

Parent Council Bylaws



HIGH PARK ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL
since 1981

June 5, 2013

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Article I. Name of Organization

High Park Alternative School, (also known as HPAS) is a JK – Grade 8 [combined classroom](#), alternative public school in [Ward 7](#) within the [Toronto District School Board](#). HPAS was founded in 1981, is housed in the Annette Street Public School complex in the Bloor West/Junction/High Park community. The school has grown from its original three classrooms to its current seven classrooms. The student population numbers 182, with the majority of children having English as their home language. The school currently offers Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 programs. It shares space and facilities with Annette Street Public School and Junction Daycare. The complex is attached to the Annette Community Centre.

Article II. History of Ontario’s Parent Engagement Policy

Introduced in 2010, Ontario’s parent engagement policy, as set out in the document *Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools*, articulates a vision of parent engagement in Ontario schools. The policy recognizes that parent involvement is multidimensional and that parents have a role to play in fulfilling each of Ontario’s core priorities for educational excellence. The policy identifies four key strategies designed to support parents as partners so that they have the opportunity – and the knowledge, skills and tools – to work together with all education partners and contribute fully to the success of Ontario’s students and our education system.

Equally important, the policy acknowledges that developing effective parent engagement practices and programs requires action on the part of education partners at every level of the education system. Accordingly, it sets out actions for schools, school boards and the Ministry of Education that will, individually and collectively, contribute to realizing Ontario’s vision for parent engagement across the province.

Ontario’s Vision of Parent Engagement

In Ontario’s education system, all partners acknowledge the positive impact of parent engagement on student achievement. Students are supported and inspired to learn in a culture of high expectations in which parents:

- are welcomed, respected and valued by the school community as partners in their children’s learning and development;
- have opportunities to be involved, and also a full range of choices about how to be involved, in the educational community in order to support student success;
- are engaged through ongoing communication and dialogue with other educational partners to support a positive learning environment at home and at school;
- are supported with the information and tools necessary to participate in school life.

Parents in Partnership: A Parent Engagement Policy for Ontario Schools can be accessed on the ministry website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/involvement/index.html

Article III. Mission Statement

HPAS nurtures an inclusive and dynamic community of learning and care through partnerships between staff and families that extend both locally and globally. Collaborative decision making and cooperative learning in a safe, respectful and joyful environment empowers our children to appreciate their own and others' educational and emotional achievements, challenges and potential. A curriculum which crosses age groups and disciplines encourages each child to cultivate intellectual curiosity, an ethic of care, critical thinking and a love of learning.

Article IV. Purpose and Objective

The Parent Council is your voice on important matters that affect your child's education. The committees consist of parents who communicate, organize and implement various parent initiatives and enrichment programs at High Park Alternative School. The Parent Executive Committee holds General Meetings six times during the school year and the committees meet on as-needed basis. The Parent Council acts as a sounding board to the school administration and serves as link between the school and the community. It encourages the participation of parents from all groups and of other people within the school community and observes the council's code of ethics and established bylaws.

Ontario Education Act Reg. 612, Section 2.1 and 2.2

The purpose of school councils is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. O. Reg. 612/00, s. 2 (1)

A school council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations in accordance with this Regulation to the principal of the school and the board that established the council. O. Reg. 612/00, s. 2 (2).

Article V. Procedures and Operating Guidelines

The operational procedures of this council are outlined in [TDSB's Operational Procedure PR.558 SCS](#). All recommendations and activities of the council shall comply with all Ministry of Education Acts, Toronto District School Board Policies and Procedures and Staff Collective Agreements.

Article VI. Code of Ethics

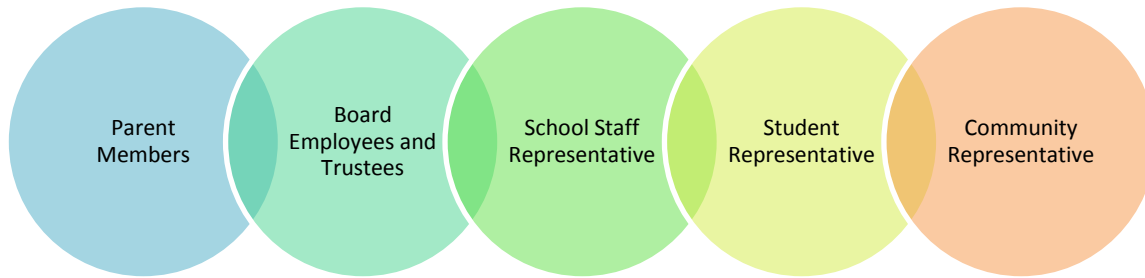
The code of ethics outlines the Parent Council's expectations of its members and guides their behaviour. The code establishes boundaries, clarifies their roles and responsibilities, determine areas of conflict of interest and the manner in which members are expected to interact, in the interests of preserving democratic principles and minimizing and/or managing conflict. Parent Council members are required to sign the code of ethics annually.

