



Dewberry

**SCHOOL COUNCIL**

# Handbook

Advising Dewberry School to ensure learning is maximized in a safe and caring environment

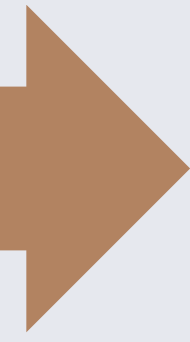
*working together*

*for success*



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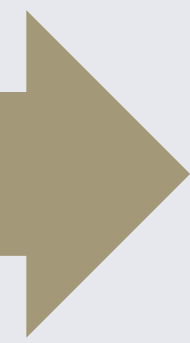
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## Vision & Mission

Understanding our goals

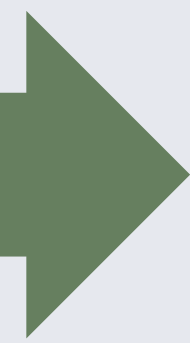
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## Operating Procedures

Understanding how we work

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## Our Purpose

Understanding what we do

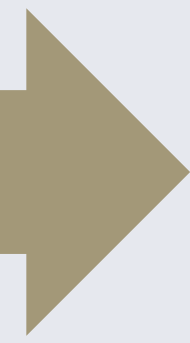
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## Code of Ethics

Understanding our expectations

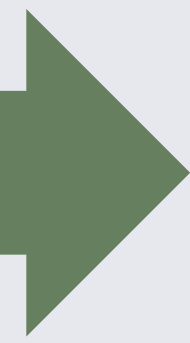
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## Samples

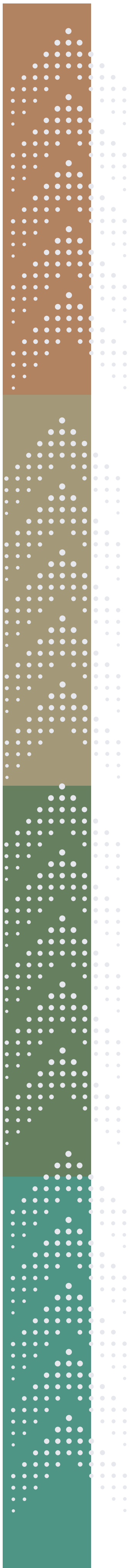
Understanding general templates

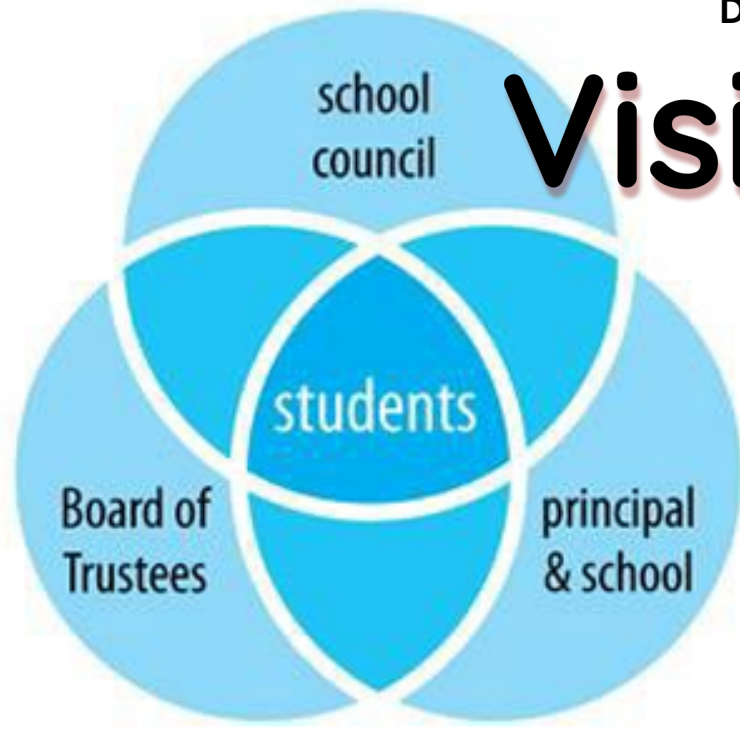
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## FAQ's

Providing clarity





# Vision & Mission



The establishment of a clear and well-defined vision and mission for Dewberry School Council is of paramount importance as it serves as the foundational framework upon which the entire council's activities and decisions are built. A vision and mission statement not only provides a sense of purpose and direction but also unifies the efforts of council members towards common goals.

