



EYNESBURY
PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Council Standing Orders

2021



SCHOOL COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

Purpose of School Council

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 DET guidelines, decides the future directions for the school and oversees the school's operations

The legislative framework

School Councils operate under a framework provided by the:

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Education and Training Regulations 2007
- Individual school's standing orders

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

School Council membership

The constituting Order of Eynesbury Primary School states the composition of the Council is:

- 6 elected parent members
- 2 elected DET employee members
- Up to 2 community members. Community membership is optional, and these positions are co-opted, rather than elected. DET employees are not eligible for co-option to this category
- The principal who is the Executive Officer and is classified as a DET member

Councils are to be between six and fifteen members in total size. Community members have the same voting rights as elected members.

Casual vacancies

Should a casual vacancy occur on Council, this vacancy can be filled by Council co-opting a person from the appropriate category who then completes the rest of the term of office of the retiring member.

Office bearers

Regulations require 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 School Council with the same voting rights as other councillors.

Other potential office bearers:

- The Vice President is elected by all members of School Council. As the vice president may need to chair a meeting in the absence of the president, it is recommended this position is filled by a non-DET parent member or community member.
- The convenor of the finance sub-committee is appointed by School Council. It is recommended this position is held by a non-DET parent member or a community member. This position should not be filled by the office manager / business manager.

- The convenor of other School Council sub-committees, such as: canteen, fundraising, buildings and grounds and others as approved by Council
- The minute secretary may be either an elected member of School Council or a person appointed to this role who is not a member of School Council and is therefore a silent observer with no voting rights.

Quorum

A quorum requires no less than one half of School Council members currently holding office to be present at the meeting with at least half of the members present in the non-DET employee category. Any parent members on School Council who work for DET are counted as DET employees for the purpose of a quorum. A meeting of Council cannot be held if a quorum is not reached.

A member of the School Council may be present in person or by video conferencing or teleconferencing.

Tied votes

When a vote is tied, the President has the casting or deciding vote. It is therefore important that when the President offers a personal opinion on an issue that this is clearly stated. Councillors need to be able to clearly distinguish between the President's personal views and when a ruling is made as President of School Council.

Proxies and voting procedures

Eligible members of Council must be present at a meeting to be part of the decision-making process. There is no provision in either the Act or Regulations for proxies. Therefore, if someone is unable to attend a meeting, another person cannot attend and vote on their behalf. In the event of a vote being tied, the chairperson of the meeting (usually the president) has the casting vote.

If the president is absent...

In the absence of the President, 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. This person should be a non-DET employee.

School Council meetings

Unless otherwise decided, School Council meetings will be held twice a term. If members are unable to attend a meeting, they are expected to send their apology prior to the meeting to the Principal or the President.

An extraordinary meeting may be held at any time as decided by the Council, provided all members are given prior notice of the date, time, place and purpose of the meeting. At least one week's notice is preferable if an extraordinary meeting is to be held.

Open and closed meetings

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 recommendation (called 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.

Visitors or observers can be present with the agreement of the Principal and a decision by School Council, but they must direct all comments through the Chairperson. Visitors have no voting rights.

Extensions of meeting times

School Council meetings will be no longer than 90 minutes in duration. If business has not been concluded by the scheduled closing time for the meeting, the Chairperson should ask councillors whether they wish to defer the rest of the business until the next meeting or to extend the meeting by a specified period of time (e.g. 15 minutes).

A motion is necessary if Council wants to extend the meeting for that evening.

Conflict of interest

If a school councillor has a direct financial or other type of conflict of interest in a matter being considered before Council, that councillor:

- Must declare the conflict of interest
- Must not be present during the discussion unless invited to do so by the President
- Must not be present when a vote is taken on the matter
- May be included in the quorum for that meeting

Agenda and notes

The agenda, minutes from previous meeting and any notes for the meeting, such as sub-committee minutes, President's Report and Principal's Report, will be distributed to all councillors with sufficient time before the meeting for councillors to read over these documents.

Business arising from previous minutes and all sub-committee recommendations will be itemised in the agenda.

Minutes

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.

When 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 chaired the meeting.

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

School Council decisions

Decisions of the Eynesbury Primary 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.

Eynesbury Primary School Council will try to reach decisions by consensus but when that is not possible, a count will be taken with the number for and against recorded in the minutes.

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

Council sub-committees

Sub-committees assist Council in all the work that needs to be undertaken. They provide advice and make recommendations to Council and report regularly at School Council meetings. Sub-committees cannot make decisions for School Council. School Council maintains final responsibility for decisions.

All school councillors are expected to play an active role in at least one sub-committee.

School Council Principles

School councilors will at all times behave in a civil and respectful manner.

Councilors will promote:

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

Date: 25/03/21

Date for review: 25/03/22