



STUDENT PARLIAMENT CONSTITUTION

Adopted: Wednesday January 18th, 2017
Amended by Principal's Council: May 11th, 2022
Printed: May 11th, 2022

*First Parliament officially opened February 13th, 2008,
by the Honourable David C. Onley, 28th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario*

The Waterdown District High School Student Parliament was first opened by the Honourable David C. Onley, 28th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, on February 13th, 2007. The Student Parliament operated under its first Constitution from 2007-2016.



Photo above: Principal Helen McGregor receives the WDHS mace as the Honourable David C. Onley, 28th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, looks on. The moment was witness by the assembled student body, as well as members of the Waterdown and Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board community. February 13th, 2007.

The 2016 Constitution was written during Semester One (2016) in consultation with the Electoral Reform Committee, as well as the Student Parliament and Faculty of Waterdown District High School. The constitution was passed by means of a referendum held on Wednesday January 18th, 2017 with the votes of 326 students. The results of the constitution were as follows: 82.2% yes, 16.5% no, and 1.2% spoiled.

The 2016 Constitution more accurately reflects the Canadian Constitution, and models its concepts and officers (both outlined in the Constitution of Canada and established through tradition in the Canadian Constitutional Monarchy):

Canada's Tradition	Student Parliament
Sovereign	Principal
Governor General	Staff Advisor
Head of Government (Prime Minister)	Prime Minister
Executive Council / Cabinet	Executive Council / Cabinet
Member of Parliament	Member of Student Parliament
House of Commons	Student House

Following a controversial vote of non-confidence and dissolution of Student Parliament in 2021, the constitution was amended by the Principal's Council (Passed by a 13-3 vote on May 11th, 2022) to clarify the process of removing Members of Student Parliament. Fresh elections were held under this amended constitution on May 31st, 2022.

2016 Waterdown Electoral Reform Committee: Selah Bishop (Chairperson), Adam McKenzie, Cameron Ramolla, Alison Smoke. (Teacher Advisor: Mr. Nathan Tidridge).

2007 Waterdown Constitutional Committee (2007 Constitution):
 Scott Jackson (Chairperson), Laura Head, Trish Riddell, Becky Harkness, Hilary Carter. (Teacher Advisor: Mr. Nathan Tidridge).

Special thanks are owed to:

Christopher Evelyn, Policy Advisor of Minister of Democratic Institutions and Maryam Monsef, Minister of Democratic Institutions.

Preamble

Our school is a community, and as students, we are all citizens of this community. The WDHS Student Parliament believes that all members of the school community should be respectful of others and the school property, and accept and care for one another with the utmost integrity. It is not the number of people, but the values of the community members that make it strong. Only when these values are upheld by the community, can the school be successful and flourish. It is the responsibility of each student to maintain the values and the integrity of the school.

Our Student Parliament strives to make a school based on informed, active and purposeful decisions by all students. With this attitude, we will inspire active citizenship within our student community.¹

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP IN THE STUDENT BODY

A person shall be a member of the Waterdown District High School Student Body, hereinafter called the Student Body, if:

- i) He or she is enrolled in day classes at Waterdown District High School; and
- ii) He or she is in possession of the Student Activity Card issued to him/her for that academic year of study.

ARTICLE II – COMPOSITION

Section One

i) The Waterdown District High School Student Parliament (hereby referred to as the “Student Parliament”) will be made up of two components: The Principal (represented by the Teacher Advisors) and a Student House comprising of twenty-two members elected by the Student Body to be styled as “Members of Student Parliament.”²

ii) The Principal, and his or her representatives, are not bound by the convention of responsible government, and reserve the right to be consulted, to encourage, and to warn the Student House.³

Section Two

i) Acts of the Student House shall be subject to existing and future rules and policies of the Principal of Waterdown District High School as outlined in Article II, Section One, Sub-Section ii.

