

**Terry Fox Elementary School**

**School Council**

# **Constitution**

**Simcoe County District School Board  
May, 2015**

## **Terry Fox Elementary School Parent Council Constitution**

### **Article 1: Name and Address**

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The name of the organization is Terry Fox Elementary School Parent Council (herein referred to as the “Council”). The address is:

Terry Fox Elementary School  
100 Livingstone Street  
Barrie, Ontario  
L4M 6X9

The phone number is (705) 727-4267

The e-mail address is councilchairter@scdsb.on.ca

### **Article 2: Mission Statement**

To support and encourage shared responsibility for student learning among students, parents, teachers and administration.

### **Article 3: Purpose and Objectives**

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Terry Fox Elementary School Parent Council will

- Collaborate positively and innovatively with the school administration and staff
- Provide input to Terry Fox administration
- Develop an increased sense of shared accountability for public education
- Present educational and informative material to the school community
- Provide a means of regular communication and dialogue between all partners in education
- Fundraise to support the school and students
- Promote and maintain contact with other school advisory councils

### **Article 4: Procedures and Operating Guidelines**

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The School Council will provide community input. It is a partnership of school and community representatives. They provide a forum through which parents and other members of our community can contribute to improving student achievement and school performance. The school council encourages, promotes and supports open communication between the school and the community.

Confidential personnel matters and/or individual parental matters may not be addressed by the Parent Council. Nor are Parent Councils to discuss confidential information on individual students.

If confidential information is divulged at a meeting, the chair and/or co-chair would interject to stop the sharing of information, and will instruct Council members to keep the information confidential, request that members of the public keep the information confidential, ensure that the minutes do not refer to the indiscretion, and determine if further action needs to be taken.

The operational procedures of this Parent Council comply with the procedures *procedures and policies Memo 4310 in accordance with Regulations 612/00 and 613/00*), outlined in the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) All recommendations and activities of the School Council shall comply with all Ministry of Education Acts, SCDSB Policies and Procedures and Staff Collective Agreements.

### **Article 5: Definitions**

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When we use the term “parent” in this document, we mean it to include any person who is the parent and/or the legal guardian of a student attending Terry Fox Elementary School. *The term “voting member” refers to a parent/guardian member of the School Council who has been recognized as a school council member who has been bestowed with voting privileges, established through the election procedures of the school council during the first 30 days of the current school year.* Voting members must be in attendance at the first meeting of the year.

### **Article 6: Membership**

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Members of the Terry Fox Elementary School Council shall be elected or appointed in keeping with the guidelines of the Terry Fox Elementary School Council by-laws (in accordance with the Provincial Guidelines as set out in reference School Council, A Guide for Members).

- a majority of parents, as specified in a bylaw **of the school council**
- the principal or vice-principal of the school (the principal may delegate membership responsibility to the vice-principal)
- one teacher employed in the school, other than the principal or vice-principal
- one non-teaching employee of the school
- one or more community representatives appointed by the elected council
- one person appointed by an association that is a member of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations

### **Article 6.1: Parent Membership**

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There shall be no more than one parent who is a voting member on the School Council from any one household. A parent is a member who is a parent or legal guardian of a child who attends Terry Fox Elementary school. The Board or the Council must ensure that parent members form the majority of the school council membership. School Council will be responsible for stipulating the number of voting *parent members on the Council, in accordance with Regulations 612/00 and 613/00.* School Council will consist of 11 voting parent members, (which includes the four members on the Executive Proper). The Executive Proper will consist of the Chair, the Co-Chair, the Secretary and the Treasurer.

Any other parent or staff members are welcome to attend and *provide their input to discussions, but do not have voting privileges, in accordance with SCDSB Policy 4310.*

### **Article 6.2: Staff Membership**

One teaching staff member and one non-teaching employee of the school will also be voting members of the Terry Fox Elementary School Council. A Community Representative would also be eligible to vote.

### **Article 6.3: Conflict of Interest**

Conflict of Interest for a school council representative is any situation where the individual's private interest may be incompatible or in conflict with his or her school council responsibilities.

If individual Council members perceive themselves to be in conflict of interest, they are honour bound to declare their conflict at the earliest possible opportunity and at the time of the meeting. The minutes of the meeting will reflect this declaration. As a result, the Council member is ineligible to vote on the issue(s) relating to their conflict of interest.

