

Gateway Christian School Council

Operating Procedures

Proposed to be amended September 2018

Section 1: Name

1.1 The name of the council shall be the "Gateway Christian School Council."

Section 2: Mandate

2.1 The school council is a legislated structure - a forum for parents and community members to participate in an advisory capacity in their local school decision-making processes. The advisory role is intended to engage parents, high school students and the community in school decision-making for which the principal is responsible. School council may, at its discretion, advise the school board on matters relating to the school.

(School Council Resource Guide Alberta School Councils' Association © September 2016 pg. 4&5)

Section 3: Mission and Vision

3.1 The mission of the Gateway Christian School Council is to be a forum for parents, high school students and community members to engage in Gateway Christian School. This will be accomplished through a positive exchange of information and resources, allowing our voice to be heard at Gateway Christian School, the Red Deer Public School Board and the Alberta Provincial Government. We will advocate for students and parents as we play our part in God's story.

3.2 **present:** The vision of the Gateway Christian School Council is to be a part of a flourishing Christian community of lifelong learners.

Draft: Will be adapted in the 2018/2019 school year.

Section 4: Objectives

4.1 Consulting with the principal to ensure students have opportunities to meet Ministry standards, fiscal management is sound, and the community is taken into consideration during school-based planning.

- 4.2 Advising the principal and the school board on topics as requested.
- 4.3 Being involved in school-based planning.
- 4.4 Sharing ideas and information with other school councils and provincial organizations.
- 4.5 Communicating information to the school community and other school councils.
- 4.6 Setting policies that relate to school council functions.

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Section 5: Membership

Membership in the Gateway Christian School Council is defined in the School Act. The majority of the members must be parents of children enrolled at Gateway Christian School. Other members are the principal, one or more teacher representatives and a high school student representative. A school council may also have community members.

Generally the “executive” are the primary members needed to ensure the operations of the school council are managed: chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer. Other positions may be filled by individuals considered to be apart of the executive committee or apart from it (at the discretion of the school community). These individuals may be called “officers” of the school council or have a title assigned. E.g. Communications Officer, Event Organizer.

(School Council Resource Guide Alberta School Councils' Association © September 2016 pg. 9,10)

5.1 The Executive members of the Gateway Christian School Council include:

- a) Principal of the Gateway Christian School
- b) Chair (elected position)
- c) Vice Chair (elected position)
- d) Treasurer (elected position)
- e) Secretary (elected position)
- f) Teacher (elected by the teachers of Gateway Christian School)
- g) High school Student (representing Student Council)
- h) Past Chair

5.2 Personal qualifications of elected eligible School Council Executive members will include:

- a) A willingness to represent our community from the perspective of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- b) Parent or guardian of a child(ren) attending Gateway Christian School (enrolled in Kindergarten through Grade 12).

5.3 Role of Elected Executive Members:

a) School Council Chair

Expectations:

- a parent of a student(s) attending the school.
- Works collaboratively and knows how to organize both programs and people.
- Actively encourages others to become engaged in meaningful ways.
- At least a 2 year commitment

Typical chairing duties include:

- chair all meetings of the school council
- regular and ongoing communication with the school principal. This relationship of mutual trust and respect must be nurtured and supportive of community goals for the learning community.
- coordinate with the principal to establish meeting agendas
- ensure that the operating procedures are current and followed
- be the official spokesperson of the school council
- ensure there is regular communication with the whole school community
- stay informed about school board policy that impacts school council
- comply with the *School Councils Regulation* by providing the school board with an annual report that summarizes the school council's activities for the previous school year, including a financial statement relating to money, if any, handled by the school council

(School Council Resource Guide Alberta School Councils' Association © September 2016 pg. 10)

b) Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair may assist the Chair with duties assigned and, in the absence of the Chair (in the event of resignation, incapacity or leave of absence), assume the responsibilities of the Chair. May move up to the roll of Chair following their term in office.

c) Secretary

The Secretary shall be responsible for ensuring that the minutes are prepared accurately to reflect the directions agreed to at the meeting. Minutes shall be completed and sent to the principal and School Council chair within one week of the meeting. The Secretary shall keep an attendance record of school council meetings.

d) Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping accurate records of all financial transactions and ensuring that records are available upon request of the school board or school community. The

Treasurer also prepares an annual report of financial transactions for the entire school community and for submission to the school board.

