



# CHILLIWACK TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

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## STAFF COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

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FIRST EDITION





## Role of the Staff Committee

Staff committees can impact decisions made in a school. It is a wonderful vehicle for teachers to have real input into how their school is run! For example, the staff committee may study and make recommendations on:

### **School regulations, policies and routines**

- Dress codes
- Discipline plans and procedures
- Assemblies
- Attendance
- Parent teacher days
- Field trips
- Collection of money etc.



### **Non-instructional days**

- Working with ProD committee to suggest and plan content for school based days
- Working with ProD committee to suggest a plan content for after school collab

### **School curriculum planning and evaluation**

- Course offerings
- Fine arts events involving the community
- Evaluation/reporting formats and schedule
- School calendar etc



### **School timetable and organization**

- Teaching assignments
- Utilization of EAs
- Organization of split classes or new courses etc

### **Any issue affecting the teaching or learning conditions within the school**

- Internal transfer of students
- Initial placement of students
- Staff and administration communication and relationship
- School climate
- Wider community or neighbourhood issues to bring to the attention of staff and admin



## ARTICLE A.27 SCHOOL STAFF COMMITTEES

1. The Board and the CTA encourage each school to develop committees to foster communication and collegiality among teachers and Administrators through discussion of issues relevant to the teaching staff.
2. Each school has the right to establish a recognized staff committee.
3. Staff committee size, quorum and membership shall be determined by the staff.
4. Proposals made by school staff committees shall be considered by the school administration.
5. Should the school administration choose not to implement a proposal of the staff committee, the school administration will, when requested, advise the staff committee of the reasons. The administration's response is not subject to the grievance/arbitration process.

## How can I make a change in policy at my school?

### Process at a Glance

#### Step 1

The Staff or a teacher identify an issue

#### Step 2

The item is placed on the staff committee agenda

#### Step 3

The staff committee discusses the issue and makes a recommendation to the whole staff and/or administration

#### Step 4 (Optional)

The whole staff considers and votes on the recommendations

#### Step 5

Administrator accepts and acts on the recommendation or responds to the staff committee if unwilling to comply with the staff's recommendation

If the issue or non-action is perceived to be in violation of the Collective Agreement, it should be referred to the Staff Rep who will contact the CTA. The CTA will assess the situation and may file a grievance according to A.6 of the Collective Agreement.

The teacher is there too, to present the idea!



# FAQs

## **What are some tips to help things run?**

Think of it as a monthly process. Here's a typical month for the staff committee chair:

- It is not recommended that the Staff Committee Chair Person be the Staff Rep
- Plan to have your staff committee meeting a week or so before the Staff Meeting. You could set up a year-long schedule for regular meetings if that works for your school. Special meetings on urgent issues can also take place.
- Mid-month, send an email to all staff to ask for agenda items. When items come in, create the agenda, and circulate the proposed agenda a few days before the planned meeting. This may generate more items, as people are reminded of the upcoming meeting! If appropriate, add the new items and circulate the adjusted agenda. It is important that all staff know what will be discussed, as items may pertain to them and they may want to come and speak on these issues.
- It is important to notify people who should be at the meeting if an agenda item will affect them personally. For example, if an agenda item is about something happening at the library, make sure the librarian is informed about it so they can attend! Hold the meeting. Have someone appointed to take minutes, and to forward them to the chair as soon as possible after the meeting for distribution to the whole staff.
- Email the minutes to the whole staff, and also prepare to present the recommendations at the Staff meeting or to the administrator.
- (Optional) Present any motions passed (or defeated) at your staff committee meeting to the general staff meeting for their consideration and vote. The staff committee chair should facilitate the discussion on these items at the staff meeting.

## Who should be on the Staff Committee?

- Some schools already have a constitution established, and you can ask your Staff Rep for a copy of it. The constitution might stipulate that different departments, grades, or school roles should be represented. If it seems like it should be changed, constitutions can also be amended by your staff to better suit your school's needs going forward!

- If your school doesn't have a staff committee constitution, see a couple of example ones in this package.

- Since having a staff committee is our right established through negotiations between the Employer and the CTA, CUPE workers (secretarial staff, EAs, custodial staff, Youth Care workers etc) should not be official members with a vote on the committee, but it can be very helpful to have them present at meetings, especially if they have in issue to bring forward, or an issue you are discussing involves their work or expertise.

## I don't know how to chair a meeting! How do I do it?

Different schools do things different ways and that is OK, but some formality does tend to speed up meetings, once people get the hang of it. See our tips sheet on the next page for some basic rules of order to help you!

Most basically, the chair will keep a speaker's list during the meeting, which means maintain a list during the meeting of who has indicated they want to speak (by raising their hand) and letting people speak in turn. This helps different voices be heard so all sides of an issue can be discussed. It also prevents someone from dominating or interrupting the discussion.

Some staff committees have a discussion about an issue first, and then vote on a motion that captures the idea, and others have motions proposed first, followed by debate, discussion and then voting. The important thing is that if you have arrived at a decision, make sure it is articulated and recorded and voted upon by the members of the committee, so everyone is clear on what the committee is taking forward to the whole staff meeting and/or administrator.

The chair should **not** also be trying to take minutes. They may want to write down the wording of motions, but it is too difficult to do both chairing and minutes -taking at the same time! Ask for a member of the committee to be the regular recording secretary.



## Some of the Basic Rules of Order

(primer for committees)

**Motion:** A main motion brings business before a meeting. A meeting can consider only one subject at a time so a main motion can be made only when no other motion is pending. The meeting cannot consider any other business until the motion has been disposed of (or some other motion of higher precedence has been proposed, seconded, and accepted by the chair.)

**Amendment:** A motion to change, to add words to, or to omit words from, an original motion - usually to clarify or improve the wording of the original motion. (There is a long tradition of not allowing amendments that are contrary to the intent of the motion.)

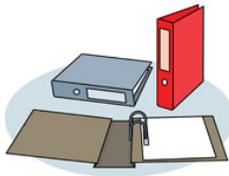
**Amendment to the amendment:** A motion to change, to add words to, or to omit words from, the first amendment. (There cannot be an amendment to the amendment to the amendment.)

**Challenge the Chair:** Any ruling of the chair can be challenged, but such appeals must be made immediately after the ruling. If debate has progressed, a challenge is not in order.

**Refer:** If a motion needs to be discussed more informally or at greater length than is possible in a regular meeting, Robert's Rules allows you to refer the motion (usually to a specific committee). Both sides of the issue must have been heard for this motion to be in order.

**Table:** A motion to set aside consideration of the main motion; it has the effect of delaying or preventing action from being taken on the main motion. Rather than passing or defeating a motion, a meeting may choose to 'bury' it by tabling. A motion to table is not debatable, so if someone moves to table a motion, the vote to do so (or not) takes place immediately.

**Postpone:** A motion to postpone to a certain time (or postpone indefinitely) allows for limited debate which must not go into the merits of the main question any more than is necessary to enable the meeting to determine the propriety of the postponement. It may only be amended as to the time of postponement.



**\*Use the level of formality with which your staff is comfortable.**

### I move that we:

Adopt... (the agenda and/or the minutes from meeting dated \_\_\_\_\_)

Amend...(agenda/minutes/motion)

Recommend...(something—to another body - admin, dept, CTA Reps, etc.)

Put the question...(ie vote now/stop debating)

Table the motion...(it disappears; no record of it)

Refer the motion...(to the next meeting or another specified meeting)

**NOTE:** Record in the minutes who the mover/seconded was, and if it carried or was defeated.

## Sample Staff Committee Minutes

Date:

Time Start:

Chair:

Recording Secretary:

Members in attendance:

Members absent with regrets:

1. Motion to accept the agenda

Motions: Moved by \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ Carried/Defeated

2. Business Items

Motions: Moved by \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ Carried/Defeated

3. Old Unfinished Business

Motions: Moved by \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ Carried/Defeated

4. Motion to adjourn

Motions: Moved by \_\_\_\_\_ Seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ Carried/Defeated

