

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

January 13, 2021

### BACKGROUND

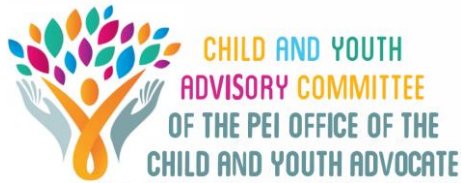
In May 2020, the Province on Prince Edward Island announced the creation of the PEI Children and Youth Table to promote and protect the rights of children and youth during COVID-19 while the province awaited the formal appointment of the independent Child and Youth Advocate and enactment of the PEI *Child and Youth Advocate Act*.

On July 15, 2020, Marv Bernstein was sworn in as an independent officer of the PEI Legislative Assembly as PEI's first independent Child and Youth Advocate. The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate officially opened on the same day.

In recognition of the independence of the Child and Youth Advocate, membership of the former PEI Children and Youth Table was revised to child and youth representatives only who serve in an advisory role to the Child and Youth Advocate. The revised Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate reports directly to the Child and Youth Advocate to help inform the work of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate on matters of importance to children and youth.

### OBJECTIVES

- Amplify the voices of children and youth, with a view to advancing the rights, interests and well-being of all PEI children and youth
- Establish needs and priorities for children and youth to contribute to informing the work of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate;
- Identify and advise on gaps and areas of concern related to reviewable programs and services to PEI children and youth;
- Identify and advise on supportive structures and processes for child and youth engagement to ensure their voices are heard and considered in matters impacting them;
- Create a balanced constituency approach to ensure that as wide a range of perspectives as possible are brought forward;
- Support public awareness and education on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as it affects children and youth, specifically with a peer-to-peer approach.



## **SCOPE**

The Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will operate and function under the statutory independence of the Child and Youth Advocate to include authority over the scope, membership, roles and functions of the Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. The Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will serve as an advisory body to the Child and Youth Advocate to help inform the work of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate and act in a manner that is consistent with the independent, impartial and non-partisan statutory authority of the Child and Youth Advocate and Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

Child and youth membership of the Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, which consists exclusively of children and youth, will reflect a rich diversity of lived experience, Indigenous and cultural traditions, and other child and youth-sensitive perspectives.

The functions and activities of the Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will be guided by the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

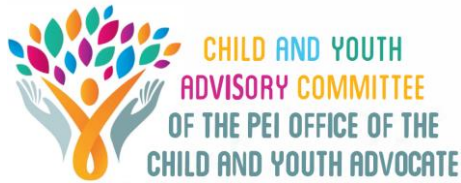
- Sarah Knockwood
- George Martin
- Shaylee Bjornson
- Shauna Bjornson
- Payge Kowaleski
- Vacant (up to 3 positions)

Membership activities of the Child and Youth Advisory Committee on the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate are supported by staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate. Child and youth committee members are guided by the Job Description - Youth Member.

## **ROLES & FUNCTION**

Membership roles of the Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate includes:

- Participation at an individualized level to meet committee objectives as outlined in the Job Description – Youth Member
- A focus on leadership opportunities including yet, not limited to: Chairing meetings, authoring position papers, facilitating consultations, participating in stakeholder meetings, and making public presentations under the guidance of staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.



Staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate are responsible to provide support to the Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate to include, but not limited to:

- Engaging child and youth members, including children in care and children or youth placed in facilities, to meet the committee objectives;
- Facilitating recruitment and retention – through a child and youth rights-based lens – to support membership; and,
- Maintaining a matrix-model approach to diversified constituency of membership; receiving all inquiries and applications for membership consideration; screening and approving potential applications prior to any engagement with current members.

## **CHILD AND YOUTH CONSULTATION**

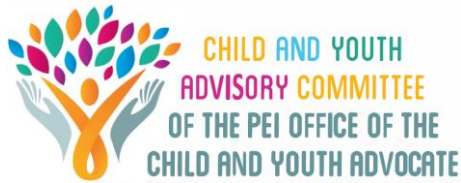
The Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate, with approval of the Child and Youth Advocate may engage in consultations on matters affecting children and youth.

Consultations may be initiated by members of the Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate or by a public body, community organization or professional organization seeking views of children and youth on a matter affecting the rights of children and youth.

The Child and Youth Advocate is the contact person for all child and youth consultation requests.

