

**School Council Bylaws 2020**  
**Claude Watson School for the Arts**  
**Toronto District School Board**

**Preamble**

In accordance with O. Reg. 612/00 of the Education Act, every school shall establish a school council that shall be recognized as the official school community organization representing the interests of the parents and students of the school, and that shall be provided with the information and support necessary for fulfilling its role (PR.558 SCS).

- The purpose of a school council is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. (Reg. 612/2.1)
- A school council may make recommendations to the principal of the school or to the Board on any matter. (Reg. 612/ 20)
- The school council is an advisory body which consists of elected parents, teacher(s), principal/vice principal, support staff, community representatives and a representative from the Ontario Home and School Association, if such a group exists in the school. (Reg. 612/3.8)

**Bylaws**

**1. Name**

The name of the council shall be Claude Watson School for the Arts School Council (herein referred to as Council)

**2. Definitions**

2.1 *Council Members*: as listed in section 3.

2.2 *Elected Parent / Guardian Member*: as defined in section 3.1.

2.3 *Executive Members*: as listed in section 6.

2.4 *Voting Members*: every council member gets a vote except the Principal or his/her designate.

2.5 *Conflict*: A strong disagreement or a dispute between council members, council members and chairs/co-chairs, council and administration or between parents and the council resulting from.

- (i) differences of opinion, belief or understanding, or
- (ii) differences of personality or behaviour, or
- (iii) violation of council by-laws/school code of conduct.

2.6 *Administration*: The principal or his/her designate.

2.7 *Mediation*: A process where a neutral third party assists two conflicting people to come to agreement.

This could involve the mediator speaking individually to the two people but ultimately must include the mediator facilitating a meeting between both of the conflicting people (s).

2.8 *Resolution*: An agreement by parties that solves the conflict.

### **3. Membership:**

Council shall consist of

3.1 Eleven parents/guardians of students in the school who are elected to the Council as voting members.

3.2 The Principal or his/her designate.

3.3 One teacher employed in the school, to be elected or nominated by the teaching staff of the school.

Council may consist of

3.4 One person who is employed at the school, other than the principal or vice-principal or any other teacher.

3.5 One community representative appointed by the elected Council

3.6 One student representative, where feasible.

### **4. Election of Parent /Guardian Member**

4.1 Elections shall occur within the first 30 school days of the school year in accordance with Ontario Regulation 612/00.

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

4.3 Each parent/guardian seeking election must be a parent/guardian of a student in the school, must be nominated or self-nominated in writing, must declare if s/he is employed by the Toronto District School Board, and summarize his /her reason(s) for seeking election.

4.4 Nomination forms supplied by the school/council shall be filed by all parent/guardian candidates to the school (principal or designate).

4.5 Information about each candidate supplied by the candidate him/herself shall be made available to the school community at least 7 calendar days prior to the election.

4.6 If the number of declared candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates will be acclaimed at the first Council meeting of the school year. No election is required.

- 4.7 If the number of declared candidates is higher than the number of positions, then an election will be called.
- 4.8 Elections for school Council shall be supervised by the Principal (or designate) and parents /guardians not seeking election.
- 4.9 Voting shall be by secret ballot and neither proxy nor absentee voting is permitted.
- 4.10 Only parent/guardian of a student enrolled in the school shall be entitled to one vote for each vacant parent/guardian member position on the Council.
- 4.11 The names of the successful candidates shall be made public (in the school's newsletter and / or on the school website).
- 4.12 When a full complement of parent members is not elected /acclaimed, Council may fill vacancies through appointment. Names of suggested candidates may be brought to Council by members, committees or interested parents/guardians. A Council vote of 51% or higher will confirm their selection. This process may also be used to fill vacancies that occur as the result of member resignation.
- 4.13 Election process may start at the last council meeting of the school year to prepare for the election in September.

