

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL  
CONSTITUTION  
of  
ÉCOLE LAURA SECORD SCHOOL

APPROVED BY THE MEMBERSHIP ON

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PRINT CHAIRPERSON'S NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE (OF SIGNING THIS FORM)

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT EXECUTIVE'S NAME

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SIGNATURE

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TITLE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE (OF SIGNING THIS FORM)

## **Section I - DEFINITIONS**

1. In this Constitution and Bylaws, unless the context otherwise requires:
  - (a) "PAC" means the École Laura Secord School Parent Advisory Council;
  - (b) "Bylaws" means the rules established under this Constitution;
  - (c) "Council" refers to the body of voting members, that is, École Laura Secord School Parent Advisory Council;
  - (d) "Executive" refers to elected Members who hold office, i.e. Chair, Vice-Chair, Past-Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and others as determined in Section VI;
  - (e) "School" means École Laura Secord School;
  - (f) "Parent" includes the guardian, the person legally entitled to custody, or the person who usually has care and control of the École Laura Secord School student; and,
  - (g) The singular shall include the plural and vice versa.

## **Section II – GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The Ecole Laura Secord Parent Advisory Council exists for the benefit of the children of our school. We believe a healthy school is one in which parents and teachers work cooperatively to encourage all parents to take an active role in the education process. We believe that parental participation is essential for quality education.

PAC operates as a non-profit organization to support student success in our School and community, with no personal financial benefit to the Council or its Members.

PAC is a volunteer organization and year to year continuity may be a problem. As such, caution should be exercised when Council considers making continuing bequests or commitments.

The purpose of PAC is to:

1. Ensure a network of communication among parents and to promote effective communication and cooperation between the home and school in providing for the education of our children
2. Ensure that parents can ask questions and have a pro-active voice in educational decisions at the school and division levels
3. Responsibly manage finances to support students and parents.
4. Support and enhance the overall educational experience and the well-being of students in the School;
5. Advise the principal about school policies, activities and organization, including:
  - a. departmental and locally developed curricula,
  - b. cultural and extra-curricular activities,
  - c. student discipline and behaviour management policies, and

- d. community access to school facilities;
6. Participate in fundraising activities to support PAC activities.
7. Advise the school board about the process of hiring and assigning principals;
8. Advise the principal and the school board about an annual budget for the school;
9. Participate in developing an annual school plan.
10. Provide leadership in the School community;
11. Contribute to a sense of community within the School and among the School, home and neighbourhood;
12. Share the Council and Parents' views on matters relating to the School with School administration;

### **Section III - Membership**

All parents of students registered at Laura Secord School are voting members of the PAC. Administration and staff (teaching and non-teaching) of Laura Secord School may be non-voting members of the PAC.

### **Section IV Meetings**

1. There shall be a minimum of 5 meetings throughout the school year, generally held bi-monthly. Dates for these general meetings are ideally determined at the beginning of the year.
2. One of these meetings shall be called the Annual General Meeting and will be generally held in May or June .
3. General meetings are for the purpose of conducting PAC business and discussion of issues as outlined in the Objectives of the PAC, Section II. A Council meeting will not be a forum for the discussion of individual school personnel, students, parents, or other individual members of the school community.
4. All financial policy decisions, other than operational needs, shall be made at general meetings where all parents, not only the Executive, can participate.
5. A special meeting is a separate session held at a time different from that of any regular general meeting, and may be convened to consider only one or two items of urgent business. Special meetings can be called by the executive when deemed necessary. Maximum possible general notice of the meeting date and the agenda item will be provided to parents.
6. Meetings of the executive shall be held as often as needed during the school year to conduct operational business and provide input for general meeting agendas.
7. Minutes of General and Special meetings will be made available to attending members via email and to all members via the school newsletter. Effort should be made to post on the PAC section of the school website.

