

Valley Creek School Council Operating Procedures

(Updated October 2024)

1. Definitions

In these Operating Procedures:

- A. "School" means Valley Creek School.
- B. "Council" means the School Council for Valley Creek School.
- C. "Parents" means the parent, guardian, or primary caregiver of any child enrolled in an educational program at the School.
- D. "Regulations" means the School Council's Regulation as provided through Alberta provincial legislation.
- E. "Non-parent member" 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 this governing document serving the same purpose as Bylaws referenced in the Regulations.
- G. "Executive" means elected persons in official Council positions.
- H. "CBE" means Calgary Board of Education.
- I. "PIPA" means Personal Information Protection Act, R.S.A. 2003, c. P-6.5, and any amendments thereto.
- J. "School Community" means all parents, staff, students, and non-parent members who are involved with Valley Creek School.

2. Authority

The School Council derives its authority to participate in the education of our students through Alberta Provincial Legislation (Education Act, Section 55), hereinafter referred to as "legislation."

3. Mission Statement/Philosophy

The Valley Creek School Council is an advisory group that facilitates open and respectful communication among all members of our school community so that we may work together as partners to promote well-being and foster an effective, positive, respectful, and safe learning environment that enables our students to achieve their full potential.

4. Objectives

The objectives 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 school board on matters relating to the School, such as the School philosophy, mission and vision, policies, improvement plans, programs and directions, student wellness issues, school events, and budget allocations to meet student needs.

B. Foster a positive, collaborative environment with a variety of opportunities for meaningful engagement by members of the school community.

C. Support special events that will support and enhance student learning, encourage participation, and promote the well-being of the school community.

D. Submit an annual report about School Council activities to the CBE and Alberta Education. There is no requirement to submit an annual report to Alberta Education.

E. Share information with Parents and the community and facilitate communications with all educational stakeholders.

F. Adhere to the School Council's Code of Ethics.

G. Consult with other School Councils and provincial organizations.

H. Support an approach to education in which decisions are made collaboratively within the Council.

I. Advise School Boards, Alberta Education, or other provincial organizations on broader educational issues.

5. Governance, Membership, and Decision-Making

The School Council uses a **Town Hall Operating Style and/or Model of Governance**. In a town hall model, decisions are made at regular meetings open to the entire school community, and the executive members of the School Council act only to carry out the wishes of the assembly. All parents that attend meetings are welcome to participate and vote. Individuals are elected or appointed (executive and others) to manage meetings and coordinate School Council business.

Implications of Town Hall Governance

- The executive carry out the work, or delegate the work, that the Council chooses to do.
- The executive is responsible for connecting with all parents to give them the opportunity to provide advice/input on School Council matters (surveys, newsletters, social media).
- Members are responsible for staying informed about School Council business.
- Every parent with a child enrolled in the school is a member of School Council (by default). Every parent can participate in discussion (advice) and decision making (voting).
- Parents must be majority at any meeting.

6. Membership

The membership of the School Council shall consist of:

- i. All Parents, as defined in 1C above.

ii. The Principal of the School.

iii. One or more teachers and staff of the School, elected or appointed by the teachers.

iv. It does not require a student representative because it is a middle school, not a high school. VCS Council may keep the option open to request a student representative.

v. Others as decided by the School Council.

A. Parents make up the voting Members of the School Council. If the Principal or Teacher is also a parent, they may vote as a parent.

i. The Principal is the recipient of the VCS parent council advice and is the decision-maker in the school. Typically, the Principal would not vote on Council matters. Teachers voting in their capacity as a parent should abstain from voting on anything that impacts them in their role as a teacher as this is conflict of interest.

B. The non-voting Members of the School Council shall consist of the Principal, teachers, students, and others as referenced as ii, iii, iv, and v above.

C. 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 other representatives.

7. Decision-Making

Decisions at School Council meetings will be made by consensus as much as possible.

A. A decision made by consensus must be stated clearly and recorded as such in the minutes of the meeting.

B. If a decision is made by a vote, the 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.

C. There will be no voting by proxy.

8. Quorum

A. Quorum will be attained when the majority of voting Members present at any School Council meeting are Parents as defined in 1C above, and the Principal or designate is present. Quorum will be attained when a minimum of 3 Parents are present and the Principal or designate is present.

