

Principals guide to school council elections

Reference materials



Contents

Introduction	7
School council elections – fundamentals	8
Election timeframe	8
Electorates	8
Eligibility of candidates and voters	10
Locating electorate members for the election	10
Disputes	10
Maximum department employee parents on school council	11
Information for parents, school employees and students	11
Term of office – elections/casual vacancy	11
School council meetings	11
Co-option of members	11
Complaints process/conduct of an election	12
New schools – the first school council election	12
School council election process overview	13
Stages of election	13
Stage one: the election framework and calling for nominations	14
Indicative timeframe	14
Intended outcomes at this stage	14
Requirements – steps to be taken	14
Flow chart 1: voting rights – parent electorate	15
Flow chart 2: voting rights – school employee electorate	15
Flow chart 3: voting rights – student electorate	15
Note 1: School council election process and timetable	16
Stage two: closing and assessing nominations and deciding if a ballot is required	17
Indicative timeframe	17
Intended outcomes during this stage	17
Good practice	17
Requirements – steps to be taken	17
Flow chart 4: assessing the validity of nominations and eligibility of candidates	19
.....	19
..... Error! Bookmark not defined.	
Flow chart 5: assessing the requirements for a ballot	20
Stage 3: preparing for ballot	21

© State of Victoria (Department of Education) 2024



Principals guide to school council elections 2024 is provided under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. You are free to re-use the work under that licence, on the condition that you credit the State of Victoria (Department of Education), indicate if changes were made and comply with the other licence terms, see: [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

The licence does not apply to:

- any images, photographs, trademarks or branding, including the Victorian Government logo and the DE logo; and
- content supplied by third parties.

Copyright queries may be directed to copyright@education.vic.gov.au



Department
of Education

Indicative timeframe	21
Intended outcomes at this stage	21
Requirements – steps to be taken.....	21
How to vote.....	22
Good practice	22
Statements from candidates.....	23
Editing the statements of candidates	23
Stage 4: ballot count and declaring poll.....	24
Indicative timeframe	24
Intended outcomes at this stage	24
Requirements – steps to be taken.....	24
Good practice	25
Note 2: scrutineers for the vote count.....	25
Note 3: how to determine invalid votes	26
Stage 5: special and first council meetings after the poll	27
Indicative timeframe	27
Intended outcomes at this stage	27
Good practice for appointing community members	27
Requirements – steps to be taken.....	27
Stage 6: post-election compliance	29
Indicative timeframe	29
Intended outcomes at this stage	29
Requirements following council elections	29
Update school council president details.....	30
Changing the size or composition of council – Schedule 5	30
Appendix A	32
Fact sheet 1: school council elections – information for parents	32
What is a school council and what does it do?	32
Who is on the school council?	32
Why is parent membership so important?	32
Do I need special experience to be on school council?	32
Code of conduct for school councillors	32
Indemnity for school council members	33
How can you become involved?	33
What do you need to do to stand for election?	33
Remember	34
Fact sheet 2: information for principals regarding the student member council elections....	35
How many student member positions are there on school council?	35
Which students are eligible to stand for election?	35
Which students are eligible to nominate and/or vote for the student member category?.....	35
Do students have the same rights and responsibilities as other council members?	35

Can a parent and child be on the same council?.....	35
Can students co-opted to the community member category be transferred to the student member category?	35
Nominations for school council	35
How long is the term of office for student members?	36
What happens if there are tied votes in the ballot?.....	36
Do Year 12 students serve a two-year term of office?.....	36
Can a student share the role with another student?	36
Are school captains and Student Representative Council (SRC) members offered a position on council before other students?.....	36
Campaign rules for student members and student electorate	36
Are students able to attend school council training?	37
Fact sheet 3: information for students seeking election to council	38
What is a school council and what does it do?	38
What are some of the duties of a school councillor?	38
Why is student membership so important?.....	38
Do I need special experience to be on school council?	38
Who is on the school council?	39
How many student member positions are there on school council?	39
Can I share the role with another student?	39
Are school captains and SRC members offered a position on council before other students?	39
How long is the term of office?.....	39
What happens if there are tied votes?	40
What do I need to do to stand for election?	40
Are there any rules on how I campaign?	40
Nominations for school council	40
How do I know which students are standing for election?	40
How do I vote?	40
School council meetings	41
Conflict of interest	41
What if I cannot attend a council meeting?	41
Is there training that I can attend?	41
Can a school council tell a teacher what to do?	43
Further Information	43
Code of conduct for school councillors	43
Fact sheet 4: information for parents of children seeking election to school council.....	44
What is a school council and what does it do?	44
Who is on the school council?	44
How long is the term of office?.....	44
Why is student membership so important?.....	44
Does my child need special experience to be on school council?.....	44

What does my child need to do to stand for election?	45
School council meetings	45
Conflict of interest	46
Can I attend council meetings with my child?	46
I am a parent member of the council. Can I be a member of the same council as my child(ren)? ..	46
What if my child cannot attend a council meeting?	46
What if my child decides they no longer want to be a member of council?	46
Code of conduct for school councillors	47
Indemnity for school council members	47
Fact sheet 5: nominating and voting others to the student member category	48
What is a school council and what does it do?	48
What are some of the duties of a school councillor?	48
Who is on the school council?	48
Why is student membership so important?	49
Do candidates need special experience to be on school council?	49
How do I nominate a candidate for a position on council?	49
How do I know which students are standing for election?	49
How do I vote?	50
Appendix B: examples of assessing need for election and determining election results	51
More nominations than vacancies	51
Example 1	51
Example 2	51
Nominations equal the number of vacancies in the parent and school employee categories	51
Insufficient nominations in the parent and school employee categories	52
Insufficient nominations in the student electorate	52
Appendix C: new schools – the first school council election	53
Term of office	53
Appendix D: casual vacancies	54
How casual vacancies are to be filled	55
Schedule 2: school council variable membership table	56
Form 1: new schools – notice of first school council election and call for nominations	61
Form 2: notice of election and call for nominations	63
Form 3: self-nomination form for parent member category	64
Form 4: nomination form for parent member category	66
Form 5: self-nomination form for school employee member category	68
Form 6: nomination form for school employee member category	70
Form 7: self-nomination form for student member category	72
Form 8: nomination form for student member category	74
Form 9: candidate nomination form receipt	76
Form 10: parent ballot paper – ordinary	77

Instructions.....	77
Form 11: school employee ballot paper	78
Instructions.....	78
Form 12: parent ballot paper (separate voting for department and non-department parents)...	79
Instructions.....	80
Form 13: student ballot paper.....	81
Instructions.....	81
Declaration of School Council membership	82
Appendix E: fact sheet for principals and school council presidents	86
Commonly asked questions and topics from principals and school councils.	86
Does the principal count as a school employee member on school council? Is the principal a voting member?	86
Quorum at the special meeting after the declaration of the poll – co-option of community members	86
Quorum at the first meeting after the declaration of the poll – to elect office bearers	86
What constitutes a quorum at general and extraordinary meetings?	86
In the event of a tied vote at a general meeting or extraordinary meeting of council, who has the deciding vote?	87
In the event of a tied vote at the first meeting of the new school council after the poll, to elect office bearers, what is the process?	87
How is school council membership declared each year?	87
When does school council need to present the Annual Report to the school community?	88
Annual planning for school council business	88
President's email account	89
Inducting and supporting new members, including student members on councils	89
How to access school council training	89
Managing conflicts of interest	89
Processes and procedures for fundraising	90
Appendix F: nomination notification form	92
Co-option to a community member position on school council	94
Co-opted member to complete:	94
Co-option to a casual vacancy on school council	96
Co-opted member to complete:	96

Introduction

School council elections take place in Term 1 of each year. The principal is responsible for conducting the election. Elections must be completed by 31 March. The principal may appoint a person to act on their behalf for one or more of the purposes detailed in the Ministerial Order 1280 (Constitution of Government School Councils) 2020 (Ministerial Order 1280), which came into operation on 1 January 2021.

Ministerial Order 1280 establishes the legal framework for conducting school council elections.

This guide has been developed to assist principals to understand and conduct school council elections in accordance with Ministerial Order 1280. It is updated annually to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and policy.

The election process is set out in six stages. The section headed 'Requirements' in each of the stages must be followed. Some stages have a 'notes' section and include examples of good practice. Forms and fact sheets are also included.

For further guidance on school council elections refer to [School Council Elections](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-elections/policy) (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-elections/policy>).

For advice contact the School Operations and Governance Unit, Operations and Governance at school.council@education.vic.gov.au or call [03 7022 5666](tel:0370225666).

For more information about the Ministerial Order 1280, refer to [School Council – Powers and Functions](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-powers-and-functions/policy) (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-powers-and-functions/policy>).

School council elections – fundamentals

Election timeframe

The school council election process for all government schools in Victoria must begin at the start of the school year and be completed on or before 31 March. **Updates to, and declaration of School Council Membership must be completed by 30 April** via the [School Council Portal](https://scp.educationapps.vic.gov.au/) (principal or business manager login required) <<https://scp.educationapps.vic.gov.au/>>.

An election outside this timeframe can only be conducted on receipt of a signed Order from the Minister for Education.

Electorates

Each school council operates according to Ministerial Order 1280, which details the objectives, functions and powers of a council and its size and composition.

There are three separate electorates within a school community:

- parent electorate
- school employee electorate
- student electorate.

In addition, there is an optional community member category, and for a small number of school councils, a nominee member category.

Parent electorate of the school

The parent electorate includes each parent of a student at the school, except those who are department employees engaged in work at, and for, the school. A parent of a student at the school, who is a department employee but does not work at or for the school is included in the parent electorate. These parents are recognised on council as 'department employee parents'.

'Parent' includes a guardian or person who is liable to maintain or has the actual custody of a student of the school.

If a student ceases to be enrolled at the school having completed the normal school year for the student's year level and that student's parent is a parent member of the school council, the parent may continue to be a member of the council until the next council election, at the beginning of the next year.

If a department employee is elected to the parent category (department employee parent) council of the school where their child is enrolled but where they do not work, they are counted as department employees for school council meeting quorum requirements.

Parent members generally comprise more than one third of the council's total membership.

School employee electorate of the school

The school employee electorate of the school includes the principal of the school and school employees engaged in work at, and for, the school.

The principal and school employees of a school are, and can only be, school employee members of the school council. The principal is automatically included in the school employee membership category and has full voting rights. Members of the school employee electorate are also considered 'department employees'.

Department employees

- a. means a person employed:
- i. under Part 2.4 of the *Education and Training Reform Act (2006)* or by the Secretary under the *Public Administration Act 2004*; or
 - ii. a person employed by a school council of a government school (for example, maintenance or grounds person, cleaner) for 8 hours or more per week in either an ongoing capacity or for a fixed term of at least 90 days.

Contractors or their employees are not department employees

A contractor is engaged under a contract for a service (as distinct from an employment contract). Neither a contractor nor the employees of a contractor are department employees. As an example, a parent of a child at the school who is a director of a company that has been engaged by the school council to provide a service is not a department employee. Similarly, a person employed by a company to manage the school canteen is not a department employee.

Status of department employees on leave

A department employee, including a department employee parent, on any form of leave (including personal leave, secondment), whether with or without pay from employment with the department is considered to be a department employee and have the employee status they had immediately prior to going on leave.

If the leave is for six months or less, they remain a member of the electorate of which the person was a member immediately prior to going on leave and identified as a department employee for quorum purposes.

Secondary school student electorate of the school

All government schools with a Year 7 cohort and above are required to have two student members on council.

The student electorate includes all students enrolled at the school in Year 7 and above. Student members of school council have the same rights, responsibilities and terms of office as other council members including full voting rights. However, student members are not eligible to hold any office bearer position. Student members are counted as non-department employee members for quorum.

If a Year 12 student, who has been elected to the student member category, has completed the normal school year and ceases to be enrolled at the school, that student may continue to be a member of the council until the next council election, at the beginning of the next year.

Community members

The community member category is an optional category for school councils. Community members are co-opted onto council, usually at the first meeting of the newly elected council and cannot be department employees. Community members typically bring special skills, interests, or experience to the council such as:

- members from parent clubs
- accountants
- digital technology skills and/or
- project management skills.

Community members generally have the same rights, responsibilities and terms of office as elected members unless otherwise provided in Ministerial Order 1280.

Nominee member category

A small number of school councils have a nominee member category. Nominee members are appointed by organisations authorised by the Minister for Education. Principals with nominee members on school council should review the terms of appointment of the nominees at the start of each school year and action as required.

Nominee members generally have the same rights, responsibilities and terms of office as elected members unless otherwise provided in Ministerial Order 1280.

Eligibility of candidates and voters

A candidate for school council must be a person who is eligible for election to the membership category to which they are seeking election.

The nominator of a candidate standing for election to the **parent member category** must be a member of the parent electorate of the school.

The nominator of a candidate standing for election to the **school employee member category** must be a member of the school employee electorate of the school.

The nominator of a candidate standing for election to the **student member category** must be in Year 7 or above, and be a member of the school student body.

A candidate may self-nominate.

In deciding a person's eligibility, the principal may request in a specified timeframe that:

- a candidate produce evidence of their eligibility to nominate for election
- a nominator produce evidence of their entitlement to nominate the candidate and/or
- a voter produce evidence of their eligibility to vote.

A person is ineligible for election or co-option to the school council if the person:

- is or has been insolvent under administration within the last three years. Note: Insolvent under administration includes a person who is an undischarged bankrupt
- is of unsound mind
- has been found guilty or convicted of an indictable offence or an offence that would be an indictable offence if it had been committed in Victoria
- is a registrable offender within the meaning of the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*
- is subject to any medical condition that makes them unable to fulfil the role of a council member.

Locating electorate members for the election

When posting or arranging delivery of the Notice of Election, nominations forms (Forms 1 or 2) or ballot papers (Forms 10, 11, 12, 13), principals are not required to locate any member of the electorate, other than from information kept in the records at the school, or by written information provided to the principal from a member of the particular electorate.

Disputes

The principal has the power to decide any dispute which may arise in the conduct of the ballot.

Any queries or concerns about information or procedures during the election process should be discussed with the principal.

The principal is required to retain all election and ballot papers, ballot results and other related election information in the school for 12 months, unless instructed otherwise by the Secretary of the department.

Maximum department employee parents on school council

The size and membership numbers of council are listed in the School Council Variable Membership Table (Schedule 2) included in this guide. The table also includes information on the total number of department employee parents who can be elected to a particular school council.

On any council constituting Order, the majority of councillors must be non-department employees. Principals must be conscious of the maximum number of department employee parents that may be elected to school council. When deciding whether the number of nominations in the parent member category, including department parents, is equal to, less than, or greater than the number of vacancies, principals should refer to Appendix B in this Guide.

Please note that student members are not included in the School Council Variable Membership Table (Schedule 2). However, those schools that are required to have student members have a fixed number of two members in this category.

Information for parents, school employees and students

Principals should provide their school community with information about the school council election through the school newsletter, by email or on the school website and encourage as many people as possible to participate in the process. Each parent of each child or children at the school is eligible to nominate, and to vote if the election goes to a ballot.

Information on the role and responsibilities of school councils should be freely available to the school community.

Term of office – elections/casual vacancy

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 council co-opting an eligible person for the remainder of the term of office. For further information on casual vacancies refer to Appendix D.

School council meetings

The school council can meet the day after the date of declaration of the poll. If a school council is required by Ministerial Order 1280 to have community members co-opted to the school council, the principal must:

- as soon as practicable after the declaration of the poll and before office bearers are elected, call, and preside at, a special meeting for the purpose of co-opting the community members.