*A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential:*

- *Actual: When a school council member has a private interest that is sufficiently connected to his or her duties and responsibilities as a council member that it influences the exercise of these duties and responsibilities.*
- *Perceived: When reasonably well-informed persons could reasonably believe that a school council member has a conflict of interest, even where, in fact, there is no real conflict of interest.*
- *Potential: When a school council member has a private interest that could affect his or her decision about matters proposed for discussion.*

### **Article 6.4 – Code of Ethics**

- A member shall consider the best interests of all students
- A member shall be guided by the school's and the school board's mission statements.
- A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of a school council, as identified by the school's operating guidelines the school board, and the Ontario Ministry of Education
- A member shall become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- A member shall maintain the highest standards of integrity.
- A member shall recognize and respect the integrity of each member of the school community.
- A member shall treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.

- A member shall encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- A member shall acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council.
- A member shall respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation for the school council.
- A member shall not disclose confidential information.
- A member shall limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- A member shall use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise
- A member shall promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
- A member shall declare any conflict of interest
- A member shall not accept any payment or benefit financially through school council involvement

## **Article 6.5: Membership Responsibilities**

### **Co-Chairs shall**

- call and chair Council meetings
- *assist with preparation of the agenda for meetings, in consultation with other Council members and the principal*
- ensure that the minutes of the meetings are recorded and maintained
- coordinate the activities of the Council and subcommittees of the Council
- communicate with the principal
- ensure that there is communication with the community
- sign any contracts, this constitution and other documents which the Council has authorized
- prepare the Council Annual Report as required by the Board
- liaise with the Trustees and Board as required
- ensure that the Council constitution and by-laws are reviewed each year
- *notify a member of possible removal by preparing the notification*

### **The Secretary shall**

- Secretary reviews copies of minutes with principal or designate
- record attendance and the minutes of the meetings of the Council
- post the minutes in the Council book available in the school office and on the website
- distribute the minutes by email to all Council members
- ensure that all records are kept in a safe place
- make member aware of missing two meetings

### **The Treasurer shall**

- assist in the preparation and distribution of the Annual Financial Report
- prepare the Annual Council Treasurer's Report as required by the Board

### **The Terry Fox Elementary School Senior Administrative Assistant shall**

- keep full and accurate accounts, receipts, disbursements and books belonging to the Council
- deposit all money and other valuable effects in the name of and to the credit of the Council
- distribute the funds of the Council as instructed by the Council, in accordance with the fundraising plan

### **The Terry Fox Elementary School Principal**

- supports and promotes the Council's operations and activities as an equal member of the Council
- seeks input from the Council in areas which it has identified as priorities and is prepared to provide a rationale for decisions made
- provides or gathers resources on laws, regulations, Board policies and collective agreements required by the Council to enable it to make informed decisions
- ensures that copies of the Council constitution and by-laws, financial reports, and minutes of meetings are kept at the school and available for everyone to see
- ensures all contacts and information are forwarded to the chair and/or co-chair
- assists the Council in communicating with the school community
- encourages the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the community
- lends support to school community organizations which operate separately from the Council, and serves as an effective liaison between the Council and such organizations

## **Article 7: Elections**

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According to Ontario Regulation 612/00 elections must take place at the same time each year – within the first thirty days of each school year.

### **7.1 Election Subcommittee**

The committee must ensure that a new council is in place within 30 days of the start of the school year in September. Election will take place prior to the end of the month of September.

At the May meeting of the Council, the Principal will discuss the potential for needing an election committee for September. The Election committee will consist of the Principal,

teaching staff, non-teaching staff, community representative and/or parents. No one standing for election or the spouse of anyone standing for election shall be a member of the election committee. The election subcommittee will assist the Principal in setting up the election procedures, running the election, and counting the ballots.

### **The Election subcommittee shall**

- provide nomination forms
- ensure that the school community is notified of election procedures and election date(s), location, and time, at least fourteen days in advance of election
- conduct the elections by secret ballot
- count the ballots
- help the principal notify all candidates of the results
- keep all the results and related information confidential
- release only the names of successful candidates
- notify all individuals standing for election of the results before the results are released to the school community

### **7.2 Date**

Elections for Council membership shall take place annually, no later than the end of September.

### **7.3 Election Procedures for Parent Members**

*Each family of a student enrolled at Terry Fox Elementary School shall be entitled to one vote for each vacant parent member position on the Council.*

- Nomination forms will be made available in the June Newsletter and office
- *During the first week* of school a note will be distributed to all school parents, giving them the opportunity to complete a form to become a School Council voting member, or a member of the School Council executive.
- Nomination forms would be accepted up until the end of the first week of school.
- Receipt of nomination forms will determine the format of the first School Council meeting of the year, and recognition of those who want to be considered to be an executive or a voting member
- In addition, if of the eleven voting member, openings still remain, ballots will be handed out to all attendees at the first School Council meeting of the year.
- The vote will be held during the first School Council meeting to determine the remainder of the eleven voting members if there are more interested parties than available voting member positions

### **7.4 Acclamation**

Parent elections shall be by acclamation when the number of candidates is equal to or less than the number of parent member positions on the Council.

