

SCHOOL COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

Purpose of Standing Orders

The purpose of these Standing Orders is to assist the 2023 Footscray High School Council to operate efficiently and effectively 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 Footscray High 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

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (the Act)
- The Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017 (Vic)
- [Ministerial Order 1280 Constitution of Government School Councils 2020](#)
- Individual school's constituting Order

School Council Membership

The constituting Order of Footscray High School states the composition of the Council is:

- Six (6) elected parent members, who represent more than one-third of school councillors
- Four (4) elected School employees. The principal who is executive officer is included in this number.
- Two (2) elected School students.
- Two (2) community members. It should be noted that community membership is optional and that these positions are co-opted, rather than elected. School employees are not eligible for co-option to this category.

Office Bearers

The school council will have the following office bearer positions:

- President
- Vice president

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.

There is no treasurer as the Business Manager attends all meetings and reports appropriately.

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
- Education
- Buildings & Environment
- Communication

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

Meeting Times and Dates

Regular Meetings

The school council will meet at least twice a term. The meeting will commence at 5pm and will finish no later than 7pm unless agreed by the school council. Meetings will be held via Google Meet, and at least three meetings for the year will be held face to face, one at each campus.

Schedule of meeting dates for the next twelve months will be approved by the school council at the first meeting of the new Footscray High School Council of each year.

All members are asked to make every effort to be on time. The Vice-President will begin the meeting in the absence of the President.

Public Reporting (Annual) Meeting

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

The meeting cannot commence until not less than one half of the total membership of the Council is present. The majority of the members' present must be non-DET. Any parent members on the council who also work for the Department are counted as DET.

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.

Absence of the President / Vice President

If there is a quorum, but the President or Vice-President are not present at the meeting, those present will identify another member who is not a DET employee to chair the meeting.

School Council Elections

Nominations for vacancies on School Council will be called for in February or March of each year.

Agenda

The agenda will be drawn up and circulated to all members at least one week before the meeting, along with any reports and information papers that are available for the meeting. All agenda items must be forwarded to the Executive Principal or to their delegate in this instance the Executive Assistant.

Correspondence

All correspondence to and from the School Council will be tabled at each meeting. The correspondence folder will be available half an hour prior to the meeting. All correspondence displayed will be with due regard to privacy laws.

Between Council meetings, the Principal / Executive Assistant may refer correspondence to appropriate sub-committees for discussion and the development of recommendations to the Council if required. However, all such items will still be tabled at the following Council meeting.

Reports

All reports (such as the Finance Report and the Education Report) from various sub-committees of the Council that are available will be provided in time for circulation with the agenda papers. Reports need to be provided to the Executive Assistant via email, seven working days prior to the meeting.

Verbal reports can be accepted where an issue / item has arisen that is not included in the report. Questions may be asked of the Convener.

Minutes of the Meeting

Minutes will record all of the decisions of the Council, and briefly note the main points made in discussion. The minutes will also record who is to take action with regard to the decisions made. Minutes of a meeting will be forwarded to Councillors no later than one week following the Council meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of each meeting will be approved at the subsequent meeting.

Attendance

Only School Council members may attend a meeting. Community members may only attend by invitation through the Executive Officers of Council.

Prolonged Absence

Councillors absent from three consecutive school council meetings without prior special leave being granted by the school council will be contacted by the President to discuss continued tenure on council.

Council Decisions

A decision on any matter may only be reached when it is supported by a majority of the members present in person at a duly constituted meeting.

The President has both a deliberative and casting vote. However, wherever possible, if opinions are evenly divided on a matter before the Council, the item will be deferred to the next meeting to enable further examination of the issue, rather than by the use of the President's casting vote.

Proceedings of Meetings

The President's role is to facilitate the smooth running of the meeting so that the Council arrives at the best possible decisions. This responsibility is shared by all members of the Council.

The following principles will apply to the conduct of business:

- all members who wish to comment are to be given reasonable opportunity to do so and are all treated as equally important;
- all members will be given full information on the issues under consideration, and jargon and initials etc. will be avoided wherever possible;
- new members will be given the necessary information to enable them to participate;
- provision will be made for the use of interpreters and translators;
- time spent discussing issues should be proportionate to the importance relevance and extent of agreement;
- discussion should be pertinent to the issue under consideration;
- only matters which are related to one of the Council's roles and responsibilities will be discussed;
- reports are to be presented in writing and members will have had the opportunity to discuss options and proposals within them;
- discussion that would be more suitably held at the relevant sub-committee will be referred to that sub-committee;
- criticism of individual teachers, families or students or confidential information related to any individual is at all times avoided; principles of Freedom of Information and the Privacy Act will be adhered too
- opportunity will be given for members of the wider school community to have input into issues where appropriate;
- proposed points of agreement should be provided in writing wherever possible, to assist the minute secretary;

- discussion should be directed towards a decision that is generally accepted, likely to be effective, understood by those required to implement it and clear and understood by those present.

Close of meetings

Unless the School Council in session (by a 3 / 4 majority of the quorum) makes a decision to extend a meeting, meetings of the Council will conclude by 7pm.

Co-option Community Members

Two members may be co-opted as community members to the Council at the special meeting after the declaration of the poll. For example: A member of the Parents and Friends (P & F) Committee may be co-opted to Council.

Co-option of Members

A school council can co-opt persons to a vacant member position where:

- an elected position remains unfilled after completion of the election process, and, if after the second call, there are insufficient nominations to fill vacancies, or
- there is a casual vacancy.

Term of office

For all elections after the first school council election, the term of office for elected and co-opted members is not more than two years unless the term has been varied by a Ministerial Order. The term of office commences the day after the date of declaration of the poll and ends on the date of the declaration of the poll held two years later.

Where a member resigns or is no longer eligible to complete the term of office, a casual vacancy is created. The position may be filled by the school council co-opting an eligible person for the remainder of the term of office.