**Bessborough School Council By-Laws**

As at November 2022

**Preamble**

School Councils are legislated bodies, governed by Regulation 612 of the Ontario Education Act. School Council and all of those who attend School Council meetings and activities shall adhere to these regulations, as well as the policies and the procedures of the Toronto District School Board, including but not limited to P031 – Human Rights Policy, P037 – Equity Policy, P034 – Workplace Harassment, Prevention for Non-Human Rights Code Harassment Policy, P051 – Caring and Safe Schools Policy and PR585 – Board Code of Conduct.

**Name**

The name of this association shall be Bessborough School Council, representing Bessborough Elementary & Middle School, hereafter referred to as the School Council.

**Objectives**

In accordance with the regulations, policies and guidelines of the Ministry of Education and Toronto District School Board (TDSB) concerning school councils, the objectives of the School Council shall be to:

* contribute to the improvement of student achievement and school performance and enhance accountability of the education system to parents
* enhance parent involvement in the school
* to provide a forum for dialogue and collaboration on topics of interest to parents and teachers to promote effective consultation and communication between home and school
* act as an advisory body and resource to the school principal (Principal) and, when appropriate, to the board

**School Council Membership**

An effective School Council relies on the contributions of the broader school community. The School Council will work to elect/acclaim members who are representative of this school's community. To this end, eligible candidates will be encouraged to seek office regardless of their race, colour, creed, culture, ethnicity, linguistic origin, disability, level of ability, socio-economic class, age, ancestry, nationality, place of origin, religion, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, body image, citizenship, immigration status, family status, marital status or as First Nations, Metis or Inuit.

The School Council shall be composed of:

* Ten (10) parents/caregivers of students enrolled in the school
* the Principal
* one teacher
* one non-teaching staff member
* if and as deemed appropriate by the other members of the School Council, one or more community representatives

Parents/caregivers shall form the majority of the School Council.

**Elections of School Council Members**

***Process for Parent/Caregiver School Council Members***

Elections will be inclusive, transparent and accountable, ensuring that all members of the school community are included, welcomed and feel valued.

Elections shall be held during the first 30 days of the school year on a date that is set by the School Council Chair(s) in consultation with the Principal.

The Principal, on behalf of the School Council, shall give written notice of the date, the time and the location of the election, to every parent/caregiver of a student enrolled in the school, at least 14 days before the date of the election.

Each parent/caregiver seeking election must be nominated or self-nominated in writing and must have a child registered at the school. A person is not qualified to be a parent/caregiver member if they are employed at the school. If employed by the Board but not at the school, they must take reasonable steps to inform those qualified to vote in the election of their Board employment status.

The school (Principal or designate) will receive and file all nomination forms.

Written information (picture not required) about each candidate, supplied by the candidate, shall be made available to the school community at least one week prior to the election. Candidates may not engage in campaigning on or off school property or use any School Council social media or other tools to promote their candidacy.

The election of parent/caregiver members shall be by secret ballot and neither proxy nor absentee voting is permitted. A person is eligible to vote in an election of parent/caregiver members if they are the parent/caregiver of a student enrolled at the school.

Elections shall be supervised by the Principal (or designate) and at least one parent/caregiver, not seeking election. Nominations will not be accepted from the floor on the evening of the elections.

If the number of candidates is less than, or equal to, the number of positions available, the candidates will be acclaimed, notified and communicated to the school/community.

***Process for Other School Council Members***

Elections for teaching and non-teaching staff representatives on the School Council will be held during the first 30 days of each school year. The teaching representative shall be elected by those individuals at the school qualified to be the teacher representative in any method they determine. The non-teaching staff shall be elected by those individuals at the school qualified to be the non-teaching staff representative in any method they determine. When applicable, community members shall be appointed by the members of the School Council.

***Vacancies***

A vacancy in the membership of the School Council can be filled by holding an election (in which case the School Council’s election process will apply) or the School Council can choose to appoint an eligible member. The School Council may continue to operate with a vacancy.

Executive vacancies will be opened to nominations from the voting members.

**Term of office**

School Council members, elected or appointed, hold office from the later of: (a) the date that they were elected or appointed; and (b) the date of the first meeting of the School Council after the elections held in the school year, until the date of the first meeting of the School Council after the elections held in the next school year.

Any member may seek re-election or re-appointment.

**School Council Executive**

School Council Executive shall include the following positions which are elected annually at the first meeting of the School Council:

* Chair(s)
* Secretary
* Treasurer

**Remuneration**

No person shall receive any remuneration for serving as a member or Officer of the School Council. Members shall be reimbursed for pre-approved expenses that they incur as members or Officers of the School Council, as per Board procedures.