CODE OF ETHICS

- A member shall consider the best interests of all students.
- A member shall be guided by HPAS' and the TDSB's mission statements.
- A member shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of HPAS Parent Council, as identified by the school's operating guidelines, the TDSB and the Ontario Ministry of Education.
- A member shall become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- A member shall maintain the highest standards of integrity.
- A member shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- A member shall treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption.
- A member shall encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- A member shall acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council.
- A member shall respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council.
- A member shall not disclose confidential information.
- A member shall limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole.
- A member shall use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise.
- A member shall promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
- A member shall declare any conflict of interest.
- A member shall not accept any payment or benefit financially through school council involvement.

Adapted from the bylaws of the Port Arthur Collegiate Institute School Council, Lakehead Board of Education, Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Article VII. Membership



A robust School Council consists of:

1. **Parent Members** - A parent member is one who is a parent or guardian of a child enrolled at HPAS. All parent members are voting members.

The Parent Executive Committee is composed of both elected and appointed parent members. The co-chairs, secretary, treasurer and all committee leads are voting members of the Parent Executive Committee. The four elected positions within the Parent Executive Committee are: two Co-Chairs, Secretary and Treasurer.

All Parent Members are encouraged to:

- Bring a wealth of experience and diversity to the Parent Council and help create a culture of caring, communicating and dealing with issues and challenges
- Participate on any committees established by the Parent Council
- Contribute to the discussions of the Parent Council
- Maintain a school-wide perspective on Parent Council issues and seek to achieve consensus
- Solicit views of other parents and members of the community
- Observe the Parent Council's code of ethics and established bylaws

ELECTED PARENT MEMBERS' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Co-Chair positions: The Co-Chairs of the council are elected by the parent body and must be a parent or parents who are not employed by the Toronto District School Board. The Co-Chairs are voting members who, in addition to performing the same duties as other council members perform these specific duties:

1. Uphold the Council's purpose and mandate by serving as the liaison between parents, teachers and other stakeholders.
 - a. Brings education and community issues to parents for feedback

- b. Regularly communicates with the principal and her appointee and seeks feedback on Council matters
 - c. Acknowledges receipt of mail, e-mail and phone messages; brings forward these messages to the appropriate committee or for Council's decision, if needed.
 - d. Helps set-up workshops for students and families
 - e. Communicates regularly with Annette St. PS Parent Council and Junction Daycare
 - f. Reviews Ward 7 updates and spearheads any actionable items at the school level
 - g. Reviews MOE and TDSB practices for school councils, ensures that the Council is compliant
2. Arranges, chairs and hosts council meetings
- a. Prepares draft agendas for both Executive and General Meetings and forwards to Secretary for distribution
 - b. Reviews draft minutes and advises Secretary of changes
 - c. Ensures that all approved motions are communicated and enforced
 - d. Maintains Parent Council calendar, with the help of Communications Committee
 - e. Creates a year-end report for the school community about the current school year's accomplishments, requirements for upcoming school year, ongoing projects, etc.
3. Acts as one of the authorized signatory for the Council's bank account
- a. With the help of the Treasurer, collates the financing goals for upcoming school year based on the school community needs, including soliciting budget items from teachers
 - b. Prepares and submits a written report outlining the Parent Council's goals, activities and achievements, including any fundraising activities. (The Principal, on behalf of the Parent Council, must ensure that a copy of this annual report is provided to every parent who has a child enrolled in the school.)
 - c. Reviews Council finances, ensuring Council funds are properly administered and accounted for
 - d. Seeks out available grants, manages the grant application process and ensures that applications are submitted in a timely manner
4. Provides guidance and support to the Committees
- a. Follows-up with Committees on a regular basis and assists in its formation, if necessary
 - b. Works with Communications Committee ensuring information in the school website is current, immediate information is circulated in the weekly newsletter

- c. Works with the Fundraising Committee in communicating to families about options on contributing to the school year's budget (Fundscrip, trip fees, blocked fees)
 - d. Works with the Recruitment Committee in the collection of new parent sign-up list
 - e. Acts as the alternate representative at the Safe Schools Committee (a joint committee with Annette St. PS)
5. Oversees resolution of any conflicts and any school issues that may arise.
 - a. Facilitates an unbiased forum for issues that require Council's attention
 - b. Holds people accountable, following-up on actionable items

