



WILLIAM RUTHVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL SCHOOL COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

Purpose of School Council

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

The Legislative Framework

School Councils operate under a framework provided by the:

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

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

School Council Membership

The Amended Constituting Order of WILLIAM RUTHVEN PS School Council states the composition of the Council is:

- Four (4) elected parent members, who represent more than one third of School Councillors
- Three (3) elected DET employee members. The Principal who is Executive Officer is included in this number.
- TWO (2) community member. These positions are optional and 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.

Elected members of the Council have two year terms of office with half retiring annually on 31st March of each year. Co-opted members of School Council have one year terms which also terminate on 31st March. Elections are conducted according to the Education Regulations 1988 (amended 1993).

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.

Office Bearers

• **President**

The President is elected by all members of School Council and may not be in employment at the School.

• **Principal**

The Principal is a full member of Council and apart from acting as Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of Council policies and for informing Council on educational, statutory, regulatory and Government policy issues.

• *Council shall also elect from its members the following office bearers:*

- * Vice President (Although there is no restriction on a DET member being appointed, the position is normally allocated to a non-DET employed member of Council to allow for the Vice President to chair meetings in the absence of the President).
- * Secretary- Business Manager

The President shall:

- * act as chairperson of all meetings of Council
- * decide recommendations for each item of correspondence in collaboration with the Executive Officer
- * conduct the business of Council under agreed rules and any standing orders adopted from time to time
- * be an ex-officio member of all Council sub-committees.

The Vice President shall:

- * in the absence of the President, act as Chairperson at Council meetings and otherwise represent the President as required (NB only a non-DET employed member of Council can chair meetings).

The Principal shall:

- * provide all Council members with minutes of the previous meeting, agenda, reports of committees and financial reports by three working days prior to the Council meeting.
- * notify Council of any apologies received
- * ensure that minutes of the meeting are recorded
- * table all correspondence relevant to the meeting
- * write all correspondence authorised by Council
- * be the Executive Officer of the Council
- * be an ex-officio member of all Council committees.

The Business Manager shall:

- * present to Council a monthly statement of the financial position of Council
- * ensure that all Council accounts are audited according to regulations
- * act as a signatory to the Council financial account.

The Secretary shall:

- * take minutes of meetings and forward to the school office for distribution at least 5 working days prior to the next School Council Meeting
- * Note actions arising from the meeting and distribute this list to President, Principal, and all Council members who are responsible for an action

Signatories for Accounts Under the Control of Council

The Principal, the President, the Treasurer and/or two other Council member nominated by the Council shall act as signatories.

School Council Meetings

School Council meetings will be held at least twice a term on the third Monday of the month, from 5:30pm to 7:00pm. If this date falls within a school holiday period an alternative date will be negotiated by School Council.

If members are unable to attend a meeting, they are expected to send their apology to the school office prior to the meeting.

School Council must also hold one public meeting each year (the Annual General Meeting) 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.

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

Quorum

A quorum requires not less than one half of School Council members currently holding office to be present at the meeting with a majority of members present who are not DET employees. 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 video conferencing or teleconferencing.

Chairing the Meeting

The President will normally chair the meeting. 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 member to chair the meeting. This person should be a non DET employee.

School Council Decisions and Voting Procedures

Decisions of William Ruthven PS School Council will be by a majority of those eligible to vote and who are present at the meeting.

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

Voting will normally be by a show of hands, but Council may resolve to hold a secret ballot for particular issues.

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 attend a meeting, another person cannot attend and vote on their behalf.

When a vote is tied (i.e. an even number of people are for and against the decision), the Chairperson of the meeting has the casting or deciding vote.

Executive Decisions

An Executive consisting of the President and the Principal may act on behalf of the Council on any urgent matter or at any time when it is not possible to call a full meeting of the Council. Any decision by the Executive must then be discussed and minuted at the next Council meeting.

Extensions of Meeting Times

Each School Council meeting will be scheduled to close 90 minutes from opening. If business has not been concluded by the scheduled closing time for the meeting, the chair will 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. A motion is necessary if Council wants to extend the meeting for that evening.

Open and Closed Meetings

While all School Council meetings are expected to be open to the school community, there may be times when the Council meeting, or part of the meeting needs to be closed to protect confidentiality or privacy or for another valid reason. Should this occur, School Council will need

to approve a recommendation to go into a “closed” session. School Council should then go back into open session once the topic under discussion has been concluded.

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

Conflict of Interest

If a School Councillor has a direct financial interest in a matter being considered before Council, that Councillor:

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

Agenda and Notes

The Agenda, Minutes from the previous meeting and any notes for the meeting, such as Sub-committee Minutes, President’s report, Principal’s report, will be distributed to all Councillors no less than three (3) working days before the meeting.

Business arising from previous Minutes and all Sub-committee reports/recommendations will be itemised in the agenda.

Items not appearing on the Agenda can be added at the beginning of the meeting, after which time the Agenda is set and no further items can be added.

Minutes

All decisions of Council shall be recorded as Minutes. Also included in the Minutes are the dates and times of the meeting, those present and apologies, and an overview of key discussions.

When 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.

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

Council Sub-Committees

Sub-Committees 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 final responsibility for decisions. Sub-committees cannot make decisions for School Council rather they make recommendations to Council.

All School Councillors are expected to play an active role in at least one Sub-Committee.

Council will determine which committees it requires and will review the need for each annually. The committees comprise the following unless Council decides otherwise:

- Finance (OHSC and Canteen inclusive)
- Buildings & Grounds
- Community

Membership of Sub-committees shall be decided at the first meeting of Council after the Annual Council elections, when Councillors will nominate their preferences for committee membership. Some negotiation may be necessary to achieve general balance of size and representation. Each committee shall elect a Convenor. Membership of committees may be extended to include interested community members with special expertise or interest in the area of the Sub-Committee. The full membership of the Sub-Committee will be as listed by the Council.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances, each Sub-Committee is asked to provide a written report on its monthly activities to the office at least 5 working days prior to each Council meeting, to be included in distribution of School Council Minutes.

School Council Principles

Each member of Council is expected to:

- regularly attend meetings of Council
- thoroughly scrutinise reports etc. before each meeting
- be prepared to be a member of at least one Sub-committee of Council
- maintain confidentiality as required. Statement to be signed at commencement of School Council year.
- if a member fails to attend 3 consecutive meetings a letter requesting reasons to be sent to establish whether or not the member still wishes to remain on Council.

Councillors will promote:

- Respectful partnerships
- Clear and honest two-way communication
- Transparent processes
- Democratic, informed decision-making
- Personal and professional integrity
- School values throughout the school community
- Abide by the school Code of Conduct.