

### 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 Virtual School Victoria school council according to its constituting Order is 15 members – six Parent, three Department employee, two Department nominees, two student members and two Community members.

### Co-option of community members

The community members included in the constituting Order will 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.

### Office bearers

The school council will have the following office bearer positions:

- President
- Vice President

Vacant Office bearers will be elected at the first meeting of the school council after declaration of the poll each year and following a special meeting to co-opt community members.

### 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-committee or as required:

Finance

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 three members.

## Meetings

The school council will meet twice a term on the third Tuesday of each month. The meeting will commence at 2.30 pm and will finish no later than 4.00 pm unless agreed by the school council. Meetings will be held online via Webex with link to be shared.

### 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 DET employees. Any parent members on the council who also work for the Department are counted as DET 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

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 non-Department of Education members. A vote by proxy is not valid.

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 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.

## Absence of the president and other members from a meeting

If the president is unable to preside at a school council meeting, and if a vice-president has been appointed, the vice-president shall preside at the meeting.

If the president is unable to preside at a school council meeting, and there is no vice-president appointed, the school council will elect a member of the school council to chair the meeting. An employee of the Department, is ineligible to chair the school council meeting. In rare circumstances and with approval from the Department (DE) the principal can chair the meeting, when no other Council member can.

**If a council member is unable to attend a meeting, an apology should be submitted to the Principal/Executive Assistant prior to the meeting.**

## Extended leave of a council member

A school councillor may apply in writing to the president for extended leave of up to three consecutive meetings. If a councillor is granted extended leave, their membership is excluded in determining the requirement for a quorum of not less than half the members currently holding office.

## 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.

## Agenda

The agenda lists the business that school council will consider at the meeting. Some items are for information only, some for discussion and others for decision.

The Principal shall ensure an agenda is prepared for each regular meeting and advise the Executive Assistant to the Principal to distribute the agenda, draft minutes from the previous meeting and meeting papers such as subcommittee reports, Principal's report and any other reports (President, Student and Finance reports) to school council members (recommended) no less than five working days before the meeting.

## Open and closed meetings

School council meetings will generally be open to the school community but the principal and school council may decide that only members may be present at a meeting or part of a meeting. 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 the 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 (Executive Assistant to the Principal).

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.

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 presided at the meeting.

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.

### Code of Conduct for school councillors

School councils in Victoria are public entities as defined by the *Public Administration Act 2004*. School councillors are directors of public entities and must abide by the Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities (Code of Conduct) issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission.

The Code of Conduct sets the standard of behaviour and requires councillors to:

- act with honesty and integrity – be truthful, open and clear about their motives and declare any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest and duty
- act in good faith in the best interests of the school – work cooperatively with other councillors and the school community, be reasonable, and make all decisions with the best interests of students in mind
- act fairly and

impartially – consider all relevant facts of an issue before deciding, seek to have a balanced view, never give special treatment to a person or group and do not act from self-interest

- use information appropriately – respect confidentiality and use information for the purpose for which it was gathered
- use their position appropriately – not use their position as a councillor to gain an advantage
- act in a financially responsible manner – observe all the above principles when making financial decisions
- exercise due care, diligence and skill – accept responsibility for decisions and do what is best for the school
- act consistently with legislative and policy requirements when making decisions
- notify the school council if they become a candidate for an election in any state, local or federal election and not use the council's resources in connection with their candidature
- demonstrate leadership and stewardship – set a good example, encourage a culture of accountability and child safety, and manage risks to keep the school strong and sustainable.

School councillors are encouraged to review the Code of Conduct and Public Sector Values each year.

#### Public Sector Values

School councillors must also abide by and demonstrate the Victorian Public Sector Values set out in the Code of Conduct.

These values are Responsiveness, Integrity, Impartiality, Accountability, Respect, Leadership and Human Rights.

The values underpin the behaviours that the government and community expect of all directors of public entities, including school council members. Failure to uphold the values can result in reputational damage for the school council, school and Government, and can undermine confidence in the community and in democratic practices. Breaches of the code of conduct are taken very seriously.

#### Virtual Live training

Virtual Live training replaces the face-to-face training program for the foreseeable future. It is delivered by trained facilitators, using video conferencing or on site. The training provider, Synergistiq will liaise with school councils who have booked training, to ensure informative and effective delivery.

This training covers 4 of the ISG training modules:

- governance
- finance
- strategic planning and
- school council president.

Virtual Live training is delivered free of charge to school councils of Victorian government schools. The Executive Assistant will contact Synergistiq, to book or register interest in training in any of the 4 modules for new and current members.

## Virtual School Victoria

Providing access and choice to students has always been a focus of VSV.

In 2018, Distance Education Centre Victoria was renamed Virtual School Victoria (VSV) to better reflect its position as the leading F – 12 school specialising in virtual and face-to-face learning.

VSV exists to meet the educational needs of Victorian students whose circumstances prevent them from accessing mainstream schooling. In order to directly enrol with us, students must fall under one of the six enrolment categories: medical (physical), medical (social and emotional), travel, sports/performance, distance or young adults.

VSV is also for students wanting to maintain their current enrolment in a mainstream school. At VSV, students can complete one subject (or two subjects for those in Years 11 and 12) that are not offered at their school or not available due to timetabling clashes or other issues.

The school also delivers the Victorian High-Ability Program, a key component of the Department of Education and Training's Student Excellence Program to almost 50,000 high-performing state school students in Years 5 to 8.

The Victorian Government's \$22.6 million investment in the Expanding the VCE in Rural and Regional Victoria Initiative will see the school further improve and expand virtual and blended learning opportunities for all students. By 2023, VSV will offer all VCE subjects to Victorian students.

In 2024 a second campus of VSV opened in Morwell. Named Bellum Bellum Blended Learning Hub this facility offers 3 VCE subject areas to students enrolled in 15 local schools and VSV directly enrolled students who are local. The model of delivery for Bellum Bellum includes opportunities once every three weeks for students to engage in face-to-face classes with their peers.

VSV teachers are experts in their fields as well as in digital learning. Our learning programs are rigorously developed using best practice virtual learning techniques and user experience testing. VSV is one of the largest state government schools in Victoria, with around 5500 students studying at the school annually.

## Key Staff

Fiona Webster	Executive Principal
Deanna Butler	Business Manager
Lena Berias	Executive Assistant – Executive Leadership Team
Mal Mclver	AP - Student Engagement & Wellbeing

Martin Jorgensen	AP - Virtual Learning & Collaboration
Tricia O'Hara	AP - Curriculum Development
Terri Runciman	AP - School Operations: Allotments & Recruitment
Stephen Hodder	AP - School Operations: Facilities & OH&S
Vani Manokaran	VHAP Assistant Principal
Catherine Tsekouras	Head of Senior School
Adrienne Warner	Middle School Leader
Cheryl Laing	Primary School Leader
Jordan Anderson	Family & Community Partnerships
Rob Mason	Wellbeing Team Leader
Nicole Edwards	Inclusion Team Leader
Naomi Wong	Learning Support Leader
Anthea Barrett	Enrolments Leader
Matt Aumann	ICT Manager & Infrastructure
Justin De Lima	ICT Manager Software & VSV Online
Liane Briner	Communications
Lisa McCormack & Renata Marsano	Reception