

# Standing Orders for School Council

*Positivity, Persistence, Pride, Passion*

239 Pearcedale Road Cranbourne South VIC 3977 Tel: 9782 2999

Email: [cranbourne.south.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:cranbourne.south.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au) Website: <http://www.cranbournesouth.vic.edu.au/>



## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Standing Orders is to assist School Council to operate efficiently and effectively within the legal framework and Department guidelines for School Councils.

School Council is the legally formed body that is given powers to set the key directions of a school. It is the major governing body of the school that, within Department of Education and Training (DET) guidelines, decides the future directions for the school and oversees the school's operation.

## **The Legislative Framework**

School Councils operate under a framework provided by the;

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (the Act)
- Education and Training Regulations 2007 (the Regulations)
- Individual school's constituting Order

Subject to this framework, School Council may regulate its own proceedings.

## **Reviewing of Standing Orders**

Standing Orders will be discussed and reviewed at the meeting following the election of the President, of the newly elected School Council each year. A copy will be provided to all School Council members.

## **Cranbourne South Primary School Council composition is:**

- 7 elected parent members, who represent more than one third of School Councillors
- 4 elected DET employee members (which includes the Principal as Executive Officer)
- 1 co-opted member

## **Co-option of community members**

The community membership is an optional category and these positions are co-opted, rather than elected. DET employees are not eligible for co-option to this category. Community members have the same voting rights as elected members.

The community member included in the constituting Order will be co-opted to the School Council at a special meeting of council held as soon as practicable after the declaration of the poll and before office bearers are elected. If the appointment of the community member either cannot be resolved at the special meeting called or on the resumption of the adjourned special meeting, the School Council may proceed to the first meeting of the School Council to elect office bearers.

## **Casual Vacancies**

When a casual vacancy occurs on council, this vacancy is filled by council co-opting an eligible person from the appropriate category who then completes the remainder of the term of office of the member.

## **Office Bearers**

The Regulation requires there be at least two office bearers; the President and the Executive Officer.

- The **President** is elected by all members of School Council and may not be a DET employee.
- The position of **Executive Officer** is filled by the Principal. The Principal is a full member of council with the same voting rights as other councillor.

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**Cranbourne South Primary School Council** additional office bearers include:

- The **Vice President** is elected by all members of School Council and may not be a DET employee as the vice President may need to chair a meeting in the absence of the President
- The **Treasurer** is appointed by the School Council. This position will not be filled by the Principal or Office manager//bursar
- The **Secretary** may be either an elected member of School Council or a person appointed to this role who is not a DET member. If the latter, the secretary is therefore a silent observer with no voting rights

## **Election of office bearers; 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.

## **Sub-committees**

The **Cranbourne South Primary School Council** will have the following sub-committees:

- Buildings and Grounds
- Finance
- PFA/Fundraising
- Policy

Each sub-committee will be chaired by a member of School Council unless otherwise decided by council. A sub-committee must include at least one School Council member and have at least three members.

Sub-committees assist council by meeting on a regular basis to make recommendations to the School Council on matters within their terms of reference. Sub-committees will report regularly at School Council meetings, providing advice and making recommendations to council. Sub-committees cannot make decisions for the School Council.

All School Councillors are encouraged to play an active role in at least one sub-committee.

## **Working parties**

A working party may be established to plan and implement a short term project.

## **Meetings**

### **Regular**

- The School Council will meet a minimum of twice a term on a Wednesday.
- School Council must meet at least 8 times per year with a quorum.
- The meeting will commence at 6.30pm and will finish no later than 9.00pm unless agreed by council.
- Meetings will be held in the Cranbourne South Primary School staff room.

## **Length of meetings and extension of meeting times**

- If business has not been concluded within 2.5 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 is necessary if council wants to extend the meeting.
- The meeting will be extended for no more than 15 minutes.

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## **Public reporting (annual) meeting**

The School Council will call a public meeting at least once each year and at that meeting will:

- Report the proceedings of the council for the period since the date of the previous public meeting
- Present the Annual Report published by the council
- 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.

## **Open and Closed Meetings**

- Visitors or observers can be present at School Council meetings but they must direct all their comments through the chairperson. Visitors have no voting rights.
- While all School Council meetings are expected to be open to the school community, there may be times when the council meeting, or part of the meeting needs to be closed to protect confidentiality or privacy or for another valid reason. Should this occur, School Council will need to approve a motion to go into a "closed" session.
- School Council should then go back into open session once the topic under discussion has been concluded and recorded as such in the minutes.

## **School Council Executive meeting; interim endorsement**

Whilst every effort is made at the school operational level to meet deadlines for approval of adventure activities or camps, occasionally due to the timing of School Council meetings and booking deadlines this may not be possible. In the event of this situation occurring and to avoid the necessity of calling all members to an Extraordinary School Council meeting, the School Council Executive, consisting of the Principal, Principal's nominee and School Council President, may be electronically communicated with or convened to approve such events. Interim endorsements will be recorded and tabled at the next scheduled School Council meeting.

## **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 subject 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 three 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 subject of the meeting.
- The business of an extraordinary meeting will be confined to the subject 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 DET employees. Any parent members on the council who also work for the Department are counted as DET 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.

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## **Attendance at School Council Meetings**

In order to make the most of School Council meetings and show value for the contribution of each member in attending these meetings, regular attendance at School Council meetings is an expectation of all members. If members are unable to attend a School Council meeting they are required to register their apology with the Principal (Executive Officer), prior to the meeting. A member ceases to be eligible to be a School Council member when they are absent from three consecutive council meetings without special leave previously granted by council and subject to a decision of council.

## **Extended leave of a School Council member**

- A member of the School Council may apply in writing to the President for extended leave of up to three 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.

## **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 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.

## **Proxies and Voting Procedures**

- Eligible members of council must be present throughout the meeting in person or by teleconference or video conferencing to be part of the decision making process. There is no provision in either the Act or the Regulations for proxies.
- If the President is absent, the vice President must chair the School Council meeting. If neither the President nor the vice President is present, councillors may elect a member to chair the meeting. The person should be a non DET employee.

## **Absence of the President and other members from a meeting**

- If the President is unable to preside at a School Council meeting, 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 prior to the meeting.

## **Conflict of interest**

If a School Council member or a member of his or her immediate family has any 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 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

The declaration of interest will be included in the minutes of the meeting.

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## Agenda

The Principal, with the assistance of the Secretary, shall ensure an agenda is prepared for each regular meeting and distribute the agenda, draft minutes from the previous meeting and meeting papers including:

- Principal's report
- Correspondence
- Sub-committee reports

The School Council papers will be forwarded to members electronically no less than five days before the meeting and in a paper format, via the eldest child, no less than 3 days before the meeting.

## Minutes

- The Principal will ensure a record of each School Council 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 sub-committees tabled 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 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 to be signed by the School Council President or the person who presided at the meeting (the original signed documentation will be filed).

*Note: The Secretary email to the Principal and President (or the person who presided at the meeting) for endorsement. Business arising from the minutes is dealt with after the minutes have been confirmed.*

## Conduct of meetings

The members of the School Council must abide by the Directors Code of Conduct issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commissioner and locally agreed etiquette.

## 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.

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 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.