## VISION

At Dewberry School Council, we envision a vibrant and inclusive community of dedicated parents, educators, and community members working collaboratively to enrich the educational experience of our students. Inspired by the Buffalo Trail Public School Division's vision of being dynamic leaders in empowering students to be caring, responsible, and contributing global citizens with a passion for learning

## MISSION

To collaborate with unwavering dedication, striving to enrich the educational journey of our students in alignment with Dewberry School's mission of *working together for success while promoting pride in ourselves and our community.*

## MOTTO

Empowering Excellence, Together

# OPERATING PROCEDURES

## SCHOOL COUNCIL CHAIR

Must be a parent. The chair should actively encourage others to become engaged.

Duties include:

- chair meetings
- work with principal to establish agenda
- ensure operating procedures are followed
- official spokesperson of school council
- provide regular communication with community
- stay informed about board policies that impact school
- comply with regulations (annual report)

## VICE CHAIR

This can also be viewed as a co-chair, where the chair position is shared between two people.

The vice chair, in the event of resignation or leave from the chair, will fulfill the chair's responsibilities.

## PRINCIPAL

Provincially mandated member of school council.

Duties include:

- work with chair to establish agenda
- support chair in running meetings
- provide contextual information on school matters
- seek input from school council on major decisions
- encourage and support the formation and improvement of school council
- share PAT and diploma results
- seek advisory

## SECRETARY

Records the meeting minutes, and sends a finalized product to the principal. The principal will display the minutes on the school website

## PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Forms the majority of school council.

Duties include:

- encourage additional participation
- share professional knowledge
- encourage community feedback
- communication information of interest
- share information from meetings with the community
- create an inviting environment
- identify possible future agenda topics
- recommend school council effectiveness

## STUDENTS & TEACHERS

Presents student perspectives on issues, helps with school policies, seeks other students' views to share, and communicates school council information with fellow students.

Required by legislation. The teacher contributes by sharing professional knowledge with school council members and presenting the teachers' perspective.

## COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Community members are welcome to come and be a part of the conversation. They can take part in advising, deciding, but are not considered when determining consensus or vote.

## OUR MODEL

Dewberry school operates via an assembly/townhall model, inviting members of the community to join. Decisions will be made with an attempt of consensus, but some items may need to be put to a vote.

# working together



School council is a structured group of parents, principals, teachers, secondary students and community representatives whose purpose is to advise the principal and the school board respecting matters relating to the school. It is a means for parents and community members to work together with the school to support and enhance student learning. To ensure we are effective, Dewberry School Council will:

## Advise on

- School's education plan
- Program priorities
- Budget allocations
- School policies
- In-service for parents
- School board policies other council members
- School board policies
- Alberta Education curriculum changes, regulations and projects



## Facilitate

- Communication involving the school community in important decisions
- Ensuring parents and teachers are working in partnership to enhance student learning
- Providing time for committee, district or provincial (ASCA) reports at council meetings
- Sharing information with other school councils in the area



## Evaluate

- School board's success at supporting its schools
- Provincial Government's success at supporting excellence in its public education system
- Success in meeting school education plan
- Results of special projects



# for success



## CODE OF ETHIICS

### All School Council members shall:

- Abide by the legislation that governs them
- Endeavour to be familiar with school policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them
- Practice the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, integrity and trust
- Recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community
- Declare any conflict of interest
- Encourage a positive atmosphere in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued
- Apply democratic principles
- Consider the best interests of all students
  
- Respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council
- Not disclose confidential information
- Limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole
- Use the appropriate communication channels when questions or concerns arise
- Promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community
- Accept accountability for decisions
- Not accept payment for school council activities

## PRIVACY

- a. School council shall adhere to the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA).
- b. School council shall not share personal information for purposes other than those of school council business.

