

# Centennial School School Council Policies and Practices Manual

## **AUTHORITY**

The Centennial School Council derives its authority to participate in the education of our students through Alberta Provincial Legislation, specifically Section 22 of the *School Act*, and the School Councils Regulation which supports it.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mission of Centennial School Council is Committed to engaging parents and community members to support and enhance student learning.

Policy Adopted on: \_\_11 October 2016\_\_\_\_\_

Last Reviewed: \_11 October 2016\_\_

Next Review Date: \_\_\_\_As Required\_\_\_\_\_

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## 1) POLICY MAKING

### Preamble:

The Centennial School Council believes that developing and following policies will help to provide effective parameters and guidelines for the action of its members and committees. The Centennial School Council will also endeavour to use these policies as orientation tools for new members.

In fulfilling its responsibility for policy making, the School Council will:

- a) Ensure that policies comply with relevant legislation and regulations, with the School Council's Operating Procedures, and with existing School Council policies before being approved new policy.
- b) Work from the broadest, most general statement of policy when setting operational policy. The School Council may develop more specific policies until satisfied that it has reached the necessary level of clarification and direction.
- c) Encourage interested school community individuals to participate in its policy-making process.
- d) Ensure policies approved by the School Council are available to all members and original copies are kept in a safe location.
- e) Regularly monitor and review its policies at minimum on an annual basis.
- f) Ensure that all written policies are consistent in appearance and presentation.
- g) Whenever possible, provide a Preamble to explain rationale, spirit or intent of what the policy is attempting to accomplish.
- h) Recognize that policies are being written not only for the present but also for future use.

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## PRIVACY AND SECURITY OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

### Preamble:

The Centennial School Council adheres to the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) and will not share personal information for purposes other than those of School Council business.

In fulfilling its responsibility for maintaining the privacy and security of personal information, the School Council will:

- a) Ensure that the purpose for the collection of all information is clearly communicated / stated on all requests.
- b) Ensure that only one member of the School Council Executive, most likely the Secretary, coordinates and stores the information collected.
- c) Ensure that storage of personal information will occur in a secure, protected location (locked file cabinet, password protected electronic storage, etc)
- d) Ensure that any information distributed to School Council members, such as communication lists, or volunteer lists, will only be given to those individuals in need of the information.
- e) Ensure that individuals with access to the personal information understand and abide by, provincial privacy and security legislation, and School Council policies.
- f) Ensure that all electronic communications addressed to more than one individual will either use the “bcc” function, or will use an “email group” address where personal email addresses cannot be seen, reproduced, or saved.
- g) Ensure that all personal information collected will be permanently and securely destroyed no later than September 30 of the following year.

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**OFFICIAL MAILING ADDRESS**

**Preamble**

The Centennial **School** Council understands the importance of maintaining predictability and consistency in many areas, including the mailing address of the School Council. As such, the mailing address for Centennial School Council will be

a) The mailing address for Centennial School which is:

5310 – 55 Avenue, Wetaskiwin, AB, T9A 1A5.

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## MEETING LOCATION

### Preamble

The Centennial School Council believes in responding to the needs of its community in all possible areas, and in creating a welcoming, inclusive environment for its activities and meetings.

- a) School Council meetings will, whenever possible, take place at Centennial School, in a room to be decided and posted closer to each meeting.

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## NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

### Preamble

The Centennial School Council values new and returning participants at its meetings, activities and events. The purpose and work of School Council is often misunderstood. To assist new participants in clearly understanding the important roles and relationships of the School Council, the Centennial School Council will do the following:

- a) Provide a welcome letter to new parents upon enrollment directing them to the school website (School Council tab) for further information.

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## COMMUNICATION – INTERNAL

### Preamble

The Centennial School Council defines “Internal Communications” as being those which take place between regular meeting attendees.

To facilitate a robust two-way internal communication system, the School Council may use, but is not limited to, one or more of the following methods:

- Email
- Telephone: Automated, Verbal or Text
- School Newsletter
- Signage Outside of the School
- School Webpage (School Council tab)

It is expected that all communications will be conducted in a professional manner, respecting the integrity of individuals, the school and the School Council. School Council business documents, such as agendas, minutes, Operating Procedures, Policies and Codes of Ethics and Conduct will, at minimum, be made available to all school community members via the School website (under the School Council tab). Special Events and activities requesting additional parental or community attendance at the school will be communicated via the school website (School Council tab), Notes home, or the school newsletter. The Chairperson, as the key spokesperson for the School Council, will, if needed, delegate this and other communication duties as required.