¹ On November 5th, 2007, the Assembled Student Council voted 12-2 in favour of this preamble for the Constitution of the proposed Student Parliament. This preamble was constructed by Janet Rudzroga from statements written during Camp Edgewood, 2007.

² Canada’s Parliament consists of The Queen, House of Commons and The Senate.

³ Based on the principles of Constitutional Monarchy developed by Walter Bagehot in *The English Constitution*.

ii) All events organized by the Student House are subject to the approval, or assent, of the Principal, or Vice-Principals, of Waterdown District High School.

Section Three

i) A Mace shall be made to represent the authority given to the Student House by the Principal.⁴

ii) The Principal will give the Mace to a Sergeant-at-Arms at the beginning of the school year as outlined in Article XII, symbolically giving the House its authority.

iii) The Sergeant-at-Arms will be in charge of the Mace for the duration of the school year. Only the Sergeant-at-Arms may touch the Mace (and do so wearing white gloves).

iv) The mace must be present at all meetings of the Student House.

v) At the end of the school year the Mace must be returned by the Sergeant-at-Arms to the Principal, thus proroguing⁵ Parliament for the school year.

Section Four

i) Every resolution made by the Student House shall be made available to the Student Body in the form of printed or digital minutes.

ARTICLE III – THE STUDENT HOUSE

Section One

i) The Student House shall consist of:

a. Twenty-One Members of Student Parliament duly elected by the student body.

b. An Executive Council, or Cabinet, formed by the prime minister which should include:

- A Prime Minister (Chairperson)
- A Secretary
- A Minister of Finance
- A Minister of Events
- A Minister of the Warriors Den
- Any other Executive Council positions that the Prime Minister deems

necessary.

⁴ Crafted by Mr. Colin Davis in 2008, the Mace represents the authority of The Queen in the Waterdown District High School Student Parliament. The WDHS Mace is made out of mahogany wood, stained with Danish oil finish. The coins surrounding the head of the Mace consist of three medallions depicting the effigy of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II (the monarch of Canada), and one depicting Queen Victoria minted in 1853 (the year Waterdown High School was founded). This Mace was presented to the student body by His Honour, The Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, on February 13th, 2008, after His Honour officially opened Waterdown's first Student Parliament.

Section Two

- i) The Prime Minister shall be the Chairperson of the Executive Council, and thus the Head of Student Government at Waterdown District High School. They are responsible to fulfill the duties and expectations outlined in this Constitution.
- ii) Members of Executive Council, or Cabinet, serve at the pleasure of the Prime Minister.
- iii) The Prime Minister is responsible for keeping the Staff Advisors fully up-to-date on the proceedings of the Student Parliament.

Section Three

- i) The Student House, on its first assembling after a General Election, shall elect one of its Members to be Speaker.⁶ This Member cannot be a member of Cabinet.
- ii) The Speaker shall preside at all meetings of the Student Parliament and be charged with maintaining order in its proceedings. The Speaker's job is to ensure order in the meetings. Everyone must have the chance to speak, and all points on the agenda must be addressed.
- iii) If the Speaker is away during a session of the Student House the Members of Student Parliament shall elect a Member to sit in his or her place for the duration of the meeting.
- iv) The Speaker has the responsibility to be familiar with this Constitution, and ensure that the Student House is run according to its guidelines.
- v) The Speaker, at their discretion, may do the following:
 - a) "Caution" individuals who are disrupting the debate (people who are talking out of turn, people who are forcing their views on others, etc.)
 - b) "Warn" individuals if they continue to disrupt the debate
 - c) If the Member of Student Parliament does not heed the caution and warning issued, The Speaker may ask the person to leave.
 - d) Once a Member of Student Parliament has been asked to leave, The Speaker may consider disciplinary measures in accordance with Article V.

Section Four

- i) The Student House shall pass resolutions, motions and by-laws necessary for the initiation and management of student-run activities.

ii) All such resolutions, motions and by-laws must conform to the provisions of this Constitution.

