

# Ardmore School Council and Ardmore Parent Advisory Association

## ***Manual for parents, teachers and community members***

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*This document provides information regarding:*

Ardmore School Council and Ardmore Parent Advisory Overview and Mission Statements

School Council Code of Ethics and School Council Code of Conduct

Roles & Responsibilities of School Council and School Council members

Meeting Operating Procedures

Month by Month Overview of Events and Procedures

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Ardmore School phone number: 780.826.5144

Ardmore School website: <http://ardmoreschool.ca/>

Principal Ken Wiens' email address: [ken.wiens@nlsd.ab.ca](mailto:ken.wiens@nlsd.ab.ca)

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Facebook group page: search Facebook for the 'Ardmore School Council / Parent Advisory Association'

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For information about the Ardmore School Council/Parent Advisory Association visit **[ardmoreschool.ca](http://ardmoreschool.ca)**

For information about the Northern Lights School Division visit: **[nlsd.ab.ca](http://nlsd.ab.ca)**

For information about Alberta Education visit **[education.alberta.ca](http://education.alberta.ca)**

For information about the Alberta School Council Association visit **[albertaschoolcouncils.ca](http://albertaschoolcouncils.ca)**

For information about the Alberta Liquor and Gaming Commission visit: **[aglc.ca](http://aglc.ca)**

# **Ardmore School Council and Parent Advisory Overview and Mission Statements**

## **Two Groups - Two Meetings - One Night**

Although they are held on the same night and the executive volunteers for both groups are the same people, the monthly meeting is divided into two as each group serves a specific purpose:

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**First**, we hold a meeting for the **Ardmore School Council**. The council *is not* a forum for individual grievances better communicated to your child's teacher or principal. Rather, meetings are an opportunity for parents to be directly involved in their child's education, to be informed of current issues within the school, and to participate in improving your child's learning environment. A wide range of issues are discussed at these meetings such as school policies, student education and events, health, safety etc.

**Our mission as the Ardmore School Council is to work together to promote the well being and effectiveness of the entire school community. We do this by facilitating cooperation among all the concerned participants in our school. We do this so that our children's education will be enhanced.**

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**Then**, we hold a meeting for the **Ardmore Parent Advisory Association** is a registered society, (*not a registered charity*). It is a fundraising association. Funds are raised with two large events: the Ardmore Duck Race and Fort McMurray Boomtown Casinos. Thousands of dollars have been raised by many parent and community volunteers. The proceeds have been used for things such as transportation, gym equipment, choir, band and sports uniforms, library resources and furniture, technology, display cases, playground upgrades and cultural experiences for students.

**Our mission as the Ardmore Parent Advisory Association is to enhance the learning environment of our school and support learning opportunities for students. We do this by organizing fundraising events. Namely, the Ardmore Duck Race and Fort McMurray Boomtown Casinos. We do this so that our children's education will be enhanced.**

## **CODE OF ETHICS**

As a school council, advocating for student achievement and school improvement in Ardmore School, we shall strive to:

- Know the legislation that governs school council
- Be guided by the mission statement of the school and the school council
- Endeavor to be familiar with school policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them
- Practice the highest standards of honesty, accuracy and integrity
- Adhere to democratic principles and the operating principles of the School Council
- Foster a positive atmosphere in which individual contributions are welcomed and valued
- Consider the best interests of all students in decisions and deliberations
- Respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on issues discussed at school council. Confidential information should not be discussed at school council.
- Limit discussions at school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole
- Accept accountability for school council decisions
- Recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community
- Use the appropriate communication channels when questions or concerns arise
- Declare any conflict of interest
- Accept no payment for school council activities

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## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

As a member of the Ardmore school council, I will:

