Williamstown High School

School Council
Standing Orders

Developed and endorsed by School Council
20 March 2007
Last amended: 20 February 2018
At Williamstown High School we value:

- Excellence and creativity in our achievements and ambitions.
- Integrity and honesty in our actions and relationships.
- Diversity in our curriculum, in each other and in our community.
- Strong and open communication between our school and our homes, and between our teachers, our students and our families.
- A commitment to social justice and a passion to protect and improve our environment and our community.

1. **General Purpose of Council**
   School Council is the governing body of the school. It determines appropriate education policies within Department of Education (DET) guidelines to promote the achievement of school strategic plan goals and priorities. In addition, Council controls the school's monies and resources.

   Council's responsibilities include:
   - reporting annually to the school community
   - approving and monitoring the school budget
   - developing the student code of conduct
   - generally stimulating interest in the school

   Council sets the vision, determines priorities and ensures that the school is responsive to the needs of the local community.

2. **Composition of Council**
   The Constituting Order of Williamstown High School states the composition of the School Council as:
   - Seven (7) elected parent members
   - Four (4) elected DET employee members (other than the Principal)
   - The Principal
   - Up to three (3) community members co-opted by Council from the wider school community (excluding DET employees) having special expertise and an interest in the school.

   Elected members of the Williamstown High School Council have two-year terms of office with half retiring annually on or about 31 March each year.

   Elections are conducted within the legal framework of Ministerial Order No 52: *School Council Compositions and Elections Order*, and the school's Constituting Order.

   As needs arise, up to three (3) Community members can be co-opted by Council at any time. When this occurs, the terms, rights and responsibilities of the Community members are the same as those of the elected members. By mutual agreement, the term of the co-option can be varied.

3. **Office Bearers**
   Council shall elect from its members the following Office Bearers:
   - **President**
   The President is elected by all members of Williamstown High School Council and may not be a DET employee.
Vice President

This position is normally allocated to a non-DET member of Council to allow for the Vice President to chair meetings in the absence of the President.

Treasurer

There is no legal requirement for Council to have a Treasurer, but most do. It is recommended that the position be held by a non-DET parent or co-opted community member.

Executive Officer

The Principal acts as Executive Officer and is responsible for the implementation of Council policies and for informing Council on educational, statutory, regulatory and Government policy issues. The Executive Officer is a voting member of Council.

Council Executive

The Executive consists of the President, Vice President, Treasurer and the Principal.
The Executive shall:
- make decisions on behalf of the Council when time doesn't allow for a meeting of the whole Council
- if it deems a matter of sufficient importance, call an extraordinary meeting of the Council to decide the issue; and
- report any decisions taken to the next meeting of Council to allow for further discussion / ratification

4. Role Descriptions

The President shall:
- Act as chairperson of all Council meetings
- Decide recommendations for each item of Council correspondence in collaboration with the Executive Officer
- Conduct the business of Council under Council’s standing orders
- Act as a signatory to the Council financial accounts
- Be an ex-officio member of all Council committees
- Act as a spokesperson for Council

The Vice President shall:
- In the absence of the President, act as chairperson at Council meetings and otherwise represent the President, as required

The Treasurer shall:
- Chair all Finance sub-committee meetings
- Ensure that the school finances are in accordance with DET guidelines
- Ensure that relevant internal control procedures are maintained
- Work with the Principal and the Finance sub-committee to develop budget recommendations to submit to Council
- Present financial reports and Finance sub-committee recommendations to Council

The Principal shall:
- Provide all Council members with minutes of the previous meeting, agenda, reports of committees and financial reports by the Friday prior to the Council meeting.
- Notify Council of any apologies received
- Ensure that minutes of the meeting are recorded
• Table all Council correspondence
• Write all correspondence authorised by Council
• Be the Executive Officer of Council
• Be an ex-officio member of all Council committees

Signatories for accounts under the control of Council
• The Principal and one of the President, the Treasurer or one other Council member nominated by Council shall be authorised to sign cheques.

5. Council Meetings
• Council will meet at least twice each term with at least eight (8) meetings being held in any calendar year.
• The Council must hold at least one (1) public meeting each year to report on its activities and to present a statement setting out the school’s income and expenditure for the previous calendar year.
• The times, dates and locations of the meetings are to be decided by the Council and reviewed annually, preferably after each election.
• Quorum for a Council meeting is not less than one half of the total membership provided that there is a majority of members present who are not DET employee members.
• An extraordinary meeting of Council may be held at any time decided by Council, provided all members are given prior notice of the time, date, place and purpose of the meeting. An extraordinary meeting may also be called upon written request by three (3) members being given to the President, Vice President or Executive Officer of the Council, who must then convene a meeting by sending a notice to all Councillors advising the time, date, place and purpose of the meeting.