8. The Chair or Chair Designate will prepare draft agendas after accepting input from other Council members and the Administration. A meeting is duly called when the draft agenda has been posted and distributed to the parents at least seven days prior to a general meeting.
9. Any member wishing to place an item on the agenda of a general meeting shall contact the Chair or Chair Designate at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. The member or their designate is then required to attend the general meeting to present the rationale of that issue to the membership. "New Business" from the general membership can be added to the agenda to be discussed, if time permits, or be tabled to the next meeting.
10. Each member entering a meeting shall sign the attendance record so that quorum and their eligibility to vote may be determined and recorded for any audits of Council records.
11. Meetings will be conducted efficiently with fairness to all members. Open discussion is encouraged, but orderly conduct and respect for other points of view is mandatory. Members acting inappropriately will be asked to leave the meeting. If they fail to comply, the meeting can be adjourned at the Chair's discretion.
12. The Principal and staff members of the school are encouraged to attend and report at general meetings as requested by the PAC.
13. Guests may be invited to any meeting at the discretion of the Executive to provide information or address agenda items. The guests' speaking time should be short and not dominate the meeting. Consideration should be given to inviting parent education speakers to separate sessions so their talks will not be hurried and parent questions and other PAC agenda items will not be minimized.
14. The meeting chair directs discussion and alone decides questions of procedure. A procedural decision undertaken by the meeting chair is subject to an appeal of that by any member. A majority vote of the members participating at a meeting is required to suspend or cancel such procedural decision undertaken by the meeting chair. The rules contained in the most recent edition of "Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised" shall be used by the Council to resolve any procedural situation, unless they are in conflict with the rules in this Constitution and Bylaws.

## **Section V - Quorum & Voting**

### **Quorum**

1. At any duly called general or special meeting the number of voting members present shall be a quorum, providing that a minimum of 4 Executive members are present.
2. If the agenda has been provided with less than one week's notice when calling a general or special meeting, a quorum shall be a minimum of 50% of elected Executives plus the voting members present, as long as it totals a minimum of seven members.
3. For the purposes of Executive meetings and resolutions of the Executive, the quorum shall be one half of the voting positions filled on the Executive.
4. At the discretion of the meeting Chair or at the request of any voting member, non-voting members and visitors may be asked to leave the meeting room, for closed

discussion and voting on any issue. This is essential to the free expression of the voting membership.

### **Voting**

1. Unless otherwise provided, questions arising at any meeting shall be decided by a simple majority of eligible members actually voting
2. In case of a tie vote, the motion shall be lost.
3. Voting by members on all matters must be given in person, i.e. voting by proxy shall not be permitted.
4. Voting shall be done by the show of hands except when a secret ballot is ruled by the Executive or requested by any member at a general meeting.
5. When the ballots are counted, two or more filled out ballots folded together are recorded as illegal votes. A filled out ballot will be counted if it is folded with a blank ballot.

### **SECTION VI EXECUTIVE POSITIONS**

1. The affairs of the Council shall be managed by a board of elected executive whose titles and duties may be determined by the needs of the Council.
2. The composition of the Executive must include:
  - a. Chair
  - b. Vice Chair
  - c. Treasurer
  - d. Secretary
  - e. Past-Chair
  - f. Volunteer Coordinator
  - g. Lunch Program Liaison
3. The executive may also include other positions such as Members-at-Large (number at the discretion of the chair)), and other positions deemed necessary or desirable by the executive.
4. The positions of President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Volunteer Coordinator, and Lunch Program Liaison are essential to the operation of the Council and must be filled before any nominations will be accepted for other Executive positions.

### **SECTION VII ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE**

1. All executive positions are opened to any parent of the school, except that no employee or elected official of a School Division or Ministry of Education shall hold an Executive position.
2. In the event a position on the Executive is vacated during the year, election of a new executive will take place at the next general meeting.
3. No person shall hold more than one position on the Executive. If a volunteer does not come forward for a vacant Executive position, no other Executive shall assume the duties of that position
4. Any Executive position may be co-chaired or shared with the agreement of the two (2) parties and with the requirement that the two people share one (1) consensus vote.