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## COMMUNICATION – EXTERNAL

### Preamble

The Centennial School Council defines “External Communications” as being those which take place to any and all parties outside of Centennial School. The Chairperson, as the key spokesperson for the School Council, in consultation with other School Council members whenever possible, will determine the most appropriate form of communication to use in each circumstance as it arises. The School Council may encourage the use of one or more of the following methods:

- Email
- Telephone: Automated, Verbal
- Canada Post

It is expected that all communications will be conducted in a professional manner, respecting the integrity of individuals, the school and the School Council. Reports from School Council representatives on external committees, or to outside organizations, will be made available via the school website (School Council tab). Articles for print in community publications will be written by School Council Executive Members and proof-read by school administration. TV, radio or newspaper interviews will be given by School Council Chair or designate with consultation with school administration.

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## USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

### Preamble

The Centennial School Council believes that the responsible use of Social Media will assist in its efforts to establish multiple and varied methods of two-way communication with its members and the greater school community.

These statements spell out the responsibilities of School Council members when using social media for School Council purposes (including participation in discussion groups such as blogs or forums) and when participating in social media for personal use. They are consistent with best practices used across the Internet. School Council members failing to abide by this policy may be prevented from further participation on social media sites related to the School Council.

Members of the Centennial School Council will:

- a) **Be responsible.** School Council members are personally responsible for the content they publish online through social media, and can be held liable for any commentary deemed to be defamatory, obscene, proprietary or libelous. School Council members are aware that the content they publish is visible to the entire world and will remain public for a very long time. School Council members will protect their privacy.
- b) **Follow the rules.** School Council members will be aware of, and respect, the rules of participation governing the discussion groups and social networks within which they chose to participate. School Council members understand that laws that apply in the “real” world also apply online.
- c) **Be transparent.** If School Council members post material or discuss topics related to their work or to Centennial School Council, they will identify their relationship to the School Council. If taking part in an anonymous discussion or

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using a nickname, School Council members will disclose their connection to the topic at hand and will never pretend to be someone they are not.

- d) **Take ownership.** School Council members will clearly state that they are not speaking on behalf of Centennial School Council, unless they are expressly authorized to do so. School Council members are strongly encouraged to use a disclaimer such as: “This is my personal opinion, and does not necessarily represent the views of Centennial School Council.” Although good practice, this does not exempt School Council members from being held accountable for what they write.
- e) **Respect your audience and colleagues.** School Council members will not engage in any conduct or use any language that would not be acceptable in the workplace or at the School Council table. School Council members will protect the privacy of others and respect their opinions.
- f) **Add value.** When School Council members express themselves in social media on issues related to, or about school councils, they will contribute to the public perception of the Centennial School Council. School Council members will only write about what they know, from their own perspective.
- g) **Protect the image.** If School Council members identify themselves as a member of the Centennial School Council in an online social network, they will ensure their profile and related content is consistent with how they wish to present themselves with other participants and school community members.
- h) **Be accurate.** If School Council members publish information about Centennial School Council, they will ensure the information is accurate and the source is clearly indicated. School Council members will be the first to correct their own mistakes, and will not alter previous posts without indicating that they have done so.

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- i) **Do not reveal secrets.** School Council members will not disclose confidential or proprietary information about the school, School Council, staff, students, other participants or community members. School Council members will respect copyrights and ask permission before they cite School Council members, staff, students, other participants or community members. If School Council members are not sure whether some information is okay to publish, they will ask the School Council Chairperson and/or the school Principal.
  
- j) **Remember the purpose.** School Council members are encouraged to use social media. School Council members will ensure their online activities do not compromise their responsibilities to the school, School Council, staff, students, other participants or community members.

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## MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

### Preamble

The Centennial School Council is dedicated to conducting School Council meetings, activities and events efficiently, meaningfully and with integrity. As the School Council adheres to a Code of Ethics which applies to the Council as a whole, individual members of the Centennial School Council are asked to be guided in their thoughts, words and deeds by the following:

As a member of Centennial School Council, I will:

- a) *Devote* time, thought and study, to the role and responsibilities of a school council member so I can provide effective service to my council.
- b) *Be* familiar with school council policies and operating principles.
- c) *Work* with my fellow school council members in a spirit of harmony, cooperation, and respect for differences of opinion.
- d) *Promote* positive and collaborative relationships on school council, between school council and the greater school community.
- e) *Encourage* parent/guardian participation in school council.
- f) *Work* with my fellow school council members to support the goals of the school's education and improvement plans.
- g) *Assist* the school council to excel in all of its efforts and undertakings.
- h) *Act* as an advocate for excellence in education at the school and community levels.

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- i) *Declare* any conflict of interest.
- j) *Never* disclose any confidential information I may have access to through other involvements at the school.
- k) *Use* the appropriate communication channels to address concerns.