- Devote time, thought and study to the role and responsibilities of a school council member so I can provide effective service to my school council
- Be familiar with school council policies and operating principles
- Work with my fellow members in a spirit of harmony, cooperation and respect, even when differences of opinion arise
- Promote positive and collaborative relationships on school council, and between council and the greater school community
- Encourage parent participation in school council
- Work with fellow school council members to support the goals of our school's education and improvement plans
- Assist the school council to excel in all of its efforts and undertakings
- Act as an advocate for excellence in education at the school and community levels
- Declare any conflict of interest
- Never disclose confidential information I may have privy to through my involvement at the school
- Use appropriate communication channels to address concerns

## School Council's Roles

Our school council is a vehicle to support meaningful parental involvement in decisions that affect the school and its operations. School council provides the venue for parents to reflect the wishes of the broader community for the education of its students and to actively participate in giving advice and support to the principal in the operations of the school.

### **The actual decision-making authority of the school council is limited to:**

- a) setting policies to govern school council activities at the school level, as described in the *School Act*,
- b) planning support activities that align with school council's purpose and
- c) choosing which advice to provide the principal and board on areas that specifically fall to them.

### **Other school council functions may include:**

- consulting with the principal so he or she can ensure students have opportunities to meet Ministry standards, fiscal management is sound and the community's expectations are taken into consideration during school-based planning
- advising the principal and the school board
- being involved in school-based planning
- sharing ideas and information with other school councils and provincial organizations
- communicating information to the school community and other school councils
- setting policies that relate to school council functions, such as:
  - location of school council meetings
  - mailing address for school council correspondence
  - school council orientation and development policy
  - financial policy
  - fundraising policy
  - communications policy
  - privacy policy
  - minutes of school council meetings
  - pertinent information unique to the school council

### **School council plays a decision-making role in its own operations by:**

- deciding on which matters to advise
- creating operating procedures to carry out its functions, which may be in the form of by-laws/operating procedures
- developing operational policies in the school that are considered necessary to carry out its functions, with the support of the principal
- choosing goals, setting plans and organizing activities to support the school council's purpose
- deciding how to allocate undesignated school council funds.

### **School council may, at its discretion, advise the principal on any matter relating to the school.**

*Some of the more common topics for discussion include:*

- school's overall mission, philosophy, policies, rules and goals
- school's improvement planning, including three-year plans
- school jurisdiction policies (e.g., school fees, school council policies)
- school budget
- school volunteers
- provincial achievement test results and diploma exam results
- guidelines and principles for the school resource allocations
- fundraising
- in-service and/or information needs of school council members
- school policy on use of facilities by the larger community
- facility renovations
- ways of reporting student achievement results to parents and public
- methods of communicating with the public
- promotion of the school in the community
- programs offered in the school
- extracurricular activities offered in the school
- student attendance procedures, standards of student conduct and bullying issues
- services for students to help improve learning, such as:
  - assistance from reading specialists and guidance counsellors
- school calendar and adjustments in school hours
- Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) projects
- graduation and other school celebrations.

## School Council's Roles continued...

**School council may, at its discretion, advise the school board on any matter relating to the school.**

*Typical topics include:*

- jurisdiction's three-year plan
- school jurisdiction budget
- fundraising issues and methods of generating additional revenue
- school council policies
- jurisdiction-wide programming priorities
- school infrastructure priorities
- safety issues that affect students/schools in the jurisdiction
- advocacy for students, parents and public education
- transportation issues
- suggested criteria for hiring a school principal.

**There are a number of ways to approach the board or charter board, including:**

- Elect a representative to attend board meetings and report back to the school council.
- Invite your trustee or charter board member to attend all or specific meetings and present a report.
- Write letters to your trustee, board member or chairperson.
- Provide your trustee with school council reports and/or minutes of meetings.

School councils may also come together to advise the Minister of Education on matters that pertain to provincial educational policy and directions. When advice with the potential to affect change in schools across the province is given, it becomes advocacy. This form of advising or advocacy can be undertaken through a government recognized provincial association that represents the voice of parents in public education; e.g., the Alberta School Councils' Association (A.S.C.A.). Responsibilities

## School Council's Responsibilities

School council members are responsible for creating a culture of respect and collaboration, especially with respect to the roles of staff and volunteers, the skills, knowledge and time contributed by school council members and individual family structures and values.

