

Chelsea Heights Primary School

Standing Orders

Purpose of Standing Orders

To assist School Council to run their meetings in a productive, efficient and effective manner by promoting teamwork and avoiding conflict within the legal framework and Department guidelines for School Councils.

Purpose of School Council

School Council is the legally formed body that is given powers to set the key directions of CHPS. 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 Council 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 (which specifies the make-up of School Council membership).
- Subject to this framework, the School Council may regulate its' own meetings.

School Council Composition

- School Councils are to be between 6 and 15 members in total size.
- 'Parent Member' means a person/guardian with a child/ren at CHPS.
- 'DEECD Employee' means a person employed for eight hours or more per week in either an ongoing capacity or a fixed term of at least 90 days by DET or by School Council (so does include contracts including garden maintenance etc).
- 'DET Parent' means a DET employee not employed at CHPS with a child/ren at CHPS.
- 'Parent' includes a guardian or person responsible to maintain or having custody of a student at CHPS.

The Constituting Order of CHPS states the composition of School Council is as follows, with a total membership of **15**:

- 8 Parent Members:
 - This group must represent **more than one third** of the total members of School Council.
 - Parents who are DET employees (DET Parents) are Parent Members as long as they are not engaged in work at CHPS (please note: quorum exception below).
 - All 8 members are elected.
 - Community Members who are parents are not included in this category.
- 5 DEECD Employee Members:
 - This group must represent **no more than one third** of the total members of School Council.
 - The Principal, as the Executive Officer, is included in this number.
 - The four remaining members are elected.
- 2 Community Members:
 - Community Membership is optional.
 - Community Members are co-opted, not elected, by a decision of School Council.
 - Community Members are co-opted because of their special skills, interests or experiences.
 - DET Employees are not eligible for co-option as a Community Member however DEECD Parents are eligible for co-option.

- Community Members have the same voting rights as elected members.
- Community Members are co-opted for one year only.
- The total number of DET Employees (including DET Parents) allowed on the committee is 7.
- Elected Members have two year terms of office with half retiring annually following the election.
- The new School Council takes effect as soon as possible after the election period.
- Elections are conducted according to DET regulations and the CHPS Constituting Order.

Changing the Size and Configuration of School Council Membership

- A Ministerial Order is required to effect a change in size or configuration of School Council.
- A change in size or configuration must be approved by a minimum 75 per cent majority vote of the total Council membership according to its current Constituting Order and a reason provided for the request.
- The proposed new Council size must be consistent with one of the options specified by DEECD.
- A request to change the Constituting Order can be made once in any 12-month period.
- If a School Council is unable to achieve the minimum 75% majority vote of the total Council membership, a request for an exemption from that requirement can be made. eg. difficulty in filling vacant positions.

Community Member Appointment

- In consultation with elected Council members, the Principal is to assess the skill mix required for the Council to function effectively and consider what skills gaps can be filled through appointing Community Members.
- Conduct informal consultations with newly elected and existing Council members to discover potential Community Members for co-option.
- Seek prior consent from potential Community Members for their co-option to the Council.
- The Principal must as soon as practicable after the declaration of the poll and before office-bearers are elected, call, and preside at, a special meeting for the purpose of co-opting the Community Members.
- At the special meeting the quorum must consist of not less than one half of the members of School Council currently holding office.
- If the purpose of co-option of Community Members cannot be achieved at this meeting, the meeting may be adjourned to a date decided by the meeting.
- If the co-option of Community Members either cannot be resolved at the special meeting or on resumption of the adjourned special meeting, the School Council may proceed to the first meeting of the School Council to elect office-bearers.

Executive / Office Bearers

Council shall elect from its members the following Office Bearers:

President:

- Is elected by all members of School Council.
- Must be filled by a non DET Parent or Community Member.
- Should not be open to the same person for more than four consecutive years.
- Will chair the School Council meetings.
- Act as a signatory to the Council financial accounts.
- Act as a spokesperson for Council.
- Is an ex-officio member of all Sub-Committees.

Executive Officer

- Is filled by the Principal.
- Has the same voting rights as other Councillors.
- Is responsible for the implementation of Council policies and for informing Council on educational, statutory, regulatory and Government policy issues.
- Is an ex-officio member of all Sub-Committees.

Vice President (recommended):

- Is elected by all members of School Council.
- This position should be filled by a non DET Parent or Community Member.
- Will chair the School Council meetings in the absence of the President.
- Will otherwise represent the President as required.

Treasurer (recommended):

- **Is appointed (not elected) by School Council.**
- This position should be filled by a non DET Parent or Community Member.
- This position must not be filled by the office manager or bursar of the school.
- Chair Finance Sub-Committee meetings.

Minute Secretary

- May be either an elected member of School Council or a person appointed to this role, who is not a member of School Council and is therefore a silent observer with no voting rights.
- Ensure minutes of all School Council meetings are recorded.

Casual Vacancies on School Council

Should a casual vacancy occur on School Council, this vacancy is filled by the School Council co-opting a person from the appropriate category who then completes the rest of the term of office of the retiring member.