6. Meeting Procedures
• Normal meeting procedures will be followed as defined by Council and may vary from strict rules of debate to a less formal procedure appropriate to committee meetings.
• All decisions of Council shall require formal voting.
• All members of Council including the Principal have one vote. If votes are tied, the presiding member has a second or casting vote. Voting will normally be by show of hands, but Council may resolve to hold a secret ballot on a particular item of business.
• Meetings will be held on the third Tuesday of the relevant month and shall commence at 6pm and conclude by 8pm, unless Council votes for one 30-minute extension. Under exceptional circumstances, Councillors may vote for a second extension.
• Visitors are welcome as observers. However, if matters to be discussed are of a confidential nature, Council may declare the meeting as "closed". When a meeting is closed, observers will be asked to leave. Observers cannot vote but can speak if invited by the President.
• The Agenda for Council meetings is to include the following:
  o General outline of the order of the meeting
  o Statement of correspondence sent and received
  o Copies of any correspondence to be debated by Council
  o A written report from each sub-committee including recommendations to Council
  o Financial statements for month since the previous Council meeting
• The Agenda and all reports are to be sent to Councillors by the Friday before each Council meeting.
• A call for additional items of general business will be made immediately following discussion of business arising from the minutes.
7. **Responsibility of Council Members**

Each member of Council is expected to:

- Attend the meetings of Council. Members unable to attend a meeting of Council or their designated sub-committee must provide an apology that explains their absence to the chairperson or executive officer in advance of the meeting.
- Read all reports before each meeting.
- Be a member of at least one Council sub-committee.
- Maintain confidentiality as required.
- Have a commitment to make decisions in the best interests of all students at the school.
- Maintain an awareness of education issues.
- Participate in at least one professional development activity per year pertinent to the operation of School Councils.

Council may move to declare a casual vacancy should a member be absent from three consecutive meetings of Council, or absent for half the meetings in any one year.

8. **Pecuniary Interest**

If a member of the Council, or an immediate family member, has any pecuniary interest in a subject or matter under discussion at a Council meeting, that member:

- Must declare it.
- Must not be present during discussion unless invited by Council.
- Must not be present when a vote is taken on the matter.
- May be included in the quorum for the meeting.

9. **Council Decision Making**

A decision of the majority of members eligible to vote and present at any meeting of Council is the decision of the Council. For Council to make a decision, a majority of people present must be non-DET employees.

10. **Council Sub-Committees**

Council will determine which Sub-Committees it requires and will review their role description annually. The standing Sub-Committees, unless otherwise agreed, will be:

- **Education Policy**
- **Finance**
- **Facilities & Environment**

Membership of standing Sub-Committees shall be decided at the first regular meeting of Council after the annual Council elections, when Councillors will nominate their preferences for Sub-Committee membership. Some negotiation may be necessary to achieve general balance of size and representation.

Each Sub-Committee shall elect a convenor. Membership of Sub-Committees shall be extended to include interested school community members with special expertise or interest in the area of the Sub-Committee.

The membership of the Sub-Committees will be listed and approved by the Council. All Sub-Committees are formed to advise Council and have no decision-making powers. Sub-Committee meetings are to be held at a time to be decided by its members but usually within 14 days of the next Council meeting.
Each Sub-Committee is to provide a written report on its activities including recommendations to each Council meeting.

**General Guidelines**

*All Council Sub-Committees shall:*
- Be comprised of a minimum of three (3) members of School Council
- Meet at least once between regular meetings of the School Council at a time and place convenient to the majority of School Council members (i.e., those Sub-Committee members who are elected or ex-officio members of School Council). The time and place should be advertised to the broad school community.
- Consist of both parent and DET members of the School Council.
- Have the option to co-opt non-School Council members of school community (both parent & DET) interested and willing to contribute.
- Recognise that, within the School, the Council is the ultimate decision-making body in the formation of policy
- Have a clear role statement approved by Council
- In their area of responsibility, recommend courses of action to the Council
- Prepare submissions for programs to be considered when budgets are prepared

*The Convenor of a Council Sub-Committee shall:*
- Call all meetings and provide all members with an agenda prior to the meeting.
- In the event of his/her absence, nominate another member of the sub-committee to act as chairperson of the meeting.
- Provide Council with a written report of the minutes and recommendations within three (3) working days after each sub-committee meeting (a common format for reporting to Council is recommended).
- Ensure that the guidelines above are followed

**Special Guidelines**

*The Education Policy Sub-Committee shall:*
- Consult with the school community and make recommendations to Council on aspects of the school’s education policy development, recognising that it is the province of the Principal and teaching staff to implement these policies.
- Monitor progress towards both the school’s Strategic Plan & Annual Implementation Plan goals and targets.
- Develop and review policy as required.
- Undertake other activities as requested by Council.

*The Finance Sub-Committee shall:*
- Consider budget submissions in the light of Council policies and charter goals and priorities and make budget recommendations to Council for approval.
- Monitor Council income and expenditure including:
  - Local fund raising
  - Voluntary contributions
  - Trusts and Co-operatives
- Make recommendations to Council for short- and long-term financial planning in line with Charter goals and priorities.
- Make recommendations to Council for the annual family contribution to essential education items, optional extras and voluntary financial contributions.
- Undertake other activities as requested by Council.
The Facilities & Environment Sub-Committee shall:
- Develop and implement a maintenance priority plan for the school.
- Identify the future buildings and grounds requirements for the school.
- Ensure that grounds and buildings are safe and well maintained.
- Monitor the school cleaning contract.
- Co-ordinate working bees.
- Monitor and make recommendations to Council on improving the student learning environment.
- Undertake other activities as requested by Council.

Council Working Groups

As required, Council can establish Working Groups for the purpose of managing a particular issue or event. When this occurs, the orders covering the behaviour and operation of the Working Group will be the same as those covering Sub-Committees. Working Groups will be established for a limited time with the expectation they will report back to Council on a specified date.

References:


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