## Sample Staff Committee Operational Procedures (Constitution)

Chairperson, Vice Chair Person/Secretary, Other Staff

- Staff Committee will operate within the guidelines of the School Act, School Board Policies and the CTA Collective Agreement A.27
- The size, composition, tenure and operational procedures of the staff committee shall be determined by a majority vote of the school staff by September 30th of each school year
- Meetings are open to all teaching staff and all may participate in the business of the day, but only the committee members present will be able to vote on motions
- The School Staff Committee will foster the values, attitudes, and skills for an enlightened, reasonable and democratic process in decision-making
- Each member of the staff committee will have one vote on any recommendations
- Members who raise items or tender motions for staff committee must be in attendance to present the item/motion
- The chairperson will ensure staff committee minutes are distributed to the teaching staff via email
- A staff committee agenda form will be kept by the chairperson for staff to record motions and additions can be made up to two days prior to the staff committee meeting

## Areas of Responsibility (Constitution)

### The Role of staff committee includes the following:

- Development and maintenance of communication and consultative processes throughout the school;
- Review school policies and procedures and the development of recommendations for improvement;
- Receiving and making recommendations on matters of concern presented by staff;
- Ensuring the development and maintenance of a professional development committee for the school;
- Ensuring the establishment and maintenance of a health & safety committee for the school.

### Implementation:

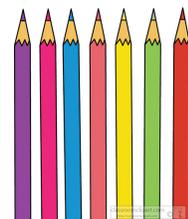
- The principal should not unreasonably refuse to implement the recommendations of the staff committee or the majority decisions of a staff meeting;
- In a case where a principal rejects a recommendation of a staff committee or a majority decision of a staff meeting, the principal will submit the reasons for rejection, preferably in writing, to the staff committee.

### Individual Rights:

- In the event that a Chilliwack Teachers' Association member feels that a staff committee or staff meeting decision is contrary to the Collective Agreement, the School Act and/or School Act Regulations, then advice will be sought from the CTA.

### General Procedures:

- Meetings will be held once a month, in the week preceding the monthly staff meeting;
- The Simplified Robert's Rules of Order, when necessary, will govern meetings;
- If the agenda necessitates more time then the committee members will vote on an extension;
- A quorum is determined by the staff committee;
- The Chair and one other staff committee member can set an unscheduled or emergency meeting. All reasonable efforts will be made to schedule the emergency meeting for a time and place such that all members can attend.
- "Old Unfinished Business" will be an automatic agenda item.



## Sample Secondary School Staff Committee (Constitution/Procedures)

### Statement of Purpose:

The purpose of the Staff Committee structure is to promote and facilitate a democratic, collegial process in school-based decision making.

### 1. Composition

Staff Committee consists of eleven voting members:

9 teachers (elected by staff each September; one will be the Staff Rep)

Quorum: A majority of members (6) with one being the chair (or chair-appointed designate), must be in attendance before a Staff Committee meeting can commence.

### 2. Procedures

- There should be at least one meeting each month
- Minutes of the previous meetings and the agenda of the upcoming meeting will be distributed by the Chair at least two school days prior to each meeting
- A staff member with a concern or issue will submit this item to the Staff Committee Chair to be added to the agenda.
- In order for an item to be considered, this individual, or a representative, must be present at the Staff Committee meeting.
- Any staff member may attend a meeting and speak to questions on the floor, but voting is restricted to elected members
- The Chair may call an emergency meeting if an issue must be dealt with in a timely manner
- The Chair has the discretion to determine if it is an emergency issue. Should an emergency issue arise after the agenda for an upcoming meeting has been distributed, the Chair will make every effort to communicate this item to staff. If possible, the item should be referred to the next scheduled meeting.

### 3. Responsibilities

- To represent the staff at large
- To receive and make recommendations
- To advise and assist the administration in the solution of specific problems
- To develop and maintain effective communication and consultation throughout the school
- To review school policies and procedures and develop recommendations for improvement

### 4. Decision-making

- Significant Staff Committee motions/recommendations/decisions will be presented to the staff as a whole at staff meetings to be discussed and voted on by the whole staff.
- The principal shall not unreasonably refuse to implement the recommendations (decisions) of a Staff Committee or the majority vote of the staff.
- In the case where a Principal rejects a recommendation (decision) of the Staff Committee or a majority vote of the staff, the principal will submit in writing the reason for rejection to the Staff Committee

### 5. Duties of Chair and Secretary

- The Staff Committee Chair calls all meetings and accepts motions in accordance with the BCTF Simplified Rules of Order (1984). They are also responsible for reporting committee activities to the staff.