5. Elections shall be conducted by the Elections Chairperson (generally the past chair).
6. Call for nominations shall be made in the spring, a minimum of four weeks (28 days) before the elections are to be held.
7. If two or more persons express an interest or are nominated for a position, the Elections Chairperson may at their discretion facilitate a discussion between those interested to determine if both persons wish to stand for election.
8. In the event that more than one person is standing for election, the nominee or any voting member of PAC may make a short presentation prior to the vote being taken.
9. Voting will be take place by secret ballot. If only one person is standing for election, and there are no objections by any voting member, then the vote can occur by a simple show of hands.
10. The Elections Chairperson shall tally the votes and announce the decision. All election duties must be carried out in full view of the meeting assembly.
11. A vote shall be taken to destroy any written ballots.

## **SECTION VII DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE**

1. The elected Executive shall consult with, take direction from, and represent all parents of the school. The Executive shall work as a team to ensure Council purposes are achieved.
2. All executive are expected to attend all executive, general, and special meetings, to be familiar with the Bylaws, to carry out their duties as described, and to follow the Code of Conduct (Section IX).
3. If an Executive member is unable to attend, they should inform the Chair or Secretary prior to the meeting.
4. Each Executive position shall have a designated binder and files where all written material pertaining to the position is to be maintained in a current and orderly fashion. These official materials as well as any electronic files must be delivered to their successors or the President within 14 days of their ceasing to hold the executive position.

### **A. CHAIR**

- shall convene and preside at all executive, general and special meetings or notify the Vice Chair to assume this duty as necessary
- shall be familiar with and follow the Constitution and Bylaws
- shall ensure that an agenda is prepared and distributed following the Bylaws
- shall ensure a quorum is present before calling a meeting to order
- shall appoint committees where authorized to do so by the Executive or membership and be an ex-officio member to all committees except the Nominating Committee
- shall be the official spokesperson and representative for the Council, always acting on behalf of the majority of members and not personally
- shall take such actions or ensure that such actions are taken by others to achieve the objectives and purpose of the organization;

- shall participate in forming, updating or reviewing the PAC yearly budget and annual plan
- shall be one of the signing officers
- shall submit a written annual report to the membership

#### **B. VICE CHAIR**

- shall convene and preside at all executive, general and special meetings at the notification of the Chair to assume this duty as necessary
- shall be familiar with and follow the Constitution and Bylaws
- shall assume all PAC Chair duties at the request of or in the absence of the Chair
- Shall accept extra duties as required;
- Shall participate in forming, updating and/or reviewing the PAC yearly budget and annual plan
- may be one of the signing officers
- may submit an annual report at the AGM.

#### **C. TREASURER**

- shall have a demonstrated ability and/or understanding of bookkeeping procedures
- shall keep an accurate and current record of all receipts and expenditures of the Council. Bank statements must be reconciled monthly and made available for review as requested
- shall assess all financial undertakings to ensure they are within the annual budget
- shall ensure expenditures have the proper authorization and are backed by detailed receipts and invoices
- shall prepare a written financial report for presentation at each Council meeting; this shall include the total balance on hand in all accounts at the beginning of the period covered by the report and all credits to and disbursements from the accounts, balance of funds on hand and outstanding accounts receivable and payable, and the net surplus or deficit
- shall be responsible for issuing receipts and the prompt deposit of all monies paid to the Council. Also refer to Section XV, Finances
- shall be one of the Council signing officers
- shall ensure all bills are paid promptly
- shall participate in forming, updating or reviewing the PAC yearly budget and annual plan
- ensure another executive has access to the books in the event of his/her absence
- shall submit an annual report at the AGM.
- shall return all documents and supplies belonging to the PAC, or pertaining to PAC business to the school in June of each year

