

2025 School Council- Nominations for Ballot

Wednesday 12th February, 2025

Dear Parents, Carers and Staff

The Essendon North Primary School, School Council is now calling for nominations for positions vacant.

These positions have become vacant due to the expiry of term of office and/or resignation of particular council members.

These positions include:

- Two parent electorate representatives (Two year tenure position)
- Three DET Staff electorate representatives (One year tenure period)

Below is an outline of School Council and process for nomination.

Nomination forms are available from the school office from today, Wednesday 12th February, 2025 and are attached to this Compass Message.

The Purpose of School Council

The School Council of Essendon North Primary School plays an important role in assisting with the efficient governance of the school. Being a member of the School Council is a rewarding and challenging experience. Acting as a team, council supports the Principal to provide the best possible educational outcomes for all students.

School Council operates under a framework provided by the:

- Education and Training Reform Act 2006
- Public Administration Act 2004
- Education and Training Regulations 2007

It is important that School Councillors understand the key features of the legislation because it affects all aspects of their work: how they interact with the community, consider options, make decisions and generally how they conduct themselves. This strengthens community confidence in the school and helps to protect and build the school's reputation.

The Roles and Responsibilities of School Council

The role of School Council is outlined in the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. In essence, the role of School Council is to support the Principal in setting the long-term future for the school. The types of responsibilities for School Council include:

- Participates in the development of the school strategic plan
- Approves the strategic plan which is then signed by the president
- Monitors the progress of school strategic plan against the goals
- Approves the annual budget
- Ensures appropriate internal controls are in place
- Monitors school expenditure
- Approves requests for voluntary contributions and school fees
- Approves and monitors investments
- Develops the broad direction and vision for the school using guidelines provided by DET
- Develops, monitors, reviews and updates policies
- Develops Student Engagement Policy and Student Dress Code
- Consults with the school community before adopting changes to these policies

- Approves employment of some staff (e.g. casual replacement teachers and support staff)
- Allocates contract for school cleaning
- Enters contracts for building and grounds improvements
- Promotes the school to the wider community
- Works with school community to stimulate interest in the school
- Makes a recommendation to the Secretary regarding Principal selection.

School Council does not:

- Manage the day to day running of the school that includes all operational processes and procedures
- Discuss individual issues relating to teachers, staff or parents
- Represent specific interest groups or permit special interests to dominate the agenda of the council
- Purchase land, buildings or motor cars, and it cannot enter into hire purchase agreements or obtain credit or loans, unless it is given permission by the Minister.

The Role of a School Councillor

Parent members on School Council bring their experience as parents at the school and the views of the wider school community to School Council meetings.

DET employees bring their educational expertise to School Council meetings.

Community members, if they are on School Council, most often bring a particular skill or area of expertise.

School Council Membership

School Council at Essendon North Primary School has twelve (12) positions. The constituting order of School Council states that the composition is as follows:

- Six (6) elected parent electorate members, who represent more than one third of all School Councillors. Parent members are elected by a call for nominations. If more nominations are received than there are places available, the process will follow DET Guideline 'Principal's Guide to School Council Elections.' Parent members are elected for a two year term.
- Four (4) elected DET staff electorate members. The Principal as Executive Officer is included in this number. DET employee members are elected according to the process outlined in DET Guideline 'Principal's Guide to School Council Elections' and are elected for a twelve month term.
- Up to two (2) co-opted community members. Community member positions are optional and are co-opted, rather than elected. DET employees are not eligible for this category. Community members will be co-opted for a twelve month term.

Our Current School Council Membership

The current membership of School Council is:

Six (6) elected parent members	Four (4) elected DET employee members	Up to two (2) co-opted community members
*Merter Kavas (President)	Kate Barletta (Principal)	
Ben Suter (Vice President)	*Alice Stephens	
*Josh Briggs-Kelly (Treasurer)	*Darcy Wynd	
Jenny Dinh	*Alice McKenzie (co-opted in July)	
Mahmoud Amirghouli		
Jodie Elliot		

*Indicate members of School Council whose term of office expires in March 2025

Process for Call for Nominations of School Council Members for Essendon North Primary School

Event	Date
a) Notice of election and call for nominations	Wednesday 12 th February 2025
b) Closing date for nominations	Tuesday 25 th February 2025 at 4pm
In the case of more nominations being received than positions available, the process will go to election:	
c) Date by which the list of candidates and nominators will be posted	Tuesday 25 th February 2025 (after 4pm)
d) Date by which ballot papers will be prepared and distributed	Wednesday 26 th February 2025
e) Close of ballot 4pm	Tuesday 4 th March 2025 at 4pm
f) Vote count	Tuesday 4 th March 2025
g) Declaration of poll	Tuesday 4 th March 2025
h) Special council meeting to co-opt Community members (the Principal will preside)	Monday 17 th March 2024
i) First council meeting to elect office bearers (the Principal will preside)	Monday 17 th March 2024

The following nomination forms are available on Compass and at the school office from Wednesday 12th February:

- Self-nomination form for Parent electorate category
- Nomination form for Parent electorate category

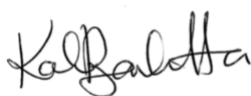
ENPS Staff will be emailed the following forms and these will also be at the school office from Wednesday 12th February:

- Self-nomination form for DET employee electorate category
- Nomination form for DET employee electorate category

A fact sheet is provided for additional information is below.

