

# CONSTITUTION OF OSGOODE PUBLIC SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

Revised: September 11, 2007

## ARTICLE I: NAME

This organization shall be known as the “Osgoode School Council,” hereinafter referred to as the “Council.”

## ARTICLE II: MISSION

To encourage respect and teamwork to improve the School’s atmosphere.  
To encourage and instill pride in the School and a positive community spirit.  
To promote academic excellence.

## ARTICLE III: MANDATE

The four main objectives of the Council shall be: 1) to develop a strong relationship between home, school and the wider community served by the school through information sharing and encouraged involvement; 2) to enhance educational opportunities for all students; 3) to promote an environment that helps all students to develop to their full potential; and 4) to provide advice to the principal and, as appropriate, to the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board and/or staff, on the development and implementation of policies, programs and services affecting the school.

## ARTICLE IV: JURISDICTION

The Council shall provide advice to the school Principal, and where appropriate, the Ottawa-Carleton Board of Education on any of the matters listed below:

- the Osgoode school year calendar;
- the Osgoode code of student behaviour;
- curriculum, program goals, and priorities;
- the responses of Osgoode Public School or the School Board to achievement in provincial and Board assessment programs;
- preparation of the Osgoode school profile;
- selection of principals;
- Osgoode budget priorities, including local capital improvement plans;
- Osgoode/community communication strategies;
- methods of reporting to parents and the community;
- extracurricular activities at Osgoode;
- Osgoode based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreational and nutrition programs;
- community use of Osgoode facilities;
- local coordination of services for children and youths;
- development, implementation and review of Board policies at Osgoode; and

- other matters that the Council considers appropriate.

#### ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Council shall consist of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Principal, Vice-Principal (optional), Secretary, Treasurer, Fundraising Coordinator, Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of Schools Council Representative (optional), Community Representative (optional), Teacher Representative, Non-Teaching Staff member (optional), Student Representative (optional) and Council Members Without Portfolio.

The minimum Council size is 10. The maximum number of Council members is 20. However, should any of the aforementioned “optional” positions be filled, then the maximum number of Council members will be increased accordingly, that is, to 21 or 22.

Board employees may run for a position as a parent representative on any school Council at a school where their children are enrolled or registered, and this entitles them to express their views as any other parent on a school Council.

Trustees may attend Council meetings as observers, but not as voting members.

The composition of the Council should reflect the diversity of the community served by the school. In defining a school community, considerations may include geography and/or school boundaries; language; and culture, ethnocultural, economic, business, demographic and socioeconomic considerations including representation for adult students, single parents and seniors.

#### ARTICLE VI: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Council members shall: a) be familiar with the Constitution; b) attend Council meetings regularly; c) treat each other with mutual respect; d) participate actively in the work of the Council; and e) support the work of the Council in the community, and bring forward to the Council views of others along with their own.

All members shall serve on a voluntary basis. No honoraria shall be paid to a person who undertakes a task as a Council member or who serves on a committee of this Council.

#### ARTICLE VII: TERM OF OFFICE

The Council members, excluding the Principal, Vice-Principal, Community Representative, Teacher, Non-Teaching Staff member, and Student Representative, shall be elected during the October Council meeting to serve for

a period of 1 school year with the provision that they may stand for reelection, to any position.

The Teacher Representative and Non-Teaching staff member shall serve for 1 or 2 years, or may rotate through teachers and staff respectively on a monthly basis.

A Council member shall be deemed to have resigned if he/she fails to attend 3 consecutive meetings unless the circumstances of the absence can be justified to Council. When a Council member must be absent from a meeting, that member may have his/her "second" attend and vote on their behalf. If the "second" is to be present, it is the Council member's responsibility to direct the "second" to identify themselves to the Chair prior to the meeting.

"Seconds" are prohibited from acting in any executive capacity on the Council.

If a Council member fails to carry out his or her duties in keeping with his or her responsibilities, resolutions will be determined by a majority of the Council with prejudice.

#### ARTICLE VIII: ELECTION OF THE COUNCIL

Elections are required on an annual basis to establish the parent/guardian representation on the new Council. Notice of an election must be made public at least 2 weeks in advance of an election meeting.

Any parent or guardian who has a child at Osgoode Public School is eligible to stand for election. Declarations of candidacy for an election will be accepted up until the time voting begins, provided the person nominated is present and agrees, or if the person is not present, his/her consent is delivered to the Chair. The Nominating Committee (see Article Xa) will assemble a list of eligible election candidates prior to the election and present the list at the election meeting.

Elections are to be conducted consistent with accepted principles of democratic elections.

The existing Council will ensure that adequate provisions for a closed ballot process are made including the preparation of ballots, sealed ballot containers, and the appointment of a non-Council person to count the ballots and report the results.