Following the co-option meeting, the principal will:

- call, and preside at, the first meeting of the school council to elect office bearers.
- A school council must meet at least eight times a year, and at least once per school term. It is good practice to have two meetings per term.

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.

Complaints process/conduct of an election

Any person who is aggrieved by any matter arising out of the election process may, within 14 days of the date of the declaration of the poll, make the complaint in writing to the principal.

If the principal receives a complaint, they must refer that complaint to their Regional Director as soon as possible and request that the Regional Director, either personally or through a nominee, establish a committee consisting of:

- a person nominated by the Regional Director
- the president of the school council, or, if the president has a connection to the complaint, a member of the school council who is within the parent member category and who has no connection to the complaint
- a member of the school council who is within the school employee member category and who has no connection to the complaint.

The regional office must forward a copy of the complaint to the School Operations and Governance Unit, Operations and Governance via email at school.council@education.vic.gov.au and by contacting [03 7022 5666](tel:0370225666).

The School Operations and Governance Unit can also be contacted for further advice and support.

If the committee does not, within 14 days of its establishment, agree on how to deal with the complaint, the committee must contact the Regional Director and request that the Regional Director, either personally or through a nominee, determine how the complaint should be dealt with and resolved.

Until a determination by the committee or Regional Director, the election in respect of which a complaint is made, will be regarded as valid. Any decision made by the school council during that interval is valid.

If the determination of the committee or Regional Director is that a fresh election is required, any decision made by the school council from the date of the determination to the date of the fresh election is valid. **A Ministerial Order is required for the new election to be conducted.** The principal or nominee must conduct the fresh election in accordance with the Order.

New schools – the first school council election

A new school operates initially with an interim school council until the first school council election is held. The timeframe for the first council election is specified in the constituting Ministerial Order for the new school council.

The Notice of Election and Call for Nominations for the first school council election (Form 1) must be used. The term of office of the interim members finishes upon the date of declaration of the poll for the first school council election.

Additional information about the conduct of a first school council election is provided in Appendix C.

School council election process overview

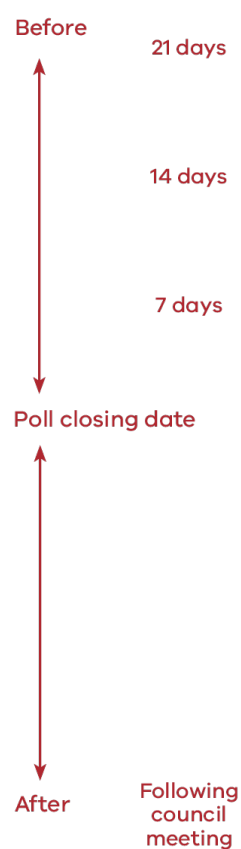
Stages of election

The election process needs to start at least 21 days before the poll closing date.

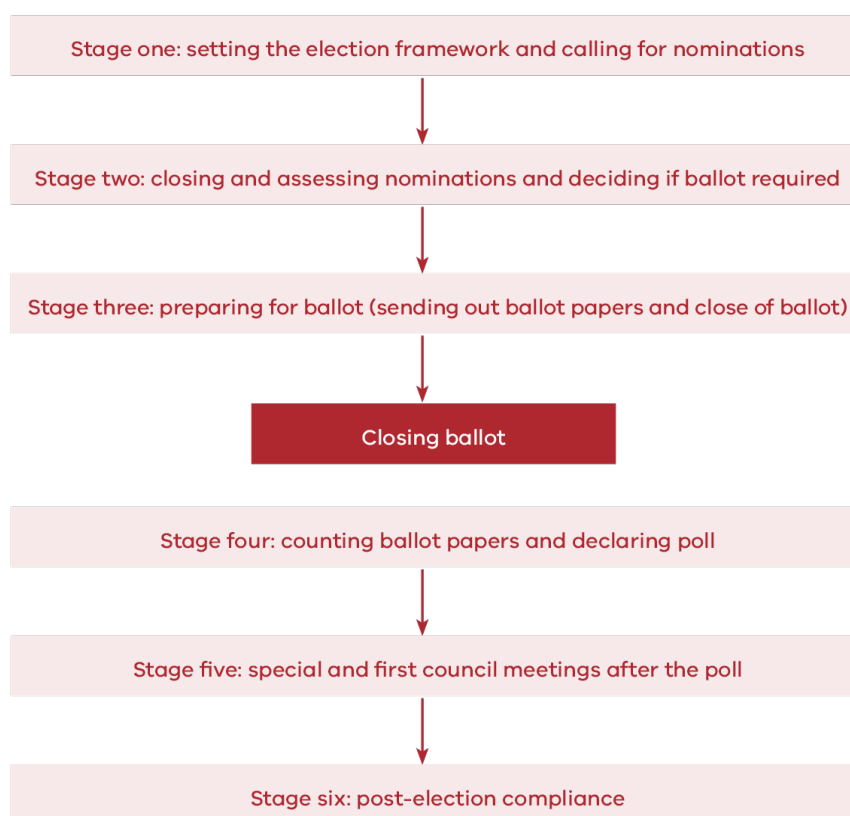
The following are indicative stages of the process.

Further information about the requirements for each stage of the election is set out in subsequent pages.

Indicative timeline



Stages of election process



Stage one: the election framework and calling for nominations

Indicative timeframe

This stage may start any time after the commencement of term one. It must be completed at least 21 days before the poll closing day.

Intended outcomes at this stage

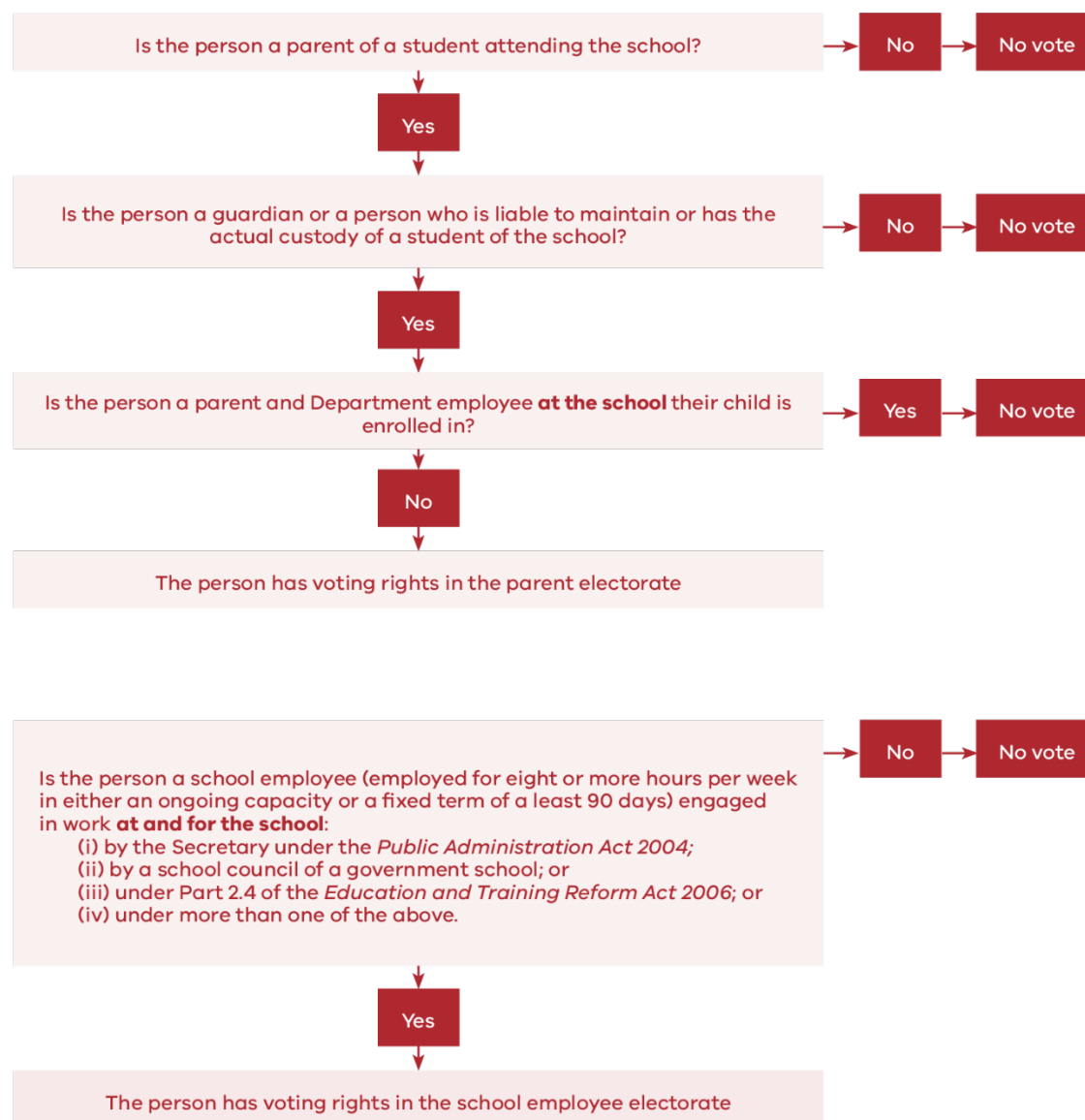
- An effective election plan is in place with sufficient time to communicate with the school community, distribute election papers if required, receive nominations and prepare ballot papers.
- Information is provided to the school community to participate in the election process.
- Nomination forms are prepared and are made available at the school.
- Nominations forms can be provided in either hard copy or emailed.

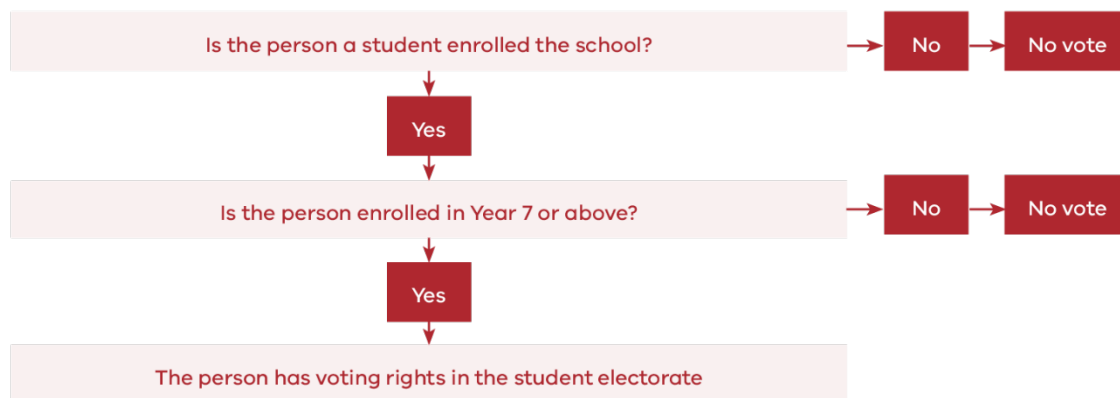
Requirements – steps to be taken

1. Identify the number of vacancies in the parent, school employee and student electorates. That is, only those vacancies created due to the expiry of the term of office of councillors. Short-term vacancies or casual vacancies are not part of the election process and can be filled through co-option when the election process has concluded.
2. **Confirm vacant positions by referring to the school council's current membership under Ministerial Order 1280.** This information is listed in the Declaration of School Council Membership section of the [School Council Portal](https://scp.educationapps.vic.gov.au) (principal or business manager login required). (<https://scp.educationapps.vic.gov.au>).
3. Information on how to access school council membership information can be found in Stage 6 of this guide.
4. Fix a date for the closure of the ballot that will ensure the election is completed by 31 March.
5. At least 21 days before the fixed date, post or arrange for delivery of the Notice of Election and Call for Nominations to the parent, student and/or school employee electorate of the school council. Display the Notice of Election and Call for Nominations in a prominent position at the school. Refer to Fact sheet 1 – school council elections, information for parents, and Form 1 and Form 2, in this guide.
6. Prepare, and make available at the school sufficient copies of the nomination forms 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. The nomination forms include information for nominators and nominees about the collection, use and disclosure of personal information under the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. The nomination forms only can be provided in hard copy or electronically.
7. Prepare Nomination Form Receipt (Form 9).
Compile a roll with names and addresses of every person eligible to vote in the three electorates (refer to Flow charts 1, 2 and 3). Each parent of child/ren enrolled at the school is eligible to vote.
8. When posting or arranging delivery of the Notice of Election, Nominations forms or ballot papers, principals are not required to locate any member of the electorate, other than from information kept in the records at the school, or by written information provided to the principal from a member of the electorate.
9. Decide the date and time for the counting of votes and declaration of the poll.
10. Provide general information about the election through the school newsletter/website or other forms of communication to the community (an example of a communication is provided in Appendix A).

11. The principal is the returning officer. If there is a need to nominate another person to this role, then this person should be a person independent of the outcome of any election.

Flow chart 1: voting rights – parent electorate





Note 1: School council election process and timetable

This document is an example of a school council election process for 2024. The dates included are only suggestions, however, the process must be completed on or before 31 March.

School council election process and timetable		
Name of the school:		
Letter	Event	DATE
a)	Notice of election and call for nominations	Monday 5 February 2024
b)	Closing date for nominations	Monday 12 February 2024
c)	Date by which the list of candidates and nominators will be posted	Wednesday 14 February 2024
d)	Date by which ballot papers will be prepared and distributed	On or before Monday 19 February 2024
e)	Close of ballot	Monday 26 February 2024
f)	Vote count / /
g)	Declaration of poll / /
h)	Special council meeting to co-opt community members (the principal will preside) / /
i)	First council meeting to elect office bearers (the principal will preside) / /

Stage two: closing and assessing nominations and deciding if a ballot is required

Indicative timeframe

This stage falls between 14 days and 21 days before the poll closing date.

Intended outcomes during this stage

- Nominations are received and validity of nominations and eligibility of nominators/candidates assessed.
- Nomination form receipt is sent to candidates and nominators (if a different person).
- Decisions are made on whether or not a ballot is required and in which membership category.
- The community is informed of the outcome of nominations as soon as possible after the process has been closed.

