



WILLIAM RUTHVEN
PRIMARY SCHOOL

2025-26 School Council
Standing Orders

Endorsed by School Council: 17 March 2025

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
2. Membership
3. Meetings
4. Operations

Attachments:

- A. Constituting Order for all school councils
- B. Code of conduct for directors of Victorian public entities
- C. Roles and responsibilities – Principals and School Councils
- D. School Council responsibility
- E. Subcommittee responsibilities
- F. Meeting agenda
- G. Subcommittee report
- H. School Council self assessment

1. Background

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 2017* (the Regulations)
- Individual school's Constituting Order (Attachment A)
- Other Victorian laws and guidelines applying to School Councils, such as the *Code of conduct for directors of Victorian public entities 2024* (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
- 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 and responsibilities of the Principal and School Council 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 each year. Parents vote for parent members and DE employees vote for staff employed by the the Department. 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 DE employee members. The Principal who is Executive Officer is included in this number.
- 2 community members. Community membership is optional and these positions are co-opted, rather than elected. DE 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.

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 DE 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-DE employee.
- The **Convener of the Finance Subcommittee/Treasurer** is appointed by School Council. It is recommended this position be held by a non-DE 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
- Special events/Fundraising
- Outside School Hours Care

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 G) and provide it to the principal five days before the School Council meeting (e.g. if the School Council meeting is on Monday night, reports must be sent by noon the previous Monday).
- 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 school's server 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 G) and provide it to the Principal one week before the meeting (e.g. when making a recommendation 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 H) 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 (that is, operational matters) 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 whether they would like to invite discussion on the topic as an input to a decision by the School Improvement Team;
- 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 (that is, raise operational matters) 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 Compass

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).

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 H) 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 DE employees (e.g. 4 non-DE employees out of 6 members). Any parent members on School Council who also work for the Department are counted as DE 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-DE 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 F).

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 approximately five days prior to the meeting date, if possible, to allow councillors to reflect on the issues, and to gather more information if necessary. All discussions need to be included as an agenda item either arising from a sub-committee 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-DE employee member to chair the meeting.

4.11 Frequency

Unless otherwise decided, School Council meetings will be held on the third Monday of a month, from 5:45 – 7:45 pm. Meetings should not be longer than 2.5 hours. The only exception to this is the first meeting of the new School Council which meets on the third Monday in March. This is to allow for the election of office bearers. 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, by 30 April, 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 for all school councils

[Ministerial Order 1280 Constitution of Government School Councils 2020 \(DOCX\)](#)
updates the Constituting Order for all school councils with effect from 1 January 2021.

Please see:

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-powers-and-functions/policy>

Attachment B

Code of conduct for directors of Victorian public entities 2024

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.

Please See: **Code of conduct for directors of Victorian public entities**

<https://vpvc.vic.gov.au/ethics-behaviours-culture/codes-of-conduct/code-of-conduct-for-directors-of-victorian-public-entities>

Attachment C

Roles and Responsibilities

Principals and School Councils

The school council has a limited governance and oversight role, whereas the principal manages the day-to-day activities of the school and is responsible for ensuring the delivery of a comprehensive education to every student. The principal also holds a duty of care for, and is responsible for the care, safety, and welfare of the students at the school.

