

OAKVILLE TRAFALGAR HIGH SCHOOL COUNCIL



CONSTITUTION & BYLAWS

Passed June, 1998

Amended June, 2000

Revised May 19, 2011

<i>Introduction</i>	4
<i>Preamble</i>	4
1. Definition of the Council	4
2. Mandate of the Council	4
3. Jurisdiction of the Council	4
4. Roles and Responsibilities of Council Members	5
5. Composition of the Council	5
5.1 Membership	5
5.2 Selection of Members	5
5.3 Term of Office	5
6. Operations of the Council	6
6.1 Openness	6
6.2 Voluntary Nature of Council	6
6.3 Meetings	6
6.4 Minutes	6
6.5 Selection of Chair	6
6.6 Committees	6
6.7 Quorum	6
6.8 Voting	7
6.9 Amending Formula	7
6.10 Rules	7
7. Conflict of Interest	7
8. Effective Date	7
Bylaw No. 1-Election Procedures	8
1. General Provisions	8
1.1 Election Committee	8
1.2 Annual Elections	8
1.3 Terms	8
1.4 Voters' Choice	8
1.5 Ties	8
1.6 Composition of Council	8
1.7 Executive Positions (see By-Law No.2, 1.1)	8
2. Election of Parent Members	9
2.1 Duties of the Election Committee	9
2.2 Notice	9
2.3 Nominations	9
2.4 Eligibility for Parent/ Guardian Members	9
2.5 Recruitment	9
2.6 Ballots	9
3. Other Elections	9
3.1 Student Members	9
3.2 Teacher Members	9
3.3 Non-Teaching Staff Member	10
3.4 Appointment of Community Members	10
4. Appeals	10
5. Vacancies	10
Bylaw No. 2-Operating Procedures	10
1. Executive Committee	10
1.1 Membership	10
1.2 Election	10
1.3 Purpose	10

1.4 Meetings	11
1.5 Powers	11
2. Duties of Officers	11
2.1 Chair	11
2.2 Co-Chair or Vice-Chair	11
2.3 Secretary	11
2.4 Treasurer	11
2.5 Principal	11
2.6 Failure to Perform Duties	12
3. Committees	12
3.1 Standing Committees	12
3.2 Duties of Committee Chairs	12
4. Meetings	12
4.1 Regular meetings	12
4.2 Changes to schedule	12
4.3 Emergency or special meetings	12
4.4 Petitioned meetings	12
5. Rules of Order	12
5.1 Chair's Rules	12
5.2 Challenge to the Chair	12
5.3 Robert's Rules	13
6. Protocol for Decision-Making and Conflict Resolution	13
6.1 Rule of Consensus	13
6.2 Failure to reach consensus	13
 Bylaw No. 3-Financial Practices	 13
1. Not for profit status	13
2. Financial Practices	13
3. Disbursements	13
3.1 General	13
3.2 Petty Cash	13
4. Responsibility of Treasurer	13
5. Responsibilities of Council	13

Introduction

Following is the constitution, bylaws and governing operation of a school council pursuant to the requirements of the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training/Policy Program Memorandum No. 122, dated April 12, 1995. In the year 2000, Ontario Regulation 612/00 replaced PPM 122 further clarifying the roles and responsibilities of school councils.

Preamble

- The parents of students at Oakville Trafalgar High School “OTHS” have agreed to form a School Council which will represent all members of the OTHS community.
- The Council will provide advice as defined by the Ontario Ministry of Education guidelines and the Halton District School Board “HDSB” on School Councils. From time to time, the Council may also comment on and/or co-ordinate matters considered to be in the best interests of the OTHS students as well as the educational and/or resource programs affecting OTHS.
- In collaboration with the broader community, the council’s role is to provide input and advice with regard to school goals and to enhance learning opportunities for the benefit of all students in the school.
- The Council will encourage communication with the community, parents, the Board, and other school councils.
- This constitution, ratified by School Council, intends to clarify roles, goals and processes in support of student learning at OTHS.

1. Definition of the Council

The OTHS Council is an advisory group of members of the school community—parents, residents, business people, students, staff and administrators—dedicated to maximizing educational opportunities by working together in a partnership. The members are committed to openness, believing that it leads to mutual trust, understanding and a willingness to share responsibility.

2. Mandate of the Council

The mandate of the Council is to:

- serve as a liaison among the school, the board and the community;
- advise on all areas of school policy;
- propose initiatives aimed at maximizing educational opportunities and enhancing school life;
- establish and co-ordinate committees of the Council engaged in activities related to fulfilling this mandate.

