Grade 8 Orientation, Open House, etc.)
7. **Social media** (standards tags are suggested by HWDSB).