5.4 Role of non-elected executive members of the Gateway Christian School Council:

a) Principal

“The principal is the instructional leader who manages the day-to-day operations of the school and is a key member on school council who promotes cooperation between the school and the community. As a provincially mandated member of the school council, the principal:

- works in collaboration with the chair to prepare school council agendas
- supports the chair in running efficient school council meetings
- provides contextual information, as requested by the school council, on matters relating to the school
- seeks input from the school council, parents and community on major decisions that affect the school
- encourages and supports the formation and continuous improvement of school council
- interprets and shares results of provincial achievement tests and diploma exams
- enables the school council to provide input into the school's education plan, policies and budget “

(School Council Resource Guide Alberta School Councils' Association © September 2016 pg. 10)

b) Teacher representative

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

c) High School Student Representative

“The student is the centre of the education system and, in high school, has an important role to play as a participant on school council. A student presents the student perspective on issues, helps with school policies, seeks other students' views to share with school council and communicates school council's information to fellow students.”

(School Council Resource Guide Alberta School Councils' Association © September 2016 pg. 11)

d) Past Chair

The Past Chair shall serve a supportive and encouragement role to the chair and council, providing continuity of leadership in the operation of School Council affairs.

5.5 Committees

School Council may appoint committees consisting of School Council members and others from the school community with either delegated or advisory responsibilities.

5.5 Vacancies

With the exception of the School Council positions filled by the Principal, teacher representative and the High School student representative, the Gateway School Council officers may appoint qualified persons to fill vacancies until the vacancies can be filled at the next Annual General meeting.

5.6 One member of the Gateway School Council executive may also be a director on the Red Deer Society for Christian Education. This allows for input to be made into both the Gateway School Council and the Red Deer Society for Christian Education.

5.7 Remuneration

No member of the Gateway Christian School Council shall receive any remuneration for services rendered for the School Council.

Section 6. Meetings

6.1 The school council shall meet at least seven times during the school year.

6.2 Meetings will take place at the school.

6.3 Special meetings of the school council may be called by the School Council Executive members.

6.4 Quorum

A quorum is a minimum number of members of an assembly that must be present at any of its meetings to make the proceedings valid. Quorum will be attained when at least five members, two of which hold executive positions are at the meeting.

6.5 Annual General Meeting

- a) The annual general meeting (AGM) of the School Council, shall be held no later than twenty days after the first instructional day of the school year or at an appropriate time during the school year as determined by the School Council.
- b) The AGM will be advertised throughout the school and/or the community until the date of the AGM.
- c) All parents and guardians of students attending the school are eligible to vote at the AGM.
- d) The business of the AGM shall include but not necessarily be limited to :
 - The election of School Council executive members
 - Any proposed operating procedures amendments
 - Motion to accept a financial statement of the previous year
 - Plans and budget for the upcoming year
 - Discussion of any major issues in which parents should have input such as: changes to the vision or mission of the school, policy or major changes in the school program or focus, formal evaluation of the School Council

- Presentation of the Annual Report

Section 7: Governance

7.1 Town Hall Model of Governance

Decisions are made a regular, open meetings of the entire school community and the executive members of the school council act only to carry out the wishes of the assembly. All parents and guardians that attend meetings are welcome to participate and vote. Individuals are elected or appointed (executive and others) to manage meetings and coordinate school council business. (School Council Resource Guide Alberta School Councils' Association © September 2016 pg. 9)

7.2 Conflict Resolution

The process used to resolve conflict between Council Members will be by simple majority vote of members present.

7.2 Rules of Order

- a. We will assume the good intentions of all members of the School Council.
- b. We will address all comments to the Chair, who is to be addressed as Chair.
- c. We will wait to speak until recognised by the Chair.
- d. We will debate and discuss ideas only, and not people. To facilitate this, we will remember to speak to the Chair, even if asking a question of another person; and we will avoid using the names of other members.
- e. We will each be allowed to speak for two minutes, twice (2 times) on each issue.
 - We will wait to speak for a second time until everyone has had the opportunity to speak once.
 - We will not speak in response to a question or comment without the express permission of the Chair.
 - We cannot save our time for another issue or transfer it to another person.
- f. When necessary, without taking offence, we expect the chair (or other members of School Council) to remind us:
 - To stay on topic
 - To not repeat ourselves
 - To stay within the time limit
 - To extend courtesy to all members
- g. We will make make decisions together, using these processes:
 - i. Consensus:
 - A topic for decision will be listed on the Agenda
 - The Chair will introduce, or ask the appropriate individual to introduce the issue to be decided