## **5. Term of Office**

- 5.1 The term of office for all Council members runs from election until the election of the new council and any member may, if qualified, seek re-election or re-appointment.
- 5.2 A person elected or appointed to council will hold office until the first meeting of the new school council after elections.

## **6. Executive Members**

- 6.1 The following executive positions shall be elected at the first meeting of the school council from among the elected parent /guardian members:
- (i) A Chair, or two Co-Chairs, or a Chair and a Vice Chair as determined by the Council
  - (ii) One or two secretaries
  - (iii) One or two treasurers
  - (iv) One Ward Liaison
  - (v) One to two grade representatives for each grade

- 6.2 Voting shall be by secret ballot and neither proxy nor absentee voting is permitted.
- 6.3 If the number of declared candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates will be acclaimed at the first Council meeting of the school year. No election is required.
- 6.4 If the number of declared candidates is higher than the number of positions, then an election will be called at the first Council meeting of the school year.

## **7. Council Meetings**

- 7.1 A minimum of four meetings per year, and the first meeting of the new Council shall take place within 20 school days of the election.
- 7.2 All meetings of the Council shall be open to the public and be held at a location or online that is accessible to the public.
- 7.3 The council meetings for the entire school year shall be scheduled in consultation with the council members and the principal. The council meeting dates, time and location shall be communicated to the entire school community as soon as the meetings are scheduled.
- 7.4 Should a council member miss three consecutive meetings without sufficient notification to Council, the executive may call a meeting with the member to determine the member's interest in the Council.
- 7.5 All Council members are required to attend a majority of the Council meetings.
- 7.6 Each council meeting shall have meeting agenda and minutes.
- 7.7 A meeting of the Council cannot be held unless:
- (i) A majority (51%) of the council members are present at the meeting including the Principal or his/her designate
  - (ii) A majority (51%) of the council members who are present in the meeting are elected parent/guardian members

## **8. Quorum**

Quorum will be a simple majority (51%) of council members.

## **9. Committees**

- 9.1 Council decides what committees need to be established and each committee's mandate.
- 9.2 Committees may be chaired by any parent/guardian of the school.
- 9.3 Each committee shall have at least one council member.
- 9.4 All committees meet as required throughout the year to carry out the strategic plans for Council's objectives and report to Council on its activities.

9.5 Committees make recommendations to Council, and Council make decisions.

9.6 Each committee/sub-committee member is entitled to one vote in votes taken at the committee/sub-committee level.

## **10. Finances:**

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

10.2 All expenditures are to be reported in a financial statement to be made available to the Council.

10.3 The Council will not borrow funds or enter into any financial commitment for which funds are not already in hand.

10.4 The Council shall maintain a bank account to which Council funds shall be deposited and from which payments by the Council shall be made. Cheques drawn on the bank account of the Council shall require the signature of two executive members: the treasurer and Chair/Co-Chair.

## **11. Conflict Resolution:**

### 11.1 General Principles

The intent of this section is to provide a process for resolving conflict between council members, council members and chairs/co-chairs, council and administration that affects the function and/or the physical or social environment of the Council.

It is the intent of this process to encourage council members to resolve conflicts and foster good will through direct dialogue whenever possible, before following this formal resolution procedure.

It is also the intent of this process to keep relations at the school and council constructive so that council members can carry out its purpose.

This policy is intended to work in tandem with existing TDSB laws/policies including the Employment Standards Act and the Human Rights Act, and not to supersede those laws or any policies of the TDSB.

### 11.2 Procedure

- (i) If the conflict is between council members, the chair/co-chairs with support of administration will request a private meeting with the parties to try and resolve the conflict
- (ii) If the conflict is within the entire council a special meeting will be called by the chair/co-chairs with the support of administration to mediate the conflict. Item(s) for discussion must be present on the meeting agenda. At such a meeting:
  - (a) Every council member will be given an opportunity to express his/her concern or opinion about the issue and impact of the dispute.