ARTICLE IV – ELECTION OF THE STUDENT HOUSE

Section One

i) Once an election has been called by the Principal, finalized party lists must be submitted to the teacher advisor to be posted in a public place at least two weeks before the election. These lists will have each member of the party ranked in order of their desired appointment to Parliament. Parties must include at least one current representative from the following grade levels: Grade Nine, Grade Ten, and Grade Eleven.

Example list for “Party A”:

- 1.) Selah (party leader)
- 2.) Cameron
- 3.) Alison
- 4.) Adam
- 5.) Robert
- 6.) Terrence
- 7.) Evan
- 8.) Nathan
- 9.) Gerard
- 10.) Murray
- 11.) Amy
- 12.) Erin
- 13.) Elizabeth
- 14.) Pam
- 15.) Jobina
- 16.) Patricia
- 17.) Carl
- 18.) Jen
- 19.) John
- 20.) Jeannine

*Two seats are reserved for the following semester’s Grade Nine students, and are therefore not up for election at the end of May.

**If “Party A” receives 63% of the popular vote, then they will be awarded 13 of the available seats in the Student House (filled by Numbers 1-13 on their publicized party list).

ii) A description of Cabinet positions must be posted for the Student Body, at least one week before nominations.

iv) Parties may campaign during the election period.

v) Party elections for the Student House will be held during the last week of May.

vi) After a general election, the member elected to the Student House who is the leader of one political party (the name listed as “No.1” on the posted party list), or a coalition of parties which commands the confidence of the House shall be invited to be appointed as the Prime Minister by the Principal.

vii) At the end of the election, the Prime Minister will select their Cabinet from the elected members of Parliament.

viii) Within one week of Grade Nine Day in the new school year, the Prime Minister shall appoint two Grade Nine representatives based on submitted applications.

Section Two

i) Students must have a current academic average of at least 60% in order to be written on a party list for Student Parliament.

Section Three

i) The Executive Council, or Cabinet, members shall hold their positions for the school year for which they were elected, on the condition that they fulfill all obligations required.

ARTICLE V – REMOVAL FROM OFFICE

Section One

i) The Prime Minister, and the members of Student Parliament, serve at the pleasure of the Principal of Waterdown District High School and may be removed by the Principal, including for violations of Board and school standards of behaviour. The Student House may recommend to The Principal, a replacement for consideration, however such a recommendation is not binding.

ii) If a Member of Student Parliament, including the Prime Minister, fails to conform to the qualifications established for his or her office, including Board and school standards of behavior, a vote of Non-Confidence⁷ may be called by any Member of Student Parliament, and must be seconded by another Member of Student Parliament. The Speaker must give the Member of Student Parliament (including the Prime Minister if the Prime Minister is the Member in question) the opportunity to show why they should remain in office before calling a vote of the assembled Parliament. **Before a motion of non-confidence is introduced, any Member of Student Parliament may give a statement in favour of, or against, the motion, allowing them to publicly explain their reasoning, or ask any questions they might have for the member being voted on of the Parliament in general.** A vote of non-confidence is carried if it garners a simple majority of votes (50% + 1 of Voting Members) (see Article VII – Section II). Upon a successful Non-Confidence vote, the mace must be returned to the Principal.⁵

iii) If a motion of Non-Confidence passes—

a) the Member of Student Parliament immediately ceases to hold executive office;

⁵ This is modeled after the Canadian tradition of a Vote of Non-Confidence in the House of Commons against the ruling Government.

b) The Student Government is dissolved and the current Student Parliament must come together to form a new government (including the appointment of a leader and Cabinet);

c) The party, or coalition of parties, that command the confidence of the Student House must select a new leader to be sent to the Principal to be invited to form a new Government.