All parents/guardians of children attending Osgoode Public School are eligible to vote. Voting by proxy is not allowed.

The ballot results will be reported by total number of votes cast for each candidate at the election meeting. Based on the reported results, the Chair (or Acting Chair) of the existing Council will announce the candidates elected to the new Council at the election meeting.

In the case of a tie, where the tied candidates have the least number of votes, a second closed ballot will be conducted for the tied candidates to determine the final election results.

Elected members decide amongst themselves who will hold each of the Council offices within 30 days of the election, that is, by the next Council meeting. The Chair must be a parent member.

Should a Council position not be filled following the October election meeting or become vacant at any time during the one year term, the duties shall be shared amongst the remaining Council until such time as the position is filled.

If desired, each elected member will name, in writing, a “second” at this time. A “second” must have a parent/guardian relationship to the child/children attending Osgoode Public School on whose basis the Council member was nominated.

A member may change his/her “second” should their family situation change during their term of office. This can be done by writing a letter to the Chair who will in turn present the change at the next Council meeting.

The Teacher Representative shall be elected by the teaching staff, or teachers may choose to rotate monthly to share the load. The Non-Teaching staff representative shall be elected by the members of the non-teaching staff. This is an optional position and may not be filled.

The Student Representative shall be elected by the students.

The Community Representative cannot be a parent or guardian of an enrolled Osgoode student, and shall be appointed by the Council in May after the election.

#### VIIIa: General Election

Elections are to be held at the regular scheduled Council meeting in October.

If the number of declared candidates is less than or equal to the maximum number of parent/guardian representatives, that is 16, at the start of the election meeting, the election will be declared by the Chair to be complete by acclamation, or else a closed ballot process will be conducted.

If the maximum complement of parent/guardian representatives, that is 16, is not elected in October, a subsequent by-election meeting will be held in December.

#### VIIIb: By-election

If necessary, an election, known as a by-election, will be held in December to fill any remaining positions on the Council to achieve the parent/guardian maximum complement of 16.

#### ARTICLE IX: DUTIES

Each Council member has the right to coordinate volunteer teams to assist in their respective area, for example, a fundraising team.

Three parent members of the Council have signing authority: the Chair, the Treasurer, and 1 other selected officer.

#### A. Chair

- calls Council meetings
- prepares the agenda items for Council meetings. Consults with the Principal and then forwards said agenda to the Secretary prior to the date of the meeting.
- chairs all Council meetings according to the procedures outlined in Article XII
- ensures minutes for the Council meetings are recorded and maintained
- ensures that all relevant preparations for meetings are undertaken, e.g., pertinent documents are made available and distributed
- participates in information and training programs
- communicates with the school Principal
- ensures that there is regular communication with the school community
- consults with senior Board staff and Trustees as required
- prepares the annual report of the Council for the Director of Education that is presented at the annual May meeting
- ensures that a current principal profile is on file with the Board by October 31st of each year
- oversees implementation of all decisions for action agreed to at meetings
- has the right to withhold his or her vote and use it to break a tie when motions are voted upon
- acts as signing officer for official papers
- serves as liaison between Council, staff, Principal, Board, Trustees and Ministry
- invites the participation of all Osgoode parents

- ensures that there is a Nominating Committee in place for the December By-election, if necessary

#### B. Vice-Chair

- presides at meetings of the Council in the absence of the Chair
- assists the Chair in any of his/her other roles and responsibilities as may be delegated from time-to-time
- assumes the duties of the Chair temporarily if said duties cannot be carried out by the Chair

#### C. Principal

- supports and promotes the Council's activities
- seeks input from the Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibility
- acts as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies and collective agreements
- provides information, including the budgets for the school and for school-generated funds, required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions
- communicates with the Chair, as required
- ensures that copies of the minutes of the Council's meetings are kept at the school
- assists the Council in communicating with the school community
- encourages the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community, in the life of the school and the activities of the Council
- provides information on the needs of Osgoode school, and Board wide issues at each meeting

#### D. Vice-Principal (optional)

- assists the Principal in any of his/her responsibilities
- assumes the duties of the Principal whenever necessary

#### E. Secretary

- ensures that adequate notice of meetings, the agenda, and previous minutes are available to all members
- maintains a full and accurate account of all Council meetings, and ensures that the minutes are signed by the Chair following their adoption by the Council
- prepares correspondence as required
- ensures the safekeeping of Council records
- provides for inspection of the minute book and records of the Council to any member of Council or members

of the school's community, on request

- oversees that all records are passed on to the next Secretary. Records will be kept for a minimum of 10 years as they are part of the history of the Council