B. In the absence of a quorum:

i. If the School Council Members present agree to proceed in the absence of a quorum, the School Council may continue for the purposes of discussion of issues.

ii. No motions shall be considered or approved.

iii. No decisions by consensus shall be reached.

9. Executive and Terms of Office

The positions of the Executive shall consist of: Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary.

A. All Executive positions must be filled by Parents as defined in 1C above; every parent is eligible to be elected to an Executive position on the School Council.

B. 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 3 consecutive terms in the same position.

C. 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, elected by the voting Members present at a subsequent School Council meeting.

D. Any Executive member may resign his/her position by providing written notice to the Chair and Principal.

E. Any Executive member may be removed from the Executive at any time with cause by a majority vote of the members whenever, in its judgment, the best interest of the School Council will be served—the member being removed will have the chance to have their case heard at a special meeting of the members.

F. Unless authorized at any meeting and after notice for the same shall have been given, no Member of School Council shall receive any remuneration for his/her services.

G. The Executive will carry out the day-to-day operation of the School Council.

H. The Executive, through the Chair and in consultation with the Principal, will prepare the agenda for all Council meetings and circulate minutes of the same in advance of each meeting.

10. Duties of the Executive Members

A. Chair

It is expected that the School Council Chair will be a parent of a student enrolled in 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 co-create meeting agendas.
3. Communicate with the Principal on a regular basis.
4. Decide all matters relating to Rules of Order at the meetings.
5. Ensure that School Council Operating Procedures are current and followed.
6. Be the official spokesperson of the School Council.
7. Ensure that there is regular communication with the whole School community.
8. Review any communication to the School community from the School Council prior to distribution and include the Principal in the same.
9. Stay informed about School Board policy that impacts School Council.
10. Any money Comply with the School Councils Regulation by providing the School Board with an annual report that summarizes the School Council's activities for the previous School year, including a financial statement relating to money, if any, handled by the School Council, no later than September 30th. Any monies handled by the school Council should be given to the school directly for safekeeping.
11. Have general responsibility for all activities of the School Council.

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 (while remaining in the Vice-Chair position).
2. In the absence of the Chair, supervise the affairs and preside at any meetings of the School Council.
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 the Fundraising Association 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 are prepared accurately to reflect the directions agreed to at the meeting.
2. Keep minutes, correspondence, records, and other School Council documents, 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. Distribute, as determined by the School Council, agendas, minutes, notices of meetings, and notices of other events.

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

D. Principal

As a member of Council, the Principal will:

1. Serve on the Executive Committee.
2. Promote cooperation between the school and the community it serves.
3. Seek input from parents and community on major decisions that affect the school.
4. Establish, facilitate, communicate, and encourage opportunities for parent and community engagement in school matters.
5. Provide updates to the Council of School events.
6. Encourage and support the continuous improvement of Council.
7. Inform the Council of relevant school policies and events, including any recent changes.
8. Prepare a report, when appropriate, for the School Council Meeting for inclusion with the agenda and/or the minutes of that meeting.
9. Communicate with the Chair and Secretary for inclusion of any specific agenda items.
10. The Principal can only hold one position.

E. Key Communicator

Unless otherwise delegated, the Key Communicator of the Council will:

1. Work to develop and maintain a Parent engagement strategy in order to encourage ongoing parental involvement in the School;
2. Act as liaison between the CBE and Council;
3. Attend or send an alternate, to system wide and Key Communicator meetings and workshops;
4. Read and make available to Parents and teachers publications received as a Key Communicator;
5. Relate new information learned at Key Communicator meetings in a monthly report to Council; and
6. Submit information to the School newsletter that is deemed of interest to all members of the School Community.

F. Members at Large

The School Council may have unlimited Members-At-Large elected by the Parents at the AGM and/or appointed by the Executive.

- a) The Members-At-Large may have specific duties in areas such as: Volunteer Coordinator, or otherwise determined by the School Council.
- b) Unless otherwise determined by Executive or the School Council, the

Members-At-Large with specific duties may undertake the following responsibilities:

- i. assist the Chair and Vice Chair in finding a replacement if leaving the position; and

G. Teacher

School Council must have at least one teacher representative, as per the legislation. A teacher representative contributes to a successful school council by sharing professional knowledge with school council members and presenting the teachers' perspective.

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 Parents. Elections for a vacant position will be held at subsequent meetings of the School Council until the vacancy is filled. All school council members can vote on the replacement, unless it is for the student representative, in which case students will put forward someone on their behalf.