Good practice

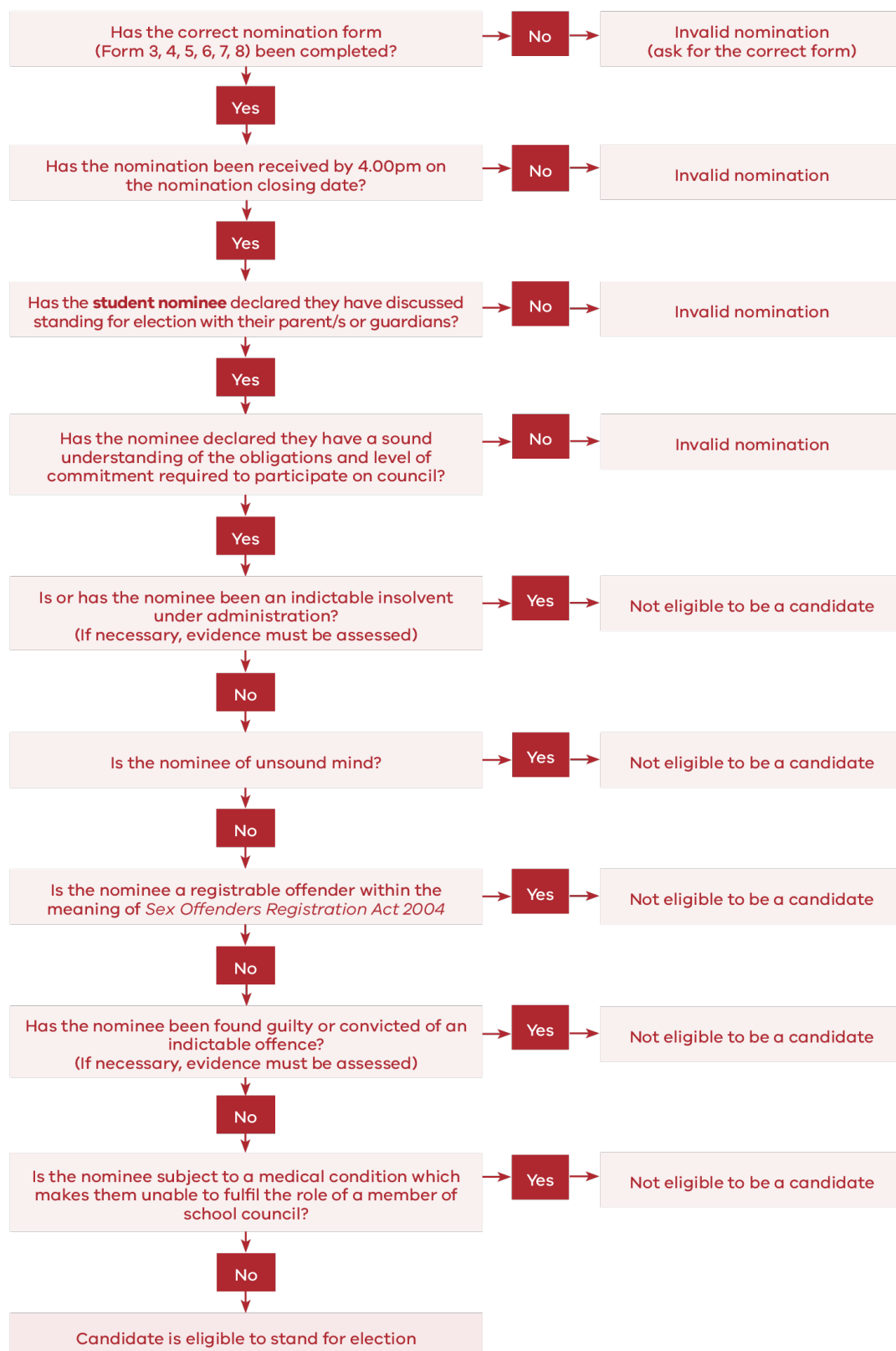
- Assess the accuracy of completed nomination forms and provide advice, if necessary, to resubmit.
- At the end of the nomination period, if the number of nominations is less than the number of vacancies in any one membership category, declare those who nominated as being elected and publicise an extension of three school days to call for nominations for the remaining vacancies.
- Where the nominations exceed the number of vacancies and a ballot is required, inform the community and the candidates. Provide candidates with the opportunity to prepare a short written statement. Provide clear instructions about the preparation of the statement and check that instructions have been followed before sending out statements with the ballot papers. Refer to Stage 3: good practice, in this guide for more detailed information about candidates' statements.

Requirements – steps to be taken

1. Receive completed nominations in the form of Forms 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 (as appropriate) by 4.00pm on the fourteenth day before the date fixed for the closure of the ballot.
2. Assess the validity of nominations and eligibility of a nominator to nominate and candidate to nominate for election (refer to Flow chart 4 for assessing the validity of nominations and eligibility of candidates). The nominator and/or candidate must be a member of the relevant electorate. A nomination does not require a seconder.
3. Display notices showing the name of each candidate and nominator in a prominent position at the school as soon as practicable after the closing of nominations. A sample notice to list the candidates and nominators can be found in Appendix F in this guide.
4. Post/email Nomination Form Receipt (Form 9) to nominees and nominators as soon as practicable after the receipt of a validly completed nomination form.
5. Assess the number of nominations and decide if a ballot is required. For example, refer to Flow chart 5 and Appendix B) or call for further nominations.
6. In the parent electorate determine which parents are department employees and whether this meets the requirements of the School Council Variable Membership Table (Schedule 2) in this guide. Non-department members must be in the majority and Schedule 2 indicates the total number of department employee parents permissible to meet this requirement.

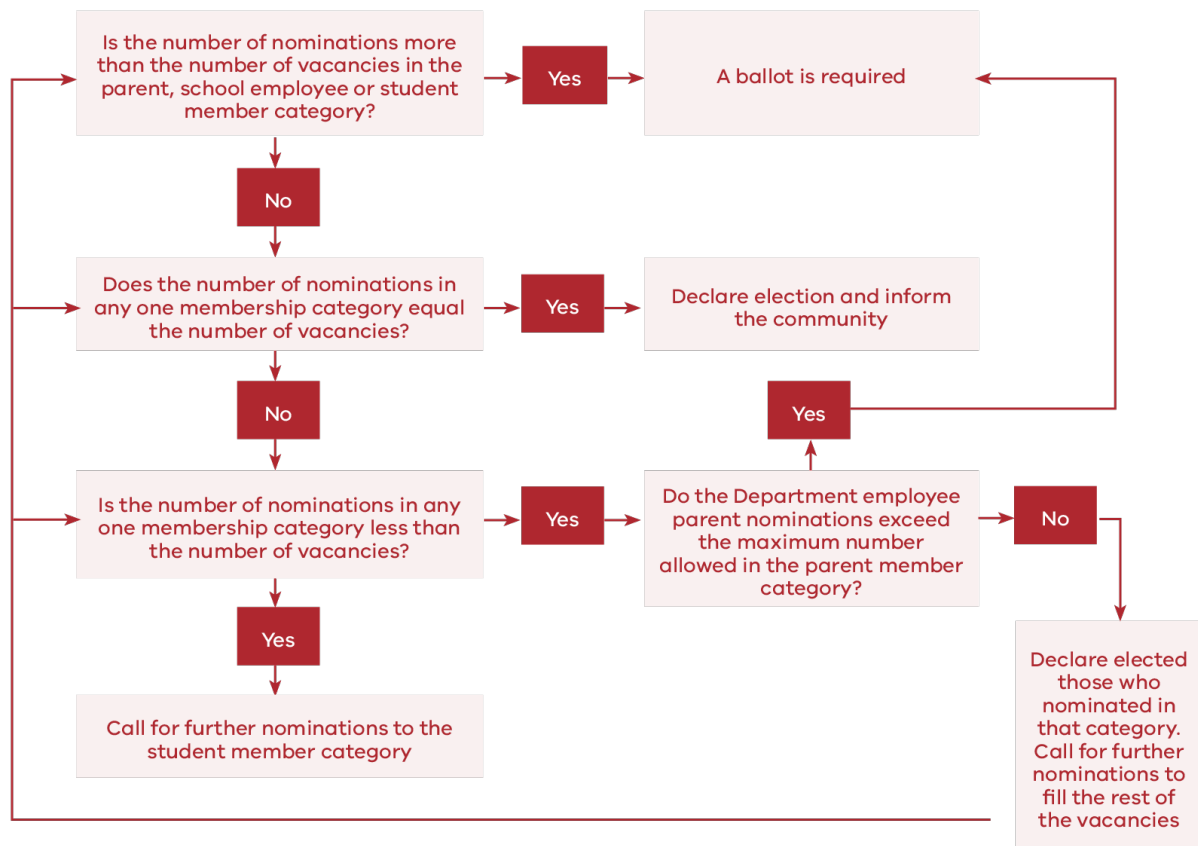
7. When the number of nominations is less than the number of vacancies in the parent or school employee categories, declare elected those who nominated into that category and immediately post in a prominent position in the school a notice stating that insufficient nominations have been received and call for further nominations. These nominations are to be lodged within three school days from the closing date of the first call for nominations.
8. When the number of nominations is less than vacancies in the student member category, the principal must post another notice calling for further nominations. These nominations are to be received within three school days. If after the second call, the number of nominations match the number of vacancies, the students are appointed to council.
9. Where the number of nominations in the parent, student or school employee categories exceeds the number of vacancies, a ballot is required.
10. Where the number of nominations equals the number of vacancies (subject to maximum department employee parent requirements not being exceeded – refer to Schedule 2), declare the poll and inform the school community.
11. Ensure completed nomination forms are available for inspection up to the commencement of voting. Given that the nomination forms contain personal information, the principal should personally handle any requests for inspection.
12. Nomination forms must be kept at the school by the principal for a period of 12 months from the date of the declaration of the poll and available for inspection by voters at reasonable times.

Flow chart 4: assessing the validity of nominations and eligibility of candidates



★ Defined in the Ministerial Order as “is or has been an insolvent under administration within the last three years.”

Flow chart 5: assessing the requirements for a ballot



Stage 3: preparing for ballot

Indicative timeframe

This stage is within 7 days before the poll closing date.

Intended outcomes at this stage

- Ballot papers (Forms 10, 11, 12 and 13) are prepared and completed as required by Ministerial Order 1280:
 - a. Form 10 is used for the parent member category (refer to Appendix B, Example 1)
 - b. Form 11 is used for the school employee member category
 - c. Form 12 is used for the parent member category in circumstances where:
 - parents who are department employees and who are nominated to the parent member category exceed the maximum department employee parents, but where there are insufficient candidates for the parent member category who are not department employees and
 - where at the second call for nominations the number of parents nominated exceeds the vacancies and a ballot is required (refer to Appendix B, Example 2)
 - d. Form 13 is used for the student member category.
 - Clear instructions to, and communication with, the voters and candidates are established.
 - Voters may only vote once in a ballot and must vote in the relevant electorate. Each parent of a student/s enrolled at the school is entitled to vote in the council ballot.
 - Administrative arrangements are completed to cast votes and to record the names and addresses of the voters on the register of voters.
 - Integrity of the voting process and the security of the ballot boxes are ensured.

Requirements – steps to be taken

1. Prepare ballot papers (Forms 10, 11, 12 and 13) as appropriate, with the names, **in an order determined by the drawing of lots**, of the candidates listed in the relevant membership category.
2. Ensure each ballot paper can be easily authenticated by, for example, a signature or school stamp.
3. Electronic or digital ballot papers **cannot be used**.
4. Ballot papers must not be uploaded onto the school website or distributed electronically.
5. At least seven days before the date fixed for the closure of the ballot, post or arrange delivery of the ballot papers **together with two envelopes to each voter** of the relevant electorate of the school. The principal may determine whether the school pays for return postage of any ballot papers. Refer to 'Casting a vote' for further details on the arrangements of envelopes.
6. Inform the school community that in the parent member and school employee member categories no campaign literature in support of candidates or groups of candidates may be distributed or posted in the school. No school resources, whether human or material, may be used to support particular candidates or groups of candidates.
7. **Campaign rules differ slightly for students.** Inform the school community that campaign literature supporting student candidates may be distributed or posted in the school at the discretion of the principal. No school resources whether human or material may be used to support particular candidates or groups of candidates.
8. Notify voters of any withdrawal of candidates as soon as possible.

9. Provide a securely sealed ballot box, or boxes in the case of multiple school campuses, for the casting of votes at the school between the hours of 8.00am and 4.00pm on every school day up to and including the day of the closure of the ballot.
10. Authorise a person to receive and register votes delivered to the school up to and including the day of the closure of the ballot.
11. Record in a register the name and address appearing at the rear of each outer envelope containing a postal vote and a vote cast between the hours of 8.00am and 4.00pm, on any school day, up to and including the day fixed for the closure of the ballot and which has been delivered to the person authorised to receive and register the votes. Place the unopened plain envelope containing the completed ballot paper in the ballot box.
12. For a ballot paper delivered to the school by the voter, the voter places the blank envelope containing the ballot paper in the ballot box and prints his/her name and address in the register of voters.
13. Ensure that the ballot box is kept in a secure place at all times.

How to vote

Each voter must complete a ballot paper by placing a mark next to the name of each candidate standing for election for whom the voter wishes to vote, up to the number of vacant positions. To cast a vote, the voter must:

- Deliver, or arrange delivery of, the completed ballot paper to the school between the hours of 8.00am and 4.00pm on any school day up to and including the day fixed for the closure of the ballot, and place the completed ballot paper in a blank envelope, and
 - (i) place the blank envelope in another envelope with the voter's name and address written on it and deliver the envelope to the person authorised to receive and register the votes, or
 - (ii) place the completed ballot paper in a blank envelope in the ballot box provided and print the voter's name and address in the register of voters;

OR

- Post the vote by:
 - (i) placing the completed ballot paper in a blank envelope; and
 - (ii) placing the blank envelope in a second envelope with the voter's name and address printed on the back of this envelope; and
 - (iii) posting the envelope to the principal so as to reach the principal by 4.00pm on the day of the closure of the ballot.

Good practice

- Advise voters on the process to cast their vote, either through a newsletter and/or as a separate guidance page with the ballot documents.
- Receive statements from candidates so that they can be circulated with the ballot papers. Where a candidate has not followed instructions for completing the statement, request that they revise it. Send candidates' statements with the ballot papers. Further advice about candidates' statements is included at the end of this section.
- Advise voters that anybody who wishes to use a postal vote should ensure that their vote is posted in time to reach the school by 4.00pm on the closing date of the ballot.
- Use the school website, an election newsletter, or a hand delivery system through school students, as additional means of communication with voters.

- Allocate a person to answer telephone enquiries regarding the election or casting votes during this period. Flow charts 1, 2 and 3 will assist in providing advice on, and assessing voting rights for the electorates.
- Where a school has a post box mailing address, clear the box at 4.00pm on the day of the closure of the ballot.

Statements from candidates

Preparation and distribution of candidates' statements is not a requirement in Ministerial Order 1280. However, in line with standard election procedure, principals may wish to invite candidates to prepare a brief statement to be distributed with each ballot paper.

This allows each electorate to gain some background about the people standing for election.

If candidates are invited to prepare a statement, the length required should be specified by the principal. It is suggested that it be no more than 150 words.

The principal should specify the type of information that could be included about the candidates.

A statement from a candidate may include information about their:

- work experience, including voluntary work
- academic and professional qualifications, if applicable
- skills and abilities including those that may be useful to the council (e.g. accounting, contract management, fundraising, organising events, etc.)
- previous and current involvement with the school, and school council including subcommittees of school council
- reasons for standing for election
- interests and hobbies.

Editing the statements of candidates

The principal should not edit the candidates' statements. The principal may request a candidate to omit any part of a statement that is likely to be defamatory or offensive or inappropriate to the election campaign or community.

If candidates provide statements that are too long, the candidate should be asked to revise the statement prior to it being circulated. If this is not done, the statement should be published using only the specified number of words.

Any instructions concerning completion should be adhered to. Failure to ensure that candidates have followed instructions for completing their statements has resulted in grievances.

Principals can place candidates' statements into a single Word document, in the order that the candidates' names are listed on the ballot paper. Principals can re-format the statements to the extent that font size and spacing is consistent across the Word document.

Stage 4: ballot count and declaring poll

Indicative timeframe

This stage starts as soon as possible after the close of ballot.

Intended outcomes at this stage

The confidentiality of the ballot and integrity of the electoral process are maintained during the vote count and declaration of the poll.