Secretary: The Secretary is elected by the parent body and must be a parent or parents who are not employed by the Toronto District School Board. He/She is a voting member who, in addition to performing the same duties as other council members performs these specific duties:

1. Attends all Parent Council meetings.
2. Keeps written minutes of each meeting, outlining the major threads of discussion. The minutes should list those in attendance at meetings; detail any decisions that have been made, anyone who stands aside from a consensus decision and specific tasks that were assigned, including the name/s of the person/s who committed to performing a specific task/s.
3. Shows the written minutes to the Council for review and revision.
4. Distributes a copy of the final version to each of the members of the Parent Council.
5. Forwards a copy of the minutes on the Communication Committee lead so it is available for other members of the school community to read (website, newsletter, etc.).
6. Keeps files updated with agendas, minutes and other Parent Council documents in the school office.

Treasurer: The Treasurer is elected by the parent body and must be a parent or parents who are not employed by the Toronto District School Board. He/She is a voting member who, in addition to performing the same duties as other council members performs these specific duties:

1. Attends all Parent Council meetings.
2. Acts as one of the authorized signatory for the Parent Council's bank account.
3. Maintains detailed, written financial statements, including records of all receipts and disbursements on behalf of the Parent Council.
4. Keeps Parent Council funds deposited in financial institutions as approved by the Parent Executive Council.
5. Oversees a spending budget and recommends proposals for allocation of funds to the Parent Executive Council.

2. **Board Employees and Trustees** - A board employee who works at the school his or her child attends is not eligible to serve as a parent member on the council. He/She may, however, be elected as either the teaching or non-teaching staff representative. The Principal and his/her delegate is the school council's Board Employee representative. The school principal is an important link between the council and the school. ***In fact, a meeting cannot be considered a meeting of the school council unless the principal, or delegated vice-principal, is in attendance***¹. However, the principal is not a voting member of the council.

PRINCIPAL OR DELEGATED VICE-PRINCIPAL'S ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Distributes promptly to each council member material identified by the ministry for distribution to school council members and posts the material in a school location accessible to parents;
2. Acts as a resource to the council on laws, regulations and board policies;
3. Attends all school council meetings, unless this responsibility has been delegated to the vice principal;
4. Considers each recommendation made by the school council to the principal and returns to the council with the action taken in response to the recommendation;
5. Solicits views on matters pertaining to the establishment or amendment of school policies and guidelines² relating to student achievement, accountability of the education system to parents and the communication of those plans to the public;
6. May participate on any committees established by the school council;
7. May solicit the views of the school council on any matter;
8. Observes the council's code of ethics and established bylaws.

3. **School Staff Representative** - Any teacher in the school is eligible to seek election for the one teacher position on the school council. He or she is to be elected by other teachers in the school. The teacher position cannot be filled by a principal or vice principal.

Any member of the non-teaching staff in the school is eligible to seek election for the one non-teaching staff position on the school council. He or she is to be elected by other non-teaching staff members in the school. A non-teaching staff member is anyone employed at the school who does not have teaching duties, such as a secretary, an educational assistant, a library technician, a member of the custodial staff, or a lunchtime or hallway monitor. Parents working in such a capacity in the school that their children attend may consider running for the position of non-teaching staff representative if they wish to serve on the school council. **School staff representatives are voting members of the school council.**

¹ See Ontario Regulation 612/00, section 14(3).

² See Regulation 298, section 11(19).

SCHOOL STAFF REPRESENTATIVES' (one each from teaching and non-teaching staff)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Contribute to the discussions of the school council;
2. Solicit views from their staff groups to share with the school council;
3. May participate on any committees established by the school council;
4. Communicate information back to their staff groups;
5. Observe the council's code of ethics and established bylaws.

4. **Student Representative(s)** - In an elementary school, the principal must consult with the school council to determine if the council should include a student. If the decision is made that a student should be on the council, then the principal can appoint the student or may consider advice received from students regarding the appointment of a student. The student representative on the school council of an elementary school must be a student enrolled in the school. Although the regulation requires the inclusion of only one student member on the school council, school council bylaws may provide for additional student representation (provided that parent members still form a majority). Students can be included in the committee work of a school council, subject to school council bylaws. **Student Representatives are voting members of the school council. Furthermore, since council meetings must be open to the public, interested students are welcome to attend.**

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE(S)' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Contributes to the discussions of the school council;
2. Solicits the views of other students to share with the school council;
3. May participate on any committees established by the school council;
4. Communicates information from the council to other students;
5. Observes the council's code of ethics and established bylaws.