- The Chair will open the floor for comments, concerns or questions
 - The Chair will summarize the discussion, highlighting areas of agreement with or proposed changes to the initial issue.
 - The Chair will test the group for agreement and allow for more discussion if needed.
 - The Chair will again test for agreement. If all parties are in general agreement, and can support the direction, the decision is made and the minutes will reflect this.
- ii. Vote:
- A topic for decision will be listed on the Agenda
 - A motion will be made that clearly defines a proposal related to the topic (“I move that clearly defined proposal ...”
 - The motion will be seconded.
 - The Chair will state the motion (“It is moved and seconded ...”
 - The Chair will ask for any comments or discussion (debate) on the motion, starting with the person who made the motion.
 - The Chair will repeat the motion after the debate, and will call the question (give direction for the vote).
 - Voting will be by show of hands: in favour or opposed. Anyone is free to abstain from voting, but abstentions will not be recorded.
- h. We will support, and not hinder the Chair in fulfilling his/her duties which include, but are not limited to:
- Moving the meeting through its agenda in a timely manner
 - Promoting discussion
 - Facilitating group decision-making
 - Ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to be fairly heard
 - Ensuring that no voice dominates
 - Avoiding repetition and preventing dysfunction

(from ASCA Sample School Council Rules of Order- Request a Resource)

Section 8. School Council Code of Ethics

As a School Council, advocating for student learning and school improvement in Gateway Christian School, we shall strive to:

- Abide by the legislation that governs school council
- Be guided by the mission statement of the school and our school council.
- Endeavour to be familiar with school policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them.
- Practice the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, integrity and truth.
- Recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community.
- Apply and adhere to democratic principles.
- Declare any conflict of interest.

- Foster a positive atmosphere in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued.
- Consider the best interests of all students in our decisions and deliberations.
- Respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council.
- Never disclose confidential information
- Limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school council community as a whole.
- Use the appropriate communication channels when questions or concerns arise
- Promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community.
- Accept accountability for school council decisions.
- Accept no payment for school council activities.

(from ASCA Sample SC Code of Ethics - Request a Resource 2017)

Section 9: Privacy

School Councils operate under the Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA). PIPA legislation governs the collection and use of personal information for organizations that are not public bodies.

9.1 Gateway Christian School Council will:

- Designate a person responsible for responding to questions about the use of personal information by school council each year.
- Obtain consent to collect, use and/or disclose personal information from parents, students, school council members or others from the school community
- Collect only the essential personal information required to fulfill its role in the school.
- State the purpose for and intended use of personal information when consent is sought.
- Use personal information only for the purpose stated when it was collected, unless consent is obtained for an alternate use.
- Ensure that all personal information is protected from unauthorized access and destroyed safely once it is no longer needed.

(School Council Resource Guide Alberta School Councils' Association © September 2016 pg. 17)

Section 10: Records

10.1 Minutes

The Gateway Christian School Council must retain a copy of the minutes for each meeting and make them accessible to the Red Deer Public School District if so requested. These are to be kept for at least seven years.

10.2 Annual Report

School councils have a duty to submit an annual report to the school board. This report helps boards measure and be accountable for parent and community involvement within the district. The Chair of a school council must prepare and provide to the board by September 30 of each year a report:

- Summarizing the activities of the school council in the previous school year and
- Including a financial statement relating to money handled by the school council in the previous school year, if any, and how the funds were used.

Section 11: Amendments

11.1 The operating procedures of the school council remain in force from year to year, however; they may be amended by a majority of those in attendance at the annual general meeting of the School Council or at a special meeting called for the council to deal with operating procedures.

11.2 Council will be the sponsoring body of all amendments. Council must receive proposed changes in advance of their regular meeting prior to the twenty-one day notice period listed in 11.3.

11.3 Notice of proposed operating procedure amendments must be circulated with the notice of meeting at least twenty-one days in advance of the annual general meeting or the special operating procedures meeting.

Section 12: Agreement with Red Deer Public School District

According to Policy 5.01.02.13 of the Red Deer Public School District:

When the position of Principal is vacant at a school, the Superintendent of Schools or designate shall, whenever possible, meet with the school staff and school council to solicit input concerning the requirements of the position. In the case of Gateway Christian School, the appointment of the principal will be the responsibility of the School District with significant input from the Gateway School Council in regard to their faith-based perspective.