



Standing Orders

Pomonal Primary School Council

Introduction

The purpose of these Standing Orders is to assist school council to operate efficiently and effectively within the legal framework and Department guidelines for school councils.

Purpose and Objective of School Council

The School Council is a legal entity in its own right and is accountable to the Minister of Education in respect to how it fulfils its function. While the day-to-day running of the school is the job of the Principal, the School Council helps to set the long-term future for the school and maintains oversight of the schools operations. This means that school council can directly influence the quality of education that Pomonal Primary School provides to its students.

The primary objectives of the School Council are to:

- Assist in the efficient governance of the school;
- Ensure that its decisions affecting students of the school are made having regard, as a primary consideration, to the best interest of all students; and
- Enhance the educational opportunities of students at the school.

School council membership

The membership of the school council according to its constituting Order is 10 members – 8 Parent and 2 Department employee members. School Council membership will consist of a 2 year terms, with the aim of half the members either retiring or being re-elected each year.

Office bearers

The school council will have the following office bearer positions.

- President
- Vice president

Office bearer positions are of one year in duration and will be elected at the first meeting of the school council after school council nominations and any polls have been completed.

Election of office bearers

In the event that there is more than one nomination for a single office bearer position a vote among School Council members will be held. Nominated persons should not vote and should be asked to leave the room during this process. This process will be facilitated by the principal. If the votes are tied the School Principal will toss a coin to determine the result.

Sub-committees

The school council will have the following sub-committees.

- Finance
- Policy
- Building and Grounds

Each sub-committee will be chaired by a member of school council who will be elected by sub-committee members. Parents or community members who are not a School Council member will be encouraged to join sub-committees. The School Council President and the School's Principal (or their nominee) will be a member of each sub-committee.

Please refer to '*Pomonal Primary School Sub-committee's Terms of Reference*' for further detail regarding Subcommittees.

Meetings

Regular

The school council will meet on the 2nd Tuesday of each month unless otherwise agreed, with a minimum of 8 meetings per year. The meeting will commence at 4.30pm and will finish no later than 6.00pm unless agreed by the school council. Meetings will be held in the administration office at the Pomonal Primary School.

Public reporting (annual) meeting

The school council will call a public meeting in March each year and at that meeting will-

- (a) report the proceedings of the council for the period since the date of the previous public meeting; and
- (b) present the annual report published by the council; and
- (c) if the accounts of the school council have been audited, present a copy of the audited accounts.

The council may, from time to time, call additional public meetings.

Extraordinary meeting

An extraordinary meeting of the school council may be held at any time decided by the council, if all members are given reasonable notice of the time, date, place and object of the meeting.

The President of the school council or, in the absence of the President, the Principal must call an extraordinary meeting of the school council if either of them receives a written request to do so from 3 members of the school council.

The business of an extraordinary meeting will be confined to the objective for which it is called.

Quorum for meetings

For a quorum to be achieved at a council meeting, not less than one half of school council members currently holding office must be present and a majority of the members present must not be DEECD employees. Any parent members on the council who also work for the Department are counted as DEECD employees for the purpose of a quorum.

If at the end of 30 minutes after the appointed time for a meeting of the school council, there is no quorum present, the meeting will stand adjourned to a time and place determined by the school council members present.

A member of the school council may be present at a council meeting, in person or by video conferencing or teleconferencing.

School council decisions

Decisions of the school council will be by a majority of those eligible to vote and who are present at the meeting, where the majority are non DEECD members. A vote by proxy is not valid.

All decisions of council, the motions as well as the name of the person that moved the motion and the seconder, should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Voting will normally be by a show of hands, but a secret ballot may be used if deemed to be more appropriate.

Tied votes

When a vote is tied (i.e. an even number of people are for and against a decision), the president (presiding member) has a second or casting vote.

Absence of the president and other members from a meeting

If the President is unable to preside at a school council meeting, the Vice-President will chair the meeting. In the event that neither are presiding then the school council will elect a member of the school council to chair the school council meeting (other than an employee of the Department).

If a member is unable to attend a meeting, an apology should be submitted to the principal or president prior to the meeting.

Conflict of interest

If a school council member or a member of his or her immediate family has any direct conflict of interest (including a financial interest) in a subject or matter under discussion at a school council meeting, that councillor:

- must declare the conflict of interest
- must not be present during the discussion unless invited to do so by the person presiding at the meeting
- must not be present when a vote is taken on the matter
- may be included in the quorum for that meeting.

