

EDMONTON CHRISTIAN NORTHEAST SCHOOL COUNCIL

GUIDELINES FOR 2024-25

Definitions used in this document, in meeting & in minutes:

School Council: principal of the school, teacher of the school or someone that is appointed by the school council, parents enrolled in the school *Education Act: School Councils Regulation, Alberta Regulation 94/2019, School Council Membership 7 (1)*

School Council Executive: School council members elected to the positions of chair, vice chair, and secretary for the current school year. *Education Act: School Councils Regulation, Alberta Regulation 94/2019, School Council Membership 8 (1-4)*

Parents: Parents will be used as a general term to include the legal guardians/caregivers/parents of Kindergarten to Grade 9 students.

Abbreviations used:

ECNS - Edmonton Christian Northeast School

ECS - Edmonton Christian Schools

EPSB - Edmonton Public School Board

Additional Resources:

Academics:

Edmonton Public Schools: Mission, Vision, Values & 2022-26 Division Strategic Plan
<https://epsb.ca/media/epsb/ourdistrict/visionmissionvalues/DivisionStrategicPlan2022-26.pdf>
Edmonton Public School, School Councils <https://epsb.ca/schools/schoolcouncils/>

Alternative Programming—Christian:

Edmonton Christian Schools: Mission, Vision, Values
<https://www.edmchristian.org/about/vision-mission/>
Summary of Statement of Faith
<https://www.edmchristian.org/about/statement-of-faith/>

Alberta School Councils Association: School Council Resource Guide.

<https://education.alberta.ca/media/3273179/school-council-resource-guide-2016-final.pdf>

Province of Alberta. Education Act: School Councils Regulation, Alberta King's Printer, 94/2019.
https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=2019_094.cfm&leg_type=Regs&isbncln=9780779812318

Purpose of School Council

School councils are collective associations of parents, teachers, secondary students, principals, staff and community representatives who work together to effectively support and enhance student learning. School councils play an important role by providing advice and assistance to school principals and trustees regarding educational issues. Involvement on these councils includes:

- focusing on educational matters
- providing input on topics such as program planning, school budgets, and school operations
- serving as a liaison between parents, the school and community groups
- locating resources such as speakers and volunteers
- gathering information and sharing experiences
- supporting the goals and objectives of the school.

(From: <https://www.epsb.ca/schools/schoolcouncils/>)

School councils work to support parental involvement in the school community and enhance student learning by:

- Representing the parent's voice to the school, boards, minister of education
- Fostering an environment of parent engagement and collaboration
- Maintaining and reflecting the culture of the school
- Focusing on what's best for all students and stakeholders.

(From: <https://www.alberta.ca/school-councils/>)



We are committed to the well-being of our students, staff and community members.

Together, we achieve learning and working environments that are:

- **Safe**
- **Respectful**
- **Ethical**
- **Free from abusive behaviour, harassment and violence in any form.**

Darrel Robertson
Superintendent of Schools

School Council Code of Conduct for Meetings, Focus Groups, etc.

1 Peter 2:17: Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

1. We value and respect your time, which is why we will ensure that the meeting starts promptly as scheduled. We understand that you may have other obligations. Feel free to attend as much of the meeting as you are able to. Additionally, to ensure efficiency, we will strictly adhere to the agenda that will be agreed upon at the start of the meeting.
2. Speak with kindness and humility. To keep everyone on equal ground, there is no need to state your education, job status, experience, church involvement or history with the school, when speaking to a topic.
3. Listen with grace and protect your heart from offense. We strive to create a safe environment where differences can be expressed, and unity is upheld.
4. Try to stay focused. Please turn your cell phones to silent mode. If you need to take a call or send a text, please slip out of the room. We kindly ask that side conversations be kept to a minimum.
5. Let's honour one another by refraining from using names, identifiable factors and ethnicities in discussions.
6. The chair will provide times for discussion and questions. During these times, raise your hand and wait to speak until you are recognized by the chair. Please stay on the topic presented and briefly state your input in 1-2 minutes. To allow everyone to participate fairly, everyone will be given one chance to speak to a topic prior to giving someone additional time and limit speaking twice to an item.
7. Our decisions will be guided by the EPSB & ECS Mission, Vision, Values, Statement of Faith. We will consider the best interests of the school community as a whole.

