

# School Council Tip Sheet

## *Dealing With Disruptions to Teamwork*

A School Council Chairperson must act with positive character and demonstrate respect for others' opinions and needs. From time to time, the Chairperson may face challenges in dealing with situations where a member or attendee tries to take control away from the Chairperson or disrupt a meeting. This might include situations where someone:

- Monopolizes discussion
- Takes people off topic and raises surprise or personal issues not on the agenda
- Takes on more responsibility or authority than their position allows.

The Chairperson's role is to handle these situations in an effective and respectful manner. Possible strategies include the following:

- Keep on hand a copy of, and refer to, your Constitution, Rules of Order/Conduct and Roles and Responsibilities to enforce rules and protocols. This allows you to focus on the behaviour and not the person.
- Refer to the agreed upon agenda and identify the impact any lengthy discussion is having on the agreed upon time lines.
- Always defer to the rest of the Council. Seek members' support by asking if anyone else is concerned about the issue or has thoughts and ideas to share regarding the issue.
- Interrupt and clarify positions when required.
- If this is an issue that should not be addressed by the group or the two players involved need to discuss it separately in a "side bar," ask these two to work it out and report back to the group.
- Take a break if a heated argument is occurring or if someone refuses to leave behind an issue.
- Take a formal vote to resolve an issue where consensus does not appear to be possible.
- Refer to the minutes and confirm that issues are closed when attempts are made to reopen an item.
- When a person is speaking negatively about an issue, ask for possible solutions (make it positive) and poll the rest of the group.

If your committee make-up is limited (not enough diversity, too many members with single agendas, not enough people to commit to the workload, etc.), the Chairperson and the Principal may need to canvas for more Council members.

## Questions?

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