If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us directly or the school office on 9379 3979.

Yours sincerely,



Kate Barletta
Principal



Merter Kavas
School Council President

Appendix A

Fact Sheet 1. School Council elections – Information for parents

What is a School Council and what does it do?

All government schools in Victoria have a School Council. They are legally constituted bodies that are given powers to set the broad direction of a school in accordance with their constituting Order and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. In doing this, a School Council is able to directly influence the quality of education that the school provides for its students.

Who is on the School Council?

For most primary School Councils, there are several possible categories of membership:

- A mandated elected Parent member category – more than one-third of the total members must be from this category. DET employees can be Parent members at their child's school as long as they are not engaged in work at the school
- A mandated elected DET employee member category – members of this category may make up no more than one-third of the total membership of School Council. The Principal of the school is automatically one of these members
- An optional Community member category – members are co-opted by a decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or experiences. DET employees are not eligible to be Community members
- A small number of School Councils have Nominee members.

For all schools with a Year 7 and above cohort, there is an additional category of membership:

- A mandated elected Student member category, two positions.

Generally, the term of office for all members is two years. The term of office of half the members expires each year, creating vacancies for the annual School Council elections.

Why is parent membership so important?

Parents on School Councils provide important viewpoints and have valuable skills that can help inform and shape the direction of the school.

Those parents who become active on a School Council find their involvement satisfying and may also find that their children feel a greater sense of belonging.

Do I need special experience to be on School Council?

Each member brings their own valuable life skills and knowledge to the role. However, councillors may need to develop skills and acquire knowledge in areas that are unfamiliar to them. It is important to have an interest in your child's school and the desire to work in partnership with others to help shape the school's future.

Code of conduct for School Councillors

School Councils in Victoria are public entities as defined by the *Public Administration Act 2004*. School Councillors must abide by the *Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities* 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)
- **exercise due care, diligence and skill** (accept responsibility for decisions and do what is best for the school)
- **use the position appropriately** (not use the position as a councillor to gain an advantage)
- **act in a financially responsible manner** (observe all the above principles when making financial decisions)

- **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).

Indemnity for School Council members

School Councillors are indemnified against any liability in respect of any loss or damage suffered by the council or any other person in respect of anything necessarily or reasonably done, or omitted to be done by the councillor in good faith in:

- a) the exercise of a power or the performance of a function of a councillor, or
- b) the reasonable belief that the act or omission was in the exercise of a power or the performance of a function of a council.

In other words, School Councillors are not legally liable for any loss or damage suffered by council or others as a result of reasonable actions taken in good faith.

How can you become involved?

The most obvious way is to participate in and vote in the School Council elections, which are held in Term 1 each year. However, ballots are only held if more people nominate as candidates than there are positions vacant.

In view of this, you might consider:

- standing for election as a member of the School Council
- encouraging another person to stand for election.

School Council induction video

The School Council induction video provides a summary of the purpose and responsibilities of School Councils as well as the roles and responsibilities of School Councillors. The video can be viewed on the [Department's website at School Councils](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/management/community/Pages/schoolcouncils.aspx).

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

What do you need to do to stand for election?

The Principal will issue a Notice of Election and Call for Nominations following the commencement of Term 1 each year. All School Council elections must be completed by the end of March unless the usual time line has been varied by the Minister.

If you decide to stand for election, you can arrange for someone to nominate you as a candidate or you can nominate yourself in the Parent member category.

DET employees whose child is enrolled in a school in which they are not engaged in work, are eligible to nominate for Parent membership of the School Council at that school.

Once the nomination form is completed, return it to the Principal within the time stated on the Notice of Election. You will receive a Nomination Form Receipt via post, email or by hand following the receipt of your completed nomination.

If there are more nominations received than there are vacancies on council, a ballot will be conducted during the two weeks after the call for nominations has closed.

Remember

- Consider standing for election to School Council.
- Ask at the school for help if you would like to stand for election and are not sure what to do.
- Be sure to vote if the election goes to ballot.

Contact the Principal for further information.