Area	The Principal ...	School Council ...
Governance	• leads the organisation, management and administration of the school • allocates teaching or other duties to teaching staff • is responsible for the general care, safety, and welfare of students • determines the overarching education decisions for students, such as curriculum and staffing arrangements	• assists in the efficient governance of the school • ensures all money is expended for proper purposes relating to the school • informs itself of the views of the school community
Strategic direction of the school	• leads development of curriculum – teaching and learning programs • determines teacher, subject and time allocations; timetable; class sizes; and structures • leads the school review, including keeping the school community and council informed about the school review, leading the pre-review self-evaluation and presenting the findings of the review report to school staff and school council • engages the staff and school community in development of the School Strategic Plan following the school review • engages the staff and school community in the development of the Annual Implementation Plan • engages the staff and school community in the monitoring of progress against annual Targets and Plans	• contributes to the broad direction and vision for the school, using guidelines provided by the department • participates in the school review as defined in the terms of reference (e.g. pre-review self-evaluation, participation in focus groups etc), and the president is a member of the core School Review Panel • contributes to the finalisation of the School Strategic Plan following the school review • is presented with the Annual Implementation Plan, including any risks to achieving the plan's Targets and Actions • following endorsement by council the president endorses the School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan in the Strategic Planning Online Tool (SPOT)
Student dress code policy	• implements the student dress code developed by school council in consultation with the wider community • considers and, where appropriate, grants exemptions to dress code guidelines for individual students • enforces the student dress code	• develops student dress code policy in close consultation with the wider school community • consults with the school community before adopting changes to this policy
Camps and excursions	• is responsible for approving all excursions, including camps, local, interstate and overseas • Where a camp or excursion involves more than one school, all relevant principals are responsible for approving all excursions involving another school	• is responsible for approving excursions in relation to the school's budget and the parent payments policy or contracts engaging third party providers
Buildings and grounds	• is responsible for maintenance of school buildings and grounds • monitors implementation of contracts	• exercises a general oversight of school buildings and grounds to ensure they are kept in good condition and order

	• is responsible for maintaining records of school council approved quotes on the Asset Information Management System (AIMS) • is responsible for maintaining records on AIMS of contracts that school councils enter or endorse	• oversees school cleaning, and in regional schools only, enters into contracts for school cleaning • enters into contracts for building and grounds improvements • makes decisions about the hiring and shared use of school facilities in accordance with Community Use of Schools – Hiring and Licensing at www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/community-use-schools-hiringlicensing-and-community-jointuse-agreements/guidance, to be recorded in AIMS by principal • is responsible for approving quotes for construction works and services under \$50,000 in line with the Procuring Low-value Construction Works or Services policy, to be recorded in AIMS by principal
Strategic planning	• 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	• actively participates in the strategic planning process, including by involving the school community in consultation • approves, advocates and monitors the strategic plan
Outside school hours care or kindergarten service	• engages the school community in the decision-making process to establish or change operating models or service provider • informs the school community and school council about the service on a regular basis • may be nominated by school council as the person with management or control for a school council managed operating model • has knowledge of the National Law and National Regulations and the Child Safe Standards as they apply to education and care services • is a person with management or control under Family Assistance Law where a service administers Child Care Subsidy (CCS) • ensures that procurement policies for facilities and services from third parties ensure the safety of children and students	• decides whether to establish a service or change operating models or service provider • for a school council managed operating model: - makes applications to the department's Quality Assessment and Regulation Division to become an approved provider and to obtain service approval(s) under the National Quality Framework (NQF) - nominates a person with management or control, noting this does not take away from the council's legal responsibilities under the NQF - is the legal entity under Family Assistance Law where a service administers the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). School council members are considered persons with management and control under this Law • in a third-party-provider operating model: - selects, engages and contractmanages the preferred provider, and endorses the licence agreement negotiated with a third party - receives regular program reports from the OSHC or kindergarten provider - regularly monitors the provider's compliance with the requirements of the National Law and National Regulations