**School council must decide how to fulfill this responsibility in the school community through activities, such as:**

- seeking the views of the school community  
(e.g., through questionnaires, informal discussions, topic-specific meetings)
- representing the views of the school community actively and accurately  
(e.g., through consulting as widely as possible with parents, teachers, students and community before making major decisions or providing conclusive advice to the principal or board)
- informing the school community of things, such as meetings, committee work, news and surveys  
(e.g., through newsletters, bulletin boards, e-mails)
- involving the school community (e.g., by inviting, supporting, including)
- encouraging and promoting parental involvement and support  
(e.g., by publicizing opportunities for ways to get involved, not just council meetings)
- becoming well informed (e.g., by asking questions, reading, critically examining what is presented)
- focusing on the best interests of all students (e.g., by considering a wide variety of students and families when making decisions and formulating advice)
- becoming familiar with the policies of the local school board and understanding how they impact the school community
- maintaining high ethical standards and setting ground rules of respect for meetings  
(e.g., adopting a code of ethics for school council members).

# School Council Member Roles and Responsibilities

## Chair

It is expected that the school council chairperson will be a parent of a student attending the school. The chair should be someone who can work collaboratively and knows how to organize both programs and people. The chair should actively encourage others to become involved in meaningful ways.

The chair's role is key to the success of the school council. One important responsibility is regular and ongoing communication with the school principal. This relationship of mutual trust and respect must be nurtured, being mindful of common goals for the learning community.

### *Chairing duties include:*

- calling regular school council meetings
  - preparing agendas for school council meetings
    - request that members submit agenda items via email, newsletter and Facebook group page before setting agenda
    - email agenda to all members before meeting and post online and at school before meeting
    - fax agenda to community rep. Bob Deresh @ 780.826.4990 at least one day prior to meeting
  - distributing mail (located in staff room) at monthly meetings to appropriate members
  - chairing and maintaining meeting decorum
  - ensuring that minutes are recorded and maintained
  - ensuring that motions carried are followed through on
  - communicating with the principal on a regular basis
  - ensuring there is regular communication with the school community, beyond those who attend meetings
  - following existing school council by-laws/operating procedures
  - ensuring roles and responsibilities are clearly defined
  - soliciting input from all members
  - staying informed about school board policy that impacts school council
  - striving to ensure the diversity of the school community is represented on school council
  - promoting teamwork between the school council, principal and staff
  - leading a school council self-evaluation (e.g., completing the annual report to the school board).
- \* *The chairperson does not vote on motions. They are the deciding vote in the event of a tie.*

## Vice-chair

- chair meetings, in the event the chair is unavailable
- work with and support the chair in agenda preparation
- promote teamwork and assist the chair in the smooth running of the meetings
- keep informed of relevant school and school board policies
- prepare to assume the responsibility of chairperson in the future

## Secretary

- act as a recorder at each meeting and ensure the minutes accurately reflect the directions agreed to at the school council meeting
- keep minutes, correspondence, records and other school council documents filed in an orderly fashion and publicly accessible (in council filing cabinet in staff room)
- forward minutes to school principal, administrative assistant and council chair upon completion
- have a working knowledge of the operating procedures of the school council
- ensure notice of meetings and other school council events is distributed

## Treasurers

- handle all payments and deposits
- keep accurate records of all transactions (using accounting program on laptop)
- report to the school council on the receipt and expenditure of funds, plus note balance minus earmarked funds
- ensure that records are available, upon request of the school board
- assist fundraising chair in managing donations and filing financial report to Alberta Registries for Duck Race (*Duck Race treasurer*)
- manage communication and reporting to Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission re: casino (*casino treasurer*)
- be aware of Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission's policies regarding approved uses of funds: [www.aglc.ca](http://www.aglc.ca)
- prepare Ardmore Parent Advisory Association's financial reports for annual return