## POLICIES

- a. School council may develop policy for the duration of their term.
- b. The policies of 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.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

12. a. The annual general meeting of the school council will be held within 20 days after the start of the school year or at an appropriate time during the school year determined by the school council.
- b. The meeting will be advertised throughout the school and the community at the beginning of the school year until the date of the AGM or within 20 school days of the AGM date
- c. Election of school council members and/or executive positions will take place at the AGM
- d. All parents of students attending ABC School are eligible for election.
- e. All parents of students attending the ABC School are eligible to vote at the AGM.
- f. The business of the AGM shall include:
  - election of school council members and/or executive members
  - proposed bylaws/operating procedures amendments
  - motion to accept a financial statement of the previous year
  - plans and budget for the upcoming year
  - discussion of any major issues in which parents should have input

## Checklist for School Council Chair

- Have you discussed setting the date of the first school council meeting of the year with the school principal?
- Has an invitation been sent to all parents/community members to attend the first school council meeting of the year?
- Working with the school principal, has a schedule for regular meetings for the school council been identified?
- Have members of the community been identified who may be interested in sitting on the school council executive?
- Has a teacher been identified from the school staff to be part of the school council?
- High school only – has a student been identified to be part of the school council?
- Is there a mail slot in the school office that can be used by the school council?
- Does the school office have the contact information for the school council executive?
- Have the members of the school council executive been provided with a copy (or appropriate internet links) to information such as the school development plan, the Three-Year Education Plan, etc.
- Have bylaws for the school council been reviewed and revised as necessary for the current school year?
- There is a requirement to keep all records for seven years. Has a system for filing this information in the school office been established?
- Invite the local trustee to at least one school council meeting during the year.
- Local MLAs may be interested in contacting the school council chair. Have you provided your contact information to the local MLAs?

## Checklist for Principals

- September – does the school have a school council? If not, has an establishment meeting been scheduled in accordance with the School Councils Regulation?
- Have you met with the school council chair this year to discuss such items as membership on the school council (i.e. has a community member been selected) meeting notice for the first meeting, etc.
- Working with the school council chair, has a schedule for regular meetings for the school council been identified?
- September – Has a teacher been identified to be part of the school council?
- September – High school only – has a student been identified to be part of the school council?
- Is there a mail slot in the school office that can be used by the school council?
- There is a requirement to keep all records for seven years. Has a system for filing this information in the school office been established?
- Does the treasurer of the school council require any information regarding accounting practices/procedures that are used in the school?
- Does the school council understand the process to invite the ward trustee to a school council meeting during the year? Do they need any assistance or information regarding this?
- Does the school have the contact information for the school council executive?



## Checklist for Overall School Council Operations

- Bylaws/operating procedures have been established (more information available in *School Councils Regulation* and *Alberta School Council Resource Manual*)
- Bylaws/operating procedures reviewed and updated as needed each year? How and when will the school council's bylaws/operating procedures be amended?
- Do you have a school council mission/purpose?
- Do you have school council goals (purpose made more specific)?
- What model of governance will you adopt?
- What will be your decision-making model? Who can vote? Does your school council need quorum? How will quorum be defined?
- What will be the meeting procedures for regular, annual and special meetings? How often will council meet? Will council use Robert's Rules of Order?
- Who are the members of school council? What will be the executive positions? What will the terms be? Does executive have authority beyond other council members? How will vacancies be filled?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of the members of the school council and the executive of the school council?
- What committees, if any, will the school council have? How will the school council create committees and their terms of reference?
- What will be the relationship of the school council with the fundraising society, if there is a society?
- To whom will the school council report? (more information available in *School Councils Regulation*)
- What will be the purpose of a fundraising activity? How will the school council's funds be managed? Who will manage the funds? Who will decide how the funds are distributed? What is the policy of the school district regarding school council funds?
- Will the school council develop policy in addition to the bylaws/operating procedures to assist it in its year to year operation? How will policy be created? (reference *Education Act Section 22 (5)*)
- What will be your code of ethics?
- Who will be the school council member designated to ensure the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) and privacy issues are understood and implemented for the school council? Who will be the school council member responsible to manage the personal information of school council members and school community members involved with the school council?
- What will be the process to address an internal school council dispute?