11. Meetings

School Council meetings may be held in-person or using a virtual or online platform suitable for conducting School Council business, or a combination of the two. The Executive, in collaboration with the Principal, will determine the format of the meetings. Virtual meetings may include electronic voting which will be determined by the Executive (ie. Microsoft TEAMS raise hand feature, chat window, ballots via private messaging, etc.).

11.1 Meeting Agendas

The Chair and one other member of the Executive will work in partnership with the Principal to co-create the agendas for all meetings. Agenda item requests must be made through the

Chair at a minimum of 5 days prior, who will consult with the Executive and Principal as to the appropriateness of the item requested. Agendas will be posted/ communicated to the School Community at least 3 days prior to the meeting.

A. Annual General Meetings (AGM)

The Annual General Meeting of the School Council will be held before November 30th or at an appropriate time during the School year as determined by the School Council. The meeting will be advertised throughout the School and Parent community no less than 2 weeks beforehand and will state the business to take place at the Annual General Meeting.

- i. All Parents as defined in 1C above are eligible for election;
- ii. All Parents as defined in 1C above are eligible to vote at the Annual General Meeting (the Principal and Teacher Rep are not allowed to vote unless they are also a parent);
- iii. The business of the Annual General Meeting shall include:
 - a. The election of the Executive Members of the Council
 - b. Any proposed amendments to the Operating Procedures;
- iv. And may also include:
 - a. Plans for the upcoming year;
 - b. 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;
 - c. An evaluation of the School Council.

B. Special General Meetings

The School Council Executive may at any time give notice of a Special General Meeting of the School Council. Notice will be given at least 5 days before the meeting. The notice will state the time, date, and place of the meeting, and describe the matters to be dealt with. At any Special General Meeting, all Parents in attendance shall have the right to vote.

C. Regular Meetings

A minimum of 7 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 or virtually as appropriate and as advertised. At any Regular Meeting, all Parents in attendance shall have the right to vote.

12. Committees

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

13. Policies

Subject to any provincially or School 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 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;

B. Topics on which School Council may wish to develop guiding policies include, but are not limited to: Elections, Communication (Internal and External), Record Keeping, Fundraising, Privacy, Location of Meetings, Official Correspondence Address, New Member Orientation, School Council Evaluation, and Social Media.

14. 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 Valley Creek School Cooperating Society 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 the other associations and groups of Parents.

15. Code of Ethics

All School Council Members shall:

A. Abide by the legislation that governs them.

B. Be guided by the mission statements of the School and School Council.

C. Endeavour to be familiar with the School's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.

D. Practice the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, integrity, and truth.

E. Recognize and respect the diversity and personal integrity of each member of the School Community.

F. Declare any conflict of interest.

G. Encourage respectful and inclusive working environments, in which diverse contributions are encouraged and valued.

H. Apply democratic principles, including transparency, fairness, and equality.

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. Maintain the privacy of others by not disclosing 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. Decline payment or other benefits offered in exchange for the performance of Council duties.

16. Conflict Resolution

A. The School Council shall abide by the Conflict Resolution Procedures outlined in the Calgary Board of Education's policies and regulations to address disputes between the Principal and the School Council with respect to policies proposed or adopted for a school.

B. The School Council shall apply every effort to resolve internal conflicts using the steps outlined in these Operating Procedures. 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:

- i. The Chair will call a Special General Meeting of the School Council;
- ii. 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;
- iii. At the Special General Meeting, all Parents and School Council Members present will have an opportunity to hear and discuss the issues causing conflict;
- iv. On motion, a vote shall be taken respecting a proposed resolution to the conflict;
- v. If the majority of voting Members present vote in favour of the resolution proposed, the School Council will immediately act upon it.

17. 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.

18. 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 choose to 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.

19. 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.

A. The Operating Procedures will be reviewed for their relevance and effectiveness annually by the School Council Executive or by a committee established expressly for that purpose.

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B. The Operating Procedures of the School Council may be amended by a majority vote of the voting Members present at any scheduled meeting of the School Council.

C. Notice of proposed amendments to the Operating Procedures will be provided to the School community no less than 5 days before a meeting.

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

Date October 17, 2024

Shelley Wiart
Chair's Name

[Signature]
Chair's Signature

Celeste McIlhargy
Secretary's Name

Celeste McIlhargy
Secretary's Signature

Anne Markovich
Principal's Name

[Signature]
Principal's Signature