

**Notre Dame Elementary School**  
**School Council**  
**Operating Procedures**  
Approved December 12, 2016

**“ Notre Dame School Council is a faith filled parent community that encourages spiritual, academic and personal growth of students through collaboration and engagement between parents, school and the greater community.”**

## **1. DEFINITIONS**

In these Operating Procedures:

- A. “School” means Notre Dame Elementary School;
- B. “Council” means the School Council for the School;
- C. “Parents” means parent, guardian or primary caregiver of any child enrolled in an educational program at the School;
- D. “Regulation” means the School Councils Regulation as provided through Alberta Provincial Legislation;
- E. “School community” means persons other than parents (as defined in 1C above) who have, in the opinion of the majority of the Members of the School Council, an interest in the well-being of the students and the School;
- F. “Operating Procedures,” means the governing document serving the same purpose as Bylaws referenced in the Regulations.

## **2. AUTHORITY**

The Notre Dame Elementary School Council derives its authority to participate in the education of our students through Alberta Provincial Legislation hereinafter referred to as “*legislation.*”

## **3. MISSION STATEMENT/PHILOSOPHY**

*Notre Dame School Council will work in partnership with our school and our parent community in the support of student’s spiritual and educational journey.*

## **4. GOALS/PURPOSE**

The goals of the School Council, in keeping with the legislation, are to:

- A. Represent the parent perspective by providing advice to and consulting with the principal and the board on matters relating to the School such as: the School philosophy, mission and vision, policies, improvement plans, programs and directions, and budget allocations to meet student needs;
- B. Develop community engagement opportunities that will foster participation and well-being of the school community and add to the culture of the school;

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- C. Facilitate communication with parents and the community;
- D. Advise and collaborate with other school councils, school boards, Alberta Education or other provincial organizations on educational issues;
- E. Encourage a positive atmosphere where individual contributions and continuous improvements are encouraged and valued;
- F. Support an approach to education in which decisions are made collaboratively and, wherever possible, at the School and classroom level;
- G. Facilitate a formal performance evaluation of our School Council and communicate the results of this evaluation to the school board and the School Community;
- H. Comply with all relevant legislation and school board;
- I. Adhere to School Council's Code Ethics.

## **5. GOVERNANCE, MEMBERSHIP and DECISION MAKING**

**Notre Dame** School Council uses a Town Hall Operating Style

- A. The membership of the School Council shall consist of:
  - 1) All parents, as defined in 1C above;
  - 2) The Principal of the School;
  - 3) One or more teachers and staff of the School, elected or appointed by the teachers;
  - 4) Others as decided by the School Council;
- B. The voting Members of the School Council shall consist of all parents as defined in 1C above;
- C. The non-voting Members of the School Council shall consist of: Administration, staff and STAR board members or other attendees that do not meet the definition in 1C as above;
- D. The parent/other ratio may vary at times, but the number of parent Members must always exceed the number of administration, staff, students and/or community representatives.

## **6. DECISION MAKING**

Decisions are made by a vote process. A motion must be moved, seconded, and passed by the majority of School Council voting Members present at the meeting at which the vote was taken.

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**7. QUORUM**

- A. Quorum will be attained when the majority present at any School Council meeting are parents as defined in 1C above, and at least two (2) executive members and the principal or designate is present.
- B. In the absence of a quorum:
  - 1) No motions may be considered or approved.
  - 2) If a majority of parents and School Council Members at the meeting agree to proceed in the absence of a quorum, the School Council will continue the meeting for purposes of discussion of issues, but point 1) above will continue to apply.

**8. EXECUTIVE and TERMS of OFFICE**

The positions of the Executive shall consist of: Chair, Vice-Chair (or Co-Chair), Secretary and four (4) members at large.

- A. Parents as defined in 1C above will fill all Executive positions.
- B. The positions of the executive shall not be held by a teacher, principal (or any administrative of the school) any staff member employed at Notre Dame School, or a board member of St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic School Division.
- C. Every parent is eligible to be elected to an Executive position on the School Council.
- D. The terms of office are from the close of the Annual General Meeting to the close of the following Annual General Meeting. Any elected Member may serve two (2) consecutive terms in the same position. The principal, under special circumstances, may give permission to an officer to continue in an executive position past the two (2) year term.
- E. The Executive of the School Council will be elected by parents attending the Annual General Meeting or, in the event of vacancies after the Annual General Meeting, executive positions will be appointed by the voting Members present at a subsequent School Council meeting.
- F. Any Executive Member may resign his/her position during their term by providing written notice to the Chair and Principal.

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- G. Any Executive Member may be removed from the Executive at any time with cause by a majority vote of the Executive whenever, in its judgement, the best interest of the School Council will be served.
- H. The Executive will carry out the day-to-day operation of the School Council.