ARTICLE VII – PROCEEDINGS & VOTING RIGHTS

Section One

i) The Student House shall convene at least twice a month in regularly scheduled meetings during the school year with all committees represented.

ii) Emergency sessions shall be called at the discretion of the Prime Minister.

iii) Full-House meetings shall be held at least once every-other month, in which members from all teams or associations are invited to be present

Section Two

i) Each elected member in attendance shall have one vote in the deliberations of the Student Parliament, except the Speaker (who shall remain independent), and the Grade Nines, who will enter as independents.

ii) A majority is considered to be 50% + 1 of the voting Members of Student Parliament.

iii) The Speaker shall have voting power in the event of a tie.

Section Three

i) A Student Event Planner Sheet⁶ be completed for each Parliament-run event, outlining the purpose, proceedings and suggestions for the event.

ii) In order for a student-run event to be held at Waterdown District High School it must include the following signatures: Recommended by: _____ (signature of a Member of the Student Parliament, or associated club) Sponsored by: _____ (signature of a Parliament Cabinet Officer, most appropriately the Minister of Events) Approved by: _____ (signature of the Teacher Advisor) Ordered by: _____ (signature of the principal, or vice-principal).

⁶ Obtained from the Main Office or Teacher Advisors.

Section Four

i) The agenda for the meetings of Student Parliament, unless ordered otherwise by the Prime Minister, should consist of:

- a. Call to Order
- b. Roll Call
- c. Approval of the agenda
- d. Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting
- e. Minister of Finance's Report
- f. Committee Reports
- g. Correspondence
- h. Bills and Accounts
- i. Other Business
- j. Date of the next meeting
- k. Call for adjournment

ii) During the proceedings there shall be the moving and debating of substantive motions and resolutions.

iii) Free opinions shall be offered by Student Parliament members, with a limit of five minutes for each speaker or with a limit established at the Speaker's discretion.

Section Five

i) A copy of the minutes for each meeting must be kept by the Prime Minister and Secretary, and passed on to their successors.

ii) A copy of the minutes of every meeting will be posted by the secretary to the Student Body within a week of each meeting in accordance with Article II, Section Four.

Section Six

i) Members of Student Parliament shall keep the Student Body and/or clubs informed of Parliament activities and shall present any problems encountered by the Student Body to the Student House.

ARTICLE VIII – THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Section One

i) A Student Parliament fund shall be maintained by the Minister of Finance, into which all money paid to the Student Parliament must be deposited.

ii) Money may be removed from the fund only by order of the Executive Council (Cabinet).

Section Two

i) The Student Parliament Fund shall be kept in an appropriate account with the Main Office except that portion of the fund which may be invested for the purpose of accruing interest for Student Scholarships wherever the best rate of interest may be obtained, according to the advice of the financial advisor.

ii) The Executive Council (Cabinet) shall hold in trust, at the request of any committee/club/association, money raised for a particular project. Such funds will be placed in the Cabinet's general account at the end of each academic year.

iii) The signing authority for all Parliamentary accounts shall be with the Principal and/or Teacher Advisor (who is accountable to the Principal).

ARTICLE IX – STANDING COMMITTEES

Section One

i) From time to time, the Student Parliament may establish Standing Committees, which shall meet throughout the school year in which they were established.

Section Two

i) Each Standing Committee shall be composed of any number of interested students that the Committee feels is appropriate. The members of the Committee shall elect a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary and any other members as needed, and shall govern themselves according to general school and Parliamentary policies.

ii) The Chairperson must be a Member of Student Parliament.

Section Three

i) Each Standing Committee shall, through a representative, report its progress at the regularly scheduled meetings of Student Parliament at Open Parliament meetings.

ARTICLE X – RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Section One

i) Each Member of Student Parliament shall be expected to read and thoroughly understand this constitution, as well as responsibilities and important dates related to the Student House. Those failing to fulfill their responsibilities will be asked to meet with the Prime Minister and the Staff Advisors. Extreme cases may be dealt with under Article V.

ii) Those with poor attendance records will first be warned by The Speaker before invoking Article V.

ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Section One

i) This Constitution may be amended by a two-third vote of Student Parliament or, by a petition of the majority of the Student Body.

ii) Such amendments must be approved and ordered by the Principal and be published by Student Parliament to the Student Body.