## sample - agenda

(NAME) School Council Meeting  
Date Time  
Location

### AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS 5 minutes
3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA 5 minutes  
(Members may request an item be added)
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM LAST MEETING 5 minutes
5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES 10 minutes
  - 5.1 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5.2 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 5.3 \_\_\_\_\_
6. NEW BUSINESS 30 minutes
  - 6.1 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6.2 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6.3 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 6.4 \_\_\_\_\_
7. REPORTS 20 minutes
  - 7.1 Principal's Report
  - 7.2 Communication Committee Report
  - 7.3 Community Member Report
  - 7.4 \_\_\_\_\_
  - 7.5 \_\_\_\_\_
8. NEXT MEETING DATE
9. ADJOURNMENT

## sample - minutes

### (NAME) School Council Meeting

Date Time  
Location

#### MINUTES

**Present:** S. Smith, Chair Person  
J. Jones, Principal  
B. Black, Community Representative  
W. White  
G. Gray

1. **Call to Order** - The regular meeting was called to order by S. Smith at 7:03 p.m. and a quorum was present.
2. **Welcome and Introductions** – S. Smith, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made and a special welcome was given to guest Ms. S. Smart.
3. **Approval of the Agenda** – The agenda was approved as presented, or, as amended.
4. **Approval of the Minutes** – The minutes of the meeting held on \_\_\_\_\_ were approved as presented. (*The minutes should be copied and distributed before the meeting. They can then be approved as circulated and you don't have to spend time reading them aloud at the meeting. If there were errors indicate the minutes were approved with corrections.*)
5. **Business Arising From Minutes**
  - 5.1 In follow-up to the request to provide the school office with contact information for school council members, to date, there are some members who have not provided this information.
  - 5.2 The date for the upcoming concert, previously discussed, will be October 10, 2016.
6. **New Business**
  - 6.1 School Fees – This item was discussed at length. The following suggestions were provided to the school principal regarding options for collecting fees:
  - 6.2 Teacher Appreciation Luncheon – G. Gray volunteered to head the appreciation committee. It was decided that a continental breakfast for school staff would be provided instead of a luncheon.
  - 6.3 Motion: *That the School Council ask the School Fundraising Association to report on any fundraising activities that exist.* Moved by W. White. Seconded by J. Jones **CARRIED.**
7. **Reports**
  - 7.1 *Principal's Report* – J. Jones reported that the school has welcomed 650 students this year as well as five new teachers. Upcoming events for the next month include parent/teacher interviews, a pizza lunch for students and a special presentation to students by the Calgary police on safety.
  - 7.2 Communication Committee Report – W. White reported that the school newsletter will include information about the school council. In addition the local community newsletter will contain information about upcoming school events.
  - 7.3 Community Member Report – No report at this time.
  - 7.4
  - 7.5
8. **Next Meeting** - The next meeting will be held on Date, at Time. The location will be
9. **Adjourned** – Meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Notes prepared by G. Gray. \_\_\_\_\_ (Signature)

Approved by S. Smith, Chair \_\_\_\_\_ (Signature)

# school council annual report

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Reporting Year: \_\_\_\_\_

**Executive:** *List the members who held positions as officers in the past year*

Principal

Chair

Vice Chair

Teacher

Community

Secretary

Treasurer

Student Rep (if applicable)

Other

Other

**Meeting Dates:** *List the dates of regular school council meetings*

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Date of First School Council Meeting of the Year: \_\_\_\_\_

**School Council Activities** – Summarize the major activities of the past year and provide an overview of activities or initiatives planned for the next year

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**Financial Statement (attached)** – Summarizes the finances handled by the school council during the past year, if applicable.

