# FACT SHEET No 2 - INFORMATION FOR PRINCIPALS REGARDING THE STUDENT MEMBER COUNCIL ELECTIONS

## How many student member positions are there on school council?

All Victorian government schools with a student cohort of year 7 and above will have **two** Student member positions on school council.

## Which students are eligible to stand for election?

To be eligible to run in the Student member category, that person must be a student enrolled in year 7 or above at the school where they are seeking to be on council. There is no minimum age requirement.

## Which students are eligible to nominate and/or vote for the student member category?

To be eligible to nominate and/or vote for a person to be elected to the Student member category, that person must be a student who is enrolled at the school in year 7 or above. There is no minimum age requirement.

## Do students have the same rights and responsibilities as other coucil members?

Student member school councillors have the same rights and responsibilities as all other council members. They are full voting members and are expected to prepare for and attend all council meetings.

Student members are ineligible to hold any school council office bearer position.

## Can a parent and child be on the same council?

Yes, relatives are allowed to be members of the same council.

## Can students coopted to the community category be transferred to the student member category?

Students who are currently Community members on council may choose to remain in this category or may choose to seek election to the Student member category. If a student Community member is successful in being elected to a Student member position, the student, upon accepting the new position will automatically be considered as having resigned from their Community member position, thereby creating a casual vacancy in that Community member position.

Councils are unable to simply transfer students who have been co-opted to a Community member position to the Student member category.

## Nominations for school council

Unlike the parent or DET member categories, if two student member positions are available and in the first call for nominations only one nomination is received, the student is not automatically declared elected. The principal will immediately post, in a prominent place in the school, a notice calling for futher nominations. Yhese nominations are to be received within three school days from the closing of the first call for nominations.

If, after the second call for nominations, one other nomination is received, then both students are appointed to council.

After the second call for nominations if the total number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies then all nominees will go to ballot.The two students with the most votes will serve as the Student members on school council.

## How long is the term of office for student members?

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.

In 2018 only, one student was elected for a one year term of office and one student was elected for a two year term of office. From 2019, students will be elected to council for a two year term of office.

## Which student will serve the one year or two year term of office?

Where the members in the Student membership category have been elected by ballot to their positions, the member in Student membership category with the greater number of votes shall serve the longer term of office, and the member with the second highest number of votes shall serve the shorter term of office.

For the purpose of ranking the candidates, if there is a tie between some or all of the candidates standing for election the ranking of the candidates will be determined by the drawing of lots.

Where the members in the student membership category have not been elected by ballot to their positions (an equal number of students were nominated for the same number of Student member positions), the members in that membership category may decide (by agreement amongst themselves) the term of office for each member in that membership category. Failing

agreement, the term of office shall be determined by the drawing of lots.

## Do year 12 students serve a two year term of office?

All Student members elected to council are elected to a two year term of office. Where a student who is a member of the Student member category on school council ceases to be enrolled in the school, a casual vacancy will be created for the remainder of the term of office.

Year 12 students who are serving a two year term once graduated are no longer enrolled at the school and therefore cannot be on council. These students will be eligible to stay on council until the school council election in the following year.

## Can students share the role with another student?

Councillors are not permitted to share their role. Councillors are elected to council and are expected to attend all meetings and serve their full term of office.

## Are school captains and SRC representatives offered a position on council before other students?

While being the school captain, vice-captain or a member of the SRC may provide valuable leadership experience, no students can be offered in the Student member category based on their standing within the school.

School captains and SRC members are not automatic council members. Voting for school captains, SRC representatives and Student members on school council are three distinct and separate processes. Any student interested in being a Student member of their school council is required to run for election.

## Are students required to follow the same campaign rules as the parent and DET electorate?

Campaign literature supporting Student member candidates for school council elections may only be distributed and posted in certain places in the school grounds as designated by the Principal.

The Department recommends that campaign literature not be distributed during teaching hours. Principals may decide that campaign literature be limited to: posters on the school’s notice board and/or flyers distributed at lunch time on certain days of the week and/or information posted on the school’s social media account(s).

School resources may not be used to support particular candidates or groups of candidates.

The Principal should invite candidates to prepare a brief statement to be distributed with each ballot paper. The length is specified by the principal and is usually no longer than 150 words.

## Are students able to attend school council training?

Students are encouraged to attend face-to-face training offered by the Department, in consultation with the Principal. The Principal is responsible for providing evidence of parent/guardian permission to the training providers should the student participate in training.

The training uses the Improving School Governance package and is at no cost to schools. Training is available in the following modules: Governance, Strategic Planning and Finance.

Please see the Principals Guide to School Council Elections for further information or contact the School Operations and Governance Unit at: school.council@edumail.vic.gov.au