

School
Council
Overview



MENZIES CREEK

PRIMARY SCHOOL

The importance of good governance



Good governance enables school councils to effectively perform their functions and meet their objectives, to act with integrity, and to respond strategically to changing demands and educational challenges. Good governance relies on the professional ethical leadership of the principal, the president and the individual school council members, and the establishment of effective meeting procedures.

Properly functioning school councils are characterised by sharing of information, knowledge and ideas from members who may have vastly different but equally useful experiences and skills. Members should be able to exchange information, share experiences, express perspectives, pose questions, clarify viewpoints, explore relevant research and develop a shared vision and way forward.

To fulfil their functions and objectives, school councils should:

- **have a clear understanding of its roles and responsibilities**
- **focus on improving student learning outcomes**
- **involve the community in conversations about key issues and challenges on education**
- **be actively involved in the development of the School Strategic Plan**
- **promote meaningful parent and community participation and actively seek the views of the community**
- **include members who represent the diverse views of the school community**
- **have a clear and consistent process for decision making**
- **maintain high ethical standards**
- **regularly review and evaluate its own performance**
- **devote time to its own growth and development, through induction and training.**

School council key functions

Finance

- overseeing the development of the school's annual budget and ensuring proper records are kept of the school's financial operation

Strategic planning

- participating in the development and monitoring of the school strategic plan

Policy development and review

- developing, reviewing and updating policies that reflect a school's values and support the school's broad direction outlined in its strategic plan

Council Constituting Orders - <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/management/constitutorder.pdf>

Source: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/management/community/Pages/schoolcouncils.aspx>

Other key functions of school councils include

raising funds for school related purposes

maintaining school grounds and facilities

entering into contracts

reporting annually to the school

creating interest in the school in the wider community

representing and taking the views of the community into account

regulating and facilitating after-hours use of school premises and grounds

operating a children's service at the school.

Roles & responsibilities

Area of activity	The school council ...	The principal ...
Strategic direction of the School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develops the broad direction and vision for the school, using guidelines provided by the Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leads development of curriculum – teaching and learning programs • determines teacher, subject and time allocations; timetable; class sizes; and structures
Student dress code policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develops student dress code policy in close consultation with the wider school community • consults with the school community before adopting changes to this policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implements the student dress code developed by school council in consultation with the wider community • considers and, where appropriate, grants exemptions to dress code guidelines for individual students • enforces the student dress code in line with DET policy
Staff employment and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approves employment of some staff e.g. casual replacement teachers, canteen or maintenance staff, however, not on-going staff • recommends to the Secretary of the Department the appointment of a principal in accordance with principal selection processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is responsible (as delegate of the Secretary of the Department) for the employment and management of persons in the Teaching Service (including non-teaching staff) • manages the performance, development and conduct of DET and school council staff

Roles & responsibilities continued

Area of activity	The school council ...	The principal ...
Camps and excursions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is responsible for approving interstate and international visits, excursions requiring sea or air travel, excursions involving weekends or vacations, and adventure activities. All relevant school councils are responsible for approving listed joint activities involving another school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is responsible for approving day excursions. All relevant principals are responsible for approving day excursions involving another school
Buildings and grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • oversees school cleaning, and in regional schools only, enters into contracts for school cleaning • enters into contracts for building and grounds improvements • makes decisions about the hiring and shared use of school facilities in accordance with Department policy requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is responsible for maintenance of school buildings and grounds • monitors implementation of contracts • exercises a general oversight of school buildings and grounds to ensure they are kept in good condition and order

Roles & responsibilities continued

Area of activity	The school council ...	The principal ...
Child Safe Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approves policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the Child Safe Standards • reviews existing contracts in consultation with the principal and ensures future contracts address the requirements of the Child Safe Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implements Child Safe Standards policies and procedures • with staff, develops strategies to embed a culture of child safety at the school and allocates roles and responsibilities for achieving the strategies • informs the school community about the strategies and roles and responsibilities • with staff, periodically reviews the effectiveness of the strategies and revises them if appropriate • with staff, ensures the school implements practices for a child-safe environment
School review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participates in the Pre-review Self-evaluation • value-adds to the review as defined in the terms of reference (e.g. participation in focus groups etc.) • is presented with the findings of the report and accepts the report <p>The school council president:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is a member of the core School Review Panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • keeps the whole school community and council informed about the school review • leads the Pre-review Self-evaluation in consultation with the whole school community • is a member of the core School Review Panel • presents the findings of the review report to the school staff and school council