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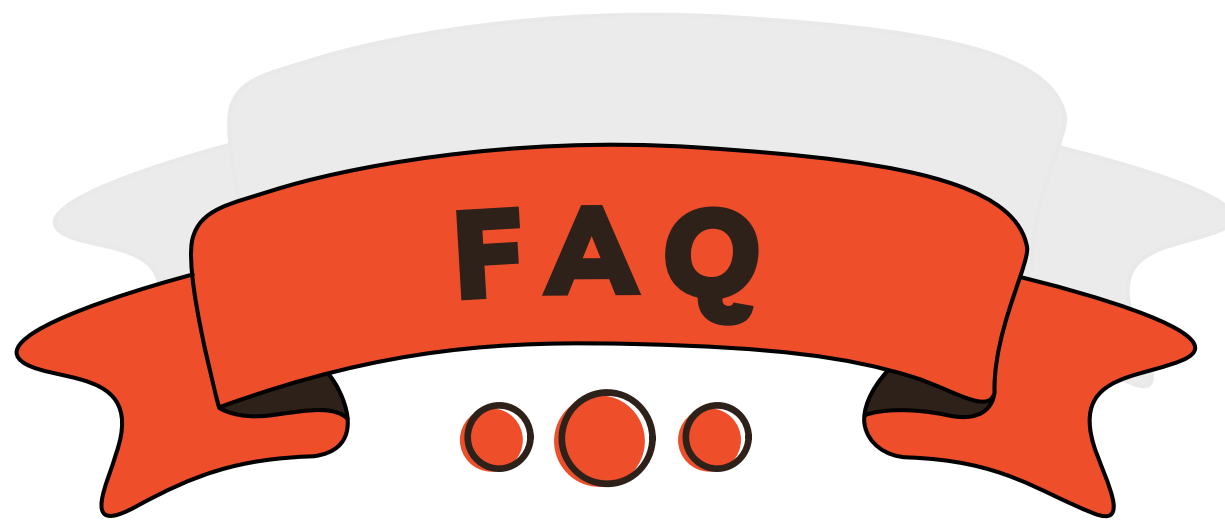
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**Signature of School Council Chair:**

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**Date:**

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### What about fundraising?

Reserved for societies. These are a formal group incorporated under the Societies Act for the purpose of raising funds. A society is a separate legal entity from the school council. The school principal is not a member of this group, but may participate in the meetings.

### What can't we do?

School councils have self-governing authority related to the by-laws and operating procedures of the school council. Roles that are not to be taken on by a school council include: school governance, employment issues and school management. It is not the primary role of school councils to fundraise or to lobby.

### How do we make decisions?

Dewberry School Council acts in a assembly/townhall model. Decisions are made at regular, open meetings of the entire school community. The executive members act only to carry out the wishes of the assembly.

### How do we make decisions, part 2?

Consensus – This model requires that each decision maker agrees to the final outcome, but not necessarily to all parts of it. Council members agree the total package best meets everyone's needs and supports it on that basis. Consensus decisions must be recorded in minutes.

### What if we don't have consensus?

If a decision is made by a vote, the motion must be moved, and seconded and passed by the majority of school council members.

### What about committees?

A school council may appoint committees that consist of school council members and/or school community members. Committees report on their activities at school council meetings and meet outside of school council meetings to complete their assigned tasks.

### Who can vote?

Any parent or parent with a child in early childhood services programming at the school

### Do I have to attend all meetings?

No, unless you hold an executive position (Principal, Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Student, Teacher)

### What if I can't make a meeting?

Please touch base with an attendee or school council representative. Meetings will have a virtual link to join as well, but participants will be muted. They are able to participate in the chat, but for voting they must identify themselves.