5. **Community Representative(s).** The council must *appoint* at least one community representative, who cannot be an employee at the school. If the community representative is employed elsewhere by the board, he or she must inform other council members of his or her employment prior to appointment.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE(S)' ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Contributes to the discussions of the school council;
2. Represents the community's perspective;
3. May participate on any committees established by the school council;
4. Helps build partnerships and links between the school and the community;
5. Observes the council's code of ethics and established bylaws.

Article VIII. Election Procedures and Bylaw

According to Ontario Regulation 612/00, elections must take place at the same time each year – within the first thirty days of each school year. They **may not** take place in May or June. While this approach may seem logical for a sense of continuity, the risk of excluding new parents from the process is too great. Since September is a busy time for parents and educators, the elections plan below shows the timelines leading up to election.

Timelines for the School Council Election

May/June	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A committee is established to deal with the school council election of parent members. The co-chairs must forward the election information package (<i>School Council Election of Parent Representatives</i>) to the principal well in advance of the election
Mid-August	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the welcome-back-to-school package, the principal includes in the school mailing the <i>School Council Election of Parent Representatives</i> which includes election forms, deadline for submitting nominations to the school, who is eligible, the election date and other election information
Early September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With the help of the Communications Committee, the Principal posts election information on the parent website and in an accessible area in the school• Parents return nomination forms to schools
Early to Mid-September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A list of parent nominees with brief biographies is published on the school's website, e-mailed out via the e-newsletter or sent home, with a reminder of the election date and information on the election process.
Mid- to end September	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ballot box is prepared for the election of parent representatives, and arrangements are made for volunteers to help voters at the voting areas.• The election of the teacher, non-teacher and student representatives may take place at the same time or shortly after the election of parent representatives.
Late September to early October	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The first meeting of the new school council takes place and meeting dates, times, and locations for the upcoming year are determined. (The first meeting of the new school council must take place within thirty-five days of the start of school.)• The names of the new school council members are publicized to the school community within thirty days of the election, as are the dates, times and locations of future meetings.

ELECTION PROCEDURE BYLAWS

School council election committee.

The current school council will establish a school council election committee. The committee must ensure that a new council is in place within thirty days of the start of the school year in September. The committee should have representation from parents, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, students and community representatives.

Considerations for the school council election process.

In any given year, the term of office for all parent-elected positions is two years. Appeals related to the school council election process or results shall be resolved by the school council election committee. If the situation is not resolved, the school principal and the chair of the outgoing council shall jointly make a ruling.

Election of parent/guardian representatives

- a. Parents/guardians of a student enrolled at the school are eligible both to vote for and to run as parent candidates. Self-nomination will suffice. No additional qualifiers or quotas may restrict eligibility either to vote for or to run as a parent candidate (e.g., child's program, grade, location of home). Candidates should be prepared to provide a brief biography and must declare if they are employed by the school board.
- b. Nomination forms shall be filed by all parent-candidates for elected positions on the school council. Parents may nominate themselves or other parents.
- c. Information about candidates shall be made available to the school community at least one week before the election.
- d. If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates shall be acclaimed.
- e. No individual campaign literature for school council elections may be distributed or posted in the school.
- f. School resources, both human and material, may not be used to support particular candidates or groups of candidates.
- g. The Election Day proceedings shall be publicized by the principal at least fourteen days prior to the election.
- h. The Election Day proceedings shall be supervised by the principal.
- i. Elections for school council shall be conducted by secret ballot. Voters must be present at the school on the election day(s) during the preset hours for voting (to include both daytime and evening hours).
- j. All eligible voters shall be entitled to cast one vote for each of the candidate positions available. Casting more than the maximum number of votes permitted in the category spoils the ballot.
- k. Ballots shall be counted by the principal in the presence of at least two parents who are not election candidates.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. If there is a tie, the winner shall be determined by lot.
Election of the teaching staff representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The principal, in consultation with the election committee, will make the necessary arrangements for the teaching staff representative to be elected. b. Anyone assigned to the teaching staff of the school (full- or part-time) other than the principal or a vice-principal may be a candidate.
Election of the non-teaching staff representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The principal, in consultation with the election committee, will make the necessary arrangements for the non-teaching staff representative to be elected. b. Anyone assigned to the non-teaching staff of the school (full- or part-time) may be a candidate.
Appointment or election of the student representative (for elementary schools)	The principal will consult with other members of the school council to determine if there is to be a student representative on the council. If a positive decision is reached, the principal appoints a student representative to the council.
Selection of community representatives	All appointments of community representatives to the school council are to be by majority vote at a meeting of the school council.