		- should be consulted on the development of the service's Quality Improvement Plan and be provided with a copy of the service's Assessment and Rating report - works with the principal to ensure that the child safety requirements in the department's Procurement – Schools policy are followed, including ensuring that contracts with third-party suppliers include requirements for the safety of children and students
Minimum Standards and Requirements for School Registration	• responsible for operational school policies, procedures and practices required for compliance with the minimum standards for school registration • consults with the school council and school community on new or updated local policies where appropriate or required, which must include the: - Statement of values and school philosophy (which requires consultation with school council only) - Student Wellbeing and Engagement - Bullying Prevention policies - Child Safety and Wellbeing policy - Child Safety Code of Conduct - Child Safety Responding and Reporting policy and procedures - Complaints policy - Digital Learning policy - Visitors policy - Volunteers policy	• fulfil other duties outlined in this table many of which contribute to compliance with the minimum standards • consider and approve policies that are within the scope of the powers and functions of school council and that are required under the minimum standards for school registration. These policies include the Statement of Values and School Philosophy and the Child Safety Code of Conduct (to the extent it applies to school council employees and members, unless delegated to the principal) and any other policy required under the minimum standards that the principal elects to seek school council approval for
Annual Report to the School Community	• responsible for the development of the Annual Report to the School Community	• table and endorse the Annual Report to the school community, which is attested by the president in SPOT • ensure the Annual Report is made available via a school council public reporting meeting to the school community
Child Safe Standards	• has responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all the requirements of Ministerial Order 1359 – Implementing the Child Safe Standards – managing the risk of child abuse in schools and school boarding premises. See Child Safe Standards at www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/child-safe-standards/policy • will implement the 11 Child Safe Standards. They can use the Child Safe Standards Action List – for Government schools to identify what they need to do to address Ministerial Order 1359. See Schools and school boarding premises at www.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards-schools-and-school-boarding-premises • will ensure the school has a Child Safety Code of Conduct which provides adults	• approves and complies with the Child Safety Code of Conduct to the extent that it applies to school council members and employees, unless delegated to the principal • in respect of school council employees, ensures that department recruitment policies and practices are followed and appropriate records kept • ensures, at least annually, the council receives appropriate guidance and training about: - their obligations and responsibilities for the Child Safe Standards - child safety and wellbeing risks in the school environment - the child safety policies, procedures and practices of the school

	with a clear guide on the behaviour that is expected of them in school environments • where applicable to their powers and functions, works with the principal to ensure that the child safety requirements in the department's Procurement – Schools policy are followed, including ensuring that contracts with third-party suppliers include requirements for the safety of children and students • can locate further information about the Child Safe Standards and school council roles and responsibilities at PROTECT – Child Safe Standards at www.vic.gov.au/PROTECT. See also Child Safe Standards at www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/child-safe-standards/policy • will be aware of the school's information sharing and recordkeeping policies and procedures as. See Privacy and Information Sharing at www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/privacy-informationsharing/policy and the Records Management – School Records at www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/records-management/policy • will follow the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct and Child Safety and Wellbeing policy
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Finance

It is a legal requirement that school councils ensure that funds coming into the school council are being properly used and authorised.

To this end, school councils are responsible for overseeing a functioning and effective system of internal controls in accordance with the **Finance Manual – Financial Management for Schools** at www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/financemanual/policy.

Principals are required to inform school councillors at the first meeting of the new council each year about their financial responsibilities and the policies and procedures that are required to be followed. The following table provides an overview of how the Principal and School council would typically be involved in school financial management.

The principal ...	The school council ...
Internal controls	
• provides financial reports to council	• considers financial reports
• puts in place a system of internal controls consistent with department policy	• ensures the school has and uses a system of internal controls consistent with department policy
• conducts school financial business in line with the system of internal controls	• adheres to internal controls such as: - appointing a school councillor, normally the school council president or another member who has been delegated the authority by the school council, to approve payments and sign cheques; this councillor cannot be the business manager - approving trading operations - ensuring issues raised by auditors are addressed - identifying and managing conflicts of interest - monitoring and overseeing offers and provision of gifts, benefits and hospitality within the school and at least annually, reviewing the School Register for compliance with policy

Budgeting	
develops the budget timeline	approves the budget timeline
develops program budgets with staff, and salary and revenue budgets	reviews budget submissions and program priority list. This can be undertaken by the finance subcommittee if school council has one
evaluates program outcomes, prepares and prioritises budget submissions	reviews and approves the budget
communicates the budget to staff	
Financial Reports	
prepares financial reports	monitors revenue and expenditure against the budget
- explains financial reports to the finance subcommittee and school council, and recommends action as appropriate - implements the council's decisions	takes action to address issues arising from the financial reports
Fundraising	
assists with the review of fundraising proposals	- approves fundraising activities (including those undertaken by a parent's club) - reviews approved fundraising profit and loss
advises council about available cash	
Parent payments	
develops the school's parent payments arrangements in accordance with the department's Parent Payments policy	contributes to and approves the parent payments arrangements

Principal and School council president

To avoid confusion over the role of the school principal and that of the school council president, the table below provides a brief outline of the differences between their respective roles and responsibilities.