Requirements – steps to be taken

1. On the date fixed for the closure of the ballot, or as soon as practicable after that date, supervise the counting of the votes and the declaration of the poll.
2. The declaration of the poll may coincide with any other school meeting.
3. Inform each candidate of the date, time and place for the counting of votes and of the right to appoint one scrutineer each to observe the counting of the votes (refer to Note 2 for advice to scrutineers).
4. Appoint no less than two tellers, being persons who are not candidates for election, to:
 - a. count, in the presence of any scrutineers, the number of votes cast for each candidate
 - b. report the result to the principal
 - c. carry out any other duties in respect of the election as required by the principal.
5. Any ballot paper that:
 - a. is not received by the principal or placed in the ballot box at the time of the closure of the ballot, or
 - b. is not properly and clearly marked, or
 - c. does not comply with the provisions of the Order, shall be rejected as invalid.
6. A scrutineer shall be removed from the counting of votes at the direction of the principal if the scrutineer interferes with the counting procedures.
7. At the conclusion of the counting of the votes, rank the candidates standing for election to the parent, school employee and student member categories in accordance with the total number of votes received by each candidate and, if requested, disclose the voting figures. Refer to Appendix B for some examples of assessing the requirement for an election and determining election results.
8. For the purpose of ranking the candidates, if there is a tie between some or all of the candidates standing for election in any membership category, determine the ranking of the candidates by the drawing of lots.
9. Formally declare to be elected as members of the parent member category of the school council, the highest-ranking candidates up to the number of vacancies to be filled in that category. However, the principal will not formally declare to be elected, any candidate seeking election to the parent member category who is a department employee if such a declaration would result in half, or more than half, of the school council's total membership being department employees.
10. Formally declare to be elected as members of the school employee member category of the school council the highest-ranking candidates up to the number of vacancies to be filled in the school employee member category.
11. Formally declare to be elected as members of the student member category of the school council the highest-ranking candidates up to the number of vacancies to be filled in the student member category.

12. Notify all persons standing for election of the results of the election within 48 hours of the declaration of the poll.
13. After the declaration of the poll, the principal must:
 - a. retain the ballot papers in the school for 12 months, after which the ballot papers must be destroyed unless the principal has been instructed otherwise by the Secretary of the department, and
 - b. retain all results and related information other than ballot papers in the school for 12 months, after which time the results and related information may be destroyed unless the principal has been instructed otherwise by the Secretary of the department.
14. Advise any person who raises a complaint arising out of the election process, that a complaint in writing may be made to the principal within 14 days of the date of the declaration of the poll.
15. If a principal receives a complaint about the conduct of an election they must refer that complaint to their Regional Director as soon as possible. Refer to the Complaints process/conduct of an election earlier in this guide.

Good practice

- Develop and use a simple system to record the number of valid votes cast for each candidate and be satisfied with the total number of votes before declaring the poll.
- Re-examine invalid votes to decide if they are valid or invalid. Refer to Note 3 for advice on how to determine invalid votes.
- Record and maintain a register of any issues raised by the scrutineers and decisions reached.
- Maintain the secrecy of the ballot and keep voting papers sealed until the scheduled time of the vote count.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the ballot at all times until satisfied that the result is correct.

Note 2: scrutineers for the vote count

- A scrutineer is entitled to be present and observe the opening of envelopes containing ballot papers, the examination of envelopes and ballot papers and counting of the votes. However, the scrutineer is not entitled to be involved in or interfere with the process.
- Should a scrutineer wish to challenge the validity of a particular ballot paper, they should draw this to the attention of the presiding officer (the principal or their delegate), who will then decide on its validity.
- The decision of the principal or their appointee is final.

If there is a tie between some or all of the candidates standing for election in any membership category, each scrutineer is entitled to be present while the principal determines the ranking of the candidates by the drawing of lots.

Note 3: how to determine invalid votes

Ministerial Order 1280 specifies that all ballot papers must be marked with an 'x'. Ballot papers must be clearly marked. The Forms in Ministerial Order 1280 specify marking votes with an "x". However, the use of another clear mark, such as a tick, will not necessarily invalidate the vote. A ballot paper will be rejected as invalid if:

- it is not received by the principal or placed in the ballot box by 4.00pm on the day of the closure of the ballot
- it is not properly and clearly marked
- the voter marks the names of more candidates than they are entitled to vote for
- in any other way it is unclear from the ballot paper for whom the vote is intended
- there is reasonable cause to believe that the ballot paper was not an official ballot paper, i.e. one that is not easily authenticated by, for example, a signature or school stamp
- from the postmark on the outer envelope, the principal is satisfied that it was posted after the poll closure date
- it does not comply with any other requirement.

Stage 5: special and first council meetings after the poll

Indicative timeframe

This stage starts as soon as practicable after the declaration of the poll and is managed by the principal.

Intended outcomes at this stage

- The co-option of community members, where applicable, and election of office-bearers is completed to finalise the election.

Good practice for appointing community members

- In consultation with elected council members, assess the skill mix required for the council to function effectively and consider what skill gaps can be filled by appointing community members. **School governance support materials to assist with this process** are available in the [School Council – Training and Good Governance, policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy). (https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy). Conduct informal consultations with council members to identify potential community members for co-option.
- Seek consent from potential community members to put forward their names for consideration, prior to their co-option to the council.
- Refer to the [School Council – Elections – Benefits of co-opting community members to school councils, resources](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-elections/resources) (https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-elections/resources).

Requirements – steps to be taken

1. If a school council is required to have community members co-opted to the school council, the principal must, as soon as practicable after the declaration of the poll and before office bearers are elected, call, and preside at, a special meeting for the purpose of co-opting the community members. The principal will then call, and preside at, the first meeting of the school council to elect office bearers.
 - a. At the special meeting to co-opt community members the quorum is constituted if not less than one-half of the members of school council currently holding office are present.
 - b. If the purpose of co-option of community members cannot be achieved at this meeting, the meeting may be adjourned to a date decided by the council.
 - c. If the co-option of community members either cannot be resolved at the special meeting or on resumption of the adjourned special meeting, the school council may proceed to the first meeting of the school council to elect office bearers.
2. If a school council is not required to have community members co-opted to the council, the principal must call, and preside at, the first meeting of the school council to elect a president and any other office bearers the council may choose to have. As executive officer of council and a department employee, the principal has a vote at the meeting. A department employee or a student member is ineligible to serve as president, or vice-president, if the council choose to elect one. The school business manager is ineligible to serve as treasurer. The quorum for this meeting must be half or more of school council members currently holding office, and the majority of members present must not be department employees.

3. In the election of an office bearer, if the votes are tied, the school council may
 - a. decide to hold a new election for the office bearer position
 - b. decide the election by drawing lots.
4. If a new election for the office bearer position is held and is tied again, the school council may
 - a. decide to conduct further elections until the election of the office bearers is decided; or
 - b. decide the election by drawing lots.
5. Once members and office bearers are elected or co-opted, the school community must be informed of the names of council members and office bearers.
6. Report to the school council, the number of votes cast in each category: school employee, parent and student, and for each candidate, in each electorate.

Stage 6: post-election compliance

Indicative timeframe

The post-election compliance stage starts following the co-option of community members and election of office bearers and operates throughout the year.

Intended outcomes at this stage

Compliance requirements post-election, including the filling of casual vacancies, are completed within specified timeframes and according to Ministerial Order 1280 and other relevant regulations.

Requirements following council elections

Online completion.

Following the school council elections in Term 1:

1. **By 30 April the principal must complete the online declaration** found in the Declaration of School Council Membership section of the [School Council Portal](https://scp.educationapps.vic.gov.au) (<https://scp.educationapps.vic.gov.au>). This informs the Secretary to the department of the names of the members, membership category, gender, term of office, office bearers and vacancies, and whether a member is a department employee.
2. The **principal's or business manager's login details** must be used to complete the online reporting. The steps are:
 - Open the School Council portal and select the Declaration of School Council Membership link.
 - You will see the membership of your school council according to Ministerial Order 1280. The parent, school employee, community (where relevant), student (where relevant) and nominee (where relevant) categories will appear on separate screens. Complete the membership details in one category before moving on to the next category.
 - Update all membership details. Add new members and their details. Where members are continuing, revise their term of office dates. Include all vacancies by selecting 'Vacant' from the drop down box. Delete members details who are no longer on school council.
 - Check all data for accuracy. Ensure that the total of the members entered (including vacancies) matches the council constituting Order. Print, sign and date the form after declaring.
 - **This is your school record and is kept at the school. This form is not sent to the regional or central office.**
 - Fill in principal's name and date when form is completed. Click the Submit Declaration button.
 - The report must be completed and declared by 30 April 2023.
 - If membership details change during the year you can update the form by again following these steps.
 - Remember to save any new details. The declaration needs to be submitted by 30 April each year and re-declared each time subsequent edits are made.
3. Throughout the year, if required:
 - assist in the co-option process for filling casual vacancies (refer to Appendix D for information on circumstances under which casual vacancies are created)
 - provide advice to the school council and follow the procedures in changing the size or composition of council membership (Schedule 5).

- As the Executive Officer of school council, ensure that:
 - a. appropriate advice is provided to the school council on educational and other school matters
 - b. decisions of the school council are implemented
 - c. support and resources are provided to enable efficient and effective meetings.
- 4. The department may provide the name of the principal and the school council president to the Victorian Public Sector Commission for inclusion on the Government Appointments, and Public Entity database for statistical purposes. The department will also provide the Victorian Public Sector Commission with the total number of school councillors.

Update school council president details

All school council presidents must have a department email account. The president's details are recorded against the school council president email account.

For more information, refer to [Education Mail](#) on the eduGate portal.

(<https://eduGate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/Services/IT/ITServices/edumail/Pages/default.aspx>) (login required).

Enter principal's username and password.

- Click on the tile 'School Council President' (under Schools and Principal Education Mail Management heading) to access and update the information.
- The process for resetting the email password for the school council president is the same as resetting the password for staff.
- Provide the school council president with their account details and password. Encourage the president to check their account at least weekly.
- Enter details of the current school council president on CASES21.

Changing the size or composition of council – Schedule 5

A Ministerial Order is required to effect a change in the size or composition to a school council.

- Schedule 5 is used to change the size or composition of the school council. **The application form is located at [School Council, Elections, resources](#) (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-elections/resources>).**
- A request to change the size or composition of school council (Schedule 5) can only be made once in any 12-month period.
- The decision to submit a Schedule 5 request is made after the school council election process and within the school year of the current membership.
- A change in size or composition must be approved by a minimum 75 per cent majority vote of the total council membership according to Ministerial Order 1280. An exemption from the minimum 75 per cent majority vote can be granted. A reason must be provided for the request. Schools should consider strategies to fill empty positions first before completing a Schedule 5 request. The School Operations and Governance Unit (SOGU) can provide advice on 03 97022 5666 or school.council@education.vic.gov.au
- The proposed new council size must be consistent with one of the options specified in School Council Variable Membership Table (Schedule 2) of Ministerial Order 1280.
- The number of student members in the student member category is fixed at 2 members.
- If a school council is unable to achieve the minimum 75 per cent majority vote of the total council membership, a request for an exemption from that requirement can be made. The exemption request and reasons for the request should be included on the Schedule 5 request form. For

example: the minimum 75 per cent majority vote could not be achieved as the council has a number of vacancies it has been unable to fill.

- Prior to submitting a Schedule 5 request, the current membership details, including vacancies, must be accurately reflected in the school's on-line Declaration of School Council Membership table.
- **The completed request form must be forwarded to the** School Operations and Governance Unit via email, at school.council@education.vic.gov.au.
- A briefing will be prepared by the department and a Ministerial Order drafted by Legal Division for the Minister or delegate's consideration. The principal will be advised of the outcome of the request.

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 Ministerial Order 1280 Constitution of Government School Councils, and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. In doing this, a school council may directly influence the quality of education for 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** – members of this category generally comprise more than one third of the council's total membership. Department employees can be parent members at their child's school providing that they are not engaged in work at the school.
- **A mandated elected school employee member category** – members of this category make up no more than one-third of membership. 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 experience. Department 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 and a range of experiences and knowledge 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 skills and knowledge to the role, however, in order to successfully perform their duties, councillors may need to gain some new skills and knowledge.

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 comply with 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?

By participating in, and voting 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.

What do you need to do to stand for election?

The principal will issue a Notice of Election and Call for Nominations in Term 1 of each year. Council elections must be completed by 31 March, unless varied by the Minister for Education.

If you stand for election, you can arrange for someone to nominate you as a candidate or, you can nominate yourself in the parent member category. You can only be nominated by another member of the same category that you are eligible for (e.g. a member of the parent electorate may only nominate another parent of that electorate).

Department employees with a child enrolled at a school where they are not engaged in work, are eligible to nominate for parent membership at that school.

Return your completed nomination form 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 delivery.

Generally, if there are more nominations than vacancies a ballot will be conducted in the two weeks after the call for nominations has closed.

Remember

- Consider standing for election to school council.
- Ask the principal for instructions if you are not sure what to do.
- Be sure to vote if the election goes to ballot.
- Contact the principal if you are unsure about what is required at any stage of the election process.

Fact sheet 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 for the student member category, the 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 council 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 positions.

Can a parent and child be on the same council?

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

Can students co-opted to the community member 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.

It is not permitted for councils 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 school employee 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 must immediately post, in a prominent place in the school, a notice calling for further nominations. Nominations must be submitted 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 be elected to 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.

Students voted onto council have a two-year term of office. If a student resigns prior to the end of their two-year appointment, a casual vacancy is created and is filled through co-option, by council.

What happens if there are tied votes in the ballot?

If there is a tie between some, or all the candidates standing for election, the successful candidates will 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.

For example, Year 12 students who are serving a two-year term once graduated are no longer enrolled at the school and therefore cannot remain on school council. These students are eligible to stay on council for the remainder of their Year 12 year, and until the school council election is held in the following year.

Can a student 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 Student Representative Council (SRC) members 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 a position in the student membership category based on their standing within the school.

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.

Campaign rules for student members and student electorate

Campaign rules differ slightly for students. 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 noticeboard and/or flyers distributed at lunchtime 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 written 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 either virtual live or face-to-face training offered by the department, in consultation with the principal. The principal is responsible for providing evidence of parent/carer permission to the training providers should the student participate in training.

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

For more information on training, refer to the [School Council – Training and Good Governance, policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy) at (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy>).

Enquiries can also be made by emailing the School Operations and Governance Unit, Operations and Governance via email, at: school.council@education.vic.gov.au.

Fact sheet 3: information for students seeking election to council

What is a school council and what does it do?

All government schools in Victoria have a school council. School councils are legal entities that are given powers to set the broad directions of a school in accordance with Ministerial Order 1280 Constitution of Government School Councils, 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.

What are some of the duties of a school councillor?

The school council has particular functions in setting and monitoring the school's direction.

School councils have key responsibilities.

- **Finance:** overseeing the development and expenditure of the school's annual budget and ensuring proper records are kept of the school's financial operations.
- **Strategic planning:** participating in the development and monitoring of the school strategic plan.
- **Policy development and review:** developing, reviewing, and updating selected policies that reflect the school's values and support the school's broad direction outlined in its strategic plan.
- **Community engagement:** informing itself of community views and stimulating community interest in the school.

Other key functions of school councils may include:

- raising funds for school related purposes
- maintaining school grounds and facilities
- entering into contracts
- reporting annually to the school community and the department
- creating interest in the school in the wider community
- representing and taking the views of the school community into account
- regulating and facilitating after-hours use of school premises and grounds
- operating a children's service at the school.

Why is student membership so important?

Students have a unique perspective on education, teaching and schools. Having student members on school council allows students to have a say in the future direction of their school and ensures student input into decision-making. Student representation on secondary school councils will assist in the development of students' skills, including leadership and communication.

