



WILLIAM RUTHVEN
PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Council
Standing Orders

Endorsed by School Council: 27 July 2020

Introduction

Standing Orders are guidelines for School Council to follow to ensure it operates effectively and efficiently and fulfils its functions. They are reviewed annually by School Council and cover:

Sections:

1. Background and fundamentals
2. Membership
3. Meetings
4. Operations

Attachments:

- A. Constituting Order
- B. Director's Code of Conduct
- C. Roles – School Council and Principal
- D. School Council responsibility
- E. Subcommittee responsibilities
- F. Subcommittee report
- G. School Council evaluation
- H. Meeting agenda
- I. Policy Development Guidance

1. Background and fundamentals

1.1 Purpose of School Council

School Council is the legally formed body with responsibility for the efficient governance of the school.

1.2 The legislative framework

School Councils operate under a framework provided by the:

- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006* (the Act)
- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007* (the Regulations)
- Individual school's Constituting Order (Attachment A)
- Other Victorian laws and guidelines applying to School Councils, such as the Director's Code of Conduct (Attachment B) made under the *Public Administration Act 2004*.

Subject to this framework, a School Council may regulate its own proceedings by making these Standing Orders and through decisions at meetings.

1.3 Functions and Roles of School Council

School Council has specific functions under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, including to:

- Establish the broad direction and vision of the school within the school community
- Participate in the development and monitoring of the school strategic plan
- Approve the annual budget and monitor expenditure
- Develop, review, and update school policies (for guidance on developing policies refer to Attachment I)
- Raise funds for school-related purposes
- Maintain the school's grounds and facilities
- Enter into contracts (e.g. cleaning, construction work)
- Report annually to the school community and to the Department
- Create interest in the school in the wider community
- Inform itself and take into account the views of the community
- Regulate and facilitate after hours use of school premises and grounds
- Operate an outside school hours care service if required
- Be involved in Principal Selection.

The roles of the School Council and the Principal are set out in Attachment C.

2. Membership

2.1 Elections

Nominations and elections are conducted by the Principal according to the Regulations in February or March each year. Parents vote for parent members and staff vote for staff members. Membership is for a two-year term on a rotating basis (half of School Council membership each year).

2.2 Composition

The Constituting Order of William Ruthven Primary School appears in Attachment A. It states that the composition of School Council is:

- 7 elected parent members, who represent more than one third of school councillors.
- 3 elected DET employee members. The Principal who is Executive Officer is included in this number.
- 2 of 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. Community members have the same voting rights as elected members and, like other members, must make decisions in the best interests of students at William Ruthven Primary School.

2.3 Responsibilities

School councillors must adhere to the responsibilities set out in Attachment D.

The following function is delegated by School Council to the Principal:

- Employment powers, e.g. nurse/first aid officer

2.4 Casual vacancies

Should a casual vacancy occur on Council, this vacancy is 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.

2.5 Office bearers

The 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 must not be a DET employee. The office of President should not be open to the same person for more than four consecutive years.
- 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 councillors.

There are three other 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 should be filled by a non-DET employee.
- The **Convener of the Finance Subcommittee/Treasurer** is appointed by School Council. It is recommended this position be held by a non-DET employee. This position should not be filled by the school's Business Manager.
- The **Minute Secretary** may be either a member of School Council or a person appointed to this role who is not a member of School Council and is therefore an observer with no voting rights.

2.6 Subcommittees

Subcommittees assist Council in all the work that needs to be done. They report regularly at School Council meetings, provide advice and make recommendations to Council, which has the responsibility for decisions.

All school councillors are expected to play an active role in at least one subcommittee.

The William Ruthven Primary School Council subcommittees include:

- Finance
- Buildings and Grounds
- Education

Attachment E sets out the responsibilities of each subcommittee.