#### **D. SECRETARY**

- shall record the minutes of all executive, general and special meetings
- shall prepare complete minutes and ensure their distribution in time for the next school newsletter following the council meeting, or within two weeks of any meeting, whichever is shorter.
- shall file the original copy of the minutes in the official Council record binder
- shall issue and receive correspondence on behalf of the Council
- shall keep a current copy of the By-laws
- shall ensure safe keeping of all records of the Council
- shall keep a complete and current inventory, including location, of all PAC assets
- shall ensure the binders are collected at the end of the term and appropriately redistributed in September
- shall keep an accurate copy of the Bylaws and if and when changes are made they shall be done in red and the amended copy shall be distributed to the membership at large in hard copy, via email, or posted on the PAC website
- shall permanently place a copy of the adopted minutes in a PAC designated locked file cabinet within the school building.
- shall place in the designated file cabinet the financial reports received from the Treasurer;
- shall participate in forming, updating or reviewing the PAC yearly budget and annual plan
- may be a signing officer; and
- may submit an annual report at the AGM.
- shall return all documents and supplies belonging to the PAC, or pertaining to PAC business to the school in June of each year

#### **E. PAST CHAIR**

- shall help smooth transitions between Chairs
- shall assist and advise the PAC
- shall act as a consultant for the Chair
- shall chair the Nominating Committee
- may submit an annual report at the AGM
- shall return all documents and supplies belonging to the PAC, or pertaining to PAC business to the school in June of each year

#### **F. VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR**

- shall create and maintain a list of all interested parent volunteers
- shall work with school administration, executive, and committees to help ensure adequate parent volunteers are available at school events
- shall coordinate a volunteer orientation session near the beginning of each school year
- shall ensure that parent volunteers have completed the volunteer application and submitted an application for a police background check prior to volunteering



- shall communicate about upcoming volunteer opportunities through the school newsletter
- shall submit an annual report at the AGM
- may be one of the signing officers
- shall keep an up to date binder of all duties, lists, procedures, etc.
- shall return all documents and supplies belong to the PAC, or pertaining to PAC business, including electronic files, to the secretary at the end of their term
- shall participate in forming, updating or reviewing the PAC yearly budget and annual plan

#### **G. LUNCH PROGRAM LIASON**

- shall act as the main point of contact between PAC and the Lunch Program Director
- shall submit an annual report at the AGM
- may be one of the signing officers
- shall keep an up to date binder of all duties, lists, procedures, etc.
- shall return all documents and supplies belong to the PAC, or pertaining to PAC business, including electronic files, to the secretary at the end of their term.
- shall participate in forming, updating or reviewing the PAC yearly budget and annual plan.

### **SECTION VIII EXECUTIVE TERMS OF OFFICE**

1. The term of office for an Executive shall be two years (commence on July 1 and end on June 30 the 2<sup>nd</sup> following year).
2. Any member of the Council may serve on the Executive for as many terms as he or she is elected, but may not hold any one position for more than two consecutive terms, except as provided under subsection 3. For purposes of determining eligibility to continue in office under such a provision, an Executive who has served more than half a term since elected is considered to have served a full term in that position.
3. An elected member of the Council may hold one position for more than 2 consecutive terms, if for each term after 2 consecutive terms:
  - a. no other member is nominated for that position,
  - b. the member is nominated to serve for another term,
  - c. the member agrees to stand for that position, and
  - d. the member is elected by secret ballot as per section VII
5. The position of past-chair shall generally be the outgoing chair or, if not available, any former chair or vice-chair, at the outgoing chair's discretion.
4. The following are grounds for termination of the office of any Executive member:
  - a. is absent from three consecutive meetings of the Executive or Council without reason acceptable to the Executive
  - b. is convicted of a criminal or other serious offence
  - c. failure to observe the Bylaws, purposes, and policies of the Council
  - d. failure to abide by the Council Code of Conduct

5. A motion to remove an Executive member from office may be carried out as follows:
  - a. a two - thirds vote of the Council Executive attended by 3/4 of the Executive (excluding the executive member in question).
  - b. the executive member in question shall receive 7 days written notice of the motion prior to the meeting, or
  - c. a three-quarters vote of voting members at a duly called general meeting, where the notice of the intent of the motion has been presented in the agenda.
  - d. consideration should be made to give the member in question an opportunity to address the Executive