Adapted from the "Thames Valley District School Board School Council Handbook"

Filling Vacancies

A vacancy in the Parent Executive Council may be filled by election or by appointment. Should a vacancy occur on the Parent Executive Council, the council is not prevented from exercising its authority; it can continue to operate as long as there is a quorum and the majority of council members are parents.

QUORUM: The majority of parent-members of the Executive Committee, including Co-chairs, Secretary, Treasurer and all active committee chairs/co-chairs must be present to have a duly constituted meeting of the Parent Council.

Participation by teleconference will be considered full presence and Parent Council may vote to allow for business to occur via electronic participation (i.e. email voting). Non-voting members are not counted for deciding if there is a quorum.

The council members should be aware that a majority of parents must be present when a vote is taken or if decisions are made. Should the number of parent members on the council fall below a majority, the council will need to take steps to fill those vacancies.

If a vacancy occurs in the office of the co-chairs or any other officer of the council, it is to be filled in accordance with this bylaw.

Vacancies occur in school council membership for various reasons:

- Not all positions on the school council were filled after an election
- A member resigns
- A member is unable to fulfil the roles and responsibilities (e.g., due to illness)

Term of Office

The term of office for parent members shall be **two years** and must be followed by a **one year stay down** from the Parent Executive Committee before running for another voted position. All other members' term of office, i.e. Teaching staff, Non-teaching staff, Student Representative(s) and Community Representative(s), shall be for **one year**.

Article IX. The Executive

The Parent Executive Committee is composed of the following:

- Co-chairs
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- All committee chairs/co-chairs
- Principal or his/her delegate (*non-voting member*)
- Teaching staff
- Non-teaching staff
- Student Representative(s)
- Community Representative(s)

To find out more about the roles and responsibilities of the Parent Executive Committee members, please refer to [Article VII](#).

Article X. Committees

Parent involvement is the cornerstone of what makes High Park Alternative School special. Get involved and experience the rewards of participating in your children's education and of getting to know all the students, teachers, administration and parents in the HPAS community. As a member of our parent body, we depend on you to be informed about classroom and school activities and to contribute to parent body decisions, raising funds and wisely spending the funds we raise. Committee lead positions are either filled by acclamation or appointment.

The Committees at HPAS are:

Arts Committee: Our Arts Committee is passionate about enriching our child's education through exposure to the arts. This includes but is not limited to music, drama, dance and tactile arts such as clay works, mosaics, painting, making musical instruments, etc. The Arts Committee organizes whole-school arts workshops, as well as several mini in-class arts injections throughout the year. The Arts Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Communications Committee: This committee's focus is on improving communication with parents and on welcoming new families to the HPAS community. This group is responsible for the HPAS Parent Council website (www.hpalt.org) and weekly e-newsletters. Parents experienced in Communications or have ideas on how to improve communication within the HPAS community are encouraged to join. The Communications Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Alternative Schools Advisory Council Rep: The Alternative School Advisory Council (ASAC) is made up of parents, teachers, and students from various alternative schools across the Toronto District School Board. ASAC meets on a regular basis to discuss issues related to alternative schools including policy, procedures, philosophy, and funding. ASAC works to represent the interests of alternative schools within the TDSB. The ASAC Rep, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Ward 7 Rep - Parents attend the Ward 7 meetings to get informed about the issues facing our school and the TDSB in order to communicate back to the HPAS community. Only the designated Ward 7 Rep/s can attend Ward 7 meetings. If you are interested in learning about the issues facing our schools and the TDSB or can help in mobilizing parents to take action on specific issues, the Ward 7 Rep/s would appreciate your ideas and involvement. The Ward 7 Rep, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Environment and Social Justice Committee - The committee will work to actualize the school's commitment to environmental and social justice locally and globally. This committee will strive to create a justice culture that works toward social and environmental sustainability. Committee members and subcommittees will support and enrich school initiatives actualizing the current school theme. The Environment and Social Justice Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Events - The Events Committee organizes and plans several whole-school events. The events include: Seasonal Celebration (mid-December), Skating Party (mid-February), Ghana OSU Book Sale (end of February), Spring Concert (end of May) and Play Day (mid-June). The Events Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Fundraising - The Fundraising Committee effectively plans and fundraises to meet the goals set by the Parent Council. The Fundraising Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Philosophy, Policy and Program - The Philosophy, Policy and Program Committee works to define and document the HPAS philosophy, its supporting policies and implementation. This committee works with the teachers at balancing traditional and progressive approaches to learning, providing a well-rounded and challenging academic experience in-class and as a whole school. Under teacher guidance and direction, we strive at enriching HPAS' programs, embedding the 4As in the school's culture while satisfying the curriculum requirements. The Philosophy, Policy and Program Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Recruitment - The Recruitment Committee works to attract new students to our school, sets and meets required recruiting targets and tracks why students are leaving the school and what attracts students to the school. The Principal, committee members responsible for specific areas of recruiting (Primary Recruiting Lead, Middle and Senior Recruiting Lead, School Open House Lead, etc.) and any interested parents are part of the Recruitment Committee. You can volunteer to help with Information Night for prospective parents or your family can be a buddy family to a new family joining the school. In the new school year you can also volunteer to help with New Families Orientation Night. The committee also works with the Philosophy, Policy and Program Committee and the Communications Committee to promote the school in the community, both in-person and online. The Recruitment Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Volunteer - The Volunteer Committee ensures that the opportunities for volunteering are well understood by the parent body and that the parent body understands that volunteerism is the cornerstone of HPAS. The committee collates a list of parent "skills" who we could tap into as required. The Volunteer Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Safe Schools Committee – The Safe Schools Committee works alongside Annette St. PS and Junction Daycare to ensure that our students are in a safe environment that encourages positive learning and provides a teaching environment that helps them succeed at school. Ontario’s Code of Conduct sets out clear standards for behaviour for everyone involved as it applies on school property, on school buses, at school-authorized events or activities or in other circumstances that could have an impact on the school climate. The Safe Schools Committee Chair, or designate, is a member of the Parent Executive Committee.