Extended leave of a council member

A member of the school council may apply in writing to the president for extended leave of up to 3 consecutive meetings.

If a member of a school council is granted extended leave, the membership of that member is excluded in determining the requirement for a quorum of not less than half the members currently holding office.

Agenda

Agenda items will be called for via email from all parents 2 weeks prior to a meeting, the principal in consultation with the president will determine if appropriate to include.

The principal in consultation with the president shall ensure an agenda is prepared for each regular meeting and distribute the agenda, draft minutes from the previous meeting and meeting papers, such as sub-committee reports and principal's report, to school council members no less than five days before the meeting.

Open and closed meetings

School council meetings will generally be open to the school community but the school council may decide that only members may be present at a meeting or part of a meeting.

If the meeting is open, visitors may speak by invitation of the presiding member, however will not be entitled to vote.

Length of meetings and extensions of meeting times

If business has not been concluded within 1.5 hours, the presiding member shall ask the members whether they wish to defer the rest of the business until the next meeting or to extend the meeting. A motion including the desired length of extension is necessary if council wants to extend the meeting.

Minutes

A minute taker will be nominated (and elected if needed) at the first meeting after the school council nominations and any polls have been completed.

The principal will work with the minute taker to ensure a record of each school meeting is kept and draft minutes are prepared after each school council meeting and distributed to school council members prior to the next school council meeting. The School Council minutes will not generally be made publicly available unless authority has been given by the school principal to do so.

The minutes will record;

- the type of meeting (regular, extraordinary or public);
- date, time and venue of meeting;
- names of attendees and apologies received from members;
- name of presiding officer;
- a record of the business of the meeting including;
 - o the decision on the minutes of the previous meeting
 - o inward and outward correspondence
 - o reports of any sub-committees tabled at the meeting
 - o decisions of the meeting including motions and any amendments, names of movers and seconders, whether the motion was carried or rejected
 - o Any actions that may result from a decisions including name of person reasonable and any timelines if appropriate

When school council minutes are submitted for confirmation, only questions regarding their accuracy as a record of the meeting are to be raised.

Once the minutes have been accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting, they are to be signed by the school council president or the person who presided at the meeting.

Business arising from the minutes is dealt with after the minutes have been confirmed.

Communication with School Community

The school council president will write a note to be included in the next school newsletter following the meeting. This note will be submitted to the principal for review before being published.

School Council Principles

The school council will operate according to the following principles:

- Respectful partnerships
- Clear and honest two-way communication
- Transparent processes
- Democratic, informed decision-making
- Personal and professional integrity.

Meeting Etiquette

In the conduct of meetings, the following etiquette will be observed by members:

- Only one person talks at a time.
- All requests to speak are directed to the presiding member.
- All speakers are listened to in respectful silence.
- No 'side conversations' are held.
- Members shall listen to the discussion carefully in order to avoid making points that have already been made or asking questions which have already been answered.
- When the presiding member indicates that the topic of discussion is closed, no further comments are made.
- Members shall not use acronyms or jargon.
- Members will ensure that all electronic devices (such as mobile phones) are silenced and no calls are taken during the meeting.
- Members shall stay calm regardless of how difficult or challenging the topic.

Code of Conduct

School councils in Victoria are public entities as defined by the Public Administration Act 2004. School councillors must abide by the Directors' Code of Conduct issued by the Public Sector Standards Commissioner.

The code of conduct requires councillors to:

- Act with honesty and integrity (be truthful, open and clear about their motives and declare any conflict of interest should it arise)
- Act in good faith in the best interests of the school (work cooperatively with other councillors and the school community, be reasonable, and make all decisions with the best interests of students foremost in their minds)
- Act fairly and impartially (consider all sides of an issue before making a decision, seek to have a balanced view, never give special treatment to a person or group and never act from self-interest)
- Use information appropriately (respect confidentiality and use information for the purpose for which it was made available)
- Use their position appropriately (not use their position as a councillor to gain an advantage)
- Act in a financially responsible manner (observe all the above principles when making financial decisions)
- Exercise due care and diligence (accept responsibility for decisions and do what is best for the school)
- Comply with relevant legislation (know what legislation is relevant for which decisions and obey the law)
- Demonstrate leadership and stewardship (set a good example, exercise care and responsibility to achieve sustainable improvements for the school).

School Council Endorsement: Feb 2017

Policy review date: Feb 2020, or as needed