

Wembley Primary School

School Council Standing Orders 2023-2024

Introduction

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

School council membership

The membership of school council according to its constituting Order is:

- 7 parent members, elected by the parent community of Wembley Primary School, who represent more than one third of school Councillors
- 4 DET employee members elected by the staff of Wembley Primary School including the principal
- 1 community member. This position is co-opted, rather than elected. DET employees are not eligible for co-option to this category. A community member is appointed by a decision of School Council. A community member has the same voting rights as elected members. Term of 1 year.

Office Bearers

School Council will have the following office bearer positions:

- **president**
- **vice president**
- **treasurer**
- **minute secretary** (non elected)

Election of Office Bearers

In the election of office bearers, if the votes are tied, the school council will decide the outcome by either holding a new election or drawing of lots. If a new election is held and is also tied, the school council may decide the election by the drawing of lots or decide to conduct further elections until the election of office bearers is decided.

Subcommittees and Action Groups

School council will have the following subcommittees and action groups for 2023:

- Finance
- Education and Policy
- Buildings & Grounds

All school councillors are to be on at least one subcommittee.

Each subcommittee and action group will be chaired by a member of school council. Subcommittees and action groups must include at least one school council member and have at least three members.

Meetings

Regular Meeting

School Council will meet on the third Monday of the month no less than 8 meeting per year. The meeting will commence at 6.00pm and will finish no later than 8.00pm unless agreed to by school council. Meetings will be held in the staff room.

Meeting dates for 2023/2024

- Monday 20 March 2023 (Last and first meeting of School Council)
- Monday 15 May 2023
- Monday 19 June 2023
- Monday 21 August 2023
- Monday 20 November 2023
- School Council dinner and meeting date to be advised
- Monday 19 February 2024
- Monday 18 March 2024 (Last meeting and first meeting of School Council))

Annual Reporting Meeting

One of the regular meetings will be designated the reporting meeting and advertised as such to all members of the school community. At this meeting school council will:

- report the proceeding of council since the date of the previous reporting meeting
- present the Annual report published by council
- present a copy of the audited accounts

Quorum for meetings

- For a quorum to be achieved members currently holding office must be present and the majority of members present must not be DET employees. Any parent members who also work for the Department are counted as DET employees for the purpose of the quorum.
- If at the end of 30 minutes after the appointed time (6.00pm) for the commencement of and there is no quorum present, the meeting will stand adjourned to a time and place determined by those present.
- A member of council may be present at the meeting, in person or by videoconferencing or teleconferencing.

School council decisions

- Decisions of school council will be by a majority of those eligible to vote and who are present at the meeting, where the majority are non DET members. A vote by proxy is not valid.
- Members will vote on a matter and the number of votes for and against will be recorded in the minutes.

- Voting will normally be by a show of hands, but a secret ballot may be used for particular issues.

Tied votes

When a vote is tied, for example: an even number of people are for and against the decision, the president has the 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 shall preside at the meeting
- If a council member is unable to attend a meeting, an apology should be submitted to the business manager prior to the meeting

Conflict of interest

If a school council member or a member of her or his immediate family has a perceived or actual conflict of interest (either financial or non-financial) 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 president or presiding member at the meeting
- must not be present when a vote is taken on the matter
- may be included in the quorum for that meeting.

The declaration of interest will be included in the minutes. If the conflict of interest involves a principal or business manager it must be entered onto the Conflict of Interest Register on EduPay and managed appropriately.

Extended leave of a council member

- a school councillor may apply in writing to the president for extended leave of up to three consecutive meetings
- if a councillor is granted extended leave, their membership is excluded in determining the requirements for a quorum of not less than half of the members currently holding office.

Agenda

The principals will ensure an agenda is prepared for each regular meeting and arrange for the business manager to distribute the agenda, draft minutes from the previous meeting and meeting papers such as subcommittees reports and principals' report to school council members on the Friday prior to the meeting.

Items for general business are to be submitted to the principals by CoB on the Thursday prior to a school council meeting for inclusion on the agenda.

Open and closed meetings

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

Length of meetings and extension of meeting times

If business has not been concluded within 2 hours of the meeting commencing, the president or presiding member will ask school councillors if 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 the meeting to be extended. The meeting will be extended for no more than 15 minutes.

Minutes

- The principals will ensure that a record of each meeting is kept and that draft minutes are prepared after each meeting and distributed to school council members prior to the next meeting.
- The minutes will record the type of meeting, 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 subcommittees tabled; and decisions including motions and any amendments, names of movers and seconders, whether the motion was carried or rejected and the number of votes for and against
- 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 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.
- All decisions of Council shall be recorded as minutes. Also included in the minutes are the dates and times of the meeting, those present and apologies, and an overview of key discussions.
- School council will publish a report following a meeting to keep the community informed of its operations.

Conduct of meetings

- *School councillors must abide by the code of conduct*

Code of conduct for school councillors

School councils in Victoria are public entities as defined by the *Public Administration Act 2004*. School councillors are directors of public entities and must abide by the Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities (Code of Conduct) issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission.

The Code of Conduct sets the standard of behaviour and requires councillors to:

- ***act with honesty and integrity*** – be truthful, open and clear about their motives and declare any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest and duty
- ***act in good faith in the best interest of the school*** – work cooperatively with other councillors and the school community, be reasonable, and make all decisions with the best interest of the students in mind
- ***act fairly and impartially*** – consider all relevant facts of an issue before making a decision, seek to have a balanced view, never give special treatment to a person or group and do not 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, diligence and skill*** – accept responsibility for decisions and do what is best for the school
- ***act consistently with legislative and policy requirements when making decisions***
- ***notify the school council if they become a candidate for an election in any state, local or federal election*** and not use the council’s resources in connection with their candidature
- ***demonstrate leadership and stewardship*** – set a good example, encourage a culture of accountability and child safety, manage risks effectively and responsibility to keep the school strong and sustainable.

School council principles

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.

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

- Only one person talks at a time
- All request to speak are directed by the president or presiding member
- All speakers are listened to in respectful silence
- No ‘side conversation’ are held
- Members will 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 president or presiding member indicates that the topic of discussion is closed, no further comments are made

- Members will not use jargon
- Members will ensure that all electronic devices, are silenced and no calls are takeb during the meeting
- Members will stay calm regardless of how difficult or challenging the topic.

School Council Confidential Statement

At the first school council meeting of the year, all new school councillors will be asked to sign a confidentiality statement. This will be effective for the duration of their tenure on school council.