3. Jurisdiction of the Council

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

- local school-year calendar;
- school code of student behavior;
- curriculum and program goals and priorities;
- the responses of the school or School Board to achievement in provincial and board assessment programs;
- preparation of the school effectiveness plan;
- annually review the principal profile and submit it to the HDSB;
- school budget priorities, including local capital-improvement plans;
- school-community communication strategies;
- methods of reporting to parents and the community;
- extracurricular activities in the school;

- school-based services and community partnerships related to social, health, recreational and nutrition programs;
- community use of school facilities;
- local co-ordination of services for youth;
- development, implementation and review of board policies at the local level, and
- such other matters that the Council considers appropriate.

4. Roles and Responsibilities of Council Members

Council members shall:

- focus on student learning and school improvement;
- maintain a school-wide perspective on issues;
- participate actively in the work of the Council (by providing informed advice to the Principal, participating in committee work, contributing to meetings);
- act as a link between the Council and the community (by representing and communicating the views of the school community, and by encouraging the participation of parents and others within the school community);
- represent and seek input from parents regarding Council initiatives, as appropriate;
- attend Council meetings regularly: a Council member who fails to attend four regular meetings shall be deemed to have resigned as of the fourth missed meeting. A "regular meeting" shall be defined as a one taking place on the agreed-upon regularly scheduled date and time. Any member removed from the Council under this provision may petition the Council for reinstatement by letter to the Council.

5. Composition of the Council

5.1 Membership

Members of the Council shall include, but not be limited to: parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school; community representatives; a student; the school principal; a teacher; a non-teaching staff member. Parents and guardians shall form the majority of the Council.

The Council shall consist of at least 13 but no more than 25 members, within the following parameters:

Parents	07	to	14
Students	01	to	04
Principal	01	to	01
Teaching Staff	01	to	02
Non-teaching Staff	01	to	01
Community Members	02	to	03
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TOTALS	13	to	25

5.2 Selection of Members

Members of the Council shall be selected in the following ways:

- parents shall be elected by parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school, according to procedures developed by the Council.
- students shall be elected by students, according to procedures developed by the Student Council.
- the principal shall automatically be a member. The principal may appoint a vice-principal as his or her alternate on occasion if necessary.
- teachers shall be selected by members of the teaching staff.
- non-teaching staff shall be selected by members of the non-teaching staff.
- community members shall be appointed by the Council.

5.3 Term of Office

The term of office for elected and appointed positions shall be one year. Elected and appointed members may seek additional terms of office.

6. Operations of the Council

6.1 Openness

All meetings of the Council shall be open to the public. However, the Council may, in appropriate situations, resolve to meet in closed session.

6.2 Voluntary Nature of Council

All work shall be voluntary. No honoraria shall be paid.

6.3 Meetings

The Council shall hold a minimum of eight meetings per year. The Council shall also hold an annual general meeting. This meeting will be open to the entire school community and will have as key agenda items the annual reports of the chair and treasurer and the election of parent members to the Council. The term of office for the purposes of this section shall commence when the new council is elected, no later than Oct. 1.

6.4 Minutes

Minutes of all meetings shall be kept and circulated to all members. The minutes shall record who was in the chair and who was acting as secretary.

6.5 Selection of Chair

Members of each incoming council shall elect a chair from among the parent members.

6.6 Committees

The Council shall appoint committees according to its priorities at any given time. They may include the following:

- Executive—to draw up agendas and deal with emergency matters between meetings;
- Membership—to recruit Council and committee members and deal with vacancies or issues that arise during the year;
- Budget & Finance—to deal with school budgetary matters;
- Education Policy Committee to review activities, plans and literature in view of the overall aims of education and respond to Ministry and Board proposals;
- Curriculum and Instruction—to deal with specific educational issues within the school;
- Staffing--to advise on staffing issues and policies when requested/mandated by the Board and/or Ministry;
- Student Affairs—to work with student groups on social activities, problem solving and other projects that might benefit from joint action;
- Fundraising/Spirit Committee—to raise funds, provide publicity and celebrate school activities and achievements;
- Board Liaison—to monitor board activities (through attendance, receipt of minutes, regular contact with trustees) and report on issues of interest to the Council;
- Communications to enhance public awareness of school activities. Council projects, board deliberations and educational issues (through meetings, forums, newsletters, publications, press releases, public speaking and other means of public relations) and to attempt to involve members of the school community;
- Community Liaison—to promote community involvement in the school and joint communications and activities with other groups, especially with the schools of Southeast Oakville;
- Volunteer Committee—to recruit, screen, train and coordinate the activities of community volunteers for school programs and student activities;
- Ad hoc committees to deal with specific tasks or short-term projects.