\* *A.P.A.A. is a non-profit organization registered under the Societies Act in Alberta. Each year, Alberta registries mails us paperwork instructing us to file an annual return, which includes a copy of the financial statements. If you are not familiar with these filing requirements, it is important that you obtain the services of a professional accountant to meet the filing requirements.*

**A note on bank accounts:**

There are three bank accounts. One is the A.P.A.A. Casino account. This is handled by the Casino treasurer. The other two accounts are handled by the A.P.A.A./Duck Race treasurer. The Duck Race account is strictly for funds raised and expenditures incurred by the Duck Race itself and Duck Race onsite raffle. These funds are accountable to Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission rules. The A.P.A.A. account is for funds raised through donations (ex. cash donations from individuals to Duck Race) and non-gaming related fundraisers. This money is not accountable to A.G.L.C., therefore can be used for whatever purposes School Council sees fit, (as long as the purposes fit within our mandate/ethics as a council).

**Principal's Roles and Responsibilities**

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. The principal implements the policies of Alberta Education and the local school board, ensures instruction is consistent with the *Programs of Study*, ensures the standards of education are met, evaluates the programs, maintains order and discipline within the school, evaluates and supervises teachers and supervises the evaluation and advancement of students.

*On school council, the principal:*

- promotes cooperation between the school and the community it serves
- seeks input from parents and community on major decisions that affect the school
- establishes, facilitates, communicates and encourages opportunities for parent and community involvement in school matters
- encourages and supports the formation and continuous improvement of school council
- interprets and shares results of provincial achievement tests and diploma exams
- shares information about the school community
- provides information on the programs in the school and the needs of the students
- refers school council to the appropriate resource for information on laws, regulations and policies that affect school council
- provides an opportunity for the school council to provide input into the school's education plan.

**Parents' Roles and Responsibilities** Parents form the majority of the members of school council.

*Parents are key members of school council who:*

- operate with a philosophy that enhances the team approach to education and community development, viewing the school and the family as a working team
- share their professional knowledge, expertise and life experience with other school council members
- encourage feedback and participation from community groups and individuals
- keep current on community events
- communicate information of interest to the school council and the school community
- share information from school council meetings with the community
- have a clear understanding of the school council's goals
- maintain flexibility while planning to achieve goals
- respect confidentiality
- contact other school councils for support and information
- attend school council meetings
- identify topics for agendas
- work toward building a positive consensus within the school environment
- make recommendations for and attend training sessions on school council effectiveness
- create an inviting school council environment

**Teacher(s)' Roles and Responsibilities** Each school council must have at least one teacher representative.

*The teacher on school council:*

- promotes a collaborative, collegial model of decision making at the school and for the school council
- provides support for the decisions of the school council
- shares professional knowledge with other school council members
- encourages parents and community members to become involved in school activities
- shares school council activities and information with other staff, parents and community members
- follows the code of ethics and professional protocols set out by the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA)
- represents the teachers' perspective.

**Community Member Roles and Responsibilities**

School councils are encouraged to have a community member attend meetings. The community representative can play a strong role in bringing the community perspective into the school. The member helps the school and school council build partnerships with the larger community and, in many instances, acts as a resource to promote cooperative ventures between community and school to enhance student learning.

## Meeting Procedures

*At the first school council meeting:*

Ask the participants for phone numbers, addresses and e-mail addresses, and inform them about how information will be used and with whom it will be shared. Distribute the contact list to executive and key members (subject to the Personal Information Protection Act).