Ad Hoc Committees - In addition to the above committees, various other committees will form as required. They will work as other committees do but will not necessarily have a representative on the Parent Executive Committee. Examples of Ad Hoc Committees: Special Education Committee and Teacher Allocation Working Committee. Any Ad Hoc Committee can be formed within the school by a parent, teacher or administrator. The formation of the committee should be approved via a motion at a parent meeting.

- **Special Education** - To champion the cause of obtaining TDSB funding for Special Education and Resource Support at HPAS and to strengthen the awareness, knowledge and opportunities for additional support for HPAS students, their families and the HPAS community as a whole.
- **Graduation** - Grade 8 parents are responsible for organizing a graduation ceremony for their children graduating from the school, in conjunction with their teacher and the school administration. They are also responsible for working with the students and their teacher to raise additional funds required covering costs associated with any activities not already covered by the budget. All students in the school attend this graduation. All parents and HPAS alumni are welcome to attend.
- **Yearbook** – A few parents, along with some teachers come together every year to organize the year’s memories from Kinder to Grade 8. The Yearbook Committee is a great way to contribute your time to the HPAS community.

Article XI. Conducting Meetings

Timetable of Meetings

1. At the first meeting of the new school year, a timetable will be created which states the meeting dates agreed to for that school year.
2. A copy of these dates and times will be posted on the parent website www.hpalt.org and will be included in communication(s) to the families of the school. Use a phone-tree system to remind parents of upcoming meetings.
3. Advertise meetings in school and via e-newsletters, noting important or special agenda items.

The Meeting Location

School councils are entitled to hold their meetings at the school³ and it is expected that there will be no charge for the use of school space for this purpose. As school council meetings must be open to the public,⁴ the meeting location(s) must be accessible and convenient to all members of the school community, including those with disabilities.

Developing an Agenda

- Provide a place on the agenda for welcoming guests and introducing new people and non members;
- Remember to include “declaration of conflict of interest” at the beginning of the agenda (see “Conflict of Interest” in [Article XII](#));
- Review the minutes of the previous meeting and include items that need revisiting (“business arising from the minutes”);
- Determine if there is any “old business” or updates that should be included;
- Include time for all committee reports;
- Determine what “new business” should come before the council;
- Include time for brief reports from the principal, student, staff and community representatives;
- Include a period of time for general questions.
- Establish a deadline for the submission of agenda items to allow enough time to develop the agenda, post it in the school and send it out to council members with minutes from the previous meeting at least a week before the meeting.

³ See Ontario Regulation 612/00, section 12(5).

⁴ See Ontario Regulation 612/00, section 12(4).