Committees may have only one member or as many members as volunteer to serve. Each committee shall have a Council member on it to serve as a liaison between committee and Council.

6.7 Quorum

Half of the members in good standing plus one shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

6.8 Voting

A majority of those members in good standing present at a properly called meeting shall be required to pass regular motions.

6.9 Amending Formula

The approval of two-thirds of the members in good standing shall be required to amend this Constitution.

6.10 Rules

The Council shall have the authority to make rules in respect of anything in this Constitution.

7. Conflict of Interest

- Members of Council cannot vote on a question that would create personal or private benefits for them or a member of the family.
- In such situations, the member should declare a conflict of interest and abstain from the vote on the matter before Council.

8. Effective Date

The main substance of this Constitution was ratified and came into effect May 19, 2011.

This Constitution, as amended, shall come into effect when it is approved by two-thirds of the Council members in good standing at a regular school council meeting.

SIGNATURE ON FILE

SIGNATURES ON FILE

Chair, Line Labonne-Mason

Secretary, Duncan Gibson & Chris Dorrington

Bylaw No. 1-Election Procedures

1. General Provisions

1.1 Election Committee

An election committee composed of one parent member, one student member (optional) and one teacher member, shall assist the Principal with the annual election process. Other people may be called upon to advise or assist with the committee's work. The election committee will facilitate the transition between Councils.

1.2 Annual Elections

Elections will be held in the first 30 days of each school year.

1.3 Terms

A person elected or appointed as a member of School Council holds office from the later of,

- i) the date he or she is elected or appointed; or
- ii) the date of the first meeting of the school council after the annual election until the date of the first meeting of the school council after the next annual election.

A member of school council may be re-elected or re-appointed.

1.4 Voters' Choice

All eligible voters shall be entitled to cast one vote for each position available in the specific category (e.g. parents elect parents, teachers elect teachers)

1.5 Ties

If a vote on a motion is tied, the motion is lost.

In the event that the Chair did not vote on the motion, the Chair may cast the deciding vote.

1.6 Composition of Council

Council shall consist of at least 13 but not more than 25 members.

Parents	07	to	14
Students	01	to	04
Principal	01	to	01
Teaching Staff	01	to	02
Non-teaching Staff	01	to	01
Community Members	02	to	03
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TOTALS	13	to	25

1.7 Executive Positions *(see By-Law No.2, 1.1)*

The Executive will:

- i) provide advice to the Chair in setting agendas.
- ii) act as an advisory group to the Chair on issues of consideration before Council.

The Executive Committee consists of seven members as follows:

- a Chair or Co-Chairs and/or Vice-Chair elected from among the parent representatives;
- the Principal (a designated member);
- a Secretary elected from among the whole membership;
- a Treasurer elected from among the parent representatives;
- a Student member of Council (optional);
- a Teacher member of Council;
- one other member of Council (optional – from the parent representatives)

At the first meeting of the newly elected Council, the election committee may/will facilitate a process to select:

- i) a model of Chair/Vice Chair or Co-Chairs.
- ii) all executive positions.

2. Election of Parent Members

2.1 Duties of the Election Committee

- Call for nominations
- Ensure that nominations meet the requirements of Regulation 612 and the OTHS School Council Constitution
- Prepare a ballot (unless all members are acclaimed)
- Notify the school community of the time and location of the election
- Conduct the election
- Announce the results

2.2 Notice

The principal of the school shall, at least 14 days before the date of the election of parent members, on behalf of school council, give written notice of the date, time and location of the election to every parent of a pupil who, on the date the notice is given, is enrolled in the school. The notice may take any form that is reasonably expected to reach most of the target population.

2.3 Nominations

Candidates for election, whether nominated by themselves or others, must fill out a candidate's declaration stating name, address, phone numbers, the name and grade of the child who is a student at the school, his or her signature and date. Candidates may be invited to make a short statement concerning the contributions each hope to make to Council. Candidate declarations may be publicized. The election committee may sponsor activities to recruit candidates and inform voters of the nominees.