F. Treasurer

- takes charge of any finances of the Council
- provides an annual financial report to the Council and the membership at large
- performs other related duties as may be assigned by the Chair
- supervises all of the money/securities belonging to the Council and shall ensure all moneys received are deposited in a chartered bank or credit union to be designated by the Council
- ensures that any money collected be counted by 2 persons
- acts as 1 of 3 persons with signing authority for dispersing funds on behalf of the Council
- prepares and presents financial status reports at each Council meeting

G. Fundraising Coordinator

- creates, researches, promotes, seeks input on, and carries out fundraising activities to meet the financial requirements of the Council
- collects and submits all money collected to the Treasurer on a timely basis
- provides reports on, and results of fundraising activities at the meetings

H. Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Council Representative (optional)

- tables Council concerns, and acts as an unbiased voting representative for Osgoode Public School at Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Council (O-C.A.S.C.) meetings
- provides a summary report from O-C.A.S.C. at Council meetings. In the event of a conflict between Council and O-C.A.S.C. meetings, a written report can be provided at the Council meeting instead of an oral one
- obtains Council input for issues to be tabled at upcoming O-C.A.S.C. meetings. Should an issue arise that demands immediate attention, the O-C.A.S.C. representative contacts the Chair and Vice-Chair to determine whether a Council meeting should be called, and/or to obtain advice on how to handle the situation.

I. Community Representative (optional)

- represents the interests of the community

J. Teacher Representative

- represents the interests of the teachers at Osgoode Public School

K. Non-Teaching Staff Member (optional)

- represents the interests of support staff members at Osgoode Public School

L. Student Representative (optional)

- represents the interests of students at Osgoode Public School

M. Council Members Without Portfolio

- represents the interests of parents at Osgoode Public School

N. All Council Members

- represent the interests of all students at Osgoode Public School
- participate in Council meetings
- participate in information and training programs
- act as a link between the Council and the community
- encourage the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community

ARTICLE X: STANDING COMMITTEES

Standing Committees are created by, and must report to, the current Council. Each must be chaired by a Council member. The size, structure, mandate, and meeting schedule are to be determined by the Standing Committee's chair.

Xa: Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is composed of the members of the retiring Council. Its duty is to ensure that there are enough nominees to fill all of the elective offices, and to present candidates for election when offices become vacant before the one year term has expired.

ARTICLE XI: AD HOC COMMITTEES

Can be appointed by the Council at any time an issue needs to be referred to a smaller body for consideration, and exists only for the length of time required to study an issue and make recommendations.

Ad Hoc Committees are appointed after a motion to that effect is passed by the whole meeting. It can consist of any number of individuals, and must be chaired by a Council member. Membership on an Ad Hoc Committee will be at least 2 Council members not of the same household.

An Ad Hoc Committee's final report should be in writing and distributed to members of the Council in advance of the meeting at which it will be considered.

## ARTICLE XII: COUNCIL MEETINGS: Procedures

### XIIa: Scheduling Meetings

Meetings of the Council shall be open to all parents of students attending Osgoode Public School, and the general public. No one may be excluded from a meeting except for disruptive behaviour.

Meetings shall be held once a month during the school year on dates scheduled to provide fairness and convenience to its members. A minimum of 4 meetings must be held per year.

Extra meetings of the Council may be held providing proper notice of the time and date has been circulated to all Council members, parents and staff.

### XIIb: Notice of Meetings

Notice of Council meetings will be posted on the Council's notice board, and be circulated to parents/guardians in the school's newsletter. In addition, the community at large shall be given notice of meetings and informed of the Council's activities by posting on community notice boards or giving notice in community newsletters or other local media.

The notice of a meeting should include information about the nature of the business to be dealt with. If possible, copies of reports or other supporting papers relating to the matters to be considered should be attached so that potential participants can give the issues thought prior to the meeting.

### XIIc: Annual General Meeting

The October monthly meeting will be the Annual General Meeting open to all members of the school's community, to be held in conjunction with the elections for parent/guardian representatives.

### XIId: Adjourning Meeting

If a meeting must be adjourned until another day to complete its business, the next meeting is in effect the same meeting and should have the same agenda, as if there had been no break in the proceedings.

Meetings can be adjourned by either the Chair when all business is completed, or at any time during the meeting if a motion has passed to that effect.

### XIIe: Quorum

A quorum, which is 50% of the Council members plus one, is required at each Council meeting. Official business cannot be transacted in the absence of a quorum. Should members leave in the course of a meeting that has begun with a quorum, proceedings must cease at the point at which the number attending falls

below a quorum. The Chair at this point adjourns the meeting to a later date if items remain on the agenda that still require decision.