## **9. DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBERS**

### **A. Chair**

The School Council Chair will be a parent of a student attending the School. Unless otherwise delegated, the Chair of the School Council will:

- 1) Chair all meetings of the School Council;
- 2) Coordinate with the Principal to establish meeting agendas;
- 3) Communicate with the Principal on a regular basis;
- 4) Decide all matters relating to rules of order at the meetings;
- 5) Follow existing SC Operating Procedures;
- 6) Ensure that minutes are recorded and maintained;
- 7) Have general supervision of all activities of the School Council and serve as ex-officio on any committee;
- 8) Be the official spokesperson of the School Council;
- 9) Ensure that there is regular communication with the School community, beyond those who attend meetings;
- 10) Review any communication to the School community prior to distribution and include the Principal in same;
- 11) Stay informed about School Board policy that impacts School Council;
- 12) Submit an annual report to the School Board in conformance with the Regulations.

### **B. Vice-Chair**

Unless otherwise delegated, the Vice-Chair of the School Council will:

- 1) In the event of resignation, incapacity or leave of absence of the Chair, fulfill the Chair's responsibilities;
- 2) In the absence of the Chair, supervise the affairs and preside at any meetings of the School Council;

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- 3) Work with and support the Chair in agenda preparation;
- 4) Ensure the appropriate management, in compliance with PIPA, of any personal information collected on behalf of the School Council;
- 5) Assume responsibility, in consultation with the School Council, for communicating with Parents At Notre Dame Association (PANDA) or other parent groups within the School;
- 6) Promote teamwork and assist the Chair in the smooth running of the meetings;
- 7) Keep informed of relevant School and School Board policies;
- 8) Prepare to assume the position of Chair in the future;
- 9) Assist the Chair and undertake tasks assigned by the Chair.

**C. Secretary**

Unless otherwise delegated, the Secretary of the School Council will:

- 1) Act as a recorder at each meeting and ensure that the minutes accurately reflect the directions agreed to at the School Council meeting;
- 2) Ensure that minutes, correspondence, records and other School Council documents are properly maintained, and ensure that all relevant documents (as per legislation) are available to the public in an accessible location in the School, for a period of 7 years;
- 3) Maintain a dated record of all the Members of the School Council who have knowingly provided their contact information, in compliance with PIPA;
- 4) Distribute, as determined by the School Council and/or the Chair, agendas, minutes, notices of meetings and notices of other events;
- 5) Ensure all materials relating to the School Council including Alberta School Council Resource Guide, all meeting minutes and any relevant documents are available digitally and in an accessible location in the School;
- 6) Maintain all records pertaining to the school council in its designated storage area during their term.

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In the absence of the Secretary, the School Council shall choose a recording Secretary for each meeting.

**D. Members at Large /Others as decided by the School Council**

These Members will:

- 1) Share their professional knowledge, expertise and life experience with other School Council members;
- 2) Encourage feedback and participation from community groups and individuals;
- 3) Communicate information of interest to the School Council and the School community;
- 4) Share information from School Council meetings with the community;
- 5) Have a clear understanding of the School Council's goals and purpose;
- 6) Attend School Council meetings;
- 7) Identify possible topics for agendas;
- 8) Serve as a liaison between the School Council and their organization or area of responsibility.

**10. VACANCIES**

With the exception of the School Council positions filled by the Principal and teacher representative, any vacancy of the School Council will be advertised to the parent community. Appointments for a vacant position will be held at subsequent meetings of the School Council until the vacancy is filled.

**11. MEETINGS**

**A. Annual General Meetings**

Where the School Council has not been operational the year prior, an Establishment Meeting will be held in accordance with legislation, otherwise an Annual General Meeting of the School Council will take place one each School year.

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- 1) The Annual General Meeting of the School Council shall be held not later than 30 days after the first instructional day of the School year and will be advertised throughout the School and the community at large at least ten(10) days in advance of the meeting.
- 1) All parents as defined in 1C above are eligible for election.
- 2) All parents as defined in 1C above are eligible to vote at the Annual General Meeting.
- 3) The business of the Annual General Meeting shall include:
  - a. the election of School Council.
- 4) And may also include:
  - a. plans for the upcoming year;
  - b. Set the dates for regular meetings for the up-coming year;
  - c. discussion of any major issue in which all parents should have input such as changes to the Vision or Mission of the School or School Board, School policy, or other major changes in the School program or focus;
  - d. any evaluation of the School Council.

**B. Special General Meetings**

- 1) Upon receipt of a written request of at least 10 parents, with a description of the purpose for a Special General Meeting, the Chair must ensure a Special Meeting will be called within 14 days.
- 2) The School Council Executive may at any time give notice of a Special General Meeting of the School Council
- 3) A notice stating the time, date and place of the meeting, the names of the parents calling the Special General Meeting, and a description of the matters to be dealt with will be provided to the School community at least 5 days before the Special General Meeting.
- 4) At any Special General Meeting all parents in attendance at the Special General Meeting shall have the right to vote.

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**C. Regular Meetings**

A minimum of eight (8) regular School Council meetings will be held per School year or as called by the Executive. It will be decided when these meetings will take place at the Annual General Meeting. The meetings will take place at the School, unless otherwise advertised.

Any School Council Member may be suspended or expelled for the duration of the School year from attendance at any Regular School Council meetings, if, upon a majority vote of voting Members present at Special General Meeting called for that purpose, it is determined to be in the best interests of the School Council to do so.