2.4 Eligibility for Parent/ Guardian Members

A person is qualified to be a parent/guardian member of School Council if he or she is a parent/guardian of a pupil who is enrolled at the school.

A person is not qualified to be a parent/guardian member of School Council if:

- i) he or she is employed at the school
- ii) he or she is not employed at the school but is employed elsewhere by the board that established the council, unless he or she takes reasonable steps to inform people qualified to vote in the election of parent/guardian members of that employment.

2.5 Recruitment

The Election Committee will have a one week period following the nomination deadline to recruit additional candidates when deemed necessary to ensure diversity of skills and representation among the candidates.

2.6 Ballots

The election will be conducted by secret ballot should an election be required. Position on the ballot will be by random order. Ballots shall remain in the school vault for 6 months after the election. A recount shall take place when requested by one or more candidates, providing the request is made within one week of the election.

3. Other Elections

3.1 Student Members

Student members shall be elected or appointed in a manner to be determined by Students' Council.

3.2 Teacher Members

Teacher members shall be elected or appointed in a manner to be determined by the school staff.

3.3 Non-Teaching Staff Member

- i) The Principal shall issue a call for nominations for this position. In the event that more than one person stands for election, the Principal shall supervise an election at a time that is convenient to all staff.
- ii) If no one comes forward to fill this position and no one can be persuaded to accept an appointment, the position shall remain open until a volunteer does come forward. Such a vacancy shall not invalidate the legitimacy of the Council.
- iii) Non-teaching staff members include all members of the Board's non-teaching bargaining units as well as contract workers.

3.4 Appointment of Community Members

After the election of Parent Members, the Election Committee shall invite community members to serve on School Council. The Election Committee will present its recommendation at the first Council meeting after the election. Community representatives need not live within the school attendance area.

4. Appeals

The Election Committee shall resolve appeals to any election or appointment. The result of the appeal shall be reported to Council.

5. Vacancies

5.1 Vacancies occur when positions on Council remain unfilled after the election and appointment process, when a member resigns or when a member is unable to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of office.

5.2 Between elections, the Election Committee may fill vacancies by appointment.

Bylaw No. 2-Operating Procedures

1. Executive Committee

1.1 Membership

At the first or any subsequent meeting of the Council, the Council may elect an Executive Committee consisting of seven members (four parents, three non-parents) as follows:

- a Chair or Co-Chairs and/or Vice-Chair elected from among the parent representatives;
- the Principal (a designated member);
- a Secretary elected from among the whole membership;
- a Treasurer elected from among the parent representatives;
- a Student member of Council (optional);
- a Teacher member of Council;
- up to one other member, who must be a parent and may be the past chair.

1.2 Election

Elections shall be by secret ballot.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of the Executive shall be to advise the Principal or Board if time constraints require an immediate response, or conduct other business of an emergency nature. The Executive may also play a key role in setting agendas and in planning or steering activities.

1.4 Meetings

While all Executive meetings shall be open to all Council members, only members of the Executive need receive notice of meetings. The Chair (or at least one co-chair), the Principal (or his designate) and at least two other members are required for a quorum. Parents must comprise at least half of any Executive meeting to constitute a quorum. Formal minutes need not be taken; however, the Chair must report on any Executive meetings to the Council at its next meeting.

1.5 Powers

The Executive may call an emergency or special meeting or conduct a telephone vote if necessary.

2. Duties of Officers

2.1 Chair

The Chair shall:

- call Council meetings;
- prepare the agenda for meetings in consultation with the Principal and appropriate members;
- chair the meetings;
- ensure that the minutes of the meetings are recorded and maintained;
- participate in information and training programs;
- communicate with the Principal (i.e., involve the Principal in the planning of all Council activities or initiatives that will involve or impact upon the school's staff or students and inform the Principal of the contents of printed materials from the Council and seek approval for its distribution through the school);
- seek diversity in committees and work groups;
- facilitate collaborative decision-making;
- ensure that there is regular communication with the school community;
- ensure that consultation with senior Board staff and trustees takes place, as required;
- prepare and submit an annual report to the Council and AGM.

2.2 Co-Chair or Vice-Chair

The co-chair or vice-chair shall share the duties of the Chair, as the Chair or Council decides, and shall act for the Chair in his or her absence.

2.3 Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for maintaining an accurate record of each Council meeting; distributing the agenda and minutes so as to reach Council members at least one week before each meeting; looking after correspondence.

2.4 Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for ensuring accurate and up-to-date accounting of all monies raised or received by the Council or any of its committees or sub-groups, in accordance with Board policies.