### **7.5 Election of the Executive**

**Once the parent members are elected, the newly elected Council votes on its Executive for the year. (See Article 8 for list of positions)**

## **7.6 Terms of Office**

Council members serve a one-year term of office. There are no restrictions to the number of times a member can be re-elected.

## **7.7 Resignations**

Anyone who is a Council member, except the principal, may resign his or her position by writing a letter of resignation to the chair or co-chair(s). If someone resigns, the Council will fill the position according to Article 7.9: Vacancies.

## **7.8 Removal**

- The Council *will* choose to remove from the Council any *voting* member who misses three (3) meetings and shall undertake to replace that person according to Article 7.9: Vacancies.
- Secretary will make the chair aware of a voting member missing two meetings.
- The council member will receive a notification of possible removal after missing two meetings unless extenuating circumstances exist and are taken into consideration by council. *Notification will be prepared by the chair(s).*

## **7.9 Vacancies**

A vacancy in the membership of Council does not prevent the Council from exercising its authority.

The Council should fill positions that become vacant due to resignation or removal as soon as possible:

- at an open meeting (the next meeting in the sequence).
- Make parents/attendees aware of the vacancies
- Ask for volunteers to serve the remaining term

The Council will fill vacancies only until May of the current school year, after which time Council will fill the vacant positions through the annual September election

## **Article 8: The Executive**

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### **8.1 Executive**

The Executive is elected from the newly elected parent members of the Council and shall consist of:

- Chair (customarily filled by the *co-chair* when he/she is re-elected to the Council)
- *Co-Chair*
- Secretary
- Treasurer

### **8.2 Chair**

*An employee of the Board cannot be chair.*



The chair shall:

- Call and chair Council meetings
- Prepare an agenda for meetings, in consultation with other Council members and the principal
- Ensure that the minutes of the meetings are recorded and maintained
- Coordinate the activities of the Council and subcommittees of the Council
- Communicate with the Principal
- *Distribute reminders by e-mail to the Council members about upcoming meetings*
- Ensure that there is communication with the community
- Sign any contracts, minutes of meetings, this constitution and other documents which the Council has authorized
- Prepare the Council Annual Report as required by the Board
- Liaise with the Trustees and Board as required
- Ensure that the Council constitution and by-laws are reviewed each year

### **8.3 Secretary**

The secretary shall

- Record attendance and the minutes of the meetings of the Council
- Post the minutes in the Council book available in the school office and on the website
- Distribute the minutes by email to all Council members
- Ensure that all records are kept in a safe place
- Keep full and accurate accounts, receipts, disbursements and books belonging to the Council
- Deposit all money and other valuable effects in the name and to the credit of the Council
- *Will notify chair/co-chair when a voting member misses two meetings*

### **8.4 Treasurer**

The treasurer shall

- *Distribute annual financial report*

## **Article 9: Meetings**

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### **9.1 Timetable**

At a meeting in May, *School Council* will establish a schedule of dates for the entire school year to follow. In the first meeting in September the schedule will be handed out to attendees and included in the meeting minutes.

### **9.2 Attendance**

*Voting* Members of the Council must either send regrets to the chair directly or via another Council member if they are going to be absent from a Council meeting.

### **9.3 Quorum**

A meeting will have a quorum if

- Six of the eleven voting members are present *and*
- The majority of those present are parents

If the majority of voting members are not present, an information meeting will be held. No votes will occur. Any items requiring a vote will be discussed and the vote will be postponed. A follow-up vote may be held by email (see section 9.6 Decision-Making).

### **9.4 Communication**

The Council will publish a timetable of current school year Council meetings in the student newsletter and on the Council website at the beginning of the school year.

### **9.5 Setting the Agenda**

- The task of developing the School Council Meeting Agenda is the responsibility of the Principal and the Chair/Co-Chairs.
- Additional agenda items may be submitted by other council members at any time prior to the scheduled meeting
- The agenda is distributed at the meeting
- Next meeting draft agenda items may be noted at the end of the meeting

### **9.6 Decision-making**

Comments and opinions from all meeting attendees are welcome, regardless of membership status. ***Decisions will be made by putting forth a motion. Votes will be held at School Council meetings whenever possible. If a vote is required but quorum is not reached, a discussion will be held. Upon distribution of the meeting minutes outlining the discussion, a vote may be held via email. The email must be distributed to all voting members and may only include the motion and required response deadline. All email motions and vote results must be noted in the following meeting's minutes.***

In the case where a decision cannot be reached through consensus, the chair/co-chairs may decide to either

- Decision would be determined by vote (if six or more of the eleven voting members are present)
- *Defer the issue to an established subcommittee for continued deliberation*
- If a vote is tied the tie would be broken by the Principal or Principal's designate, if the Principal is absent

### **9.7 Structure**

When necessary, the Council will use Robert's Rule of Order.

