STANDING ORDERS FOR SWAN HILL COLLEGE SCHOOL COUNCIL

Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact our General Office on 03 5036 4900 or email swan.hill.c@education.vic.gov.au

Introduction

The purpose of these Standing Orders is to assist school council to operate efficiently and effectively within the legal framework and department guidelines for school councils.

School Council membership

The membership of the school council according to its constituting Order and reflected in Ministerial Order 1280 is 15 members – 6 parent members, 4 school employee members and 3 community members.

Co-option of community members

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

Community members can also be co-opted at any other school council meeting.

Co-option for casual vacancies

If the school council has vacant positions in any membership category due to a casual vacancy, the school council will decide who is co-opted and when this takes place. The decision will be voted on at a meeting and included within the meeting minutes.

Office bearers

The school council will have the following office bearer positions:

- President
- Vice president
- Treasurer

Office bearers will be elected at the first meeting of the school council after declaration of the poll each year.

Election of office bearers

In the election of an office bearer, if the votes are tied, the school council will decide the outcome by either holding a new election or drawing of lots. If a new election is held and is also tied, the school council may decide the election by the drawing of lots or decide to conduct further elections until the election of office bearers is decided.

Sub-committees

The school council will have the following sub-committees:

- Finance
- Uniform

Each sub-committee will be chaired by a member of school council unless otherwise decided by council. A subcommittee must include at least one school council member and have at least 3 members.

Meetings

Time and date of regular meetings

The school council will meet at least twice a term on the third Monday of each month. The meeting will commence at 6.00pm and will finish no later than 7.30pm unless agreed by the school council. Meetings will be held in the conference room and on Webex for those who cannot attend in person.

Meeting etiquette

When discussing a topic, school council members are expected to adhere to the following:

- only one person talks at a time
- all requests to speak are directed to the chairperson
- the chairperson will seek a variety of views and may bring conversations to a close to allow as many voices to be heard as possible
- the chairperson determines when an agenda item is concluded.

Public reporting (annual) meeting

The school council will call a public meeting at least once each year and at that meeting will:

a) report the proceedings of the council for the period since the date of the previous public meeting
b) present the annual report published by the council
c) if the accounts of the school council have been audited, present a copy of the audited accounts.

The council may, from time to time, call additional public meetings.

Extraordinary meeting

An extraordinary meeting of the school council may be held at any time decided by the council, if all members are given reasonable notice of the time, date, place and subject of the meeting.

The president of the school council or, in the absence of the president, the principal must call an extraordinary meeting of the school council if either of them receives a written request to do so from three members of the school council.

The president or the principal must call a meeting under the preceding paragraph by sending a notice to all school council members giving the members reasonable notice of the time, date, place and subject of the meeting.

The business of an extraordinary meeting will be confined to the subject for which it is called.

Quorum for meetings

For a quorum to be achieved at a council meeting, not less than one half of school council members currently holding office must be present and a majority of the members present must not be department employees. Any parent members on the council who also work for the department are counted as department employees for the purpose of a quorum.

If at the end of 30 minutes after the appointed time for a meeting of the school council, there is no quorum present, the meeting will stand adjourned to a time and place determined by the school council members present.

A member of the school council may be present at a council meeting, in person or by video conferencing or teleconferencing.

School council decisions and voting

Decisions of the school council will be by a majority of those eligible to vote and who are present at the meeting, where the majority are not department employees.

A vote by proxy is not valid. Members may be present in person or via Webex or a mixture of both, to cast a vote at a meeting or extraordinary meeting.

Members will vote on a matter and the number of votes for and against will be recorded in the minutes.

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

Tied votes

When a vote is tied (i.e., an even number of people are for and against a decision), the president (presiding member) has a second or casting vote.

Absence of the president and other members from a meeting

If the president is unable to preside at a school council meeting, the vice president will chair the meeting in their absence, alternatively the school council will elect a member of the school council to chair the school council meeting (other than an employee of the department).

If a member is unable to attend a meeting, an apology should be submitted to the principal prior to the meeting.

Conflict of interest

If a school council member or a member of his or her immediate family has any perceived or actual conflict of interest (either financial or non-financial) in a subject or matter under discussion at a school council meeting, that councillor:

- must declare the conflict of interest
- must not be present during the discussion unless invited to do so by the person presiding at the meeting
- must not be present when a vote is taken on the matter may be included in the quorum for that meeting.

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

Extended leave of a council member

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

If a member of a school council is granted extended leave, the membership of that member is excluded in determining the requirement for a quorum of not less than half the members currently holding office.

Agenda

The principal in consultation with the president shall ensure an agenda is prepared for each regular meeting and distribute the agenda, draft minutes from the previous meeting and meeting papers such as sub-committee reports, and principal's report to school council members no less than 5 days before the meeting.

Open and closed meetings

School council meetings will generally be open to the school community. There may be times when, for the purposes of confidentiality or other reasons, a council meeting needs to be closed to non-members. The principal in consultation with the president will determine if a closed meeting is necessary.

If the meeting is open, visitors may speak by invitation of the presiding member

Length of meetings and extensions of meeting times

If business has not been concluded within 1.5 hours, the presiding member shall ask the members whether they wish to defer the rest of the business until the next meeting or to extend the meeting. A motion is necessary if council wants to extend the meeting. The meeting will be extended for no more than 15 minutes.

Minutes

The principal will ensure a record of each school council meeting is kept and draft minutes are prepared after each school council meeting and distributed to school council members prior to the next school council meeting. The principal may delegate this responsibility to another person.

The minutes will record:

- the type of meeting (regular, extraordinary or public)
- date, time and venue of meeting
- names of attendees and apologies received from members
- name of presiding officer
- a record of the business of the meeting including the decision on the minutes of the previous meeting
- inward and outward correspondence and reports of any sub-committees tabled at the meeting and
- decisions of the meeting including motions and any amendments, names of movers and seconders, whether the motion was carried or rejected and the number of votes for and against.

When school council minutes are submitted for confirmation, only questions regarding their accuracy as a record of the meeting are to be raised.

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

Conduct of meetings

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