2.5 Principal

The Principal shall:

- endeavor to attend all Council meetings (or send a delegate, such as the vice-principal);
- facilitate the development of the Council and assist in its operation;
- support and promote the Council's activities;
- seek input from the Council in areas for which it has been assigned advisory responsibility and provide responses to the recommendations;
- act as a resource on laws, regulations, Board policies and collective agreements;
- obtain and provide information required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions;
- communicate with the Chair of the Council, as required;
- assist the Council in communication with the school community;
- encourage the participation of parents and others within the school community.

2.6 Failure to Perform Duties

An Executive officer may be removed from his/her position through a majority vote of the Council members in good standing.

3. Committees

3.1 Standing Committees

- A school council may establish committees to make recommendations to Council.
- Every committee of Council shall include at least one parent member.
- A committee of council may include persons who are not members of council.
- All committee meetings shall be open to the public, shall be entitled to be held at the school, and shall be held at a location that is accessible to the public.

3.2 Duties of Committee Chairs

Committee chairs shall be appointed by the committee members and shall:

- conduct meetings of their committees and attempt to carry out assigned tasks;
- keep the Chair and Council informed of its activities;
- seek direction from the Council, Executive or Chair;
- abide by Council, school and Board policies, particularly those respecting financial affairs, community relations and media relations.

4. Meetings

4.1 Regular meetings

At its inaugural meeting, the Council, in consultation with the Principal, shall set a schedule for its regular monthly meetings in the coming year, which shall be publicized to the school community. No further notice shall be required for these meetings, although the agenda will normally serve as a reminder of meetings.

4.2 Changes to schedule

The Council may add meetings or change dates, as it sees fit. There should be at least one week's notice of such changes.

4.3 Emergency or special meetings

The Chair or Executive may change meeting dates or call emergency or special meetings, if necessary. The notice provisions may be waived, however all Council members must be notified. A member who cannot attend will not be penalized. The normal requirement for a quorum will still apply.

4.4 Petitioned meetings

Council meetings may also be called upon petition of a number of members at least equal to a quorum. The petition may be presented to the Chair, who must call the meeting to take place within two weeks of receiving the petition. However, if the Chair should fail to call the meeting, a copy of the petition should be presented to the Secretary, Principal or Superintendent, who must call the meeting within two weeks of receipt of the petition. A meeting thus called will be an official meeting, so long as the normal rules of quorum and procedure apply.

5. Rules of Order

5.1 Chair's Rules

The Chair shall be free to set the rules of order. He or she shall be bound by common sense and good will and will not let procedure get in the way of progress.

5.2 Challenge to the Chair

If any member objects to a ruling from the Chair, he or she may challenge the Chair. A majority vote shall decide the question.

5.3 Robert's Rules

If the Council needs or wishes to resort to a neutral authority, the Robert's Rules of Order shall decide the question.

6. Protocol for Decision-Making and Conflict Resolution

6.1 Rule of Consensus

The Council shall make every attempt to reach consensus.

6.2 Failure to reach consensus

When consensus is not achieved, the Council shall decide whether the matter warrants a simple vote, to be decided by a majority of those present, or a facilitator needs to be used to help with the decision-making process.

Bylaw No. 3-Financial Practices

1. Not for profit status

The Council shall operate as a not for profit group within the guidance of the HDSB for all school generated and school council funds.

2. Financial Practices

The School Council shall:

- maintain control of all funds raised by school council and advises on all purchases and expenditures made with those funds;
- administer all school council funds through the school activities funds bank account maintained by the school;
- ensure all record keeping is done by the School Council Treasurer.

3. Disbursements

3.1 General

Funds will be used for general operating, communications, in-service, and projects of the Council and its committees.

3.2 Petty Cash

The Chair has control of a petty cash fund not in excess of \$100.00. The purpose of this fund is to allow the Chair to respond in a timely manner to small expenditures as they arise. It will be the Chair's responsibility to notify Council of the expenditure at the next scheduled meeting. Should the amount of the petty cash fund be insufficient due to extraordinary situations, the Chair may ask Council to approve additional funds at any regular Council meeting.

4. Responsibility of Treasurer

The treasurer shall submit for approval an updated financial report at each School Council meeting stating the Council's financial position. The treasurer shall present an annual statement to the Annual General Meeting.

5. Responsibilities of Council

The Council shall abide by all school and Board policies regarding financial practices.