The principal ...	The school council president ...
As executive officer of the school council, the principal is responsible for: - providing school council with timely advice about educational and other matters related to school council functions and powers - preparing the school council's agenda in consultation with the school council president - reporting to the school council about the school's performance against its School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan at key points during the year - making sure that council decisions are implemented - providing adequate support and resources for the conduct of school council meetings - communicating with the school council president about school council business - confirming in the school's Annual Report that the school has met the Victorian Regulations and Qualifications Authority (VRQA) registration requirements - ensuring that new council members are inducted - creating an Education Mail account for the school council president and encouraging the president to check their account regularly - recording the president's details on CASES21 - keeping the community informed about council's decisions	The role of the school council president is to: - effectively chair school council meetings, ensuring that everyone has a say in meetings and that decisions are properly understood and well-recorded - be a signatory to contracts, the School Strategic Plan and financial accounts - on behalf of the school council, endorse the school pre-review selfevaluation, terms of reference for the school review, School Strategic Plan, Annual Implementation Plan and Annual Report and communicate this information to the school community - ensure school council stays focused on improving student outcomes - with the principal, be school council's spokesperson and official representative on public occasions - when votes are tied, have a second or casting vote - access email communications each week from the department through the president's Education Mail account and communicate these to school council members where relevant

Attachment D

Responsibilities of School Council members and Office Bearers

All School 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, DE 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
- Prepare a correspondence register and ensure its inclusion in the meeting papers
- Distribute and report on significant items of correspondence

Finance Subcommittee Convener (Treasurer)

- Convene the Finance subcommittee
- Submit a report to the Principal 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 Principal five days prior to the School Council meeting and present the report at the meeting

Secretary

- 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.

Outside School Hours Care subcommittee

- To support community engagement, and monitoring of the service.
- To ensure that the provider operates a quality service, value for money and adheres to all conditions of their engagement.
- To manage the licence agreement.
- Also see:
 - [OSHC subcommittee terms of reference \(DOCX\)](#)
 - [OSHC meeting agenda templates \(DOCX\)](#)
 - [School Council Subcommittees Policy.](#)

Building and Grounds subcommittee

- To ensure that the buildings and grounds are clean, safe and in a sound condition
- To develop plans for improving facilities to meet the needs of the students
- To plan a long-term maintenance and development strategy
- To organise working bees
- To provide advice to the Principal in the area of environment and facilities-related policies.

Special Events/Fundraising subcommittee

- To plan and implement special events for students and their families (parents and carers).
- To engage students' families (parents and carers) in school and community events.
- With School Council approval, may raise funds for school-based projects (e.g., improvements to buildings and grounds).

Attachment F
Meeting format (Agenda)



William Ruthven Primary School School Council Agenda

DATE:

VENUE: Staff room, William Ruthven Primary School, 5.30pm

Area	Item	Name	Time
Welcome	Welcome		
	Acknowledgement of Country		
	Apologies		
	Quorum		
	Conflict of interest		
Child Safe	Child Safe (Identification of any issues)		
Minutes from previous meeting	Tabled		
	Business Arising from Previous Minutes		
Notice of Gen. business			
Principal's report			
Sub-Committee Reports	Finance		
	Buildings and Grounds		
	Education		
	Special Events/Fundraising		
General Business			
Correspondence			
	Business Arising from Correspondence		
Next meeting Other meeting dates	• School Council: • Finance: • Buildings and Grounds: • Special Events/Fundraising: • Outside School Hours Care:		
Time			



WILLIAM RUTHVEN
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attachment G
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 H

School Council Self-assessment

School councils play a key role in Victorian government schools, supporting the school to provide the best possible educational outcomes for students. The effectiveness of a school council relies on both the skills and expertise of its individual members, and on council working as a team.

