

Cherrywood Acres Public School School Council Constitution



School Mission Statement

Educating and empowering our students in a safe and caring environment.

2020-2021

Cherrywood Acres Public School – School Council Constitution

Cherrywood Acres Public **School Council** Mission Statement: “To support an effective social and academic partnership among students, parents, teachers and the community in their quest to maximize the overall performance of our students.”

Article I

1.0 Name of Organization

- 1.1 The name of this organization shall be ***Cherrywood Acres Public School Council***. (Hereafter referred to as “***the Council***”).

Article II

2.0 Mandate of the Council

- 2.1 Working within the policies, mission statement and goals of the District School Board of Niagara, the Council will:
- Provide opportunities for parents to be more directly involved in the education of their children.
 - Adopt a mission statement for the school.
 - Provide advice to the principal (School Administrator) and a communication link to parent community. The advisory focus is on forging parent/community alliances to enhance the input provided to the school in order that the school’s policies, programs, services and procedures serve the need of the school and its community.
 - Have a continuing and foremost focus of supporting and improving the academic achievement of students.
 - Foster good relations among parents, staff and the local community.
 - Be a voice for public education in the community.
 - Report on the Council’s activities as requested by the District School Board of Niagara.
 - Involvement in the organization and management of fundraising.
- 2.2 The Council will not have any of the powers and duties reserved by law or regulation for the District School Board of Niagara, the school principal or collective agreements.

Article III

3.0 Representation and Membership

- 3.1 Membership of the council shall include:
- Parents or guardians (a minimum of three) of students currently enrolled in the school shall form the majority of members on the Council. A parent who is an employee of the DSBN may serve as a parent representative on a Council at a school where they are not

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employed, as long as the people qualified to vote for parent members of the Council are informed of their employment status prior to selection.

- One teacher from the school (a teacher who works at the school his/her child attends is not eligible to serve as a parent member on the Council but may be elected as a teacher/non-teaching representative);
- One non-teaching member of the school staff;
- The school principal. (Non-voting);
- Where possible, one member of the community.

Article IV

4.0 Elections and Appointment Procedures

4.1 Parent/Guardian representatives will be elected according to the following process:

- In September, parents/guardians will be notified through all communication channels (newsletter, school website, school messenger) that council nominations will take place at the first Council meeting of the school year.
- Parents/guardians must complete, or can complete on behalf of another parent/guardian, a **Self-Nomination Candidate Form** (see APPENDIX A for sample) expressing interest in the following council roles:
 - Chair;
 - Co-Chair;
 - Treasurer;
 - Secretary
- Only one parent/guardian per household/family is eligible for an elected position on Council.
- A candidate must declare if he/she is employed by the District School Board of Niagara.
- The Chair/Co-Chair are elected by the council members and must be a parent who is *not* employed by the school board.

4.2 A self-nominated teacher representative or one teacher determined by the teaching staff of the school.

4.3 A non-teaching, self-nominated staff representative will be determined by the non-teaching staff of the school.

4.4 A community representative may be selected and appointed by the voting Council members. Any member of the Council may recommend the names of the persons to be considered for the appointment. *The community representative cannot be an employee at Cherrywood Acres Public School.* If the community representative is an employee elsewhere within the District School Board of Niagara, then this must be disclosed at the first Council meeting.

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- 4.5 *Self-Nomination Candidacy Forms* may be received from the school before or on the day of the first meeting. The Chair/Co-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary will be elected during the first meeting of the school year.

Article V

5.0 Terms of Office

- 5.1 An elected parent/guardian may submit their Self-Nomination Candidacy Form annually.
- 5.2 Teaching and non-teaching staff members will be determined annually from their respective groups. This will occur as soon as possible in the new school year.
- 5.3 The principal is appointed by the District School Board of Niagara.
- 5.4 The Council may establish committees made up of teachers, parents, business leaders, advisors and other citizens to carry out specific functions, to study specific issues and to make recommendations to the Council. The Council will seek widespread participation in these activities. These committees will have no responsibilities beyond those outlined by the Council when the committee is established.
- 5.5 The cessation of term will be determined when the member
- No longer has a child enrolled in the school (parent/guardian).
 - No longer is employed at Cherrywood Acres Public School (teacher, support staff).
 - Has missed three scheduled meetings without proper notice or regrets to the chair /co-chair or the school and is recorded as absent in the minutes. The Chair/Co-Chair will keep a record of regrets and absences and report at Council meetings.
 - Submits a letter of resignation to the Chair/Co-Chair.
- 5.6 Vacancies that occur during the term will be determined by the Council members and will be appointed by consensus if it is necessary. Nominations for this appointment may be made by any member of the Council.
- 5.7 The name and e-mail of the Chair will be forwarded each school year, as requested, to the District School Board of Niagara.

Article VI

6.0 Council Procedures

- 6.1 All Council meetings and committee meetings shall be open to the school community.