Keeping Minutes of Council Meetings

School councils must keep minutes and financial records of all council meetings and these must be available at the school for examination by anyone without charge⁵. Minutes are usually recorded by the Parent Council Secretary and are to be kept at the school for a minimum of four years. An electronic copy can be accessed in <http://hpalt.org/committees/executive-committee/>. Accurate minutes and financial records provide school council members and the school community with a brief but clear summary of what went on at a meeting, including decisions, future plans, reports and who is responsible for what. School council minutes should note discussion areas but should not include the discussions themselves. Minutes should also include a list of those attending the meeting and those who are absent.

MEETINGS BYLAW:

1. The Parent Council will conduct at least four general meetings per year that are open to the public and in a location accessible to the public.
2. The first meeting must be held within the first 35 days of the current school year.
3. An agenda should be set by the Parent Executive Committee and circulated in advance.
4. All general meetings start at 7:00 pm and end at 9:00 pm.
5. All meetings are conducted within the *Robert's Rules of Order*. All speakers and opinions are respectfully heard. Decisions are made only when there is a quorum (a majority of the members are present AND a majority of those present are parent members).
6. All meeting minutes and financial records must be kept at the school for a minimum of four years.
7. All activities must be in compliance with the TDSB policies.

⁵ See Ontario Regulation 612/00, sections 16(1) and (2).

Article XII. Conflict of Interest Bylaw

A conflict of interest in the Parent Council is any situation in which the individual's personal or pecuniary interests may be incompatible with his or her responsibilities to the Parent Council. Conflicts of interest may be actual or perceived.

A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived, or potential:

- **Actual:** When a school council member has a private interest that is sufficiently connected to his or her duties and responsibilities as a council member that it influences the exercise of these duties and responsibilities.
- **Perceived:** When reasonably well-informed persons could reasonably believe that a school council member has a conflict of interest, even where, in fact, there is no real conflict of interest.
- **Potential:** When a school council member has a private interest that could affect his or her decision about matters proposed for discussion.

Conflict of Interest Bylaw:

1. A conflict of interest may be actual, perceived or potential.
2. Members of the council shall declare a conflict of interest in matters that they, members of their families, or business entities in which they may have an interest, stand to benefit either directly or indirectly by decisions of the council.
3. A member shall exclude him- or herself from discussions in which:
 - a conflict of interest is likely to result;
 - the member's ability to carry out his or her duties and responsibilities as a member of the school council may be jeopardized;
 - the council member, his or her relatives, or a business entity in which the member may have an interest, may gain or benefit either directly or indirectly as a result of actions that may be taken by the principal or board in response to advice that the council provides to the principal or to the board.
4. A member shall not accept favours or economic benefits from any individuals, organizations or entities known to be seeking business contracts with the school.

Article XIII. Conflict Resolution Bylaw

1. Council members are elected to serve the school community and will demonstrate respect for their colleagues on council at all times.
2. If a council member or members become disruptive during a meeting, the co-chair shall ask for order.
3. If all efforts to restore order fail or the unbecoming behaviour continues, the co-chair may direct the individual council member(s) to leave the meeting, citing the reasons for the request.
4. The removal of a member for one meeting does not prevent the council member from participating in future meetings of council.
5. The incident shall be recorded and submitted to the Superintendent of Schools within one week of the meeting.
6. When the co-chair has requested the removal of a member or members from a meeting, the co-chair shall request that the disputing members of council participate in a special meeting, the purpose of which will be to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the dispute. Such a meeting may be a private meeting and shall not be construed as a meeting of the council.
7. The co-chair may request the intervention of an independent third party to assist in achieving a resolution to the dispute. An independent third party may be a board official or another individual mutually agreed on by the parties involved in the dispute.
8. Any resolution reached at the meeting to resolve the conflict shall be signed and respected in full by all parties to the agreement.

Article XIV. Managing Finances

Annual Reports

At the end of its term, the Parent Council must prepare and submit a written report to the school and to the board, outlining the council's goals, activities and achievements, including any fundraising activities⁶. The principal, on behalf of the school council, must ensure that a copy of this annual report is provided to every parent who has a child enrolled in the school.

Financial Statements

The Parent Council shall not engage in fundraising activities unless the activities are conducted in accordance with applicable policies established by the TDSB⁷.