Do I need special experience to be on school council?

Each member brings their own valuable skills and knowledge to the role, however, in order to successfully perform their duties, councillors may need to gain some new skills and knowledge.

Student members are encouraged to attend the department's free school council training to support them in their role.

For training options, refer to the [School Council – Training and Good Governance, Policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy) (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy>).

Who is on the school council?

For all schools with a student cohort of Year 7 and above, there are several possible categories of school council membership:

- **A mandated elected parent member category** –members of this category generally comprise more than one third of the council's total membership. Parents and carers of children attending the school are eligible for membership in this category.
- **A mandated elected school 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 a member of this category.
- **A mandated elected student member category** (two positions) – members of this category are enrolled at the school and in Year 7 or above.
- **An optional community member category** – members are co-opted by a decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or expertise. Department employees are not eligible to be a community member.

A small number of school councils have nominee members.

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** mandated student member positions on school council.

Can I 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 members offered a position on council before other students?

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

Voting for student leaders at the school, such as school captains and SRC representatives, is a distinct and separate process to voting for student school council members. Any student interested in being a student member of their school council is required to run for election.

How long is the term of office?

Generally, the term of office for all council members is two years. The term of office of half the members in each category expires each year, creating vacancies for the annual school council elections.

Students voted onto council will be elected to council for a two-year term of office.

Now that the student membership category has been established, it is likely that one student will be elected each year. If a student member resigns prior to the end of their term of office, a casual vacancy is created. The casual vacancy is filled through the co-option process by school council.

What happens if there are tied votes?

If there is a tie between some or all of the candidates standing for election, the successful candidate will be determined by the drawing of lots.

What do I need to do to stand for election?

The principal will issue a Notice of Election and Call for Nominations early in Term 1 each year.

If you decide to stand for election, you can arrange for a student in Year 7 or above at your school to nominate you as a candidate or you can nominate yourself (self-nomination) for the student category.

Once the Nomination Form is completed, it should be returned to the principal within the stated time. You will receive a Nomination Form Receipt following the receipt of the completed nomination.

Are there any rules on how I campaign?

Campaign literature supporting student member candidates for school council elections may only be distributed and posted in certain places and times as designated by the principal of your school. School resources may not be used to support candidates.

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

Nominations for school council

If one student vacancy is available and only one student is nominated, then the student is duly elected.

Unlike the parent or school employee 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 further nominations. These 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 be elected to council.

How do I know which students are standing for election?

If the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacant positions, a ballot will be held.

Student names will be listed in random order on the voting/ballot paper.

The principal may invite candidates to prepare a brief written statement to be distributed with each ballot paper. The candidate statements will be placed in the same order as listed on the ballot papers.

How do I vote?

At least seven days before the date fixed for the closure of the ballot, the principal will arrange delivery of the ballot papers.

A securely sealed ballot box or boxes in the case of multiple school campuses will be available for the casting of votes at the school between the hours of 8.00am and 4.00pm on every school day up to and including the day of the closure of the ballot.

A voter must not vote more than once in a ballot and may either post the vote back to the school or deliver the completed ballot paper to the school. The principal or school staff will provide advice on how to return the completed ballot paper.

School council meetings

School councils must meet at least 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.

Councillors can attend meetings in person or by videoconferencing or teleconferencing.

Following the school council elections, council members will determine an appropriate time and location to hold meetings throughout the year. For example, council may agree that meetings will take place on the first Wednesday of each month in the school library.

For most school councils, meetings are located at the school and are held in the evening to ensure that the majority of members can attend. Meetings typically last for around 2.5 hours.

You will need to discuss and arrange transport to and from the meeting with your parent or carer.

The school council does not provide transport.

The principal, in consultation with the school council president, will ensure an agenda is prepared for each regular meeting and will distribute the agenda, draft minutes from the previous meeting and meeting papers such as subcommittee reports, principal's and president's report to school council members. These documents will be provided approximately five days before the meeting. All members, including student members are expected to read all documents and prepare in advance of each meeting.

Conflict of interest

If you, as a member of council, or your immediate family has a direct conflict of interest, including a pecuniary* interest in a matter under discussion at a school council meeting, you must declare the conflict of interest and must not be present during the discussion unless invited to do so by the chairperson at the meeting. The member will not be involved in any voting associated with the matter at hand. *For this purpose, pecuniary is defined as: relating to or consisting of money.

What if I cannot attend a council meeting?

If a member is unable to attend a meeting, an apology should be submitted to the principal prior to the meeting. A member of the school council may apply in writing to the president for extended leave of up to three consecutive meetings.

Is there training that I can attend?

School councillors can attend training offered state-wide. The training uses the Improving School Governance package and is at no cost to school council members. Training is available in the following modules for students: Governance, Strategic Planning, and Finance.

Students are encouraged to attend the virtual live or face-to-face training offered by the department in consultation with the principal. The principal is responsible for providing evidence of parent/carers permission to the training providers.

The modules and mini modules are also accessible as interactive online training. Participants can complete the modules at their own pace, in any order and are able to return to each module as often as necessary.

To access the training options including videos and mini-modules, refer to the [School Council – Training and Good Governance, policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy) (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy>).

Can a school council tell a teacher what to do?

A school council cannot issue instructions to teachers regarding their professional duties, or to employees of the department in respect of their duties at the school. That role is the responsibility of the principal. If a school council has developed a school policy on certain matters and that policy is consistent with department policy the council can expect the school staff will implement the policy.

Further Information

For more information on the roles and responsibilities of school councillors, refer to the [School Council – Powers and Function, policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-powers-and-functions/policy) (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-powers-and-functions/policy>).

Code of conduct for school councillors

School councils in Victoria are public entities as defined by the *Public Administration Act 2004*.

School councillors must comply with 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** – 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.

Fact sheet 4: information for parents of children seeking election to school council

What is a school council and what does it do?

All government schools in Victoria have a school council. School councils are legal entities that are given powers to set the broad directions of a school in accordance with Ministerial Order 1280 Constitution of Government School Councils 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 all schools with a student cohort of Year 7 and above, there are several possible categories of school council membership:

- **a mandated elected parent member category** –members of this category generally comprise more than one third of the council's total membership. Parents and guardians of children attending the school are eligible for membership in this category.
- **a mandated elected school 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 a member of this category.
- **a mandated elected student member category (two positions)** – members of this category are enrolled at the school and in Year 7 or above.
- **an optional community member category** – members are co-opted by a decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or expertise. Department employees are not eligible to be a community member.
- a small number of school councils have nominee members.

How long is the term of office?

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 student membership so important?

Students have a unique perspective on education, teaching and schooling. Electing student members onto school council allows all students to have a say in the future direction of their school and ensures student input into decision-making.

Student representation on secondary school councils assists in the development of students' skills, including leadership and communication.

Does my child need special experience to be on school council?

Each member brings their own valuable skills and knowledge to the role, however, in order to successfully perform their duties, councillors may need to gain some new skills and knowledge.

Student members are encouraged to attend the department's free virtual live or face-to-face school council training, using the Improving School Governance modules and mini modules to support them to undertake their role. Interactive online training is also available.

For more information about training and access to interactive online modules, refer to the [School Council – Training and Good Governance, policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy) (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy>).

What does my child need to do to stand for election?

The principal will issue a Notice of Election and Call for Nominations following the start of Term 1 each year.

If your child decides to stand for election, they can arrange for a student in Year 7 or above to nominate them as a candidate or they can nominate themselves for the student member category.

Once the Nomination Form is completed, it should be returned to the principal within the time stated on the Notice of Election. A Nomination Form Receipt will be issued following the receipt of the completed nomination.

If one student vacancy is available and one student nominates, then the student is duly elected.

Unlike the parent or school employee 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 further nominations. These 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.

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.

The principal will distribute ballot papers and will provide clear instructions to the voters and candidates. Voters may only vote once in a ballot. The two candidates with the highest number of votes will be elected to council.

School council meetings

School councils must meet at least 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.

Councillors can attend meetings in person or by videoconferencing or teleconferencing.

Following the school council elections, council members will determine an appropriate time and location to hold meetings throughout the year. For example, council may agree that meetings will take place on the first Wednesday of each month in the school library.

For most school councils, meetings are located at the school and are held in the evening to ensure the majority of members can attend. Meetings typically last for around 2.5 hours.

You will need to discuss and arrange transport options to and from the meeting with your child. The school council does not provide transport.

The principal, in consultation with the school council president, will ensure an agenda is prepared for each regular meeting and will distribute the agenda, draft minutes from the previous meeting and meeting papers such as subcommittee reports, principal's and president's report to school council members. These documents will be distributed approximately five days before the meeting. All members, including student members are expected to read all documents and prepare in advance of each meeting.

Conflict of interest

If your child, as a member of council, or their immediate family has a direct conflict of interest, including a pecuniary* interest, in a matter under discussion at a school council meeting, they must declare the conflict of interest and must not be present during the discussion unless invited to do so by the chairperson at the meeting. The member will not be involved in any voting associated with the matter at hand. *For this purpose, pecuniary is defined as: relating to or consisting of money.

Can I attend council meetings with my child?

School council meetings are ordinarily open to the school community. Visitors or observers can be present at a council meeting with the prior agreement of the principal and a decision of council. A request to attend must be forwarded either to the principal or president.

There may be times when, for the purpose of confidentiality or other reasons, a council meeting needs to be closed and only the appointed members can attend.

I am a parent member of the council. Can I be a member of the same council as my child(ren)?

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

What if my child cannot attend a council meeting?

If a member is unable to attend a meeting, an apology should be submitted to the principal prior to the meeting.

A member of the school council may apply in writing to the president for extended leave of up to three consecutive meetings.

What if my child decides they no longer want to be a member of council?

The department strongly encourages students to consider the time commitment of being on council prior to running for election.

Your child should discuss resigning from council with the principal or school council president.

A school councillor is required to submit their resignation from council in writing to the principal for it to be formally accepted.

Code of conduct for school councillors

School councils in Victoria are public entities as defined by the *Public Administration Act 2004*.

School councillors must comply with the *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 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
- **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.

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.

For further information please contact the school principal.

Fact sheet 5: nominating and voting others to the student member category

What is a school council and what does it do?

All government schools in Victoria have a school council. School councils are legally constituted bodies that are given powers to set the broad directions of a school in accordance with Ministerial Order 1280 Constitution of Government School Councils, 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.

What are some of the duties of a school councillor?

The school council has particular functions in setting and monitoring the school's direction.

School councils have key responsibilities:

- **Finance:** overseeing the development and expenditure 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 selected policies that reflect the school's values and support school's broad direction outlined in its strategic plan.
- **Community engagement:** informing itself of community views and stimulating community interest in the school.

Other key functions of school councils may include:

- raising funds for school related purposes
- maintaining school grounds and facilities
- entering into contracts
- reporting annually to the school community and the department
- 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.

Who is on the school council?

For all schools with a student cohort of Year 7 and above, there are several possible categories of school council membership:

- a mandated elected **parent** member category
- a mandated elected **school** employee member category
- a mandated elected **student** member category (two positions) – members of this category are enrolled at the school in Year 7 or above
- Many school councils have an optional **community** member category, and a small number of school councils have nominee 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.

Why is student membership so important?

Students have a unique perspective on education, teaching and schooling and having student members on school council allows students to have a say in the future direction of their school and ensures student input into decision making.

Student representation on secondary school councils will assist in the development of students' skills, including leadership and communication.

Do candidates need special experience to be on school council?

Each member brings their own valuable skills and knowledge to the role, however, in order to successfully perform their duties, councillors may need to gain some new skills and knowledge.

Student members are encouraged to acquire this knowledge by attending the department's free school council training using the Improving School Governance modules to support them to undertake their role. Interactive online training is also available .

For more information about training options for school councillors, refer to the [School Council – Training and Good Governance, policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy) (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy>).

How do I nominate a candidate for a position on council?

The principal will issue a Notice of Election and Call for Nominations following the start of Term 1 each year.

Students can arrange for a student in Year 7 or above to nominate them as a candidate or they can nominate themselves for the student member category.

Once the nomination form is completed, it should be returned to the principal within the time stated on the Notice of Election. A Nomination Form Receipt will be issued following receipt of the completed nomination.

Generally, 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.

How do I know which students are standing for election?

If the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacant positions, an election/ballot process will be held.

Student names will be listed in random order on the voting/ballot paper.

The principal may invite candidates to prepare a brief written statement to be distributed with each ballot paper. The candidate statements will be placed in the same order as listed on the ballot papers.

Note: voting for student leaders at the school, such as school captains and SRC representatives is a distinct and separate process to voting for student school council members.

How do I vote?

At least seven days before the date fixed for the closure of the ballot, the principal will arrange delivery of the ballot papers.

A secure ballot box or boxes, in the case of multiple school campuses, will be available for the casting of votes at the school between the hours of 8.00am and 4.00pm on every school day up to and including the day of the closure of the ballot.

A voter must not vote more than once in a ballot and may either post the vote back to the school or deliver the completed ballot paper to the school.

The principal or school staff will provide advice on how to return the completed ballot paper.

For further information please contact the school principal.

Appendix B: examples of assessing need for election and determining election results

More nominations than vacancies

If the number of nominations is more than the number of vacancies in one of the membership categories, a ballot is required for that membership category.

Example 1

There are 3 parent vacancies. Because of the council size or composition only two department employee parents may fill parent member positions. Nominations are received from 5 people, A, B and C, all of whom are department employee parents, and D and E, who are not department employees. A ballot for the 3 positions has to be held. Use Form 10.

The candidates receive the following number of votes:

- a. 250 votes
- b. 230 votes
- c. 130 votes
- d. 125 votes
- e. 85 votes

The people to be declared elected are A, B and D. Candidate C, who is in the department employee parent category, is not elected because of the limit on the number of parents who are department employees on council.

Example 2

There are 3 parent vacancies. Given the size and configuration of the council, only two department employee parents may fill parent member positions. Nominations are received from 3 people all of whom are department employee parents. Only two of these people can be elected, therefore a ballot needs to be held.

With respect to the one remaining position, a further call for nominations needs to be made in accordance with procedures for insufficient nominations. If more than one nomination is received for this final position a separate ballot will need to be conducted. Use Form 12 for both ballots.

Nominations equal the number of vacancies in the parent and school employee categories

When the number of nominations is equal to the number of vacancies in any one membership category, the principal must:

- check the number of department employee/parent nominations in the parent member category to ensure this does not exceed the number allowed (refer to Schedule 2)
- subject to the above, declare elected those who have nominated
- notify the school community within 3 school days that a ballot will not be held for that membership category.

Insufficient nominations in the parent and school employee categories

When the number of nominations is less than the number of vacancies in any one membership category, the principal must:

- check the number of school employee/parent nominations in the specific member category to ensure this does not exceed the number allowed
- subject to the above, declare elected those who nominated in that category
- immediately call for further nominations. Nominations are to be lodged within three school days from the date of the closing of the first call for nominations
- if the further nominations are equal to or are less than the remaining positions in that membership category, declare these people duly elected. Any positions remaining unfilled become casual vacancies
- if there are more nominations than the remaining positions, conduct a ballot for the remaining positions. The original timeline must be adhered to so notice must be distributed at least seven days prior to the day fixed for the closure of the ballot.