*At every meeting:*

- secretary circulates a sign in sheet for attendees in order to report in the minutes who was in attendance
- distribute agenda and minutes from last meeting
- note the start and end time of each meeting
- hold Ardmore School Council meeting 1st, A.P.A.A. meeting 2nd
- facilitate introduction of non-regular members and explain procedures and purpose of each meeting
- review the minutes from the previous meeting
- review and allow attendees to add items to be added to the agenda
- attending members may put forward a motion. A member does so by stating 'I move that/to...'. Motions need to be seconded by another member, then voted upon
- voting is done town hall style: any member attending can vote; all motions must be agreed upon by the majority of attending members to pass. *\*The chairperson does not vote on motions. They are the deciding vote in the event of a tie.*
- secretary records all tasks, action and spending motions and ensures there is a person assigned to completing them
- secretary ensures all spending motions define which bank account and license number to use
- all members make note of any tasks they are required to complete before the next meeting
- meeting of next meeting is confirmed

*Before/After every meeting:*

- secretary types up minutes then forwards them to chair, school administrative assistant and principal
- principal posts minutes on school website
- chair sets and distributes agenda (email) for next meeting approximately one week prior to meeting
- chair posts agenda and minutes on bulletin board and Facebook group page
- members follow through on assigned tasks

## Decisions Made Outside of Meetings

Motions can be made outside of a meeting, if need arises, and ratified at the next meeting.

This can occur, for example, when the principal requests that A.P.A.A. fund a specific item or event.

In order for A.P.A.A. to approve a motion, in particular a spending motion outside of a meeting:

- 1) the treasurer must confirm that funds are available
- 2) all executive and participating members must be notified of the issue
- 2) all executive members, minus the chair, must agree on the issue
- 4) the motion must be ratified at the next meeting



## Month by Month Overview of Events and Procedures

This is a to-do guide as well as an overview of issues typically discussed and items or events that have been supported in the past.

### September

#### *Inform Parents and Request Information*

- publish AGM meeting time and date, description of school council & A.P.P.A., description of volunteers required, a 'Permission to Contact Parents' form, how to add an item to the agenda etc in first newsletter, on school website and Facebook group page
- print and distribute 'School Council Meeting Tonight' stickers to staff for use in primary grade agendas

#### *Plan Barbeque \*optional*

A barbeque has been hosted by the School Council/A.P.A.A. in the past, coinciding with 'Meet the Teacher night, followed by the A.G.M. To prepare: advertise b.b.q.; have school council/A.P.A.A. information ready to distribute to parents who attend.

*Volunteer needs to purchase 200 burgers, buns, drinks + condiments*

#### *Set the Agenda*

Last year's chair will create the agenda for the first meeting. Normally, the agenda is set through collaborative efforts between the principal and chairperson. The first, or Annual General Meeting is not only to elect the executive for the year, but to discuss other relevant topics. The agenda for the first meeting should review the relevant legislation, allow discussion of the work of school council and help set the focus for the coming year. *Suggested topics for the first meeting include:*

- review of the legislation, by-laws or operating procedures
- review of the governance model used in previous years, including how decisions are made
- rules of order that the school council will use throughout the year, including voting procedures
- roles and responsibilities of school councils, council members, principals, teachers and school board
- mission, vision and code of ethics for school council or school
- school council's previous year's report to the school board
- school council's three-year plan and activities
- potential school council committees and their responsibilities
- potential events hosted by school council or A.P.A.A.
- minutes of the last school council meeting
- items tabled from previous school year

#### *Hold Annual General Meeting*

At the first/annual general council meeting, the prior year's chair will ask for nominations or volunteers for the following positions:

Chair

Vice chair

Secretary

Treasurer (x2)

- Duck Race and School Council accounts

- Casino account

Classroom Representatives - *optional*

Fundraising Committee Chair(s)

- Duck Race Chair

- Casino Chair

Concession/Healthy Eating/Hot Lunch Committee Chair

- Vote on, and record in the minutes, which three members will have signing authority on the bank accounts, *ex. chair & both treasurers, or chair, vice chair and respective treasurer.* Two members with signing authority must sign all cheques.
- Make motion to cover cost of transportation, if it was discussed and agreed upon in June.

#### *Follow-Up for Annual General Meeting*

- Secretary: Distribute school council contact list to all members.
- Signing Authority: If there are new treasurers/changes in who will have signing authority on the bank accounts, submit a list of the elected executive with address and contact information, plus a copy of September's minutes, signed by selected signing authorities, to the banks soon after the A.G.M.. Secretary and selected signing authorities will be required to sign paperwork at banks.

## **October**

- Review school budget and Annual Education Results.
- Discuss, motion for and schedule any events or information sessions for the year.  
ex. A.S.C.A. courses for council members, lice information session pancake breakfasts, movie nights etc.
- Motion to host an evening drug information session for parents, and to provide food (ex. tray of pitas + drinks) for event.  
Session can be conducted by police officer or Alberta Health/Addictions (594-7556)  
*Funds should come out of A.P.A.A. (not Duck Race or Casino) account. School Council member typically purchases and delivers food.*
- Motion to purchase food (ex. fruit & veggie trays) for teachers for parent teacher interviews in November.  
*Funds should come out of A.P.A.A. (not Duck Race or Casino) account. School Council member typically purchases and delivers food.*

## **November**

- Host drug awareness session for parents, if members voted to do so in October.
- Bring a friend to school council month! Each executive and regular attending member is encouraged to bring a parent (who doesn't usually attend) to this month's meeting.
- Christmas Candy: Motion to pay for candy for Santa to hand out after Christmas Concert.  
*Funds should come out of A.P.A.A. (not Duck Race or Casino) account. School Council member typically purchases and delivers candy.*
- Duck Race: \* *Must have someone willing to be the Duck Race chair.*  
Motion to have it, if choosing to do so and what to fundraise for.  
Advertise for volunteers so preparations can begin in January.  
*See 'Duck Race Bible' binder for more information.*
- Purchase and deliver food for teachers on parent-teacher interview day.

## **December** \* No meeting.

- Purchase and deliver candy to school for Santa.

## **January**

- Duck Race preparations begin. *See 'Duck Race Bible' binder for more information.*
- Grade 9 students typically request funding from Ardmore Parent Advisory Association for farewell field trip.  
*Members have supported students in the past with requests under \$1000.00.*

## **February**

- Discussions re: grade 9 in Ardmore for next school year usually arise at this time.
- Discuss attending the Alberta School Council Association Conference in April. *School Council chair has attended in the past.*
- Make motion to purchase food (ex. fruit & veggie trays) for teachers for parent teacher interviews in March.  
*Funds should come out of A.P.A.A. (not Duck Race or Casino) account. School Council member typically purchases and delivers food.*

## **March**

- Purchase and deliver food for teachers on parent-teacher interview day.

## **April**

- Alberta School Council Association AGM & Conference report, if chair or other council members have attended.

**May** \* Last month for spending motions!

- Make motion to purchase watermelon for Sports Day in June.  
*Funds should come out of A.P.A.A. (not Duck Race or Casino) account. School Council member typically purchases and delivers food.*
- Make a motion to donate \$250 to Ardmore Fire Department for their annual help with Duck Race to be presented to them on Duck Race day. *Funds should come out of A.P.A.A. (not Duck Race or Casino) account.*
- Make a motion to purchase gift for any retiring staff member. *Funds should come out of A.P.A.A. (not Duck Race or Casino) account.*

**June** \* No spending motions!

- Purchase and deliver watermelons for Sports Day.
- School Council Summary Report: Chair writes a description of council's activities and achievements for the school year.  
*Send copy to the N.L.S.D. board. Post copies on school website, bulliten board and upload to council's Facebook group page.*
- Final Duck Race report. Duck Race business should be wrapped up for the year.
- Discuss Awards Ceremony for last day of school.
- Discuss if A.P.A.A. can/will cover costs of transportation for next school year (*casino funds*).  
*If there are enough casino funds remaining (between \$10,000-\$14,000) and a 'yes' consensus among members, ensure motion is made in September.*
- Chair or another executive makes presentation at awards day to:
  - honor volunteers, (*secretary or chair prints labels with each volunteers name to put in school library books*)
  - present gift to any retiring staff
  - highlight Ardmore School Council and Ardmore Parent Advisory Association's role in and contributions to the school.

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