**12. MEETING AGENDAS**

The Chair will work in partnership with the Principal and the vice-chair, when invited, to establish the agendas for all meetings. Agenda item requests must be made through the Chair, who will, if necessary, consult with the Executive Committee and Principal as to the appropriateness of the item requested.

**13. COMMITTEES**

The School Council may appoint committees that consist of School Council Members and/or School community members. Committees will meet outside of School Council meetings to complete their assigned tasks as per the direction of the School Council and provide a written report on their activities at each School Council meetings.



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**14. POLICIES**

**Subject to any provincially or Board-mandated policies and/or regulations**, the School Council may make and implement policies that it considers necessary to carry out its functions.

- A. The School Council may develop policy for the duration of its term.
- B. The policies of the School Council will be reviewed at the beginning of every new School Council term to decide if each policy will be implemented for the new School Council and its term.
- C. Topics on which School Council may wish to develop guiding policies include, but are not limited to: Communication (Internal and External), Record Keeping, Fundraising, Privacy, Location of Meetings, Official Correspondence Address, New Member Orientation, School Council Evaluation, and Social Media.

**15. FUNDRAISING ASSOCIATION and OTHER GROUPS OF PARENTS**

The School Council recognizes and appreciates the efforts of other groups of parents striving to support and enhance the educational opportunities in the School.

- A. The School Council will communicate regularly with the Fundraising Society, PANDA, and/or other groups of parents to support their activities and to solicit support for School Council activities.
- B. The School Council may develop policies to promote a productive, open and transparent relationship with PANDA and/or other groups of parents.
- C. the school council will invite a member from PANDA to attend a school council meeting and/or provide a report at school council meetings.

**16. CODE OF ETHICS**

All School Council Members shall:

- A. Abide by the legislation that governs them;
- B. Be guided by the mission statement of the district, the School and School Council;
- C. Endeavour to be familiar with School policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them;

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- D. Practice the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, integrity and truth;
- E. Recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the School community;
- F. Declare any conflict of interest;
- G. Encourage a positive atmosphere in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued;
- H. Apply democratic principles;
- I. Consider the best interests of all students;
- J. Respect the confidential nature of some School business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the School Council;
- K. Not disclose confidential information;
- L. Limit discussions at School Council meetings to matters of concern to the School community as a whole;
- M. Use the appropriate communication channels when questions or concerns arise;
- N. Promote high standards of ethical practice within the School community;
- O. Accept accountability for decisions;
- P. Not accept payment for School Council activities.

## **17. CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

The School Council shall abide by the Conflict Resolution Procedures outlined in the School Board's policies and regulations. If none exist, the School Council shall apply every effort to resolve internal conflicts using the steps outlined in these Operating Procedures.

- A. If at any time, 10 parents, or 5 parents and 50% of the Executive Members of the School Council are of the opinion that the School Council is in a state of conflict such that its operation is significantly impaired, they may deliver a signed written letter to all Executive Members and the Principal requesting a Special General Meeting, and the following will apply:
  - 1) The Chair will call a Special General Meeting of the School Council.

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- 2) The Secretary will provide a minimum of 5 days' written notice to all parents and School Council Members of the date, time, place and purpose of the Special General Meeting.
- 3) At the Special General Meeting, all parents and School Council Members present will have an opportunity to hear and discuss the issues causing conflict.
- 4) On motion, a vote shall be taken respecting a proposed resolution to the conflict.
- 5) If a majority of voting Members present vote in favor of the resolution proposed, the School Council will immediately act upon it.
- 6) If required, a neutral, external person will be invited to chair the special general meeting.

## **18. PRIVACY**

The School Council shall adhere to the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) and shall not use or share personal information for purposes other than those of School Council business.

## **19. DISSOLUTION**

As per Alberta Provincial Legislation, only the Minister of Education has the authority to dissolve a School Council. If the School Council is dissolved, the Principal may establish an advisory committee to perform some or all of the duties of the School Council until the next school year. The Principal will perform the duties as outlined in Alberta Provincial Legislation with respect to the re-establishment of the School Council within forty (40) School days after the start of the next School year.

## **20. REVIEWS and AMENDMENTS**

**Subject to any provincially or School Board-mandated policies and/or regulations,** the School Council may make any changes to these Operating Procedures deemed necessary to carry out its functions.

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- A. The Operating Procedures will be reviewed for their relevance and effectiveness on a regular basis by the School Council Executive or by a committee established expressly for that purpose.
  
- A. Notice of proposed changes to the Operating Procedures will be provided to the School community no less than 5 days before the meeting.
  
- B. The Operating Procedures of the School Council may be amended by a majority vote of the voting Members present at any scheduled Regular, Special or Annual General meeting of the School Council.

These Operating Procedures have been accepted by a majority of the Members entitled to vote at a Regular, Special or Annual General meeting of the School Council.

Date: December 12, 2016

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Dawn Miller

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Chair's Signature

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Cheryl Leckie

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Secretary's Signature

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Monique Tellier-Phillips

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Principal's Signature