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- 6.2 Generally, the means of decision making shall be through **consensus** (*see APPENDIX B for process*). As compared to a democratic vote where most people support a decision, consensus would have all members willing to accept a decision as reasonable. If consensus is not forthcoming, each member of Council may give a short summation of their feelings on the issue. If this is a matter of urgency, then the Chair will call for a simple majority to determine the validity of that urgency. If this motion is carried, the Chair would follow this motion by a secret ballot. Otherwise, the Chair may choose to accept a motion to table this issue to the next School Council meeting for a Council vote.
- 6.3 The Council and the principal have the responsibility to make the past and present minutes of Council available. Minutes taken during the current school year will be available on the school website under the school council tap. Previous years minutes will be available by making a request through the school office. All Council minutes are kept at the school for four years before they are discarded by the principal. The principal will have the responsibility of maintaining a Council file in the school's administration office containing copies of all minutes, Council correspondence, current by-laws, and current reports.

Article VII

7.0 Executive Members of Council

- 7.1 At the first meeting of the school year, members of the incoming Council shall elect from the parent/guardian *Self Nomination Candidate Forms* only to fulfill each for the following positions for the new school year:
- I. Chair
 - II. Co-Chair
 - III. Treasurer
 - IV. Secretary

Article VIII

8.0 Duties of the Officers

- 8.1 The Chair is responsible for:
- Presiding at all meetings and provide leadership to the Council and general supervision of activities of the Council.
 - Working in cooperation with the principal to prepare a written agenda for all Council meetings.
 - Distributing the agenda to Council members at the time of each scheduled meeting.
 - Appointing temporary or standing committees as needed, in consultation with the Council.
 - Expressing consensus or accepting a motion from the floor, as reached by Council.
 - Serving as the spokesperson for the Council

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- Monitoring the implementations of Council decisions.
- 8.2 The Co-Chair is responsible for:
- Assisting the chair as needed and exercise all functions in the absence of the chair.
- 8.3 The treasurer is responsible for:
- Nevada Tickets.
 - Applying for license to the City of Niagara Falls when due.
 - Depositing cheques.
 - Paying invoices.
 - Recording transactions in manual and electronic forms.
 - Preparing bank reconciliations.
 - Preparing reports for monthly and year end Council meetings and the District School Board of Niagara.
- 8.4 The secretary is responsible for:
- Keeping a full and accurate account of the proceedings and transactions of Council meetings.
 - Providing to the principal and all voting Council members a copy of the complete minutes of the meeting within a timely manner and before the next meeting.
 - Maintaining a list of the Council membership with current telephone numbers/addresses and email addresses.
 - Producing an executive summary of the Council's activity in collaboration with the principal, as required by the District School Board of Niagara after the final school council meeting of the academic year.
- 8.5 The Principal is responsible for:
- Planning programs and providing materials that will assist the Council to fulfill its responsibilities.
 - Notifying the school community regarding the dates, times and location of all regular Council meeting through the Cherrywood Acres Public School website and/or monthly newsletter.
 - Sharing information on school activities, successes and concerns with the Council members on a variety of matters.
 - Assisting, advising, supporting, cooperating and consulting (seeking advice, with the Council) and inform Council on how their recommendations have been taken into account when decisions related to their recommendation have been made.
 - Share the school plan providing for co-curricular activities at Cherrywood Acres Public School on the school website.
 - Providing administrative assistance and clerical/secretarial support for Council activities.
 - Attending the meetings of the Council.
 - Cooperatively setting the agenda with the Chair of the Council.

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- Maintaining the authority, responsibilities and obligations of the principalship as mandated by Board Policy and the Acts and Regulations of the Province of Ontario.
- Reporting on BINGO funds and the School Council fundraising spending.

Article IX

9.0 Meetings

- 9.1 Although normal decision making will be achieved through consensus, at times a voting process will be required. Members of Council having one vote each are:
- I. Parent/Guardian members.
 - II. Teaching staff representative.
 - III. Non-teaching staff representative.
 - IV. Community member (voting privilege is decided by Council).
- 9.2 The Council will conduct a minimum of four meeting during the school year. The date and time for future meetings will be determined at the previous Council meeting. This information will be shared through all communication channels (newsletter, school website, school messenger).
- 9.3 Persons interested in presenting at a Council meeting may request, in writing, to the Chair/Principal to be added to the Agenda no later than seven (7) days before the next Council meeting date.
- 9.4 Council meetings will be held at Cherrywood Acres Public School and shall be open to the school community. Alternatively, and only when necessary, Council meetings may be held virtually through Microsoft Teams or a DSBN approved group-chat software.
- 9.5 The first Council meeting shall be no later than October 15th.
- 9.6 The agenda of each Council meeting shall include:
- Attendance of Members [Present, regrets, absent (without notifying the school)]
 - Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting
 - Treasurer and BINGO report
 - Business arising from previous minutes
 - New business
 - Chair's report
 - Committee reports (when applicable)
 - Principal's report
 - Open Mic
 - Agenda items for next meeting
 - Date of next meeting
 - Adjournment

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Article X

10.0 Constitutional Change

- 10.1 The Constitution may be amended at any regular meeting of the Council by a two-thirds majority vote of those present. Specific amendments must have been introduced at a prior meeting and have been published in the Council minutes and are listed on the agenda for the current meeting.
- 10.2 A copy of the Constitution will be made available on the Cherrywood Acres Public School website or to any person upon request.
- 10.3 A copy of the most current Constitution will be available in the Council minutes binder, which maintains the School Council minutes.

