



SCHOOL COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

1. Introduction

The purpose of these Standing Orders is to assist school council to operate efficiently and effectively within the legal framework and Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) guidelines for school councils.

2. Purpose of school council

School council is the legally formed body that is given powers to set the key directions of the school. It is the major governing body of the school that, within DEECD guidelines, decides the future directions for the school and oversees the school's operation.

3. The legislative framework

Fairfield Primary School council operates under a framework provided by the:

- Education and Training Reform Act (the Act)
- Education and Training Regulations 2007 (the Regulations)
- Fairfield Primary School Council Constituting Order.

Subject to this framework, the school council may regulate its own proceedings.

4. School council membership

The constituting order of Fairfield Primary School states that the composition of the Council is:

- 8 elected parent members.
- 4 DEECD employee members. The principal who is executive officer is included in this number.
- 1 appointed community member. DEECD employees are not eligible for appointment to this position.

4.1 Terms of office and elections

- The term of office for parent and DEECD members will be 2 years.
- Community members will be appointed for a 1 year term.
- Four (4) of the parent member and two (2) of the DEECD member positions, excluding the principal, will be declared vacant each year.
- Parent member vacancies will be filled through a call for nominations and a formal ballot of the school parent community consistent with standard electoral procedures.
- DEECD member vacancies will be filled by consensus or a vote by the DEECD employees of the school.

- Parent and DEECD members, excluding the principal, can serve no more than two consecutive terms and must have a break of a minimum of one year before nominating for election again.

4.2 Casual vacancies

- Should a casual vacancy occur on council through resignation of a member, this vacancy will be filled by council co-opting a person from the appropriate category to complete the rest of the term of the retiring member.
- If a member of school council misses 3 consecutive regular meetings in a calendar year, their membership of school council will be revoked. Council will co-opt a person from the relevant category to complete the rest of the term of office for position which has been made vacant.

4.3 Extended leave

- A member of the school council may apply in writing to the president for extended leave of up to 2 consecutive meetings.
- If a member of the 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 membership currently holding office.

5. Office bearers

The school council will have the following office bearer positions:

- President
- Vice president
- Treasurer

Office bearers will be elected at the first meeting of the school council after declaration of the school council ballot each year.

The principal will chair the first meeting of the new council until the president has been elected.

6. Committees

The school council will have the following committees:

- Finance
- Policy
- Building and Grounds
- Community

Each committee will be chaired by a member of school council unless otherwise decided by council. A committee must include at least one school council member and have at least 3 members.

7. Meetings

7.1 Regular meetings

The school council will meet at least twice a term and will meet on the third Monday of the month unless otherwise agreed by the school council. Meetings will commence at 6.30pm and will finish no later than 8.30pm unless agreed by the school council.

7.2 Public reporting (annual) meetings

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 account.

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

7.3 Extraordinary meetings

- 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 president or the principal must call a meeting under the preceding paragraph by sending a notice to all school council members giving the members reasonable notice of the time, date, place and object of the meeting.
- The business of an extraordinary meeting will be confined to the object for which it is called.

8. 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 member on the council who also works for the Department will be counted as DEECD employees for the purpose of the 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 via teleconference.

9. School council decisions

- Decision of the school council will be by majority of those eligible to vote and who are present at the meeting, where the majority are non DEECD members.
- Members will vote on a matter and where the vote is not unanimous, the number of votes for and against will be recorded in the minutes.
- Voting will normally by a show of hands, but a secret ballot may be used for particular issues.

10. Tied votes

- When a vote is tied (i.e. an even number of people are for and against a decision) the president (presiding member) will have the casting (deciding) vote.

11. Proxies and voting procedures

- There are no provisions in either the Act or the regulations for proxies. Eligible members of school council must be present at a meeting to participate in the decisions of that meeting. Another person, including another council member, cannot attend the meeting and vote on behalf of the absent member.

12. 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. Where both the president and vice president are not present, the school council will elect a member of the council to chair the 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 prior to the meeting.

13. 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 councilor:

- 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.

14. Agenda

- The principal 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 committee reports and principal's report to school council members no less than three working days before the meeting.

15. Open and closed meetings

- School council meetings will generally be open to the school community but the principal and school council may decide that only members may be present at a meeting or part of a meeting.
- If a meeting is open, visitors may speak by invitation of the presiding member.

16. Length of meetings and extensions of meeting times

- If business has not been concluded within 2 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 is necessary if council wants to extend the meeting.
- Meeting extensions will be for up to 15 minutes and no more than three extensions can be requested.

17. Minutes

- The principal will 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 principal may delegate this responsibility to another person.
- 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 the decision on the minutes of the previous meeting; inward and outward correspondence and reports of any committees considered at the meeting; and decisions of the meeting including motions and any amendments, names of movers and seconders, whether the motion was carried or rejected and, if not unanimous, the number of votes for and against.
- When school council minutes are submitted for confirmation, only questions or comments regarding accuracy as a record of the meeting are to be raised.
- Once minutes, with or without amendment, 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.

18. Conduct of meetings

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

- Only one person speaks 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 jargon.
- Members will ensure that all electronic devices (such as mobile phones) are silenced and no calls, unless an emergency, are taken during meetings.
- Members shall stay calm regardless of how difficult or challenging the topic.

19.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**

20.Confidentiality and privacy

School council members will respect the need for confidentiality and privacy with regard to:

- matters under consideration by council and discussions that have occurred at the relevant committee level
- the contributions and views expressed by individual council members in council meetings
- information provided to council that is not intended for wider distribution
- Sensitive matters that arise at school council meetings, in particular where there are matters of a personal nature relating to staff, students or parents.

21.Review of standing orders

School council standing orders will be reviewed annually at the first meeting of each new council.