ARTICLE XII – THE OPENING OF STUDENT PARLIAMENT⁷

Section One

i) Deliberations and voting cannot begin until an official opening of the Student Parliament is conducted.

Section Two

i) The Prime Minister will appoint a student to be Master of Ceremonies and Usher of the Black Rod⁸ for the opening of Student Parliament. This individual will be responsible for the following:

a) Setting a day and time (as early as possible into the new school year) for the elected representatives to gather together in a classroom outside of the Main Office. This meeting will be coordinated with the Principal.

b) Selecting, under the advisement of the Teacher Advisors, a Sergeant-at-Arms.⁹

c) The Master of Ceremonies and Usher of the Black Rod will then walk down to the Main Office to meet with the Principal.¹⁰ When ready, the Principal will ask the Master of Ceremonies and Usher of the Black Rod to go and get the Student Members of Parliament.¹¹

d) The Master of Ceremonies and Usher of the Black Rod will then walk back to the room where the elected Student Government is waiting. Then the Master of Ceremonies and Usher of the Black Rod will knock on the door three times to be let in.

e) A member of the elected Government will slam the classroom door in the face of the Usher of the Black Rod.¹² The Usher of the Black Rod will then knock again and be admitted to the classroom.

f) Once in the classroom the Master of Ceremonies and Usher of the Black Rod will announce to the room: “You have been asked by our principal _____, to meet with them in the Main Office.”

g) At this point the Master of Ceremonies and Usher of the Black Rod will lead the elected Student Government to the Main Office.

⁷ This ceremony is inspired by the Opening of the Canadian Parliament. The ceremony mimics the journey of the Members of the Canadian House of Commons to the Senate to listen to the Speech from the Throne.

⁸ Waterdown’s first Usher of the Black Rod was Scott Jackson.

⁹ Waterdown’s first Sergeant-at-Arms was Griffin Elliot.

¹⁰ This act will mimic the Usher of the Black Rod leaving the House of Commons (the classroom) for the Senate (Office) – highlighting the relationship between the two bodies (one to create ideas, the other to review them).

¹¹ This mimics the Sovereign of Canada, or their representative, summoning the House of Commons to the Senate.

¹² Symbolizing the individual nature of student Government and mimicking the British Tradition (now abandoned by Canada).

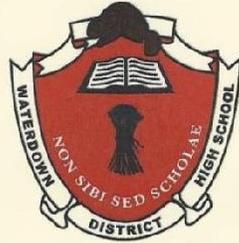
h) Once arriving at the main office, the Principal will present the Sergeant-at-Arms with the mace.¹³

ii) With the mace, the elected Student Government will return to their classroom as a Student Parliament.

iii) The Student Parliament may begin deliberations as such (It is recommended that their first order of business be the election of a Speaker as outlined in Article III, Section Three).

¹³ Just as the Canadian mace represents the authority of the Sovereign, the WDHS mace represents the authority of the Principal. By handing over the mace, the Principal is giving the elected students authority to govern.

WRIT OF ELECTION



Writ of Election

Ms. Bielak, principal of Waterdown District High School

Issued MAY 2nd, 2017

GREETING:

WHEREAS, by and with the advice of OUR PRIME MINISTERS OF WATERDOWN DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL, EMMIT BROWN and ERICA WINKS, we have ordered a PARLIAMENT TO BE HELD, on the first day of school for the 2017-2018 school year.