Article XI

11.0 Orientation

- 11.1 A digital orientation package will be available for any voting member upon request. This package will include information about Council roles, responsibilities and functions as determined by the Ontario Ministry of Education, as well as copies of the Ontario Regulations 612/00 and 298, which set out the legal requirements and responsibilities of School Councils.
- 11.2 Council members are also encouraged to attend any School Council training workshops sponsored by the District School Board of Niagara School Parent Involvement Committee (PIC).

Article XII

12.0 Conflict of Interest Conflict Resolution

- 12.1 A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived or potential. Members of the 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 the decision of the Council.
- 12.2 A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organization or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.
- 12.3 Every school council member will be given an opportunity to express his/her concern or opinion about an issue.
- 12.4 Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
- 12.5 Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.

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- 12.6 The Chair`s responsibility is to clarify statements made by all speakers, to identify common ground among points of view raised and to set out the joint interests of all members.
- 12.7 If no common ground can be identified, the Chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
- 12.8 If all attempts at resolving the conflict have been exhausted without success, the Chair shall request the intervention of an independent third party to assist in achieving a resolution to the dispute.
- 12.9 Any resolution reached at the meeting to resolve the conflict shall be respected in full by all parties to the agreement.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A:

Self-Nomination CANDIDATE FORM

Cherrywood Acres Public School Council: 2020 – 2021 School Year *(Updated each September)*

- I wish to declare my candidacy for an elected position (Chair, Co-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary) as a parent/guardian on the Cherrywood Acres Public School Council
- I wish to nominate _____ for an elected position (Chair, Co-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary) as a parent/guardian representative on the Cherrywood Acres Public School Council.
- I wish to join Cherrywood Acres Public School Council as a voting Council Member. I acknowledge that this form entitles me to voting privileges, not necessary an executive position (Chair, Co-Chair, Treasurer or Secretary), even though I may be interested in an executive position.

Everyone is welcome at Council meetings, however only those registered as members can vote

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

I am the parent/guardian of _____ (child(ren)'s name(s), who is currently registered at Cherrywood Acres Public School.

I am an employee of the District School Board of Niagara yes no

Candidate's Signature: _____

Date: _____

The Cherrywood Acres Public School Council is *an advisory group of members*. The School Council is involved in the management of fundraising activities/events, supporting the School Improvement Plan (SIP), developing and reviewing the Constitution, supporting the Safe School Policy, the District School Board of Niagara or Ministry of Education and Training Initiatives as well as matters impacting the school operation.

Please return this form to your child's classroom teacher at Cherrywood Acres Public School by **DATE or bring to the first meeting.**

We hope to see you at our first School Council Meeting. Remember that parents/guardians may choose to attend any School Council Meeting without even being a member. The submission of this Self Nomination Candidate Form just indicates your interest in becoming a voting member of the Cherrywood Acres Public School Council.

APPENDIX B:

DECISION MAKING PROCESS by CONSENSUS

1. **The Council makes decisions through consensus.**
2. **Consensus means that:**
 - I can live with the decision
 - I will support my colleagues in implementing this decision
 - I will do absolutely nothing to impede the implementation of this decision

Each Council member supports the decision as the best choice for the entire school community

3. **After the Council members fully explore a proposal, all concerns and questions have been resolved, and it appears that consensus has been reached (using the Chair who double-checks for consensus)by asking:**

Are there any other questions, issues, or concerns?

If no one speaks, then the Chair calls for an affirmation of the consensus to indicate that a decision has been made.
4. **Once consensus is reached on a decision the group will determine:**
 - What the next steps are, who will take them, and by when.
 - Who needs to know, who is going to tell them, and by when.
5. **If individual members of the group cannot support consensus, they are invited to the next meeting of the presenting group to work through their differences and decide upon a vote.**

RESOURCES:

1. Ministry of Education

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-education>

2. “School Councils: A Guide for Members” Revised 2002

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/council/guide.html>

3. Tips for School Councils

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/gettingstarted.html>

4. DSBN Parent Involvement Committee

<https://dsbn.org/pic/>

5. Ontario Regulations:

612/00 – School Councils and Parent Involvement Committees:

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/000612>

298 - Operation of Schools:

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/900298>