If anyone is not following these guidelines, they will be asked by the chair/executive to rephrase statements, take a break, or in rare cases, will be dismissed for the remainder of the meeting. If the discussion becomes unproductive, the chair will either recess or bring the discussion to a close.

School Council Meeting Agenda

- Anyone from the School Council can suggest items for the school council meetings. Please email them to the executive at ecns.schoolcouncil@gmail.com. It is suggested that requested agenda items be sent two weeks prior to the executive. The chair/executive will set the meeting agenda and have it reviewed with the principal. Once approved, the agenda items will be posted on the School Zone a minimum of seven days prior to the meeting.
- At the beginning of the meeting, the agenda is accepted, and the meeting will adhere to the established agenda.

School Council Goals

- As we embark on a new academic year, we are committed to setting meaningful goals that will guide our efforts and initiatives. To ensure that we prioritize the areas most important to our school community, we would like to gather your insights and feedback by email (ecns.schoolcouncil@epsb.ca) now until December 20, 2024.

School Council Meeting Order

1. Call to Order, Scripture Reading & Prayer
2. Acknowledge of Members Present
3. Code of conduct reviewed
4. Approval of Meeting Agenda
5. Approval of Previous Minutes (To be uploaded and read ahead of time on School Zone.)
6. School Admin Report Highlight (The full report is to be read ahead of time on School Zone.)
 - Brief discussion: Questions on the report
7. Edmonton Christian Society Board Highlight (Emails and board meeting minutes will be read ahead of time.)
 - Brief discussion: Questions on the report
8. Unfinished business
9. New business
10. Meeting is adjourned

Rules of Order

Objective: To ensure meetings are inclusive, efficient, and productive while respecting cultural differences and neurodiversity.

General Conduct:

1. **Addressing the Chair:** All comments and questions should be directed to the chair. Wait to be recognized before speaking.
2. **Agenda Items:**
 - *Information/Reporting:* Brief feedback or questions are allowed.
 - *Discussion:* Limit your speech to 1-2 minutes per topic, up to 2 times, allowing others a chance to contribute..
3. **Guidelines Enforcement:** The chair or council members may gently remind attendees to adhere to these guidelines. Please understand these reminders are to maintain order.

Decision Making Process:

1. **By Vote:**
 - **Motion Introduction:** A member introduces a motion by saying "I move that..." or similar language. This requires a second to proceed.
 - **Discussion:**
 - The chair restates the motion.
 - The floor opens for discussion, beginning with the motion maker, followed by the seconder.
 - All proposed changes to the proposal or alternative solutions will be voted on at the end of the discussion.
 - The chair, along with the school council, sets a time limit for discussion and decides whether to:
 - Vote immediately.
 - Extend discussion time.
 - Form a focus group or committee for more information and to obtain more of the parents' perspectives.
 - Table the matter for later discussion.
 - **Voting Procedure:**
 - Only parents of students at Edmonton Christian Northeast School may vote.
 - The chair will explain the voting method (e.g., hand raising, secret ballots).
 - Votes are counted by the Vice Chair and Secretary or their delegates.

2. **By Consensus:**

- **Introduction:** An executive or council member presents the decision for consensus.
- **Discussion:** Open floor for comments and questions.
- **Summary:** The chair summarizes the discussion and any necessary adjustments.
- **Agreement:** If general consensus is achieved, the decision is recorded in the minutes.

Decisions made by school council:

- **Elections:** At the beginning of each school year, parents vote for the School Council Executive (Chair, Vice-Chair/Financial Administrator, Secretary). These positions are reserved for parents not affiliated with ECNS or ECS staff or board to avoid conflict of interest.
- **Governance Review:** Annually, the governance rules and guidelines are reviewed and potentially revised at the first meeting of the new executive.
- **Financial Decisions:** The council decides on the allocation of council funds.
- **Advisory Role:** The council advises ECNS, ECS, and EPSB on educational matters, providing parental perspective. The final decisions are made by the leadership of ECNS, ECS and EPSB.