## **SECTION IX – CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. PAC is not a forum for the discussion of individual school personnel, students, parents, or other individual members of the school community. Open discussion is encouraged, but orderly conduct and respect for alternate points of view is mandatory for all members.
2. All members must refrain from discussing, influencing, and voting upon any matter before the Council in which they or their families have a pecuniary (financial) interest and are therefore in a conflict of interest.
3. A concern raised by any member regarding a conflict of interest or a perceived bias of another member(s) shall be referred to a Conflict and Bias Committee for a ruling should the member in question not voluntarily step aside.
4. An Executive member who is approached with a concern relating to an individual is in a privileged position and must treat such discussion with discretion, protecting the confidentiality of the people involved.
5. A parent or guardian who accepts a position as a Council Executive Member must:
  - a. uphold the Bylaws, policies and procedures of the Council
  - b. perform duties with honesty and integrity and meets agreed upon deadlines on projects
  - c. work to ensure that the well being of students is the primary focus of all decisions
  - d. respect the rights of all individuals
  - e. take direction from the members, ensuring that representation processes are in place
  - f. encourage, support, and provide information to parents and students with individual concerns on how to advocate on their own behalf
  - g. work to ensure that issues are resolved through the appropriate process
  - h. strive to be informed and only passes on information that is reliable and correct
  - i. respect all confidential information
  - j. support public education

Breaching the Code of Conduct or Section XII, Part 5 may be cause for removal of an Executive following the procedure outlined in Section XI.

## **SECTION X FINANCES**

1. A proposed budget should be drawn up by the Treasurer to be tabled for discussion at the first general meeting of the year, and voted on at the second meeting of the year.
2. All funds of the organization will be on deposit in a regulated chartered bank, trust company, or credit union in appropriate account(s) for the Parent Advisory Council.
3. The Treasurer is authorized to collect and disperse monies as directed by the members as expressed at executive and general meetings. Monies submitted shall be requested in the form of cheques made out to Laura Secord PAC. Two members (one shall be Executive) must verify and account for monies collected from events or fundraising. All monies raised by the Council must be deposited promptly in a Council account before being dispersed so that proper records are maintained.
4. There shall be a minimum of four signing officers for banking and legal documents. This shall be the Chair and the Treasurer, and others of the Chair's choosing.
5. All money paid out from the Council will be as a cheque on receipt of a detailed invoice or receipt
6. Expenditures for operations of the Council may be approved at Executive meetings. All proposed expenditures on capital, school events, or items/services for the school will be first presented to the Executive, and then must be approved by a majority at a general meeting.
7. The general membership must approve all expenditures by Executive or Committee Members over their budget. Preferably this should occur at a General Meeting if one is held prior to that expenditure being made.
8. The Treasurer will submit a written financial report as detailed in Section VII, Part C, (Treasurer), at each general meeting. The Treasurer will submit a complete annual statement at the first general meeting after the end of the Council's fiscal year (June 30).
9. A review or audit of the accounts must be done at the end of each fiscal year. A review or audit is also mandatory at the change of Treasurer. Audit for this purpose refers to an independent review and verification of all records during the period under review, i.e. budget year. This can be performed by one member of the executive and one member of the council at large.
10. All financial records are the legal property of the PAC and must be kept for a minimum period of seven years and turned over to the Executive on demand. Any member who makes such arrangements with the Treasurer can view financial records at the school.
11. A contingency fund shall be set up and maintained for the administration of Council activities. The amount shall be \$5,000 dollars. This amount must be carried forward to each new term.

## **SECTION XI CONSTITUTION AND BYLAW AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Parent Advisory Council may be made at any general or special meeting with a proper quorum, providing:

1. written notice of proposed amendments is given to members of the Executive fourteen (14) days prior to presentation at a general meeting
2. general notice to all members of the Council is given ten (10) days prior to the general meeting

3. a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is passed by voting members present to amend the Bylaws

## **SECTION XII - DISSOLUTION**

In the event of dissolution of the PAC, and following payment of all outstanding debts, disbursement of remaining funds will be decided upon by the membership at the final General Meeting. In the event of dissolution of the PAC all records of the organization shall be placed under the jurisdiction of the Ecole Laura Secord School administration.