Roles & responsibilities continued

Area of activity	The school council ...	The principal ...
Strategic and Annual Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contributes to the finalisation of the School Strategic Plan following the school review • contributes to the development of the Annual Implementation Plan • president endorses the School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan in SPOT • ensures regular monitoring of the Annual Implementation Plan, including key risks to achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engages the staff and school community in development of the School Strategic Plan following review • engages the staff and school community in the development of the Annual Implementation Plan • engages the staff and school community in the monitoring of progress against annual targets • endorses the School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan in SPOT
Annual report to the school community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • endorses the Annual Report by April 30 • president attests to the contents of the Annual Report in SPOT by April 30 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepares, with the school council, the Annual Report • endorses the Annual Report • attests to the contents of the Annual Report

Roles & responsibilities continued

Area of activity	The school council ...	The principal ...
<p>Outside school hours care or kindergarten service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decides whether to establish a service or change operating models or service provider • is the legal entity under the National Law of a school council managed operating model, and therefore has the role of approved provider. As approved provider, the council nominates people with management or control, noting this does not take away from the approved providers' legal responsibilities • in a third-party-provider operating model, selects, engages and contract-manages the preferred provider, and endorses the licence agreement negotiated with a third party • receives regular program reports from the OSHC or kindergarten provider • regularly monitors the provider's compliance with the requirements of the National Law • should be consulted on the development of the service's Quality Improvement Plan and be provided with a copy of the service's Assessment and Rating report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engages the school community in the decision-making process to establish or change operating models or service provider • informs the school community and school council about the service on a regular basis • may be nominated by school council as the person with management or control for a school council managed operating model

Code of conduct



School councils in Victoria are public entities as defined by the *Public Administration Act 2004*. School councillors must abide by the 2016 Directors' Code of Conduct issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission. The Code of Conduct is based on the Victorian public sector values 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 foremost in their minds)**
- **act fairly and impartially (consider all relevant facts of an issue before making a decision, seek to have a balanced view, never give special treatment to a person or group and never act from self interest)**
- **use information appropriately (respect confidentiality and use information for the purpose for which it was made available)**
- **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)**
- **comply with relevant legislation and policies (know what legislation and policies are relevant for which decisions and obey the law)**
- **demonstrate leadership and stewardship (set a good example, encourage a culture of accountability, manage risks effectively, exercise care and responsibility to keep the school strong and sustainable).**

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/management/codeconduct.docx>

School council meetings

- School councils must meet eight times a year and at least once per school term. The president chairs all meetings and all members of the council are expected to attend.
- School council meetings must operate within a quorum. A quorum requires not less than one half of school council members currently holding office to be present at the meeting and the majority of members present must not be Department employees.
- Decisions are made by voting and councillors must base their vote solely on the best interest of the students. If a vote is tied, the school council president has a second or casting vote.
- School councils must call a public reporting meeting at least once each year and report the proceedings of the council since the date of the previous public meeting. The council must present the endorsed annual report to the meeting and, if the school council accounts have been audited, present a copy of the audited accounts. The public reporting meeting can be held during the year at a time that suits school community and school council activities and commitments.

School Council – Menzies Creek

Parent representatives (10)



Role	Name
President	Sarah Wicking
Vice President	Hayley Coviello
Treasurer	Rowan Coxhead
Secretariat	Kate Keys
Sub committees	
Preschool	Hayley Coviello
Community Relations	Anna Benjamin/ Eric Thrane
Facilities	Jonathan Neilson
Finance	Rowan Coxhead
Education Policy	Jessie Evans

School Council – Menzies Creek

School representatives (5)

Role	Name
Principal	Dale McInerney
School employee	Justin Benne
School employee	Anne Matheson
School employee	Matthew Cody
School employee	Kate Keys

Sub committees – Menzies Creek



Sub committee	Responsibilities
Preschool	Promote and support Preschool
Community Relations	Promotion of school (Facebook / website), grants and support on larger fundraising events
Facilities	Working bees, grounds maintenance and planning for future needs
Finance	Oversight key reports and present clear monthly updates to school council
Fundraising	School events, event calendar and fundraising activities. <i>Formerly known as the artist Family & Friends</i>
Education Policy (<i>new</i>)	Review and update our key policies, and ensure they are available on the website

Further information



For further information, please refer to Department of Education and Trainings page on School Councils

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/management/community/Pages/schoolcouncils.aspx>

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