Sub-Committees

- The School Council will have the following Sub-Committees:
 - Finance
 - Education
 - Grounds & Buildings
- The relevance and role of these committees should be reviewed annually.
- Sub-Committees are formed to advise council and have no decision making powers.
- Membership of sub-committees shall be decided at the first regular meeting of School Council after the annual elections, when councillors will nominate their preferences for committee membership.
- Some negotiation may be required to achieve balance of size and representation.
- Each Sub-Committee will be chaired by a member of School Council unless otherwise directed.
- Membership of Sub-Committees shall be extended to include interested school community members.
- A Sub-Committee must include at least one-School Council member and have at least three members.
- Sub Committee Meetings will be held on dates and times as directed by the sub- committee coordinator.
- All School Councillors are expected to play an active role in at least one Sub-Committee.
- School Council may approve of Working Parties to assist the work of Sub-Committees or School Council.

School Council Meetings

- School Council meetings will be held on the second Monday of the month.
- A minimum of eight meetings are to be conducted each year with a preference of at least two per term.
- Meetings will commence at 8.00pm and conclude by 9.30pm
- There will be a provision for two extensions only per meeting, each of fifteen minutes. A motion is required before the meeting can be extended.
- Meetings will be held in the conference room or as directed by the Executive Officer.
- If a member is unable to attend a meeting, an apology should be submitted to the Principal prior to the meeting and recorded in the minutes.
- If a member fails to attend three consecutive meetings without prior permission their position shall be deemed vacant and a replacement member found to fill this vacancy for the previous member's remaining term of office.

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 member to chair the meeting.
- This person must be a non DET employee.

Quorum

Two Quorums are required to hold a School Council/Board meeting:

1. More than one half of School Council members currently holding office must be present at the meeting.
2. More than half the elected members present must not be DET employees.

- It is noted that any Parent Members on School Council who also work for the Department (DET Parent) 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 with the prior approval of School Council.
- If at the end of 30 minutes after the appointed time, there is no quorum present the meeting will be adjourned to a time and place to be determined.

Conflict of Interest

If a School Councillor or a member of their family has a direct or financial (pecuniary) interest in a matter being considered before the School Council, that School Councillor:

1. Must declare the conflict of interest
2. Must not be present during the discussion
3. Must not be present when a vote is taken on the matter
4. May be included in the quorum for that meeting

School Council Meeting Procedure

Agenda

The Agenda for School Council meetings is to include the following:

- An outline of the order of the next meeting.
- Draft minutes from the previous meeting.
- Sub-Committee minutes, President's Report, Principal's Report and any recommendations to School Council.
- Financial Statements for each month since the previous council meeting.
- Any additional information required for discussion at the meeting.
- Will be distributed to all School Councillors no less than five days before the meeting.

Minutes

- Will record the type, date, time and venue of the meeting, those present and apologies, late arrivals and early departures and the name of presiding officer
- It will also include all Sub-Committee reports tabled, an overview of key discussions, decisions of the meeting including motions and any amendments, names of movers, 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 chaired the meeting.
- Business arising from the minutes is dealt with after the minutes have been confirmed.
- A person does not have right of access to the minutes of a School Council meeting under the *Freedom of Information Act 2000*.

Motion

- A motion is a formal proposal for consideration and includes all reports including President, Principal and Sub-committee Reports.

- It is moved by the person proposing it and seconded by another person.
- It is then open for discussion both for and against to affect a balanced debate.
- After discussion, a decision is made by way of a vote. See 'Voting' below.
- When a motion is accepted it is described as being carried and should then be referred to as a resolution.

Amendment

- Motions can be amended during discussion.
- The amendment must be moved and seconded before it is voted on.

Moving from the Chair

- The chair can put a motion before the meeting.
- When moved from the chair, a motion does not require seconding.

Points of Order

- Points of order are questions directed to the chair which require an answer or a ruling.
- They are not open to debate and usually relate to the rules for the running of a meeting.

Lying on the Table

- When a matter cannot be resolved, or when further information is necessary before a decision can be made, the matter can be left unresolved for future discussion.

Tabling Documents

- When written information is used in support of a discussion, it should be tabled so that it can be examined by those present.
- It then forms part of the official record.

Voting Procedures

- Decisions of School Council will be 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 recorded in the minutes.
- Voting will normally be by a show of hands, however, a Secret Ballot may be used if requested.
- All Councillors in attendance at the meeting must vote on every motion.
- No member may abstain from voting. If a member should refuse to vote they will be counted as a yes or affirmative vote.

Tied Votes

- When a vote is tied the President has the casting or deciding vote

Proxies Voting

- Eligible members of School 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.

Annual General Meeting

School Council must also hold at least one public meeting each year 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.

Extraordinary Meetings

An extraordinary meeting may be held at any time decided by School 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.

Open and Closed Meetings

While School Council meetings may be open to the school community, there may be times when the School Council meeting, or part thereof needs to be closed to protect confidentiality, privacy or for another valid reason. Should this occur, School Council will approve a motion to go into a "closed" session. School Council may then go back into open session once the topic under discussion has been concluded.

Visitors and Observers

- Visitors or observers may be present with the agreement of the School Council President.
- They must direct all their comments through the President.
- Visitors have no voting rights.

School Council Code of Conduct

School Councillors must abide by the Director's Code of Conduct issued by the Public Sector Standards Commissioner.

A School Council member must:

- Act with honesty and integrity
- Act in good faith in the best interests of the school
- Act fairly & impartially
- Use information appropriately
- Use their position appropriately
- Act in a financially responsible manner
- Exercise due care, diligence and skill
- Comply with the appropriate legislation
- Demonstrate leadership and stewardship.

Councillors will promote:

- **Respectful** partnerships
- Clear and **honest** two-way communication
- **Transparent** processes
- **Democratic**, informed decision-making
- Personal and professional **integrity**
- Behave in a civil and respectful manner