Under the Public Administration Act 2004, school councils are required to assess their performance on an annual basis. From 2022, school councils will be asked to assess their performance using the [online self-assessment tool](#) and submit this assessment annually. The online tool consists of a series of statements school councillors can discuss as a group and then the council can rate itself as a group using the ratings scale and descriptors.

It is recommended that school councils use this self-assessment tool early in the life of a new council. This will allow a council to assess its strengths and identify areas where it would benefit from development and training. The sections of the tool correspond to the Department's Improving School Governance (ISG) training modules. Lower ratings will indicate possible areas for development and training. The online tool provides links to information and appropriate ISG training options.

It is good governance practice for a school council to regularly review its operation and effectiveness and this could be done by revisiting the tool, or parts of it, later in the year and submitting an updated assessment to identify where the school council may have improved.

+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
• members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.			
• understands the legislative framework of the Acts, regulations and ministerial orders that underpin their authority.			
• discussions and actions collectively reflect an understanding of and commitment to the Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities			
• 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.			
• is able to identify and manage apparent and actual conflicts of interest.			

SCHOOL COUNCIL OPERATIONS

School council:	Yes	No
• uses a set of Standing Orders that are reviewed annually		
• meets with an appropriate quorum at least 8 times per year		
• receives meeting agenda and papers at least five days where possible prior to the meeting		
• has a meeting minute taker to record items discussed and decisions made		
• has delegated school council powers and functions where appropriate		
• uses subcommittees and working groups to effectively manage school council business		

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.		
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STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

School council understands:	1	2	3
the school's values, vision and mission			
the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO 2.0) and school improvement cycle			
and uses data to evaluate and report on school performance			
its role in the development and monitoring of key processes and documents, including the School Strategic Plan			
its role in the monitoring of the Annual Implementation Plan and how it reflects goals and targets in the School Strategic Plan			
its role to review and comment on the Annual Report to the School Community			
its role in the four yearly Pre-Review Self-Evaluation and School Review			

FINANCE

School council:	1	2	3
understands its role with respect to budgets, procurement, financial controls and reports.			
appropriately fulfils its role in approving the annual school budget and monitoring expenditure.			
appropriately fulfils its role with respect to the school's internal controls and financial reports.			
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
the role and purpose of policy in school governance.			
which school policies fall within its powers and functions and has processes in place to ensure those policies are appropriately reviewed, approved and recorded			
how to develop policies consistently with DE guidance and resources (see information in the School Policy Template portal).			
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).			
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
understands the benefits of engaging with the community			
includes members who reflect the diversity of their community.			
knows and engages with the school's community to build productive relationships			

• productively leads consultation with the community through meetings, and focus groups			
• shares information using reports, newsletters, social media etc, with the school community, as appropriate			
• members support school council decisions in the school community.			

SCHOOL COUNCIL PRESIDENT

The school council president...	1	2	3
• understands their leadership role and responsibilities and those of the principal.			
• understands the characteristics of an effective school council			
• runs school council meetings appropriately according to the Standing Orders			
• engages all members in frank, open and respectful discussion			
• understands the processes for effectively making decisions			
• effectively resolves conflict, disagreements, concerns and complaints.			

PREVIOUS SCHOOL COUNCIL TRAINING COMPLETED

Enter the total number of current members on your school council before completing the table below: ____

School Council Training	Number of current school councillors who have completed training in the past two years		
• Viewed Induction Video: https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy			
• Governance			
• Strategic planning			
• Finance			
• Policy and Review (Online only)			
• School Council President			

NB. Ideally, everyone on council will view the induction video and complete governance training, then sufficient members will have completed training in the other modules so that they will be able to advise and, where appropriate, lead council in these areas.

FROM THE SELF-ASSESSMENT:

What key training / projects / actions will school council undertake to address areas identified for development? Please provide a minimum of one response:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.