2.7 Subcommittee operations

- Subcommittees must have a minimum of three members with at least one school councillor and at least one parent irrespective of whether they are a school councillor.
- School Council appoints subcommittee members and a school councillor to act as the convener who chairs meetings and reports to School Council but may appoint another person as convener if appropriate.
- Members should be sought from the broader school community, with interest or expertise in the relevant area.
- Subcommittees must meet at least once every two months and should keep meetings to 90 minutes or less
- Subcommittees shall plan the year based on their responsibilities as set out in Attachment E. School Council may modify these responsibilities on the recommendation of the subcommittee.
- Conveners will prepare a written report on the subcommittee report template (Attachment F) and provide it to the secretary five days before the School Council meeting (e.g. if the School Council meeting is on Wednesday night, reports must be sent by noon the previous Friday).
- School Council will accept recommendations and proceed to make a decision based on the recommendations, or it will refer the issue back to the subcommittee for reconsideration. It may, however, reject recommendations without referring the issue back. It will not normally reassess the issue. However, subcommittees may specifically request School Council to consider and discuss items in their reports to provide direction to the subcommittee.
- Conveners should work with the Principal and President to communicate the subcommittee's activities to the school community.
- Subcommittees may not make financial commitments or carry on correspondence without approval from School Council or, in urgent situations, the written approval of both the Principal and the President.
- Subcommittees must comply with these Standing Orders, school policies and the Director's Code of Conduct.
- Conveners will store key documents on the internet document service (eg dropbox) for future reference, including a handover document.

2.8 Community members

Community members may report to Council verbally at meetings. However, if the member is making a recommendation for decision, they should complete the subcommittee report template (Attachment F) and provide it to the secretary one week before the meeting (e.g. when the Parents & Friends Representative recommends that School Council approves the fundraising calendar).

2.9 Working parties

School Council may establish a working party to oversee the implementation of short term tasks or carry out responsibilities in accordance with the Strategic Plan or other School Council initiatives. Working parties will be given a set of responsibilities and a timeline for completing its work and should operate and report to School Council in the same way as a subcommittee would.

2.10 Induction and training

Each member of School Council is expected to attend induction and training, which will be facilitated by School Council. The School Council will complete a School Council evaluation (see Attachment G) prior to the final meeting of that council (usually the February meeting) so the evaluation results and improvements/recommendations can be discussed at the final meeting.

2.11 Protocols

School councillors are required to abide by the Director's Code of Conduct set out in Attachment B.

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

In addition, councillors will promote:

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

3. Operations

3.1 Clarifying Matters for School Council Decisions

It is essential for the effective running of School Council that all councillors understand the role of School Council and the role of the Principal (refer to Section 1.3). When matters arise for decision that may not be School Council business it is recommended that:

- There be an initial discussion to determine whether the matter is School Council business and if so then the matter can be brought to council for consideration/discussion;
- If the matter is not School Council business, the President or subcommittee convenor may ask the Principal or other staff representative whether they would like to invite discussion on the topic as an input to a decision by management;
- If it is decided to continue discussion, the President or subcommittee convenor should monitor discussion and move the discussion on if it is not constructive.

School councillors who wish to raise matters for discussion that are not School Council business should do so directly with the Principal outside of a School Council or subcommittee meeting, in their capacity as a parent/carer or staff member.

3.2 Strategic Plan

School Council has responsibility for approving the Strategic Plan. It also contributes to the development of the Strategic Plan and monitors its implementation through the Annual Implementation Plan, Annual Report and School Review processes, including regular reports, provided by the Principal, covering performance against the strategic plan.

3.3 Communication with the School Community

The School Council will keep the community informed about its operation by publishing a report following a meeting in the school newsletter and/or on the school website.

Consultation with the community enables School Council to seek ideas and views about matters under consideration, which is one of its functions. It is important that the School Council communicates with the broader school community. Some ways of doing this include:

- Publishing on the school website and newsletter
- Asking for input via surveys
- Running forums
- Consulting on community issues and needs
- Using Skoolbag

The school community is also welcome to bring items to the School Council Agenda (refer to 4.6) by contacting the Principal, President or any member of the School Council (either through contacting the School Office or via email, with addresses for the Principal and President available on the School's website).

3.4 Document management

School Council documents are retained locally.

3.5 First meeting of new School Council

The first meeting of the new Council is to appoint the co-opted members and elect new Office Bearers. The Principal will chair this meeting until the President is elected.

The new School Council will:

- Review and confirm Standing Orders and subcommittee (and working party if any) responsibilities with any amendments
- Form subcommittees and appoint subcommittee conveners.

3.6 Annual review

At the meeting before the Annual Reporting Meeting (refer to Section 4.12), the School Council will use an evaluation/review process (Attachment G) to evaluate the performance of the School Council for the past year to inform the new Council of areas for improvement.

4. Meetings

4.1 Quorum

A quorum requires not less than one half of School Council members currently holding office to be present at the meeting (e.g. a minimum of 6 out of 10 members) with a majority of members present who are not DET employees (e.g. 4 non-DET employees out of 6 members). Any parent members on School Council who also work for the Department are counted as DET employees for the purpose of a quorum.

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

4.2 Decisions

All decisions of School Council must be made in the best interests of students at William Ruthven Primary School.

Decisions will be made by a majority of those eligible to vote and who are present at the meeting, where the majority are non-DET members.

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 and abstentions recorded in the minutes.

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

In urgent situations, an interim decision may need to be made which is later confirmed or revoked by School Council at a meeting. In making an interim decision, the Principal will consult with the President and then communicate it to councillors in writing as soon as practicable.

School councillors are not legally liable for any loss or damage suffered by Council or others as a result of reasonable decisions made in good faith and reasonable actions taken in good faith.

4.3 Tied votes

When a vote is tied (i.e. an even number of people are for and against the decision), the Chairperson (usually the President) has the casting or deciding vote. It is therefore important that when the President offers a personal opinion on an issue, 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.

4.4 Conflict of interest

If a School Council member or a member of his or her family has a financial interest in a matter being considered before Council, that Council member:

- 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.

4.5 Proxies

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 the Regulations for proxies. Therefore, if someone is unable to be present at a meeting, another person cannot attend and vote on their behalf.

4.6 Agenda and meeting papers

The agenda is prepared by the Principal in consultation with the President at least one week prior to each scheduled School Council meeting (Attachment H).

The agenda, minutes from the previous meeting, correspondence register as well as reports, such as financial reports, subcommittee reports, President's report and Principal's report, comprise the meeting papers. They will be distributed to all councillors five days before the meeting. All discussions need to be included as an agenda item either arising from a subcommittee report or as essential business. Closed agenda items will be identified as such on the agenda (refer to 4.14)

4.7 Minutes

The Principal will ensure a record of each Council meeting is kept and draft minutes are prepared after each meeting and distributed to councillors within two weeks of the meeting and again with the meeting papers sent out the Friday prior to the next School Council meeting.

The minutes will record the type of meeting (regular, extraordinary or reporting). Also included in the minutes are the dates and times of the meeting, those present and absent, an overview of key discussions, inward and outward correspondence, reports of any subcommittees not already included in the meeting papers, all 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 and abstentions.

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 chaired the meeting. School Council minutes will not be available to the school community for review although any member of the school community is welcome to attend School Council as an observer (refer to 4.14).

Note: A person does not have a right of access to School Council meeting minutes, documents or records under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

4.8 Correspondence

Correspondence will typically be sent out with the meeting papers, however may be provided at the meeting if it arrives late or when it is of a sensitive or confidential nature as determined by the Principal.

4.9 Absence

If members are unable to attend a meeting, they need to send their apology to the President or Principal prior to the meeting.

A member may apply in writing to the President for extended leave of up to 3 consecutive meetings. If 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.

A casual vacancy will occur if a member of School Council misses 3 consecutive regular meetings in a calendar year without being on extended leave.

4.10 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 Vice President is present, councillors may elect a non-DET employee member to chair the meeting.

4.11 Frequency

Unless otherwise decided, School Council meetings will be held twice a term on a Monday, from 5-7pm. A schedule of meetings for the year is set in March. There must be a minimum of 8 meetings each year.

4.12 Annual Reporting Meeting

School Council must also hold at least one public meeting each year, usually in March, to report to the school community on its activities and to present a statement of the school's income and expenditure for the previous calendar year.

4.13 Extraordinary meetings

An extraordinary meeting may be held at any time decided by Council, provided all members are given reasonable 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.

4.14 Open and closed meetings

School Council meetings are generally open to the school community. Observers and visitors are welcome but have no voting rights, shall confirm their attendance with either the Principal or the President prior to the meeting, and shall direct their comments through the Chairperson.

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. To close a meeting/part of a meeting closed items shall either be identified on the School Council agenda (refer to 4.6) and/or School Council shall pass a motion to go into a 'closed' session. Visitors or observers shall be asked to leave the meeting while the closed agenda item(s) is discussed. School Council should go back into open session once the topic under discussion has been concluded.

4.15 Extensions of meeting times

If business has not been concluded by the scheduled closing time for the meeting, the Chair 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.

**Attachment A
Constituting Order**

Copy available at office

Attachment B

Victorian Public Entity Directors' Code of Conduct 2006

William Ruthven Primary School Council is a public entity under the *Public Administration Act 2004*.

As a director and member of a Board of a Victorian public entity, School Council members must:

- Act with honesty and integrity. Be open and transparent in your dealings; use power responsibly; do not place yourself in a position of conflict of interest; strive to earn and sustain public trust of a high level.
- Act in good faith in the best interests of the public entity. Demonstrate accountability for your actions; accept responsibility for your decisions; do not engage in activities that may bring you or the public entity into disrepute.
- Act fairly and impartially. Avoid bias, discrimination, caprice or self-interest; demonstrate respect for others by acting in a professional and courteous manner.
- Use information appropriately. Ensure information gained as a director is only applied to proper purposes and is kept confidential.
- Use your position appropriately. Do not use your position as a director to seek an undue advantage for yourself, family members or associates, or to cause detriment to the public entity; ensure that you decline gifts or favours that may cast doubt on your ability to apply independent judgement as a Board member of the public entity.
- Act in a financially responsible manner. Understand financial reports, audit reports and other financial material that comes before the Board; actively inquire into this material.
- Exercise due care, diligence and skill. Ascertain all relevant information; make reasonable enquiries; understand the financial, strategic and other implications of decisions.
- Comply with the establishing legislation, or its equivalent, for your public entity. Act within the powers and for the functions set out in your public entity's establishing legislation and/or ministerial charter.
- Demonstrate leadership and stewardship. Promote and support the application of the Victorian public sector values; act in accordance with the Directors' Code.

Attachment C
Roles – School Council and Principal

Area	School Council	Principal
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance of school eg. Makes policies • Ensures school complies with legislation and policies • Oversight of general decisions affecting students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations of the school eg implements policy • Operates school in compliance with legislation and policies • Make day to day decisions affecting students
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops the broad vision for the school using guidelines provided by the Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads curriculum development and implementation • Determines teacher subject and time allocations, timetable, class sizes and structures
Student management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops student engagement policy and student dress code • Consults with the school community before adopting changes to these policies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements these policies • Manages all matters of student wellbeing, discipline, academic progress
Staff employment and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends to the Secretary of the Department the appointment of a principal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible (as delegate of the Secretary of the Department) for the employment and management of persons in the teaching service (including non-teaching staff) • Sets staffing plan and reviews staff effectiveness
Buildings and grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enters contracts for building and grounds improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversees maintenance of all facilities • Monitors implementation of contracts
Strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively participates in the strategic planning process, including by involving the school community in consultation • Approves, advocates and monitors the strategic plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leads the strategic plan process, including by advising school council about key issues to consider and articulating a long-term view of school's direction • Prepares, communicates and implements the plan • Advises school council about and keeps the school community informed of implementation progress

Attachment D

School Council Responsibilities

All Council Members

- Regularly attend all meetings
- Maintain confidentiality as required
- Be a member of at least one subcommittee
- Read all documents issued for the Council meeting
- Give an apology to the President or Principal as soon as practicable, if a meeting cannot be attended
- Assist the Chair in the functioning of the meetings
- Be informed of your duties and functions as a School Council member, including attending induction training
- Abide by the Standing Orders, the Director's Code of Conduct and school policies

President

- Chair all Council meetings
- Conduct meetings impartially, in a manner that encourages all members to be involved and promote balanced, productive debate
- Be the official representative of the Council in public forums
- Be a signatory for legal documents, including contracts
- Be a co-signatory to the Official Account
- Ratify minutes and reports
- Assist the Principal to prepare meeting agenda
- Start and end meetings on time
- Introduce any guests, being sure to include all those presenting agenda items and those that are visitors to the meetings
- Maintain order and focus on priorities
- Allow for individual input by all school councillors during discussion of agenda items
- At the end of each meeting, summarise the meeting, reviewing any key actions and decisions
- Support and be a point of contact for prospective and existing school councillors
- With the Principal, provide opportunities for and encourage school councillors to attend induction training
- With the Principal, lead in the engagement of and consultation with the school community
- With the Principal, encourage participation of and interest in School Council by the school community

Vice President

- Take the President's role in her/his absence
- Support the President in their role as required

Principal (Executive Officer)

- Prepare an agenda for each Council meeting in consultation with the President
- Prepare all papers for distribution
- Maintain Council filing both within the school filing system to meet Departmental requirements
- Distribute minutes and reports
- Provide timely advice to Council on all educational issues, DET policy and guidelines, the operation of the school and Council responsibilities
- Develop appropriate policies for approval by the School Council
- Implement policies and decisions of School Council
- Report regularly to the School Council on the school's performance measured against the School's Strategic Plan
- Ensure appropriate representation on all School Council subcommittees
- Ensure the preparation of the annual budget
- With the President, provide opportunities for and encourage school councillors to attend induction training
- With the President, lead in the engagement of and consultation with the school community
- With the President, encourage participation of and interest in School Council by the school community

Finance Subcommittee Convener/Treasurer

- Convene the Finance subcommittee
- Submit a report to the secretary five days prior to the School Council meeting and present the report at the meeting.
- Present the annual budget to Council for ratification
- Ensure all Council accounts are audited according to regulations

Other subcommittee and working party convenors

- Convene the subcommittee or working party
- Develop recommendations for the approval of School Council
- Submit a report to the secretary five days prior to the School Council meeting and present the report at the meeting

Secretary

- Prepare a correspondence register and ensure its inclusion in the meeting papers
- Distribute and report on significant items of correspondence
- Take accurate minutes and transcribe minutes for distribution

Attachment E

Subcommittee Responsibilities

Finance subcommittee

- To oversee the school finances
- To oversee fundraising in the school
- To oversee the OSHC budget
- To oversee the Buildings Fund
- To participate in the setting of the program budget; establishing and setting priorities
- Checking the monthly accounts before the School Council meeting.

Education subcommittee

- Provide and receive advice to/from the Principal in the area of curriculum-related policies and programs.
- Updates policies and submits to School Council for approval.

Building and Grounds subcommittee

- Ensure that the buildings and grounds are clean, safe and in a sound condition
- Develop plans for improving facilities to meet the needs of the students
- Plan a long-term maintenance and development strategy
- Organise working bees
- Provide advice to the Policy subcommittee in the area of environment and facilities-related policies.



WILLIAM RUTHVEN
PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Attachment F
Subcommittee Report**

Subcommittee Report

William Ruthven Primary School Council

For School Council meeting to be held on

Subcommittee/WP	
Meeting date	
Attendees	
Summary of information for School Council	
Recommendations requiring School Council decision	
Date of next meeting	
Newsletter item?	
Convener	

Attachment G School Council Self-assessment

+Rating scale

1 emerging	We are beginning to do this
2 evolving	We are working this into our systems and routines
3 established	We consistently do this and we do it very well

GOVERNANCE

School council:	1	2	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understands the legislative framework of the Acts, regulations and ministerial orders that underpin their authority. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discussions and actions collectively reflect an understanding of and commitment to the Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> discussion and decisions reflect an understanding of their role and the differences between the governance role of council and the operational role of the principal and school administration. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is able to identify and manage apparent and actual conflicts of interest. 			

SCHOOL COUNCIL OPERATIONS

School council:	Yes	No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses a set of Standing Orders that are reviewed annually 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> meets with an appropriate quorum at least 8 times per year 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> circulates meeting agenda and papers to members at least five days prior to the meeting 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> takes meeting minutes to record items discussed and decisions made 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> has delegated school council powers and functions where appropriate. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uses subcommittees and working groups to effectively manage school council business. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> holds a public meeting annually to report on the proceedings of council for the period since the previous public meeting, present the Annual Report to the School Community and present a copy of the accounts of the council, if they have been audited. 		

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

	1	2	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school council has a shared purpose focused on the best possible educational outcomes for students at their school. 			
School council understands:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school's values, vision and mission 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) and school improvement cycle 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and uses data to evaluate and report on school performance 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> its role in the development and monitoring of key processes and documents, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School Strategic Plan. Annual Implementation Plan. Annual School Self-Evaluation. Annual Report to the School Community. 			

FINANCE

School council:	1	2	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understands its role with respect to budgets, procurement, financial controls and reports. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> appropriately fulfils its role in approving the annual school budget and monitoring expenditure. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> appropriately fulfils its role with respect to the school's internal controls and financial reports. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> appropriately fulfils its role with respect to fundraising, as specified in the Schools Finance Manual. 			

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

School Council understands:	1	2	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the role and purpose of policy in school governance. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> which school policies fall within its powers and functions and has processes in place to ensure those policies are appropriately reviewed, approved and recorded on a school register (see guidance below). 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how to develop policies consistently with DET guidance and resources (for guidance, see information on school policies template below). 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how to write school policies that are accessible to the community, which achieve their intended purpose and best meet the needs of the school, its students and the community (including alignment with the School Strategic Plan and address educational, social and cultural diversity). 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> which school policies require further community consultation and the nature and extent of this consultation for each policy. 			

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

School council...	1	2	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understands the benefits of engaging with the community 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes members who reflect the diversity of their community. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> knows and engages with the school's community to build productive relationships 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> productively leads consultation with the community through meetings, surveys and informally 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> shares information using reports, newsletters, social media etc, with the school community, as appropriate 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> members support school council decisions in the school community. 			

SCHOOL COUNCIL PRESIDENT

The school council president...	1	2	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understands their leadership role and responsibilities and those of the principal. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understands the characteristics of an effective school council 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> runs school council meetings appropriately according to the Standing Orders 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engages all members in frank, open and respectful discussion 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understands the processes for effectively making decisions 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> effectively resolves conflict, disagreements, concerns and complaints. 			

**Attachment H
Meeting format (Agenda)**



WILLIAM RUTHVEN
PRIMARY SCHOOL

William Ruthven Primary School School Council Agenda

DATE: Monday, 20 July 2020

VENUE: Staff Room, William Ruthven Primary School, 5.00pm

Area	Item	Name	Time
Welcome	Overview		
	Apologies		
Previous Minutes	Tabled		
	Business Arising from Previous Minutes		
Matters Arising			
Principal's Report			
Sub-Committee Reports	Finance		
	Education		
	Buildings and Grounds		
Other Reports			
Essential Business	Child Safe		
Correspondence			
	Business Arising from Correspondence		
Next meeting Other meeting dates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Council: • Finance: • Education • Buildings and Grounds: 		
Time			

**William Ruthven
Primary School
Policies**

Policy Development Guidance

Rationale

The policies of the school guide and describe the main processes, functions and operations of the school. The development and review of policies should therefore have an agreed process so that various stakeholders are part of the consultation and review process.

Aims

- To have the best school policies in place to best guide the operations and directions of the school.

Implementation

- The policies describe the rationale, aims and implementations of the operations and directions of the school as a whole.
- The process of considering school policies will be managed by the Principal, will be a continuous cycle, and will use a transparent and consultative process.
- All policies will use the school policy layout including the following elements: School Name, policy name, rationale, aims, implementation, evaluation and cycle review time.
- When developing a new policy, the Principal will consult with appropriate personnel in order to draft the initial policy statement. The draft policy will then be circulated for comment to the appropriate committee/s, to all staff members, back to the leadership team and finally to the School Council for ratification, preferably within a term.
- Policies will be developed taking into account Department of Education policies, memos and circulars relevant to each policy area.
- A database of policies and a review schedule to provide a timeline for reviews either annually or on a four-year basis is to be maintained.
- When reviewing an existing school policy as per the four-year review cycle, the Principal will consult with all staff and the appropriate committee/s, and to School Council for ratification.
- Changes as a result of policy developments and/or reviews will be widely advised to staff and parents.
- All staff will have opportunities to provide input into any policy development or review process.
- The focus of all school policies must remain the needs of students and school operations.
- Any concerns relating to the structure of the school must be directed to the Principal or School Council President.
- Policies will be subject to review where and when legislative changes and ministerial orders, that affect them, occur.
- All policies will pass through the Policy Subcommittee prior to presentation to School Council with the exception of the following two DET mandated policies, which apply to the finances of the school and which are required to be reviewed annually by the Finance Subcommittee only: Internet Banking Policy; and, Investment Policy.

Evaluation

- This policy will be reviewed annually.

Being a high performing School Council - Agreement

The School Council Standing Orders describe the role, functions and operations of School Council and form the basis for the effective functioning of School Council. This agreement builds on the Standing Orders to outline how we agree to work together to maximise the value of our contribution as School Councillors.

Prioritising what we'll discuss:

- We want to discuss matters of importance to the future of the school and the school community.
- We want to discuss matters School Council has the power to decide, or at least influence.
- We want to surface and discuss matters of philosophy, culture and values that underpin our perspectives in order to support good decisions we can stand by.
- We want to encourage correspondence from the school community regarding matters of concern to the school community.
- The Principal and President will call for input to the Agenda prior to the agenda meeting, and set the agenda and timings to ensure sufficient time for the most important matters. They will communicate any matters that were suggested for the agenda but not included, and the reasons for this.

Conducting discussions and making decisions:

- To ensure our discussions are well informed, new matters/concerns arising from Councillors and from correspondence will be discussed at the relevant subcommittee before coming to School Council.
- Subcommittees will aim to bring decision/action based recommendations to School Council. However, recommendations may include seeking input from other subcommittees or setting up a special meeting to explore a matter further.
- In relation to subcommittee recommendations, all options are on the table. School Council may approve, refer back to the subcommittee, or call a special meeting, or a working party. There is no shame in not getting a recommendation endorsed.
- Where we don't easily reach agreement on a matter we will seek to reach an agreement on a process to follow to reach a decision, and then follow that process. All councillors will support the ultimate decision reached in this way.
- All Councillors are assumed to have to read all reports prior to School Council meetings. Because of this assumption, subcommittee reports will be taken as read (convenors will not talk to them) and the floor will be opened for questions or comments.
- The Principal and President will plan ahead to ensure Councillors have sufficient time to review substantial documents (such as the Annual Implementation Plan) and to discuss them fully at the meeting.
- When reviewing substantial documents, councillors will advise the document owner in advance of the meeting if they have any significant concerns (so the owner can prepare a response), and

focus their input on matters of substance (it is generally not our role to point out typos or suggestions regarding written expression).

- All school council decisions should be governed by common sense and practicality, bearing in mind limitations such as resources and time, and other priorities.
- The President will chair School Council meetings in accordance with this agreement and the Standing Orders in order to help us as a group to focus our time where we can be of most value to the school. Everyone is welcome to remind the President when that's not happening.