- (b) The chair's/co-chairs' responsibility is to clarify the statements made by all speakers, to identify common ground among the points of view raised, and to set out the joint interests of all members.
  - (c) If no common ground can be identified, the chair / co-chairs will seek to clarify preferences from all members who present at the meeting before proceeding.
  - (d) If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the chair / co-chairs shall request intervention of an independent third party to assist in achieving a resolution.
  - (e) An independent third party may be a board official or another individual mutually agreed on by the parties involved in the dispute.
- (iii) If the conflict is with or between the chair/co-chairs and council members, then an executive member will lead the outlined process.
  - (iv) If the conflict is between council and administration, then the chair/co-chairs will lead the outlined process.
  - (v) If the conflict is between the chair /co-chairs and administration, an executive member will lead the outlined process.
  - (vi) If the conflict is between the chair/co-chairs and executive members, the administrator may identify an external mediator to lead the process.
  - (vii) If the conflict occurs at a council meeting or a special meeting, and a council member or meeting attendee becomes disruptive during a meeting, the chair / co –chairs shall ask for order. If all efforts to restore order fail, or the unbecoming behaviour continues, the chair may direct the individual(s) to leave the meeting, citing the reasons for the request. This does not prevent the council member(s) or meeting attendee(s) from participating in future meetings. If all calls to order are unsuccessful the chair/co-chairs may adjourn the meeting, and it will be recorded in the meeting minutes.
  - (viii) When the chair / co-chairs has requested the removal of council member(s) from the meeting, the chair / co-chairs may request that the disputing council member(s) participate in a special meeting, the purpose of which will be to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute. Such a meeting may be a private meeting, and shall not be construed as a council meeting.

## **12. Conflict of Interest:**

12.1 A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential.

12.2 Council members 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 council. The declaration of the conflict of interest shall be recorded in the meeting minutes.

- 12.3 A member shall exclude him- or herself from discussions in which:
- (i) A conflict of interest is likely to result;
  - (ii) The member's ability to carry out his or her duties and responsibilities as a council member may be jeopardized;
  - (iii) The council member, his or her relatives, or a business entity in which the member may have an interest, may gain or benefit either directly or indirectly as a result of actions that may be taken by the principal or board in response to advice that the council provides to the principal or to the board.
- 12.4 A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations, or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

### **13. Code of Ethics**

Council members shall conduct themselves in accordance with the following code of ethics:

- 13.1 A member shall consider the best interests of all the students of the school.
- 13.2 A member shall remember that he /she is representing the school parents / guardians and not individual wants and desires.
- 13.3 A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of the council, as identified by legislation, policies and guidelines of the board and the Ontario Ministry of Education.
- 13.4 A member shall make him/herself familiar with the Council Bylaws and act in accordance.
- 13.5 A member shall maintain high standards of integrity.
- 13.6 A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- 13.7 A member shall treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared.
- 13.8 A member shall encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- 13.9 A member shall acknowledge democratic principles and respect the consensus of the school community.
- 13.10 A member shall not disclose confidential information.
- 13.11 A member shall promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
- 13.12 Council Members shall refrain from the following:
- (i) Using any form of social media to speak negatively about any council member, the council as a whole, council initiatives, any member of the school, and the school as a whole.
  - (ii) Using any form of social media to represent the Council in any manner other than those sanctioned by the Council.
  - (iii) Using the Council or the school to promote his /her personal initiatives.

#### **14. Council Social Media / On-line Communication**

Council at its discretion will utilize any social media that will assist in fulfilling its purpose. All social media and on-line communication will:

- 14.1 Be coordinated and managed by at least two council members including the chair / co-chairs,
- 14.2 Adhere to all anti-spam legislation and TDSB on-line Code of Conduct,
- 14.3 Not compromise privacy of any parent/guardian of council or the school, and
- 14.4 Be shut down at the discretion of council.

#### **15. By-law Amendments**

Amendments to this by-law require the approval of a two-thirds of voting members.