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Prioritization of issues and discussion topics will follow the direction of Child and Youth Advisory Committee members
- All Child and Youth Advisory Committee members will use appropriate language and terminology that is accessible to everyone.
- Child and Youth Advisory Committee members serving as Chair will endeavour to ensure that all Committee members are engaged throughout meetings, supported by staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.
- Recognition is given that meeting involvement may be fluid, personalized, and should be respected as such.
- Whenever possible, decisions will be made by consensus. If agreement cannot be reached, Child and Youth Advisory Committee members serving as Chair, supported by staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate as required, will use a conflict resolution strategy.
- Child and Youth Advisory Committee members will attend regularly scheduled meetings, review materials and actively participate.
- Child and Youth Advisory Committee members will create a safe environment and listen inclusively to the views of others.



- Child and Youth Advisory Committee members will respect confidentiality of discussions and any shared materials noted as such.
- Child and Youth Advisory Committee members will recognize the varying levels of expertise, life experiences, and opportunities to work collaboratively and innovatively and participate in a respectful manner.
- Child and Youth Advisory Committee members will participate with objectivity applying a child rights lens in their representation of fellow peer children and youth.

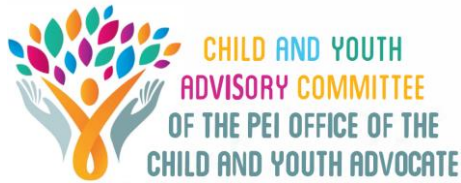
## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- Public trust in the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate depends on the integrity, honesty, fairness and good faith of all persons engaged in supporting the work of the Office to include employees and volunteers. As volunteers, child and youth members of the Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate Committee will act respectfully, honestly and responsibly when representing the Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.
- Public trust is compromised when a Child and Youth Advisory Committee Member's interest and the public interest conflict.
- Child and Youth Advisory Committee members shall not divulge confidential or privileged information to any unauthorized person.
- Child and Youth Advisory Committee members must not knowingly place themselves in positions where they are under, or may appear to be under, obligation to any person or organization who might benefit from or seek to gain special consideration or favor.
- Child and Youth Advisory Committee members shall not take advantage of, or appear to take advantage of their official position, or of information obtained in the course of their official duties unless the information is generally available to the public.
- Child and Youth Advisory Committee members are responsible to take necessary actions to prevent conflicts of interest from arising and resolving those that do arise, which could include avoiding or removing themselves from activities or situations that may place them in a conflict of interest.
- Child and Youth Advisory Committee members In the event a Member determines a conflict of interest, real or perceived, may exist, or the Member is in an actual conflict of interest position, the Members will immediately inform the Child and Youth Advocate in writing. The Child and Youth Advocate may make a determination to remove a Member from service to the Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

## **GENERAL**

### *Chair*

The Chair may rotate amongst the Membership in a fluid manner: Each Child and Youth Advisory Committee member will be supported by staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate to have the Chairing experience they wish, including, but not limited to: developing agendas, leading discussions, presenting materials, facilitating feedback.



Chairing may rotate between Members during the course of a meeting based on agenda items, familiarity, and comfort levels.

#### *Staff*

Staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate will work collaboratively with Child and Youth Advisory Committee members to schedule meetings, set agendas, and support facilitated discussion as each Chair requests and requires.

#### *Agenda Items*

All agenda items will be forwarded to the Chair and staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate by close of 3 business days prior to a meeting. Agenda items must be related to the objectives of the Child and Youth Advisory Committee.

#### *Minutes*

The Chair and/or staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate and/or Member designated, will capture action items needing further attention. Minutes will not be taken in order to allow for safe space for Child and Youth Advisory Committee members to discuss complex and challenging topics.

#### *Decision Making Authority*

Recommendations to the Child and Youth Advocate shall be based on the objectives of the Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

#### *Recommendations*

All recommendations identified by Child and Youth Advisory Committee members shall be grounded in a child rights-based approach and be forwarded to the Child and Youth Advocate in writing. The Child and Youth Advocate will provide periodic updates as to the progress status of such recommendations directly and/or through staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.

#### *Expenditures*

All expenditures related to the Child and Youth Advisory Committee of the PEI Office of the Child and Youth Advocate shall be pre-approved by the Child and Youth Advocate and approved expenditures must be submitted directly to the Child and Youth Advocate for payment authorization.

#### *Frequency of Meetings*

Meetings shall be held once per month, where practicable and pending availability of Child and Youth Advisory Committee members. Quorum for meetings shall be 50% + 1.

#### *Review & Reporting*

A monthly summary of meetings, recommendations and progress shall be provided to the Child and Youth Advocate by staff of the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate