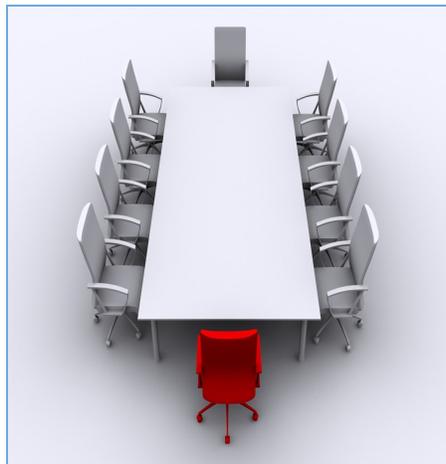


NILE VALLEY SCHOOL

KHARTOUM, SUDAN

AN INTRODUCTION TO PARENT SCHOOL COUNCILS



**A Guide for School Council
Members**

WHAT IS A SCHOOL COUNCIL?

The purpose of the school council is to provide a platform through which parents and other members of the school community have an opportunity to contribute to student learning/achievement and school performance. It is also believed that the school council, through commitment and creativity, generate a strong sense of community spirit. Community spirit makes a school more than just a building; it creates a learning environment where students feel a commitment to their peers, to their teachers, to administration and to their parents. This shared commitment will make the common goal of excellence in education a reality.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE AND ROLE OF THE SCHOOL FORUM AT NILE VALLEY SCHOOL?

The purpose of a school council is, through the active participation of parents, to improve student achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. It is universally recognised that education students is so important to society, that everyone—government, parents, teachers, students and other community members must share the responsibility by taking an active role. School council are designed to give each student the support and encouragement of the entire community. The role of the Nile Valley School Council is to serve as an advisory body and to make recommendations to the principal and Board of Directors. The school council will determine its own level of involvement depending on the needs of the school. It may choose to become involved in decisions that set the direct for the school as well as other types of activities such as:

- Establishing a mission statement
- Establishing a vision statement
- Improvement planning
- Developing a school profile
- Fundraising

SCHOOL COUNCIL COMPOSITION

As a general guideline, the school council is composed of the following individuals:

- Parent members (no definite number)
- Principal
- Teacher representative
- Student representative (age appropriate)
- Community representative

WHAT ARE THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS?

As a volunteer serving on the school council, each position has certain expectations and responsibilities to fulfil. For example,

The Chair—must be a parent and is a voting member of the council. Some duties include:

- Arrange meetings
- Prepare agendas
- Chair council meetings
- Ensure meeting minutes are recorded and maintained
- Facilitate conflict resolution
- Communicate with the principal on behalf of the council

Parent Representatives—are voting members. Their duties include:

- Participate on school council committees
- Contribute to discussions
- Solicit the views of other parents and members of the community
- Observe the council's code of ethics

Principal—must be a member of the council, but not a voting member. His/her duties include:

- Acts a resource to the council on school and ministry policies
- Attends all council meetings
- Considers recommendations made by the council and returns with an explanation of the action taken with respect
- Solicits views on matters pertaining to the amendment of school policies, relating to student achievement, accountability of the education system to parents and the communication of those plans to the public
- May participate on council committees
- May solicit views from the council on any matter
- Observes the council's code of ethics

Student representative (senior student)—is a voting member. He/she:

- Contributes to the discussions of the school council
- Represents the views of the students
- May participate on council committees
- Communicates information back to the student body
- Observes the council's code of ethics

Staff representative—is a voting member. He/she:

- Contributes to school council discussions
- Solicits from the school staff to share with the council
- May participate on council committees
- Communicates information back to the staff
- Observes the council's code of ethics

Community representative—is a voting member. He/she:

- Contributes to school council discussions
- Represents the views of the community
- May participate on council committees
- Communicates information back to the community
- Observes the council's code of ethics

DOES THE SCHOOL FORUM HAVE A CODE OF ETHICS THAT MEMBERS ARE TO ABIDE BY?

The Nile Valley School council has certain expectations with respect to the behaviour of its members. These expectations are as follows:

A member will:

- Consider the best interests of all students
- Be guided by the school's mission statements
- Act within the limits of the designated roles and responsibilities, as identified by the school's operating guidelines
- Become familiar with the school's policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them
- Maintain the highest standards of integrity
- Recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the school community
- Treat all other members with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption
- Encourage a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued
- Acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the council
- Respect the confidential nature of some school business and respect limitations this may place on the operation of the school council
- Not disclose confidential information
- Limit discussions at the school council meetings to matters of concern to the school community as a whole
- Use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise
- Promote high standards of ethical practice within the school community
- Declare any conflict
- Not accept any payment or financial benefit through school council involvement

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL FORUM WORK AT NILE VALLEY SCHOOL?

An effective school council will only work if all partners—administration, staff, parents, students and community members are committed to collaboration. The principal has the ultimate responsibility for making the final decision with respect to issues that affect the school. However, in order to ensure that the decisions made best meet the needs of Nile Valley School, the principal needs to include the school council members in the collaborative process. The school council works best when all partners:

- Commit to collaboration, consultation and partnership
- Commit to dialogue and consensus decision making
- Promote open and effective communication
- Focus on the collective needs of students in the school
- Encourage full participation and support of all members
- Work toward increasing responsiveness to the educational needs of the community
- Recognise and understand their roles, responsibilities and level of involvement
- Establish and adhere to conflict resolution

WHAT IS CONSENSUS BUILDING?

In consensus building, each school council member must agree to the final outcome, although he/she may not necessarily agree with all parts of it. They may differ on some aspects of the decision, but they agree that the outcome meets the school's needs and thus everyone can support it on that basis. The primary goal of this model of decision making is to find the highest level of agreement without dividing members into factions. When seeking consensus, it is important to remember that there is no averaging, no majority rule, no excluding anyone and no giving up.



In general the consensus process is:

- State the problem
- Brainstorm
- Discuss each item
- Clarify and do not jump to solutions
- Select final statements
- Use consensus voting

HOW DOES THE SCHOOL COUNCIL RESOLVE CONFLICT?

From time to time, it is normal for school council members to be involved in conflict. Conflict resolution can be a very powerful force and a great opportunity for creativity and personal growth. When conflict is resolved in a collaborative manner, the whole group and individuals are strengthened. Communication and attentive listening skills are key to resolving conflicts. Although perspectives vary, there needs to be a genuine willingness to accept differences and to build on commonalities.

The Nile Valley School Council follows a basic approach to addressing conflict in a constructive manner:

- Identify the source of the conflict
- Identify contributing factors i.e. communication, organisational structure, resources and human factors
- Focus on conflict
- Focus on points of interest and not positions
- Brainstorm possible solutions
- Provide time for discussion
- Seek the best possible solution for all

It is through this process that the school council is successful in filling its mandate and the school's mission.

THE NILE VALLEY SCHOOL COUNCIL 2014-15

Chair - To be determined

Principal - Mr. Frank Marisco

Teacher representative - To be determined

Parent representative - To be determined

Student representative (s) - To be determined

Community representative - To be determined

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETINGS FOR 2014-15

OCTOBER 2014

NOVEMBER 2014

JANUARY 2015

FEBRUARY 2015

MARCH 2015

MAY 2015

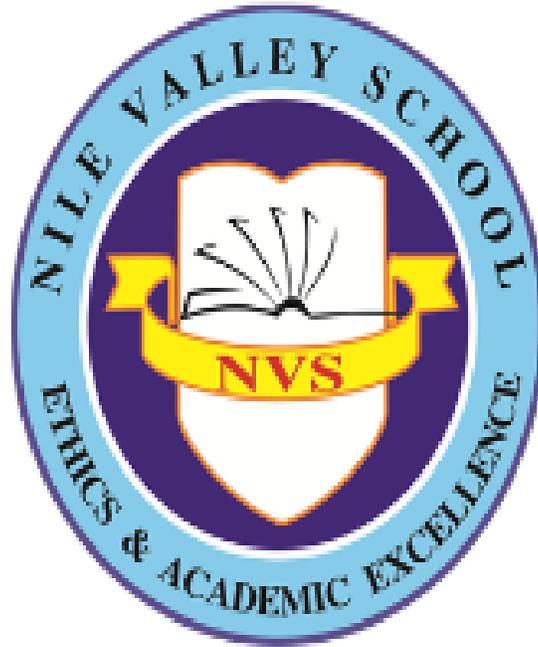
JUNE 2015

For more information or to request items to be placed on an upcoming school council meeting, please contact Ms. Alaa at the school at 0183578724 or 0183578725.

NILE VALLEY SCHOOL

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Ethics and Academic Excellence