**Role of School Council Members**

***Principal (not a voting member)***

* Attend School Council meetings, as feasible
* Distribute School Council information and give notice of School Council meetings (date, time, location) to the school community
* Seek parent input on matters affecting student achievement
* Facilitate and support the operation of the School Council including arranging for the provision of school and/or board resources

***Chair(s)***

* Arrange, prepare agendas for and chair School Council meetings
* Communicate with the Principal on behalf of the School Council
* Consult with senior board staff and trustees as required on behalf of the School Council
* ensure completion of the School Statements of Needs in collaboration with parents/caregivers, to be used to identify a principal if one needs to be appointed

***Secretary***

* Ensure that minutes of School Council meetings are recorded and maintained
* Assist the Chair in the distribution of minutes to all School Council members, and make them available (once approved) to the parent body

***Treasurer***

* Oversee receipt and disbursement of School Council monies
* Keep proper records of all financial transactions
* Sign expense reports in connection with expenses incurred by the School Council

***Other School Council Members***

* Represent the views and opinions of the parent community and are encouraged to attend and participate in School Council meetings
* Facilitate and participate as appropriate in events that the School Council holds during the school year

**Consultation**

The School Council shall consult with parents/caregivers of students enrolled in the school about matters under consideration by the School Council.

**Meetings**

All School Council meetings and events will start with the reading of the Land Acknowledgement:

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is situated on the ancestral, treaty and title lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinaabe, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples. It is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

A minimum of four meetings will be held during the school year. Additional meetings may be scheduled at the discretion of the Chair.

The first meeting of the School Council will take place within the first 35 days of the start of the school year after the election, on a date set by the Principal, in consultation with the Chair.

All Council meetings will be advertised in the school newsletter and on the school website, including the dates, times and locations of meetings.

Meetings of the School Council and committees/subcommittees may be virtual, in-person or a combination of the two. A member of a School Council who participates in a meeting by phone or virtually shall be deemed to be present at the meeting.

***Voting***

Council issues shall be resolved through a formal vote. The vote may be by secret ballot or a show of hands. The vote will be decided by a majority of 50 percent of the School Council members plus one person. Only elected or appointed members have a vote. The Principal is not entitled to vote in votes taken by the School Council. Voting cannot occur outside of official School Council meetings.

***Minutes and Financial Records***

Minutes will be taken at all School Council meetings. School Council shall keep accurate minutes of all meetings and financial records/transactions for four (4) years on the school premises for examination by any person, without charge.

***Quorum***

A meeting of the Council cannot be held unless:

* a majority of the current School Council members are present at the meeting; and
* a majority of School Council members who are present at the meeting are parent/caregiver members.

**Committees**

Committees may be appointed as required to make recommendations to the School Council and to carry out projects of the School Council.

Every Council committee must include at least one parent/caregiver member of the School Council and are open to parents/caregivers of the school (who need not be School Council members).

They will make recommendations to the School Council for approval and will report to the School Council on their activities.

**Finances**

All School Council expenditures require prior approval of the School Council.

The Principal shall maintain a bank account to which School Council funds shall be deposited and from which payments by the School Council shall be made. The Chair, Treasurer and/or other School Council Executive shall act as approved signing officers of the School Council bank account.

All School Council collections and all disbursements should be captured in their financial statements. The financial statements should be shared with School Council members and the Principal and should be presented at each School Council meeting.

The School Council may not enter into long-term agreements, loan arrangements nor other contractual agreements under the name of the school or the School Council.

**Fundraising**

All proposed School Council fundraising activities will take into consideration the ability of families to contribute and/or to raise funds. As per P037 – Equity Policy, events will reflect the ideas, traditions, cultures and strengths of the parents/ caregivers represented in the school. Monetary and non-monetary contributions will be valued equitably.

**Conflicts** **of Interest**

Each School Council member shall avoid situations that could result in an inconsistency between the overall goals and the vision of the School Council and personal or vested interest that may arise in connection with their duties as a School Council member. Should an issue or an agenda item arise during a School Council meeting where a School Council member is in a conflict of interest situation, they shall declare a conflict of interest immediately and decline from the discussion and the resolution.

A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential. Members of the School 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 School Council.

In the event that a member has a conflict of interest with respect to a matter under consideration at a meeting of the School Council, the member shall:

a. declare the conflict of interest at the beginning of the meeting and before the matter is discussed;

b. refrain from voting on the matter and participating in discussion of the matter; and

c. refrain from attempting to influence another member of the School Council before, during or after the consideration of the matter.

The declaration of the conflict of interest shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

**Conflict Resolution**

Every School Council member will be given an opportunity to express concerns or opinions about any issue or item being considered by the School Council. Speakers will be allowed to speak for a reasonable period of time without interruption.

The Chair’s responsibility is to clarify the statements made by all speakers, identify common ground among the points of view raised, if possible, and to set out the joint interests of all members.

If no common ground can be identified, the Chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further and may defer to a future meeting while more information is collected.

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.

**Annual Reporting**

The School Council shall annually:

* Prepare and submit to the Principal a written report of its activities. If the School Council engages in fundraising activities, the report shall include a report of those activities. It is the responsibility of the Principal to distribute the report to all parents of the school, which can be done by including in the school newsletter and/or on the school website.
* In consultation with the Principal, prepare and submit to the TDSB a School Council Financial Plan and School Needs Assessment Form listing expected expenditures and fundraising events for the year with anticipated incomes.

**Contact Information of Principal**

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