Insufficient nominations in the student electorate

For student member elections:

- if one student vacancy is available and one student nominates, then the student is duly elected
- 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
- if, after the second call for nominations one other nomination is received, then both students are appointed to council
- if the total number of nominations received in this round exceeds the number of vacancies, then all nominees will go to ballot
- If there is one vacancy in the student electorate and there are no nominations, call for a second round of nominations. After the second call for nominations if the total number of nominations submitted exceeds the number of vacancies, then all nominees will go to ballot.

Appendix C: new schools – the first school council election

To start the first school council election process for newly established school councils, the principal posts or arranges delivery of Form 1 Notice of Election and Call for Nominations to the electorates of the school – parent, school employee and student, if applicable, as well as placing the notice in a prominent position in the school within the timeframe set out in the constituting Ministerial Order for the new school council.

The principal identifies the number of positions for election by referring to Schedule 1 of Ministerial Order 1280.

Further information on school council membership and eligibility is located in Flow chart 4 in this guide.

Term of office

The first school council election of a newly established school council will result in half the number of members in each of the parent, school employee and student electorates serving a term of office from the date of their election to the date of declaration of the poll in the following year, that is, one year. The other half of the membership will serve from the date of their election to the date of declaration of the poll in the second calendar year following their election, that is, two years.

To determine which members, elected by ballot, serve a two-year or one-year term of office, the members with the greatest number of votes serve the longer term of office and those with the lesser number of votes serve the shorter term of office.

Where all the members in a membership category are not elected by ballot, the members in that membership category may decide (by mutual agreement) their term of office.

Failing agreement, the term of office shall be determined by the drawing of lots. The decision on the term of office will be made at the first meeting of the new elected council.

Appendix D: casual vacancies

A casual vacancy is created when a council member:

- dies
- becomes insolvent under administration
- becomes of unsound mind
- resigns in writing to the school principal or school council president
- is found guilty or convicted of an indictable offence or an offence that would be an indictable offence if it had been committed in Victoria
- is a registrable offender within the meaning of the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*
- is subject to any medical condition that would make them unable to fulfil the role of a member of school council
- ceases to be eligible for the particular membership category under which they were elected or co-opted
- is absent from three consecutive council meetings without special leave previously granted by council and is subject to a decision of council
- in the school employee member category goes on any form of leave (including family leave, secondment), with or without pay, from the department for more than six months
- in the parent member category becomes a department employee during their term of office in circumstances where this causes the school council to be in breach of the requirement that the majority of a school council's total membership must be persons who are not department employees
- in the student member category, ceases to be enrolled in the school
- in the student member category, goes on any form of leave from the school (including an exchange) for a period of more than six months
- in the community member category becomes a student member during their term of office
- who is a member of another membership category, is appointed as a nominee member of the school council
- who is a nominee member becomes a parent member, school employee member, or community member of the school council
- is found to have been ineligible for election, co-option, or appointment to the council at the time of their election, co-option, or appointment.

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.

If Year 12 students, who are serving a two-year term, graduate they are no longer enrolled at the school and therefore cannot remain on school council. However, these students are eligible to stay on council for the remainder of their Year 12 year, and until the school council election is held in the following year.

A casual vacancy is also created if a member of school council is appointed as a principal of the school, other than if the appointment is temporary. An appointment for more than 12 continuous weeks shall not be considered temporary.

How casual vacancies are to be filled

Casual vacancies are to be filled by co-opting persons to the relevant membership category.

Persons are eligible for co-option to member categories provided they are eligible to be elected to the relevant membership category.

Department employees whose children are enrolled in a school other than where they work can be co-opted to fill positions in the parent member category subject to the availability of positions, provided there is no breach of the requirement that the majority of a school council's membership must be persons who are not department employees.

Any person who fills a casual vacancy serves the unexpired portion of the vacating member's term of office.

The council process and decision to co-opt a new member onto school council will be recorded in the meeting minutes.

Schedule 2: school council variable membership table

Table of options for council membership size and composition

Please note – does not include student members

Total	Parent members	School employees	Community members	Maximum department employees	Maximum department employee parents*
15	6	5	4	7	2
15	6	4	5	7	3
15	6	3	6	7	4
15	6	2	7	7	5
15	6	1	8	7	6
15	7	5	3	7	2
15	7	4	4	7	3
15	7	3	5	7	4
15	7	2	6	7	5
15	7	1	7	7	6
15	8	5	2	7	2
15	8	4	3	7	3
15	8	3	4	7	4
15	8	2	5	7	5
15	8	1	6	7	6
15	9	5	1	7	2
15	9	4	2	7	3
15	9	3	3	7	4
15	9	2	4	7	5
15	9	1	5	7	6
15	10	5	0	7	2
15	10	4	1	7	3
15	10	3	2	7	4
15	10	2	3	7	5
15	10	1	4	7	6
15	11	4	0	7	3
15	11	3	1	7	4
15	11	2	2	7	5
15	11	1	3	7	6
15	12	3	0	7	4
15	12	2	1	7	5
15	12	1	2	7	6
15	13	2	0	7	5
15	13	1	1	7	6
15	14	1	0	7	6
14	5	4	5	6	2
14	5	3	6	6	3
14	5	2	7	6	4
14	5	1	8	6	5
14	6	4	4	6	2

Total	Parent members	School employees	Community members	Maximum department employees	Maximum department employee parents*
14	6	3	5	6	3
14	6	2	6	6	4
14	6	1	7	6	5
14	7	4	3	6	2
14	7	3	4	6	3
14	7	2	5	6	4
14	7	1	6	6	5
14	8	4	2	6	2
14	8	3	3	6	3
14	8	2	4	6	4
14	8	1	5	6	5
14	9	4	1	6	2
14	9	3	2	6	3
14	9	2	3	6	4
14	9	1	4	6	5
14	10	4	0	6	2
14	10	3	1	6	3
14	10	2	2	6	4
14	10	1	3	6	5
14	11	3	0	6	3
14	11	2	1	6	4
14	11	1	2	6	5
14	12	2	0	6	4
14	12	1	1	6	5
14	13	1	0	6	5
13	5	4	4	6	2
13	5	3	5	6	3
13	5	2	6	6	4
13	5	1	7	6	5
13	6	4	3	6	2
13	6	3	4	6	3
13	6	2	5	6	4
13	6	1	6	6	5
13	7	4	2	6	2
13	7	3	3	6	3
13	7	2	4	6	4
13	7	1	5	6	5
13	8	4	1	6	2
13	8	3	2	6	3
13	8	2	3	6	4
13	8	1	4	6	5
13	9	4	0	6	2
13	9	3	1	6	3
13	9	2	2	6	4
13	9	1	3	6	5
13	10	3	0	6	3

Total	Parent members	School employees	Community members	Maximum department employees	Maximum department employee parents*
13	10	2	1	6	4
13	10	1	2	6	5
13	11	2	0	6	4
13	11	1	1	6	5
13	12	1	0	6	5
12	5	4	3	5	1
12	5	3	4	5	2
12	5	2	5	5	3
12	5	1	6	5	4
12	6	4	2	5	1
12	6	3	3	5	2
12	6	2	4	5	3
12	6	1	5	5	4
12	7	4	1	5	1
12	7	3	2	5	2
12	7	2	3	5	3
12	7	1	4	5	4
12	8	4	0	5	1
12	8	3	1	5	2
12	8	2	2	5	3
12	8	1	3	5	4
12	9	3	0	5	2
12	9	2	1	5	3
12	9	1	2	5	4
12	10	2	0	5	3
12	10	1	1	5	4
12	11	1	0	5	4
11	4	3	4	5	2
11	4	2	5	5	3
11	4	1	6	5	4
11	5	3	3	5	2
11	5	2	4	5	3
11	5	1	5	5	4
11	6	3	2	5	2
11	6	2	3	5	3
11	6	1	4	5	4
11	7	3	1	5	2
11	7	2	2	5	3
11	7	1	3	5	4
11	8	3	0	5	2
11	8	2	1	5	3
11	8	1	2	5	4
11	9	2	0	5	3
11	9	1	1	5	4
11	10	1	0	5	4
10	4	3	3	4	1

Total	Parent members	School employees	Community members	Maximum department employees	Maximum department employee parents*
10	4	2	4	4	2
10	4	1	5	4	3
10	5	3	2	4	1
10	5	2	3	4	2
10	5	1	4	4	3
10	6	3	1	4	1
10	6	2	2	4	2
10	6	1	3	4	3
10	7	3	0	4	1
10	7	2	1	4	2
10	7	1	2	4	3
10	8	2	0	4	2
10	8	1	1	4	3
10	9	1	0	4	3
9	4	3	2	4	1
9	4	2	3	4	2
9	4	1	4	4	3
9	5	3	1	4	1
9	5	2	2	4	2
9	5	1	3	4	3
9	6	3	0	4	1
9	6	2	1	4	2
9	6	1	2	4	3
9	7	2	0	4	2
9	7	1	1	4	3
9	8	1	0	4	3
8	3	2	3	3	1
8	3	1	4	3	2
8	4	2	2	3	1
8	4	1	3	3	2
8	5	2	1	3	1
8	5	1	2	3	2
8	6	2	0	3	1
8	6	1	1	3	2
8	7	1	0	3	2
7	3	2	2	3	1
7	3	1	3	3	2
7	4	2	1	3	1
7	4	1	2	3	2
7	5	2	0	3	1
7	5	1	1	3	2
7	6	1	0	3	2
6	3	2	1	2	0
6	3	1	2	2	1
6	4	2	0	2	0
6	4	1	1	2	1

Total	Parent members	School employees	Community members	Maximum department employees	Maximum department employee parents*
6	5	1	0	2	1

** A department employee parent is a department employee who has a child at the school but who is employed at another place of work.*

Form 1: new schools – notice of first school council election and call for nominations

An election is to be conducted for members of the school council of <i>(school name below)</i>
Nomination forms may be obtained from the school and must be lodged by 4.00pm on <i>(insert day, month and year)</i> .
The ballot will close at 4.00pm on <i>(insert day, month and year)</i> .

Following the closing of nominations, a list of the nominations received will be posted at the school.

The terms of office, membership categories and number of positions in each membership category open for election are as follows:

Membership category	
Parent member – one-year term of office	
Term of office	Year
From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
Number of positions:	

Membership category	
Parent member – two-year term of office	
Term of office	Year
From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
Number of positions:	

Membership category	
School employee member – one-year term of office	
Term of office	Year
From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
Number of positions:	

Membership category
School employee member – two-year term of office

Term of office	Year
From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	

Number of positions:	
-----------------------------	--

Membership category
Student member – one-year term of office

Term of office	Year
From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	

Number of positions:	
-----------------------------	--

Membership category
Student member – two-year term of office

Term of office	Year
From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	

Number of positions:	
-----------------------------	--

If the number of nominations is less than the number of vacancies, a notice to that effect and calling for further nominations will be posted in a prominent position at the school.

Principal signature

Form 2: notice of election and call for nominations

An election is to be conducted for members of the school council of <i>(school name below)</i>
Nomination forms may be obtained from the school and must be lodged by 4.00pm on <i>(insert day, month and year)</i>.
The ballot will close at 4.00pm on <i>(insert day, month and year)</i>.

Following the closing of nominations, a list of the nominations received will be posted at the school.

The terms of office, membership categories and number of positions in each membership category open for election are as follows:

Membership category	
Parent member	
Term of office	Year
From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
Number of positions:	

Membership category	
School employee member	
Term of office	Year
From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
Number of positions:	

Membership category	
Student member	
Term of office	Year
From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
Number of positions:	

Following the closing of nominations, a list of the nominations received will be posted at the school.

If the number of nominations is less than the number of vacancies, a notice to that effect and calling for further nominations will be posted in a prominent position at the school.

Principal signature

Form 3: self-nomination form for parent member category

I wish to declare my candidacy for an elected position as a parent member on the school council.

Name

Residential Address:

Contact phone (mobile or landline):

Email:

I am the parent/guardian of
who is/are currently enrolled at this school.

Statement	Yes <i>(Mark with an x)</i>	No <i>(Mark with an x)</i>
I am an employee of the Department of Education		
I am an employee of the school council		
I am engaged in work at and for the school.		

I am prepared to serve as a parent member of the above-named school council. I hereby declare that:

- I am not and have not been insolvent under administration within the last three years
- I am of sound mind
- I have not been found guilty of an offence that is, or would if committed in Victoria be, an indictable offence
- I am not a registrable offender within the meaning of the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*.
- I am not suffering from any medical condition that would affect my ability to perform the role of member of a school council.

Signature of Candidate

Date:	
--------------	--

You will be notified when your nomination has been received.

The personal information provided in this form is collected as part of the school council election nomination process. The information may be used to determine your eligibility as a candidate. Your personal information may be disclosed as a result of inspection prior to the commencement of voting or at any time up to one year from the declaration of the poll.

Your name will be included in a list of school council candidates and nominators (where applicable) posted in a prominent position at the school and for candidates, on a ballot paper (where applicable). Further, the name, membership category, gender (optional), term of office, office held (if any) of school council members and notification whether the member is an employee of the department will be forwarded to the Department of Education by the principal by 30 April each year as a record of council membership and may be used for statistical purposes.

You can access your personal information by contacting the principal on:

If you choose not to give some or all of the information requested your nomination may not be accepted.

If you have any queries about the school council nomination process, please contact the principal.

Form 4: nomination form for parent member category

I wish to nominate <i>(name below)</i>
for an elected position as a parent member on the school council.

Candidate's details

Name
Residential Address:
Contact phone <i>(mobile or landline)</i> :
Email:

Nominators details

I am the parent/guardian of <i>(name below)</i>
who is/are currently enrolled at this school.

Statement	Yes <i>(Mark with an x)</i>	No <i>(Mark with an x)</i>
The person I have nominated is:		
an employee of the Department of Education.		
an employee of the school council.		
is engaged in work at and for the school.		

Name of nominator

Signature of nominator

Date:	
-------	--

Candidate to complete

I accept the nomination and I am prepared to serve as a parent member of the above-named school council. I hereby declare that:

- I am not and have not been insolvent under administration within the last three years
- I am of sound mind
- I have not been found guilty of an offence that is, or would if committed in Victoria be, an indictable offence
- I am not a registrable offender within the meaning of the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*.
- I am not suffering from any medical condition that would affect my ability to perform the role of member of a school council.

Signature of candidate

Date:	
--------------	--

You will be notified when your nomination has been received.

The personal information provided in this form is collected as part of the school council election nomination process. The information may be used to determine your eligibility as a candidate. Your personal information may be disclosed as a result of inspection prior to the commencement of voting or at any time up to one year from the declaration of the poll.

Your name will be included in a list of school council candidates and nominators (where applicable) posted in a prominent position at the school and for candidates, on a ballot paper (where applicable). Further, the name, membership category, gender (optional), term of office, office held (if any) of school council members and notification whether the member is an employee of the department will be forwarded to the Department of Education by the principal by 30 April each year as a record of council membership and may be used for statistical purposes.

You can access your personal information by contacting the principal on:

If you choose not to give some or all of the information requested your nomination may not be accepted.

If you have any queries about the school council nomination process, please contact the principal.

Form 5: self-nomination form for school employee member category

I wish to declare my candidacy for an elected position as a school employee member on the (school name below)
school council

Candidate's details

Name

Residential Address:

Contact phone (mobile or landline):

Email:

Statement	Yes (Mark with an x)	No (Mark with an x)
I am an employee of the Department of Education		
I am an employee of the school council		
I am engaged in work at and for the school.		