WE COMMAND YOU that, notice of time and place of elections being duly given (**May 30th, 2017**),

YOU DO CAUSE elections to be made according to the Student Parliament Constitution for WATERDOWN DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL;

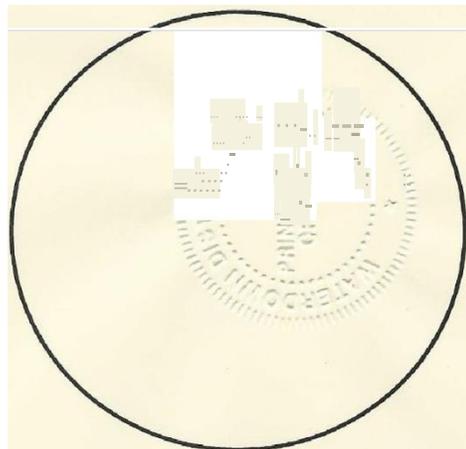
AND THAT YOU DO CAUSE the name of those members when so elected be submitted to the MAIN OFFICE as soon as possible, and not later than the first day of school for the 2017-2018 school year.

AT WATERDOWN DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL on MAY 2nd, 2017, in the sixty-sixth year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada.

BY COMMAND:

W. Bielak, May 3rd, 2017.

(Ms. Bielak)



School Seal

LETTERS OF CONGRADULATION



WINDSOR CASTLE

15th April 2017

Dear Mr Tidridge,

The Queen wishes me to write and thank you for the letter which you have sent on behalf of your students, Selah Bishop, Adam McKenzie, Cameron Ramolla and Alison Smoke.

Her Majesty was interested to hear about the special Committee which these students have recently formed in honour of Canada's commemoration of the 150th anniversary of Confederation and, although unable to reply to you personally, The Queen greatly appreciated your kind thought in writing as you did.

I hope the first election under this new system goes well in May, and I am to thank you very much once again for your letter.

Yours sincerely
Gary Gordon.

Lady-in-Waiting

Mr N Tidridge



Premier of Ontario - Première ministre de l'Ontario

May 2017

A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

On behalf of the Government of Ontario, I am delighted to extend warm greetings to the staff and students of Waterdown District High School (WDHS) as you take part in the student-wide election for the 2017 – 18 Student House.

This year, as we mark the 150th anniversary of Canada and Ontario, we have a unique opportunity to come together to celebrate pride and optimism in our country and our province, foster a greater understanding of our collective history, and unite around a shared vision for the future.

The future seems even brighter when I reflect on the remarkable work of students Selah Bishop, Adam McKenzie, Cameron Ramolla and Alison Smoke. Under the generous guidance of teacher and advisor Nathan Tidridge, these four students formed the WDHS Electoral Reform Committee, and led a successful initiative to update the school's Student Parliament Constitution. The new constitution, which allows students to form political parties for the first time, will govern the election of this year's WDHS Student House.

Selah, Adam, Cameron and Alison — I commend you for your dedication to civic engagement and to the democratic principles that underpin the strength and success of our country and our province. I also applaud your commitment to enriching the life of your school community. It seems clear that you are not just leaders of tomorrow, as us older people tend to say — you are leaders today.

I offer my sincere best wishes for what I know will be an exciting and rigorous student election, and for much continued fulfilment and success.

Kathleen Wynne
Premier

ELECTION TIMELINE AT WATERDOWN DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

1. Prime Minister requests that the Principal call an election.¹⁴
2. Principal signs writ calling for a general election. Once the writ is signed, parties may begin campaigning.
3. Finalized party lists must be submitted to the teacher advisor to be posted in a public place at least two weeks before the election. These lists will have each member of the party ranked in order of their desired appointment to Parliament.¹⁸

FOLLOWING THE ELECTION

4. The elected members of the Student House will meet and attempt to form a government.
5. The member elected to the Student House who is the leader of one political party (the name listed as “No.1” on the posted party list), or a coalition of parties, which commands the confidence of the House shall go to the office and be invited to form a government, with their leader as the Prime Minister by the Principal.
6. The Prime Minister is now free to appoint a Cabinet. A description of Cabinet positions must be posted for the Student Body, at least one week before nominations.
7. The Student House convenes at the beginning of the following school year, with its first order of business being the election of a Speaker.

¹⁴ Due to the dissolution of the 2021-2022 Student Parliament the Principal’s Council requested the May 31st, 2022, Student Election.