

SAC/PTO Tools for Success

Addendum to the Code of Ethics Document

- To strengthen each of our ability to identify components of a correctly run school meeting and to identify how each member can participate in the meeting productively.
 - 1) Why is this important?
 - a. To ensure the board or council carries out its purpose in the most responsible and constructive manner.
 - b. To ensure the board or council remains a respected body by using the structure outlined in its bylaws to communicate to others in the school environment.
 - c. To ensure each member plays a productive role when participating in the board or council.
 - d. To ensure the whole group can take a role to ensure meetings stay on track and to purpose.
 - 2) What are the components of a successful meeting?
 - a. The purpose of the board or council is understood by all members and respected.
 - b. All agenda items relate to the purpose of the board or council.
 - c. Discussions remain on topic and presented in the time allotted.
 - d. The group is aware of and follows the procedure for redirecting items that are off topic or unrelated to the purpose and scope of the board or council.
 - e. The President/Chairman is accepted as the final authority for determining the appropriateness of an agenda item or topic discussed.
 - f. “Meeting” is defined very broadly as any kind of gathering convened to discuss public business, in person, by telephone, electronically, etc. Note that this definition includes phone conversations, emails and other forms of electronic communication. The Sunshine Laws state that 3 or more members of a council meeting to discuss business is considered a meeting and must be open. These can be avoided by making as many meetings as possible public, and not using “reply all” to correspond by email. The President/Chairperson can send communications to the board, but any votes or responses should be directed to the President/Chairman only, and then a consolidation of opinions or votes can be relayed to the board by the President/Chairman, once the board has responded.
 - 3) How do we know when an item is not part of our purpose or is an unproductive part of a meeting?
 - a. A board or council should consider the following criteria to determine if a topic should or shouldn’t be addressed by your board or council as well as to determine if meeting guidelines are being respected:
 - i. Purpose of council: Does your board or council have the authority, resources, experience and access to the information needed to address the topic?
 - ii. Placement: Did the topic go through the appropriate board or council mandated steps to be considered for discussion at a meeting? Was it on the agenda? Is it a working session or general meeting topic at this time?
 - iii. Presentation: Did the material being presented stay on topic? Did the *entire* presentation relate to the board or council’s purpose? Was it presented during the appropriate time during a meeting? Was it presented in the time allotted?
 - iv. Personal: Is this a school wide topic or part of a personal agenda item? Is the topic or any portion of the topic served best by following the school’s grievance policy?
 - 4) How do I know when I’m participating productively?
 - a. To participate as a productive member of any board or council respect and use the above criteria to guide your own conduct.
 - b. Refer to the ethics policy, see attached, to determine other appropriate behavior for a board or council member.
 - c. Respect the role or “hat” you and other board or council members wear directly before, during and after meetings by staying on topic. Reserve other topics of discussion for the appropriate venue.
 - d. When unsure, consult your President/Chairman before proceeding with an agenda item or discussion.
- To understand the specific policies we as council members agree to adhere to. To be aware of the unique expectations we accept with our positions.
 1. What are my responsibilities as a board or council member?
 - a. To understand and follow the code of ethics outlined by your board or council.
 - i. Rule of thumb, you can never really take your board or council hat off. You will more often than not be construed as speaking with a voice of authority whether you intend to or not, even if it isn’t something related to your board or council. Be aware of this.

- ii. When speaking to parents respect your role as a representative of this school. Instead of discussing various issues with parents openly, continually direct them to bring the topic up to the appropriate board or council. Or, advise them to use the grievance policy outlined in the student handbook.
 - b. To follow all board or council by-laws and meeting rules.
 - c. To follow Sunshine Laws governing open meetings.
 - d. To be a productive member of your council in the role you agree to.
 - e. Don't join a board or council to achieve a personal agenda or strive to address a personal agenda item on a board or council.
2. What sort of feedback can I anticipate if I make a mistake?
- a. How is misconduct handled?
 - i. In most cases, the President/Chairman will address the misconduct on a one on one basis with the board member to highlight the issue and describe the correct course of action.
 - 1. Everyone makes mistakes. It is important that the issue is addressed and resolved. It is assumed that a board member is a valued member of the team.
 - ii. In the case of a second misconduct the board or council, as a body, or the administration has the authority to dismiss a board or council member. Depending on the by-laws and the severity of the misconduct, this may or may not be left to the discretion of the President/Chairman. It will be handled on a one on one basis with the board or council member and the President/Chairman, Governing Board or Dean. At that time the necessary measures and/or disciplinary actions will be determined by the President/Chairman, Governing Board and/or Dean.
 - iii. During a meeting the President/Chairman may cut off or redirect a meeting presenter. This is necessary if a discussion is off topic or running over the time allotted. It is especially necessary if the presenter is discussing a topic that is specifically forbidden under FERPA (child confidentiality laws) or for any other topic that doesn't meet the board or council's purpose or agenda. In the case of a potential FERPA violation or in regards to a topic that doesn't meet the board's purpose; the Chairman does not have discretion and is required to cut off the discussion.
 - 1. **FERPA Clarification: As outline by both state and federal law, discussions involving specific student issues are forbidden in board or council meetings except during an executive session. The governing board is the only school body at ACS that provides for executive sessions. There is no circumstance that would allow for a specific student issue to be discussed during an open meeting even if there is consent from the applicable parent or guardian.**

I, _____ agree and acknowledge this document and understand that it is hereby considered an "addendum" to the Code of Ethics.

Board/Council Member Signature

Date

Board/Council Position

Board President/Chairperson Signature

Date

ACS Dean Signature

Date