Disbursements and Finance Bylaw

1. Funds raised and managed by the Parent Council are spent on items in the following categories:
 - 1.1. Classroom (Field trips, Workshops, Speakers, Pets and Classroom Supplies)
 - 1.2. Technology and supplies (computers, smart boards, lab equipment)
 - 1.3. Whole School Events (Skating Party, Winter/Spring Concert, All School Event, Play Day)
 - 1.4. Parents (Childcare for Meetings, Recruitment, Website, Parent Council Communication collateral)
 - 1.5. Other Programming (Gym and Arts)
2. Funds that are not identified in the budget or exceed the allocated amount can be requested through the following procedure:
 - 2.1. Submit a written motion to the Parent Executive Committee identifying the amount and intended use of the funds.
 - 2.2. For amounts of \$300 or less, the Parent Executive Committee can vote to pass or decline the motion or choose to bring the motion to the next General Meeting for discussion and a vote by the entire parent body.
 - 2.3. If a motion for an amount of \$300 or less is declined by the Parent Executive Committee, it can still be brought to a General Meeting for additional consideration by the whole parent body.
 - 2.4. For amounts over \$300, the motion must be made at a General Meeting and requires a vote by the entire parent body in attendance. It is strongly recommended that all monetary motions be submitted in writing before the meeting so that they can be included on the agenda.
3. The Parent Executive Committee must maintain accurate records of all financial transactions for the Parent Council to refer to as needed. Treasurers can do the book keeping using Quick Books.
4. Textbooks and materials that support the curriculum should be paid for from the school budget and not from Parent Council funds.

⁶ See Ontario Regulation 612/00, section 24.

⁷ See Ontario Regulation 612/00, sections 22(2) and (3).

5. All cheques must require at least two signatures, one of whom must be the School Council co-chair or Treasurer. The Principal has co-signing authority. Changes involving signing authorities must be communicated to the financial institution in writing prior to school council member leaving the position.
6. Each month, the Treasurer should make a monthly report and at the end of the year, provide an annual report to the school community. In addition, they should have the books audited by an independent authority, annually.
7. Funds are to be used within the school year, unless designated for a specific future project.
8. The School Council Funds account cannot be in a deficit position at any time during the school year.
9. Funds cannot be used to pay or offset salaries of permanent or casual employees.
10. If funds are to be used for teacher professional development, this must be discussed with the Principal prior to any commitment to spend the money

Article XV. Constitutional Amendments

Amendments to these bylaws may be repealed or enacted by two-thirds of the votes cast at a General Meeting called for the purpose of considering an amendment or the repeal of an amendment.

If and when passed, this bylaw supersedes High Park Alternative School Parent Body Bylaws dated January 2010 that replaced the Bylaws dated May 17, 2001.

Article XVI. Definition of Terms

Administrator – An Administrator shall mean the principal or his/her designate at HPAS.

Amendment – A change made to a regulation or a law.

Bylaws – The rules adopted by an organization for the regulation of its operation and proceedings. Bylaws must not conflict with the statute or charter by which the organization is created.

Constitution – The document that defines the structure of an organization and sets out the principles according to which it is governed. School councils are not required to develop lengthy constitutions since O. Reg. 612/00 sets out the mandate and roles and responsibilities for school councils. In effect, the regulation serves as the constitution for the school council.

Executive Committee – Executive Committee shall mean the HPAS Parent Executive Committee as defined in [Article VII](#).

Executive Meeting – Executive Meeting shall mean one of the meetings of the HPAS Parent Executive Committee as defined in [Article VII](#).

Executive Meeting without Administration - Executive Meeting without Administration shall mean one of the meetings of parent-members only of the Executive Committee.

General Meeting - General Meeting shall mean one of the general meetings of the HPAS Parent Body.

HPAS - The name High Park Alternative School shall be abbreviated as HPAS.

Parent - A Parent shall mean a parent, guardian or any other caregiver legally recognized as acting in place of the parent of a child enrolled at HPAS.

Policy - A principle, direction or course of action adopted by an institution.

Quorum – The minimum number of members of an organization that must be present at a meeting to make the proceedings legitimate and official.

Regulation – A rule made and approved under an act of the Legislature. Regulations extend acts: some outline detailed directives while others serve as vehicles to communicate annually changing provisions.

Roberts Rules of Order – A formal system of meeting procedures designed to assist organizations to operate in a smooth and orderly fashion.

School Improvement Plan – A plan that sets out the changes a school needs to make to improve the level of student achievement and specifies how and when such changes will be made.

Superintendent – A supervisory officer appointed by a school board to perform various duties, which may include responsibility for the operation of schools within a specified geographic area under the jurisdiction of the board. A superintendent may address the concerns of parents, students, teachers and trustees and may provide support to the administrative staff of each school.

Teacher – A Teacher shall mean a teacher employed at HPAS.

Trustee of a school board – A member of the community selected in accordance with the applicable laws and typically elected by popular vote or appointed. Collectively, trustees direct the delivery of education in the schools of their board.