I accept the nomination and I am prepared to serve as a school employee member of the above-named school council. I hereby declare that:

- I am not and have not been insolvent under administration within the last three years
- I am of sound mind
- I have not been found guilty of an offence that is, or would if committed in Victoria be, an indictable offence
- I am not a registrable offender within the meaning of the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*.
- I am not suffering from any medical condition that would affect my ability to perform the role of member of a school council.

Signature of Candidate

Date:	
-------	--

You will be notified when your nomination has been received.

The personal information provided in this form is collected as part of the school council election nomination process. The information may be used to determine your eligibility as a candidate. Your personal information may be disclosed as a result of inspection prior to the commencement of voting or at any time up to one year from the declaration of the poll.

Your name will be included in a list of school council candidates and nominators (where applicable) posted in a prominent position at the school and for candidates, on a ballot paper (where applicable). Further, the name, membership category, gender (optional), term of office, office held (if any) of

school council members and notification whether the member is an employee of the department will be forwarded to the Department of Education by the principal by 30 April each year as a record of council membership and may be used for statistical purposes.

You can access your personal information by contacting the principal on:

If you choose not to give some or all of the information requested your nomination may not be accepted.

If you have any queries about the school council nomination process, please contact the principal.

Form 6: nomination form for school employee member category

I wish to nominate <i>(name below)</i>
for an elected position as a school employee member on the school council.

Candidate's details

Name

Residential Address:

Contact phone <i>(mobile or landline)</i> :

Email:

Statement	Yes <i>(Mark with an x)</i>	No <i>(Mark with an x)</i>
I am an employee of the Department of Education		

Statement	Yes <i>(Mark with an x)</i>	No <i>(Mark with an x)</i>
The person I have nominated is:		
an employee of the Department of Education		
an employee of the school council		
engaged in work at and for the school		

Name of nominator

Signature of nominator

Date:	
-------	--

Candidate to complete

I accept the nomination and I am prepared to serve as a school employee member of the above-named school council.

I hereby declare that:

- I am not, and have never been, insolvent under administration within the last three years
- I am of sound mind
- I have not been found guilty of an offence that is, or would if committed in Victoria be, an indictable offence
- I am not a registrable offender within the meaning of the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*.
- I am not suffering from any medical condition that would affect my ability to perform the role of member of a school council.

Signature of candidate

Date:	
--------------	------

You will be notified when your nomination has been received.

The personal information provided in this form is collected as part of the school council election nomination process. The information may be used to determine your eligibility as a candidate. Your personal information may be disclosed as a result of inspection prior to the commencement of voting or at any time up to one year from the declaration of the poll.

Your name will be included in a list of school council candidates and nominators (where applicable) posted in a prominent position at the school and for candidates, on a ballot paper (where applicable).

Further, the name, membership category, gender (optional), term of office, office held (if any) of school council members and notification whether the member is an employee of the department will be forwarded to the department by the principal by 30 April each year as a record of council membership and may be used for statistical purposes.

You can access your personal information by contacting the principal on:

If you choose not to give some or all of the information requested your nomination may not be accepted.

If you have any queries about the school council nomination process, please contact the principal.

Form 7: self-nomination form for student member category

I wish to declare my candidacy for an elected position as a student member on the (school name below)		
school council		
Name		
Residential Address:		
Contact phone (mobile or landline):		
Email:		
Statement	Yes (Mark with an x)	No (Mark with an x)
I am enrolled in Year 7 or above at this school		
I have discussed standing for election to school council with my parents or guardians		
I have a sound understanding of the obligations and level of commitment required to participate on school council		

Candidate to complete

I am prepared to serve as a student member of the above-named school council. I hereby declare that:

- I am not and have not been insolvent under administration within the last three years
- I am of sound mind
- I have not been found guilty of an offence that is, or would if committed in Victoria be, an indictable offence
- I am not a registrable offender within the meaning of the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*.
- I am not suffering from any medical condition that would affect my ability to perform the role of member of a school council.

Signature of Candidate

Date:	
-------	--

You will be notified when your nomination has been received.

The personal information provided in this form is collected as part of the school council election nomination process. The information may be used to determine your eligibility as a candidate. Your personal information may be disclosed as a result of inspection prior to the commencement of voting or at any time up to one year from the declaration of the poll.

Your name will be included in a list of school council candidates and nominators (where applicable) posted in a prominent position at the school and for candidates, on a ballot paper.

Further, the name, membership category, gender (optional), term of office, office held (if any) of school council members and notification whether the member is an employee of the department will be forwarded to the department by the principal by 30 April each year as a record of council membership and may be used for statistical purposes.

You can access your personal information by contacting the principal on:

If you choose not to give some or all of the information requested your nomination may not be accepted.

If you have any queries about the school council nomination process, please contact the principal.

Form 8: nomination form for student member category

I wish to nominate <i>(name below)</i>
for an elected position as a student member on the school council

Candidate's details

Name <i>(name below)</i>

Residential Address:

Contact phone <i>(mobile or landline)</i> :

Email:

Nominee Statement	Yes <i>(Mark with an x)</i>	No <i>(Mark with an x)</i>
I am currently enrolled in Year 7 or above at this school		
The person I have nominated is currently enrolled in Year 7 or above at this school		

Nominator's name

Nominator's signature

Candidate to complete

	Yes <i>(Mark with an x)</i>	No <i>(Mark with an x)</i>
I am currently enrolled in Year 7 or above at this school		
I have discussed standing for election to school council with my parents or guardians		
I have a sound understanding of the obligations and level of commitment required to participate on school council		

I accept the nomination and I am prepared to serve as a school employee of the above-named school council. I hereby declare that:

- I am not, and have not been insolvent under administration within the last three years
- I am of sound mind
- I have not been found guilty of an offence that is, or would if committed in Victoria be, an indictable offence
- I am not a registrable offender within the meaning of the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*.
- I am not suffering from any medical condition that would affect my ability to perform the role of member of a school council.

Signature of Candidate

Date:	
--------------	------

You will be notified when your nomination has been received.

The personal information provided in this form is collected as part of the school council election nomination process. The information may be used to determine your eligibility as a candidate and to nominate. Your personal information may be disclosed as a result of inspection prior to the commencement of voting or at any time up to one year from the declaration of the poll.

Further, the name, membership category, gender (optional), term of office, office held (if any) of school council members and notification whether the member is an employee of the department will be forwarded to the department by the principal by 30 April each year as a record of council membership and may be used for statistical purposes.

You can access your personal information by contacting the principal on:

If you choose not to give some or all of the information requested your nomination may not be accepted.

If you have any queries about the school council nomination process, please contact the principal.

Form 9: candidate nomination form receipt

A form has been received nominating (<i>name below</i>)	
as a candidate for the (parent/student/school employee) member category of the school council	

Category	Mark with an X
Parent	
School employee	
Student	

Principal name

Principal signature

Date:	
--------------	--

Form 10: parent ballot paper – ordinary

Ballot paper for the school council of (school name below)

Vote using this ballot paper if you are a **parent** of a student at the school, **unless** you are a department employee (including a school council employee) who is working at, and for, the school.

There are (number below)

vacancies to be filled. Therefore, you may vote for up to (number below)

candidates.

Candidates nominated for election to the parent member category	Mark with an 'X'

Your vote will be invalid if you vote for more candidates than the number of vacancies to be filled.

Instructions

To **cast your vote**, you must:

- Make a clear mark beside the name of the candidate/s
- Place the completed ballot paper in a blank envelope and either
 - a. place the envelope in an envelope with your name and address on the back and post or arrange to deliver it to the principal,

before closure of the ballot at 4.00pm on:

or

- b. between 8.00am and 4.00pm on any school day, on or before the date of closure of the ballot, place the envelope containing the completed ballot paper in the ballot box and print the voter's name and address in the register of voters.

Form 11: school employee ballot paper

Ballot paper for the school council of (school name below)

Vote using this ballot paper if you are a department employee (including a school council employee) engaged in work at and for the school (whether or not you are a parent of a student at the school).

There are (number below)

vacancies to be filled. Therefore, you may vote for up to (number below)

candidates.

Candidates nominated for election to the school employee member category	Mark with an 'X'

Your vote will be invalid if you vote for more candidates than the number of vacancies to be filled.

Instructions

To **cast your vote**, you must:

- Make a clear mark beside the name of the candidate/s
- Place the completed ballot paper in a blank envelope and either
 - a. place the envelope in an envelope with your name and address on the back and post or arrange to deliver it to the principal,

before closure of the ballot at 4.00pm on:

or

- b. between 8.00am and 4.00pm on any school day, on or before the date of closure of the ballot, place the envelope containing the completed ballot paper in the ballot box and print the voter's name and address in the register of voters.

Form 12: parent ballot paper (separate voting for department and non-department parents)

Ballot paper for the school council of (school name below)

Vote using this ballot paper if you are a **parent** of a student at the school, **unless** you are a department employee who is working at, and for, the school.

In the first part of the ballot, there are (number below)

vacancies to be filled. Therefore, you may vote for up to (number below)

candidates in this first part of the ballot.

Candidates nominated for election to the parent member category who are not department employees	Mark with an 'X'

In the second part of the ballot, there are (number below)

vacancies to be filled. Therefore, you may vote for up to (number below)

candidates in this second part of the ballot.

Candidates nominated for election to the parent member category who are department employees	Mark with an 'X'

Your vote will be invalid if you vote for more candidates than the number of vacancies to be filled.

Instructions

To **cast your vote**, you must:

- Make a clear mark beside the name of the candidate/s
- Place the completed ballot paper in a blank envelope and either
 - a. place the envelope in an envelope with your name and address on the back and post or arrange to deliver it to the principal,

before closure of the ballot at 4.00pm on:	
--------------------------------------------	--

or

- b. between 8.00am and 4.00pm on any school day, on or before the date of closure of the ballot, place the envelope containing the completed ballot paper in the ballot box and print the voter's name and address in the register of voters.

Form 13: student ballot paper

Ballot paper for the school council of (school name below)

Vote using this ballot paper if you are a **student** at the school enrolled in Year 7 or above.

In the ballot there are (number below)

vacancies to be filled. Therefore, you may vote for up to (number below)

candidates in the ballot.

Candidates nominated for election to the student member category	Mark with an 'X'

Your vote will be invalid if you vote for more candidates than the number of vacancies to be filled.

Instructions

To **cast your vote**, you must:

- Make a clear mark beside the name of the candidate/s
- Place the completed ballot paper in a blank envelope and either
 - a. place the blank envelope in an envelope with your name and address on the back and post, deliver or arrange for it to be delivered to the principal, on any school day

or

- b. between 8.00am and 4.00pm on any school day, on or before the dates of closure of the ballot. Place the blank envelope containing your ballot paper into the ballot box and print your name and address on the register of voters.

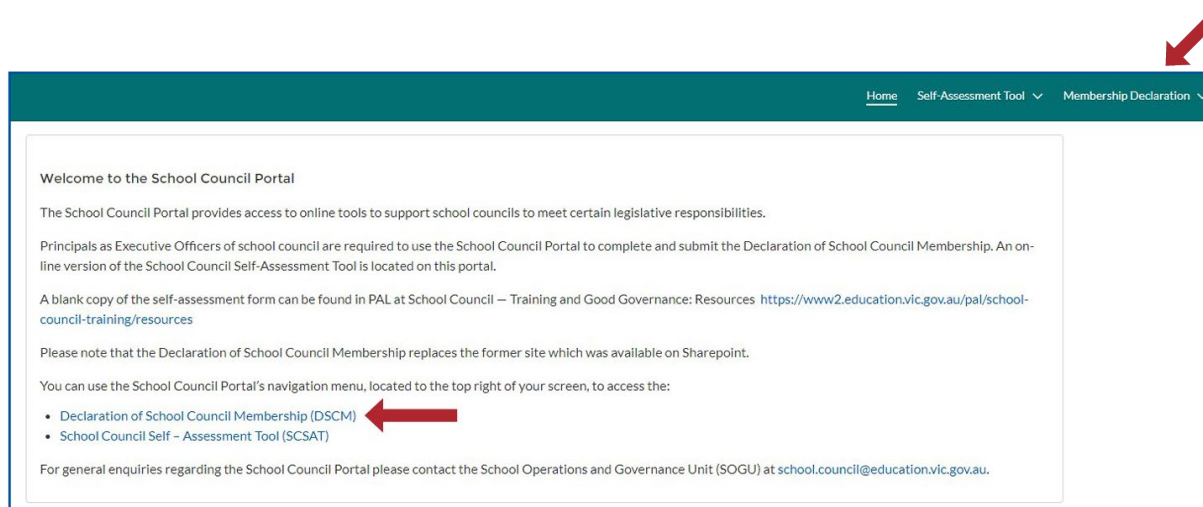
Declaration of School Council membership

A new School Council portal has been designed to provide access to the Declaration of School Council Membership and the School Council Self-Assessment Tool. The Declaration of School Council Membership must be completed and declared by 30 April.

INSTRUCTIONS:

The principal's or business manager's login details are used to access the portal.

1. Please select the link to the Declaration of School Council Membership (DSCM) from the bullet point or from the navigation menu in the top right of the screen. Instructions and frequently asked questions can also be accessed through the drop-down list.



2. Please check the number of members (including vacancies) entered on your declaration matches the Ministerial Order 1280. The constituting Order numbers are listed across the lower portion of page one, and across the top of other declaration screens. Click the 'Next' button to move through the membership details screens.

Declaration of School Council Membership (formerly Schedule 7)

Help:
If you have a technical issue or the content listed in your school council membership is not accurate, please use the live chat or raise a request via the [DET Services Portal](#).

Instructions:
Use these pages to update your school council membership details each year by 30 April. You can complete the declaration over more than one sitting by using the 'Save' button at the bottom of the page.

After you enter the membership details, enter your name and date to complete the Declaration, and press 'Submit Declaration'. Print a copy for your school's records. It is important to file a printed or soft copy at your school.

Please ensure that you declare the School Council Membership form each time you make a change.

Update the form as membership changes occur during the year. If a member has resigned, delete their details and re-fill the fields with the new member details, or make the position vacant if it has not been filled. Click 'Save' and close after the updates have been made.

Also see [Help](#) or [FAQ](#).

Your school: Test School

Council Constituting Order

Total	Parent	School Employee	Student	Community	Nominees (if any)
8	2	2	2	2	0

If the numbers above are incorrect please contact the School Operations and Governance Unit, Schools and Regional Services at school.council@education.vic.gov.au

Please enter details for all member positions including vacancies in the following sections.

Next

Summary

- You must complete membership details in one category then click **'save'**, before clicking 'Next' to move to the next screen. If you wish to close and come back, simply add 'vacant' to the membership details not filled in and you will be able to save, close and come back at a later time to complete the members names and terms of office. If you are a new school and do not have an existing Declaration of School Council Membership a new, blank Declaration form will be activated.

I

Council Constituting Order

Total	Parent	School Employee	Student	Community	Nominees (if any)
8	2	2	2	2	0

Parent Details

Member Category Parent * Is this position filled? Filled

Parent member includes a guardian or person responsible to maintain or having the custody of a student of the school.

* Member Name Christopher Wilson

* Current Term Start Date 8 May 2023 * Current Term End Date March 2025

If elected or vacant: the day after the date of the declaration of the poll. If co-opted: the date of the council meeting *Select the end period for this position's term. (Typically 2 years from the council election)*

* Is the Parent a Department employee? No * Office Held N/A

A Department Employee Parent is a Department employee who has a child at the school but who is employed at another place of work. They are counted as a Department employee for school council meeting quorum requirements.

* Address c/o Principal Gender (optional) Select....