Council meetings will cover the following in a flexible order:

- Welcome and Introductions

- Review of minutes of preceding meeting and acceptance by motion and vote
- Acceptance of current agenda by motion and vote
- Principal's Report
- Treasurer's Report and acceptance by motion and vote
- Old business items
- New business items
- Subcommittee updates, including next meeting date, time and location
- Meeting adjourned

### **9.8 Minutes**

The Council book, maintained in the school office, will contain a copy of all Council meeting minutes. Minutes will be posted in the Council book and on the Council website. The secretary will distribute the minutes by e-mail to all Council members and interested attendees and parents.

Minutes shall include attendance, a synopsis of discussions, motions, decisions and actions to be taken.

### **9.9 Conflict Resolution**

The Council will undertake to resolve all internal conflicts within its mandate in a timely manner. The Council will abide by any conflict resolution policy issued by the Board, as follows:

Should a conflict arise, the following guide will be followed:

- Every school council member will be given an opportunity to express his or her concern or opinion about the issue at dispute and how the dispute has affected him or her.
- Speakers to an issue will maintain a calm and respectful tone at all times.
- Speakers will be allowed to speak without interruption.
- The chair's 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.
- If no common ground can be identified, the chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding any further.
- If a common ground can be identified, the chair will seek to clarify preferences among all members before proceeding further.
- If a council member or members become disruptive during a meeting, the chair shall ask for order.
- If all efforts to restore order fail or the unbecoming behaviour continues, the chair may direct the individual council member(s) to leave the meeting, citing the reasons for the request.
- The removal of a member for one meeting does not prevent the council member from participating in future meetings of council.

- The incident shall be recorded.
- When the chair/co-chair has requested the removal of a member or members from a meeting, the chair/co-chair shall request that the disputing members of council 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 meeting of the council.
- If the conflict continues to escalate the chair/co-chair may request the intervention of an independent third party to assist in achieving a resolution to the dispute.
- An independent third party may be a board official or another individual mutually agreed on by the parties involved in the dispute.
- Any resolution reached at the meeting to resolve the conflict shall be documented, signed and respected in full by all parties to the agreement.

## **Article 10: Financial Management**

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### **10.1 Signing Authorities**

- Money will be held in a separate line of the school account.
- *Prior to release of funds, the expenditures must be approved by council.*
- All expenditures must be submitted to the Principal in writing.

### **10.2 Disbursement and Allocation of Money**

- All funds raised by the Council shall be collected for the purpose of enhancing the educational experience of students at Terry Fox Elementary.
- All money must be collected by the end of the school year.
- Funds should be dispersed or allocated to a specific purpose by the end of the year or allocated to the Council Reserve Fund.

### **10.3 Audit**

The treasurer will meet with the principal annually to review documentation related to the Council's monies in the school account and to prepare an annual treasurer's report to be submitted to the Simcoe County District School Board.

The school Council's monies are audited by an independent accountant as part of the audit of the school's accounts.

The year-end for the Council's financial records shall be August 31st in any given year.

### **10.4 Reporting**

The treasurer will present a written update of the financial record to the Council at each meeting.

## **Article 11: School Advisory Council Constitution**

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### **11.1: Review**

The Council will review the constitution at the last meeting of every school year. Updates to the constitution will be made as needed. The constitution subcommittee will perform the review and bring proposed amendments to the Council for voting.

### **11.2: Amendments**

Amendments to the constitution must be presented, in written form, to the *Chair* at least *14 days* in advance at a regularly scheduled meeting.

Constitutional amendments need a majority to be passed.

### **11.3: Distribution**

The Council will distribute the constitution and review the key points at the first meeting of each school year. A copy of the constitution will be posted on the Council webpage.

## **Article 12: Protection of School Advisory Council Members**

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The Simcoe County District School Board holds liability insurance undertaken on behalf of all Councils and, as such, member of the Terry Fox Elementary School Council are not personally liable for decisions and activities undertaken in relation to the council, with the exception of any willful, destructive or dishonest act or neglect, performed by a particular Council member for which that person will be held accountable.