

# Standing Orders for Ballarat High School Council



## School Purpose

Ballarat High School is an innovative learning community committed to developing all individuals through positive relationships. We provide quality learning and diverse pathways to successful futures.

## 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 constituting Order of Ballarat High School states the composition of the Council is:

- 6 elected parent members, who represent more than one third of School Councillors
- 4 elected DET employee members
- 2 elected student representatives
- Up to 4 Community members. It should be noted that Community membership is optional and that these positions are co-opted, rather than elected. DET employees are not eligible for co-option to this category
- Principal, who is Executive Officer.

Ballarat High School Council has 17 voting members in total size. Community members have the same voting rights as elected members.

Ballarat High School Council meetings are also attended by non-voting representatives of an Assistant Principal, the Business Manager, and the Office Manager (Minute Secretary)

Members of School Council have 2-year terms of office, with half retiring annually from the election of the new Council in February.

## Responsibilities of Council

Council will accept responsibility for:

- Determining the general educational policy, goals and priorities in the School's strategic plan and state-wide guidelines
- Developing the School's strategic plan
- Monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school in relation to the goals and priorities in the School's strategic plan, including participation in 4-year review processes
- Report annually to the School Community and the Department

- To inform itself and take into account any views of the School Community for the purpose of making decisions in regard to the School and the students at the School
- Approving and monitoring the School's budgets
- Ensuring that all monies coming into the School are expended for proper purposes relating to the School
- To raise funds for school related purposes.
- Making recommendations to the Secretary on the appointment of the School Principal
- Entering contracts for purposes that are consistent with the School strategic plan
- Developing the School's engagement plan, which includes a student dress code
- Employing non-teaching staff and any casual relief teachers or contracting for the provision of those services
- Exercising a general oversight of the buildings and grounds and ensuring that they are kept in good order and condition, including afterhours use of School premises and grounds
- To provide for the cleaning and sanitary services that are necessary for the School
- To generally stimulate interest in the School in the wider community
- To perform any other function or duty or to exercise any power conferred or imposed on the Council

## Responsibility of Council Members

Each member of Council is expected to:

- Regularly attend meetings
- Scrutinise reports etc. before meetings
- Maintain confidentiality as required.
- As an elected member, have a prime responsibility to the interests of the Council.
- Maintain an awareness of educational developments.

## 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

The Regulations require there be at least 2 office bearers – the President and the Executive Officer:

- The **President** is elected by all members of School Council and may not be a DET employee.
- The position of **Executive Officer** is filled by the Principal. The Principal is a full member of Council, with the same voting rights as other Councillors.

Other Office Bearers.

- The **Vice President** is elected by all members of School Council. As the Vice President may need to chair a meeting in the absence of the President, it is recommended this position should be filled by a non DET parent member or community member.
- The **Convenor of the Finance Sub-committee** is appointed by School Council. It is recommended this position be held by a non DET parent member or a community member. This position should not be filled by the Business Manager.
- The **Minute Secretary** (Office Manager) is not a member of School Council and is therefore a silent observer with no voting rights.

## 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.

## Tied Votes

When a vote is tied, (i.e., an even number of people are for and against the decision), the President has the casting or deciding vote. It is therefore important that when the President offers a personal opinion on an issue, this is clearly stated. Councillors need to be able to clearly distinguish between the President's personal views and when a ruling is made as President of School Council.

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.

In the event of a vote being tied, the Chairperson of the meeting (usually the President) has the casting vote.

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 Meetings

Unless otherwise decided, School Council meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of the month, commencing at 7.30 pm, and concluding no later than 9.30 pm.

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

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.

## 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 (called a "motion") 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.

## Extensions of Meeting Times

If business has not been concluded by the scheduled closing time for the meeting, the Chair should 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 (e.g., 15 minutes).

## 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.

Business arising from previous minutes and all sub-committee recommendations will be itemised in the agenda.

## 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.

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

## School Council Decisions

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, but a secret ballot may be used for particular issues.

## 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.

## School Council Principles

School Councillors will at all times behave in a civil and respectful manner. Councillors will promote:

- **Respectful** partnerships
- Clear and **honest** two-way communication
- **Transparent** processes
- **Democratic**, informed decision-making
- Personal and professional **integrity**.