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**RECORD KEEPING**

**Preamble**

As per the School Councils' Regulation, the Centennial School Council will retain, at the school, a copy of all meeting minutes and associated records for a period of seven (7) years, making them available to the board and public upon request. The location of the records may change from time to time, but will always be known by the Principal and Secretary of the school, in addition to the Executive members of the School Council. With respect to these records, the following points will also apply:

- a) The Secretary of the School Council will be responsible for ensuring that the records kept at the school are complete, up to date and purged when appropriate.
- b) Whereas the official copy of all records will provide full names of those in attendance, records being published on line or in printed material such as newsletters etc will use a *first name/last initial* format to identify attendance and participation in meetings, activities or events.
- c) The Secretary and/or Treasurer of the School Council will be responsible for ensuring that electronic copies of records are posted, up to date and archived or purged when deemed appropriate by the School Council.
- d) The Secretary and/or Treasurer of the School Council will ensure that storage of any personal information collected on behalf of the School Council will occur in a secure, protected location (locked file cabinet, password protected electronic storage, etc).

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## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

### Preamble

The Centennial School Council may choose to raise funds to support and sustain their own operational plans, and to enhance the student learning, as permitted within Wetaskiwin Regional Public School Board policy and administrative procedures.

The School Council will handle all funds and conduct all financial transactions with accuracy and transparency. Financial management practices are established to protect the integrity of the School Council as a whole, as well as individual members.

- a) The Treasurer of the School Council will ensure that all financial transactions are conducted in accordance with the policy.
- b) Funds collected on behalf of the School Council will not be taken out of the school until counted and verified by a minimum of two (2) individuals, one of whom will be a parent member of the School Council.
- c) Verification will be considered complete when two (2) tally sheets providing a denomination breakdown of the funds are dated and signed by the individuals performing the count.
- d) The verified funds will be kept in a secure location, complete with one copy of the signed tally sheet, until they can be deposited by the Treasurer or designate. The second signed tally sheet will remain with one of the individuals performing the count.
- e) Should a discrepancy occur between the amount for deposit calculated by the financial institution and the signed tally sheet, the individual making the deposit will immediately notify the Treasurer and the School Council Chairperson. The Chairperson and Treasurer will then research the cause of the discrepancy, and report their findings to the School Council Executive.

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- f) The School Council Executive may, at any time, determine additional financial management precautions need to be established and implemented.
- g) Any changes in financial management processes will immediately be considered to be a change in this policy, and will be handled and documented as such.
- h) The financial records of the School Council will be audited once each year by two (2) members who did not handle any funds on behalf of the School Council and who do not have signing authority on any of its accounts.

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**COMMITTEES**

The Centennial School Council may determine the need for Standing and Ad Hoc Committees in order to facilitate effective, efficient work and meaningful engagement. Terms of Reference for each Standing Committee will be communicated at the beginning of the school year, and for Ad Hoc Committees as they are established. 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 and report on their activities at School Council meetings.

a) Standing Committees of Centennial School Council will be:

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

b) Committee members shall consist of participants from the school community.

c) Standing Committees will operate on an ongoing basis with specified lengths of terms for members.

d) Ad Hoc Committees will be formed as necessary and will work within a specified time period.

e) Chairs of Standing Committees shall submit a written report of their work at regular meetings.

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## EVALUATION OF SCHOOL COUNCIL

### Preamble

The Centennial School Council believes in the value of self-evaluation as a tool to guide improvement in all aspects of our operation. School Council evaluation will focus primarily on the effectiveness of the School Council as a whole in achieving its goals and operational objectives.

The Centennial School Council will conduct a self-evaluation *annually targeting*, but not limited to the following areas:

- 1) Our School Council clearly understands the roles and responsibilities of School Council and its participants.
  - 1) We are familiar with the School Act and the *School Councils Regulation*.
  - 2) We use the Alberta School Council Resource Manual.
  - 3) We participate in workshops and other skill development and training opportunities.
  - 4) We are familiar with and regularly review our School Council's operating procedures.
  - 5) We assess and evaluate our School Council's work *annually*.
- 2) Our School Council focuses on student learning and sets priorities for student learning / school improvement:
  - 1) We are aware of the elements of Inspiring Education and support strategies enabling our students to become Engaged Thinkers who are Ethical Citizens with an Entrepreneurial Spirit.
  - 2) We are knowledgeable about and advise on the school's three-year education plan.
  - 3) We discuss strategies for school council and parents to support the goals in the school's three year plan.

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- 4) We understand the school's Accountability Pillar Report and Annual Results Report.
  - 5) We understand how our school's assessment practices relate to school improvement planning.
  - 6) We advise on strategies for improving learning through interpretation of the Accountability Pillar, Annual Results Report and assessment results.
- 3) Our School Council promotes meaningful parental engagement. We are inclusive, respectful, demonstrate trust and have high ethical standards.
- 1) We communicate with parents and the broader school community.
  - 2) We encourage participation on School Council and recognize and address barriers to participation.
  - 3) We welcome newcomers to the school and build positive, trusting relationships.
  - 4) We conduct efficient meetings and other activities with dignity and respect.
  - 5) We have implemented and adhere to our School Council's Code of Conduct.
  - 6) We strive to build positive relationships with our principal and others.

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