#### XIIf: Order

The Chair calls the meetings to order to begin the proceedings; announces the items of business in the order in which they appear on the agenda; reads the motions to the meeting as they are put so that they can be formally debated; submits motions or other proposals for final decision by vote; and having determined the sense of the meeting announces that the motion or proposal has been carried or lost. The Chair adjourns the meeting if a further consecutive meeting is required, or closes it if all the business of the present meeting has been accomplished.

At meetings, all remarks should be addressed to the Chair. A member, having signaled a desire to speak, must await recognition by the Chair. The Chair is the judge of relevancy and can interrupt a speaker who is deviating unduly from the main thread of the discussion. It is the duty of the Chair to be ready and able at all times to maintain order, that is, to ensure the meeting proceeds and that deliberations remain calm. If there is a disturbance, the Chair must courteously halt the meeting, interrupting a speaker if necessary, and call for order.

If order cannot be restored this simply, the Chair can recess the meeting for a brief period or, in the event of a serious disturbance, adjourn the meeting to another day. The Chair does not have the authority to discipline an offending member or to impose penalties.

The Chair must decide, subject to appeal, all questions of order and procedure, and must at all times preserve the order and decorum essential to calm deliberation, effective use of the available time, and general agreement that fair and equitable processes have led to acceptable conclusions.

#### XIIg: Absence of Chair

Should circumstances arise in which both the Chair and Vice-Chair are unavoidably absent at a Council meeting, the members present must approve a motion calling upon another person to act as Chair. If the Chair or Vice-Chair appear during the meeting which is being chaired by a temporary appointee, the latter concludes the items of business under consideration, then steps down in favour of the regular Chair.

#### XIIh: Minutes

The Secretary shall keep a record of minutes of the proceedings of the Council meetings. The minutes of each meeting should record the place, date and time at which it was held; the name of the presiding officer; a list of those attending, and

any other relevant details, such as the attendance of guests or regrets sent by members unable to attend. The minutes should accurately record the actions taken and decisions made by the meeting in regard to the items of business it considered. They should not attempt to be a verbatim account of the meeting. Reports or other documents vital to the business of a meeting should be referred to in the minutes of that meeting and appended to them as an integral part of the minutes.

#### XIIIi: Parliamentary Authority

The Council will operate in a manner that is: nonjudgmental, based on no-fault discussion, and uses consensus and compromise as the usual method for developing recommendations and/or plans. Where doubt exists as to procedural issues *21st Century Robert's Rules of Order*, (The Philip Lief Group, Inc., Dell Publishing, 1995) shall govern.

#### XIIIj: Formal Hand Over Routine

At the end of the October meeting, there will be a formal hand over from the outgoing Council to the new Council. People who have held key positions or chaired subcommittees will be required to meet with their successors and brief them on the status of their portfolios. Also, any supporting documentation should be turned over to the new Council members at this time.

### ARTICLE XIII: SPECIAL MEETINGS

The Principal, and the Chair have the authority to call Special Meetings when circumstances arise that require immediate attention. Should this Special Meeting fail to reach a quorum (that is, 50% plus one Council members), it can proceed as an information meeting only. Any decisions are not binding and cannot be put into effect until ratified by a properly constituted meeting.

### ARTICLE XIV: VOTING

Each Council member has one vote.

A motion is a proposal placed before a meeting, and properly all decisions made at the meeting and recorded in the minutes should be on the basis of motions either adopted or defeated. All main motions should be seconded by another member making a statement to that effect. Unless it is seconded, a motion is not open to consideration. After a motion has been seconded, the Chair restates it and this puts the question to the meeting and opens the debate. After the motion has been put, a motion may be withdrawn by its mover and seconder only with the assent of the members as a whole. In the course of debate, the motion may be amended in various ways, or action may be taken to delay or defer its effect, but it must remain before the meeting until it is finally disposed of in one way or another.

Votes are registered by a show of hands. Those for and against the motion are asked to raise one hand. The hands are counted, the result announced, and the motion declared either carried or lost. Motions are decided by a majority vote of those present. When the votes are equal, but not otherwise, the Chair shall have a vote.

Questions that have been properly put before a meeting should be resolved one way or another, but if circumstances arise that make it desirable to defer consideration of an issue for the time being or indefinitely, a motion to this effect can be made; it must be seconded and it is debatable.

#### ARTICLE XV: APPEALS

The Chair's ruling is not debatable, and it is usually accepted. It may still be challenged, however, on a properly seconded motion to dissent from the ruling. This seconded motion is not debatable and must be put to vote immediately. If this motion receives majority support, the Chair's ruling is overturned.

#### ARTICLE XVI: AMENDMENTS

Any motion to amend this Constitution shall be given to all members in writing, 2 weeks before the meeting called to consider the amendment.

An amendment shall be effected only with the support of two-thirds of the members voting at the meeting.