Quorum & Voting Rights:

- **Quorum:** At least 5 parents must be present to conduct a vote.
- **Voting:** Only parents from Edmonton Christian Northeast School can vote.
(Note: Preschool families are under ECS leadership.)

Conflict of Interest:

- **Staff-Parents:** Parents who are also staff must declare their role at the meeting (either attending as a parent or staff). They need to stay within their role for that meeting and cannot vote on decisions directly affecting them (e.g., staff appreciation events).
- **Executive Neutrality:** The executive's stance is one of neutrality, unless the circumstances call for a secret ballot or a tie-breaking vote.

2024-25 School Council Meetings and locations

Tentative dates/locations:

January 16th, February 10th, March 13th, April 14th, May 15th (online only), and June 9th

(Please note: We will strive to honor these dates and give ample notice if a change in date/location is needed.)

Minutes:

- Meeting minutes will be taken by the secretary. The minutes will include: date, location, school council members present, summary of discussions, motions/decisions, items tabled, etc. Any handouts, presentation notes, references will be included in the notes. The number of pages will also be listed.
- The secretary will have the minutes reviewed by the executive and school admin, then uploaded to SchoolZone one week prior to the next school council meeting.
- During the next school council meeting, the minutes will need to be accepted.
- Once minutes are approved, a copy of the meeting minutes will also be uploaded on to <https://www.edmchristian.org/schools/ecsne/>
- A hardcopy will be kept at the school in the School Council Meeting Binder in the office.
- School Council Meeting Minutes will be kept for a minimum of 7 years.

School Council Funds

- The School Council's role is not fundraising and it is prohibited to raise funds that would require a gaming license under the Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Act.
- School Council receives funds from Hot lunches and the Alberta School Council Engagement Grant (\$500).
<https://www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca/public/download/files/231419>
- School Council Funds must be decided in school council meetings with a majority vote. Then in an email to the ECS Financial Administrator, the vice chair will authorize to delegate certain funds mentioning: amount, purpose, where it is going/being paid. The vice chair will cc the chair and it will be confirmed.

Duty to Report to the board

- The chair will complete a Duty to Report to the Edmonton Public School board, which will include a summary of activities, handling and use of money of the school year.
Due: September 30, 2025

Communication

- ecns.schoolcouncil@gmail.com This email is only accessed by the School Council Executive and access is protected with multi factor authentication. Items brought to the school/boards will be referred to as parent, community member or staff, unless permission has been granted by the sender or a Duty to Report (report of abuse.) Emails will be deleted at the end of the school year.
- Under PIPA
https://www.epsb.ca/media/epsb/schools/getinvolved/schoolcouncil/PIPA_SchoolCouncilsFundraisingSocieties_Flyer.pdf
Parents need to complete a PIPA form for the School Council every year. It was sent by the school admin in the youngest child's school agenda near the beginning of the year. Additional forms are made available in the school office, School Zone and at School Council meetings. This information will be only used for the purposes of the school council which includes: communication of upcoming meetings/school council events, invitation to share your voice in surveys/focus groups and any other school council activities. With the exception of PIPA forms will be kept at the school and will be shredded at the end of the school year. An excel spreadsheet of the list of parents will also be deleted by the last day of school.
- Discussions with the school council executive and within meetings will be kept to matters that are about the full school. Other items will be redirected to the appropriate channels (e.g. teachers, principal, board, etc.)
- Communication will be solution focused. School council will not be a place for doctrine debates, complaining or for discussing personal manners.
- At times, surveys, focus groups, committees may be used to gather more information on discussions and increase the school community's participation.

ECNS School Council Guidelines 2024-2025 have been accepted on: November 18, 2024. The guidelines are to be reviewed and/or amended annually by school council.