4. Complete the declaration by entering the principals name and date. Then click the '**Submit Declaration**' button. This must be done by 30 April. Any membership changes that occur during the year, can be entered in this form during the year. Always '**Save**' and '**Submit Declaration**' each time there is updated membership information added during the year. Please use the '**Summary**' button to view the summary list of the council members. Please print/save and sign a copy of this list in your council records.

Page 6 of 6

Council Constituting Order

Total	Parent	School Employee	Student	Community	Nominees (if any)
8	2	2	2	2	0

Declaration
Before clicking on the Submit Declaration button check that all fields have been completed including listing of all members and vacancies. All members no longer on council should be removed and there should be no blank 'Member Details' unless Vacant.
By adding my name and the date below, I certify that the persons listed have been elected or appointed in accordance with the constituting Order of the school council.

Principal's Name

Declaration Date

Submit Declaration

Click on the Submit Declaration button after having completed all membership details and entering the principal's name and declaration date.

Help:
For further support in completing this form, see the [FAQ](#) or contact the School Operations and Governance Unit, Schools Regional Services atschool.council@education.vic.gov.au. For any technical issues please raise a request via the [DET Services Portal](#).

[Previous](#) [Save](#) [Summary](#)

Appendix E: fact sheet for principals and school council presidents

Commonly asked questions and topics from principals and school councils.

Does the principal count as a school employee member on school council? Is the principal a voting member?

The principal is the executive officer of school council and is:

- a full voting member, and is
- counted within the school employee member category.

The principal is able to:

- propose a motion, or
- second a motion and
- vote on a motion, along with other council members at a school council meeting.

For information on school council membership and the role of the principal, please refer to the Improving School Governance training modules in the [School Council – Training and Good Governance, policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy) (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy>).

The Principals Guide to School Council Elections, also provides information on the school council membership.

Quorum at the special meeting after the declaration of the poll – co-option of community members

At the first special meeting of the new council to co-opt community members, the quorum is achieved if not less than one-half of the members of school council currently holding office, are present.

Quorum at the first meeting after the declaration of the poll – to elect office bearers

There are two requirements for a quorum to be achieved at the first council meeting after the results of the poll have been declared.

For the majority of school councils:

- not less than one half of school council members currently holding office must be present, and
- a majority of the members present must not be department employees. Any parent members on the council who also work for the department are counted as department employees at the beginning of the meeting for the purpose of establishing if the meeting has a quorum.

What constitutes a quorum at general and extraordinary meetings?

There are two requirements for a quorum to be achieved at a general or extraordinary council meeting.

For most school councils:

- not less than one half of school council members currently holding office must be present, and
- a majority of the members present must not be department employees. Any parent members on the council who also work for the department are counted as department employees at the beginning of the meeting for the purpose of establishing if the meeting has a quorum.

For additional information regarding quorum requirements, please refer to the ISG Governance module under 'Quorum at a school council meeting'. The module is located in the [School Council – Training and Good Governance, policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy) (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy>).

In the event of a tied vote at a general meeting or extraordinary meeting of council, who has the deciding vote?

In the event of a tied vote, the chairperson at a school council meeting has a second and casting vote. This will normally be the school council president. However, in the absence of the president, the chairperson will be the vice president, or a member elected by the council to preside over that meeting. The chairperson cannot be a department employee. Please refer to the ISG Governance module, **'Who presides at a meeting'**.

In the event of a tied vote at the first meeting of the new school council after the poll, to elect office bearers, what is the process?

The principal must, as soon as practicable after the declaration of the poll, preside at a special meeting for the purpose of appointing community members, if the school council is required to have community members.

The principal also presides at the first meeting of the new school council to elect a president and any other office bearers the council may choose to have. In the election of an office bearer for a school council, if the votes are tied, the school council may decide to hold a new election for the office bearer position; or decide the outcome by drawing lots.

If the council decides to hold a new election for the office bearer position and the results are tied again, the council may decide to conduct further elections until the election of office bearers is decided or the council will decide the election by the drawing of lots.

How is school council membership declared each year?

Following the school council election process, the online declaration of school council membership must be updated and declared by 30 April. Refer to the [eduPass Declaration of School Council Membership](https://scp.educationapps.vic.gov.au/scsat/s/membership-declaration-welcome) (<https://scp.educationapps.vic.gov.au/scsat/s/membership-declaration-welcome>) (formerly Schedule 7).

Principals or business managers are required to:

- log into the School Council Membership Reporting page, using the principal or business manager's username and password
- update the membership: parent and school employee members, community, student or nominee members, if applicable
- include any vacancies with start and end dates
- check all entered data for accuracy
- ensure the total of the currently entered membership (including vacancies) matches the constituting Order
- save, print, sign, and date the form. This printed copy is the school record, to be kept on premises. This form is not sent to the regional or central office
- click **Submit declaration** to declare and submit the form.

If membership details change during the year, the declaration of school council membership should be updated and the declaration re-submitted.

When does school council need to present the Annual Report to the school community?

The Annual Report is endorsed by both principal and school council by 30 April, each year. It is a legislative and regulatory requirement that the Annual Report is shared with the school community via a **public reporting meeting** following endorsement.

This meeting can take place **at a time that suits school council meetings and commitments**, usually during the first half of the year.

The Annual Report to the school community provides an opportunity for the school community to celebrate achievements, reflect on the school's performance, and understand where and how improvement efforts have enhanced student achievement, engagement and wellbeing.

The Annual Report is uploaded in the Strategic Planning Online Tool (SPOT). A draft Annual Report can then be downloaded for tabling at a school council meeting. In March/April the council can consider and endorse the report.

By 30 April the school council president attests to the Annual Report in SPOT on behalf of the school council. In May/June, following notification from the department, the principal can download and present the final Annual Report to a public meeting of the school council. The Annual Report is also uploaded to the school's website.

Schools should additionally share the report in other ways that best meets the needs of the community.

For further information about Annual Reporting, refer to the [Annual Report to the School Community, policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/annual-report-schools-community/policy) (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/annual-report-schools-community/policy>).

Annual planning for school council business

Just as schools benefit from strategic and annual planning, so, too, do school councils. The school council president can take a leadership role, with the principal, in planning the school council business for the year ahead. This begins with discussing school priorities with the principal and new council, following annual elections, co-option of community members, and appointment of office bearers.

From this discussion, an annual work plan can be developed, a month-by-month schedule of the business of council for that year. This schedule could include:

- known tasks that are required to be completed each year, such as the declaration of school council membership by April 30, the endorsement of the Annual Implementation Plan and the Annual Report, and the annual public reporting meeting
- a schedule of policies that are due for review, and a timeline that spreads this work appropriately across the year and allows time for community consultation and additional research that may be required
- any significant events, including reviews and development of the School Strategic Plan
- other opportunities for community engagement, including fundraising, special school activities or similar events
- **discussion and completion of the School Council Self-Assessment Tool**, refer to the [School Council – Training and Good Governance, resources](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/resources) (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/resources>). The outcomes of the self-assessment results can guide council in its identification of strengths and opportunities for support, development, recruitment of councillors.

President's email account

Principals are required to set up or update the department email account for the president. **To set up or update the account**, refer to [Education Mail](#) on the eduGate portal.

(<https://eduGate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/Services/IT/ITServices/edumail/Pages/default.aspx>) (login required).

To ensure school council presidents have access to relevant information, they are required to have and regularly use a department assigned email account. This enables them to receive important updates and endorse key documents in the SPOT.

Inducting and supporting new members, including student members on councils

New members of council benefit from support and encouragement to fulfil the duties of a school councillor. The information below outlines some suggestions on how school councils may support new council members including student members.

Some new members will be inexperienced with meetings and meeting procedures, including department language, meeting protocols and conventions, motions, agendas, asking questions and confidently arguing a case.

School council support may include:

- providing an experienced mentor, who can brief new members before and after meetings
- developing a supportive meeting structure that encourages participation
- the principal and president meeting with new members to discuss the role of school councillor
- provide new members with responsibilities that will ensure they are included and accountable.

These responsibilities may include membership of subcommittees and working groups.

School council support may also include participation in school council training and access to, and explanations of school documentation such as strategic plans, the Annual Implementation Plan, and budgets.

Other possible issues student members may face as they take their place on school council, include the management of their time with study, council and other commitments and the capacity to get to and from school council meetings in the evening.

The principal and/or school council president can liaise with student members' parents to ensure they are aware of requirements, meeting dates and times.

How to access school council training

The department continues to offer training either virtual live or face-to-face for all school council members, free of cost at the school's request. Training is based on the Improving School Governance materials, and covers the Governance, Finance, Strategic Planning, School Council President modules.

For all training options, videos, mini modules and activities, refer to the [School Council – Training and Good Governance, policy](#) (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy>).

Managing conflicts of interest

Following school council elections, it is timely for principals, as executive officers on councils, to support the effective management of conflicts of interest.

A conflict of interest exists when there is an actual, perceived or potential conflict between a school council member's public duty and their private interests. In the case of a conflict of interest, the

member must declare the conflict to the council and remove themselves from discussion or voting on the topic.

It might be that a close friend of a councillor is applying for a job, or a councillor's family business wants to tender for a contract. This personal connection or private interest can influence, or be perceived to influence, council's decision-making.

Failure to transparently identify, declare and manage conflicts of interest, including perceived conflicts of interest, can obviously impact community confidence in the council as an impartial and ethical decision-making body.

Actions required for school councils:

- In each council meeting, declaration of any conflicts of interest that arise from any items on the agenda should be a standing item on the agenda
- A declaration of interest can be declared at any time during the meeting and must be recorded in the meeting's minutes, alongside steps taken to manage the conflict
- **In addition to recording declarations in the minutes, school council members who are also department employees are required to complete a declaration** on the [EduPay page under 'My Declarations'](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/hr/Pages/edupay.aspx) (<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/hr/Pages/edupay.aspx>).
- Any councillor with a conflict of interest must not be present during the matter under discussion and not be present when a vote is taken on the matter
- Consider communicating to the community how the council addresses conflicts of interest. For example, letting the community know about the general steps in place to manage conflicts if and when they come up.

Actions for principals:

- Discuss the management of conflicts of interest at your next school council meeting, reminding councillors of this important obligation
- Table and distribute to the school councillors a one-page overview of their obligations. For further information refer to the ISG Governance module.

Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities is relevant to school council members and is referenced under the [School Council – Training and Good Governance, policy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy) (<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy>).

Principals and school council presidents can seek advice and support on any integrity-related matters from the department's **Integrity Branch** on 03 7022 5400 or email the Integrity Branch at: integrity.enquiries@education.vic.gov.au.

Processes and procedures for fundraising

School council approves all fundraising planned for the school and school community, unless delegated to the principal. It is important that the purpose for the fundraising is agreed, before any activities begin, as funds must only be spent for the purposes for which they were raised.

If the fundraising involves a raffle or bingo, permission and instructions must be sought from [the Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission website](https://www.vgccc.vic.gov.au) (<https://www.vgccc.vic.gov.au>).

If the fundraising involves the sale of alcohol, permission and instructions must be sought from [Liquor Control Victoria](http://www.vic.gov.au/liquor) (www.vic.gov.au/liquor).

Any questions regarding school council's role in the fundraising process should be directed to the School Operations and Governance Unit, Operations and Governance via email, at: school.council@education.vic.gov.au.

Further fundraising information can also be located in the [School Council – Powers and Functions, guidance](http://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-powers-and-functions/guidance) (www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-powers-and-functions/guidance).

Questions regarding the internal controls, recording funds raised in CASES21 or other related financial matters, please contact the Financial Services Division via email at: support@education.vic.gov.au.

Appendix F: nomination notification form

After the nomination period has closed, a notice showing the name of each candidate and nominator must be displayed in a prominent position at the school.

Principals may wish to use this form to inform the community of the names of the nominees and nominators received for the school council election:

Nominations received for the parent, school employee and/or student member positions for <i>(school name below)</i>		
school council election <i>(year below)</i>		
An election is to be conducted for members of the <i>(school name below)</i>		
school council		
The following nominations were received by 4.00pm on		(day, month, year).

The name of the nominees, self-nomination or their nominator and the membership categories are as follows:

Parent member

Number of vacancies	
From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
Name of nominees	
Name of nominators	

School employee member

Number of vacancies	
From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
Name of nominees	
Name of nominators	

Student member

Number of vacancies	
---------------------	--

From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	
to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 20	

Name of nominees

Name of nominators

Principal's signature

Date:	
-------	--

Co-option to a community member position on school council

The principal may wish to use this form when a new member is co-opted into a community vacancy on school council.

<i>(Name of school below)</i>			
school council, wish to co-opt <i>(name below)</i>			
into a community member position			
for the term of office from <i>(day, month, year)</i> .			to <i>(day, month, year)</i> .

Co-opted member's details

Name
Residential Address:
Contact phone <i>(mobile or landline)</i> :
Email:

Statement	Is <i>(Mark with an x)</i>	is not <i>(Mark with an x)</i>	Statement
The person co-opted			an employee of the Department of Education.

Name of nominator/principal/president <i>(below)</i>	of	school council. <i>(below)</i>
	of	

Co-opted member to complete:

I accept the co-option onto school council and I am prepared to serve as a community member of the above-named school council, for the term of office

Date <i>(below)</i>	to	Date <i>(below)</i>
	to	

I hereby declare that:

- I am not, and have not been insolvent under administration within the last three years
- I am of sound mind
- I have not been found guilty of an offence that is, or would if committed in Victoria be, an indictable offence
- I am not a registrable offender within the meaning of the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*.
- I am not suffering from any medical condition that would affect my ability to perform the role of member of a school council.

Signature of co-opted member:

Date:

The personal information provided in this form is collected as part of the school council co-option process. The information may be used to determine your eligibility as a member of council.

Further, the name, membership category, gender (optional), term of office, office held (if any) of school council members and notification whether the member is an employee of the department will be forwarded to the department by the principal by 30 April each year as a record of council membership and may be used for statistical purposes.

If you choose not to give some or all of the information requested your co-option to join council may be withdrawn. If you have any queries about the school council membership please contact the principal.

Co-option to a casual vacancy on school council

The principal may wish to use this form when a new member is co-opted into a **casual vacancy** on school council.

(Name of school below)			
school council, wish to co-opt			
(name below)			
into a casual vacancy in the			
member category			
for the term of office from (day, month, year).		to (day, month, year).	

Co-opted member's details

Name
Residential Address:
Contact phone (mobile or landline):
Email:

Statement	Is (Mark with an x)	is not (Mark with an x)	Statement
The person co-opted			an employee of the Department of Education.

Name of nominator/principal/president (below)	of	school council. (below)
	of	

Co-opted member to complete:

I accept the co-option onto school council and I am prepared to serve as a community member of the above-named school council, for the term of office

Date (below)	to	Date (below)
	to	

I hereby declare that:

- I am not, and have not been insolvent under administration within the last three years
- I am of sound mind
- I have not been found guilty of an offence that is, or would if committed in Victoria be, an indictable offence
- I am not a registrable offender within the meaning of the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*.
- I am not suffering from any medical condition that would affect my ability to perform the role of member of a school council.

Signature of co-opted member:

Date:

The personal information provided in this form is collected as part of the school council co-option process. The information may be used to determine your eligibility as a member of council.

Further, the name, membership category, gender (optional), term of office, office held (if any) of school council members and notification whether the member is an employee of the department will be forwarded to the department by the principal by 30 April each year as a record of council membership and may be used for statistical purposes.

If you choose not to give some or all of the information requested your co-option to join council may be withdrawn. If you have any queries about the school council membership please contact the principal.