

## SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING CHARTER

### **Introduction**

The purpose of these protocols is to assist Kananook School Council to operate efficiently and effectively within the legal framework and Department guidelines for school councils.

### **School council membership**

The membership of the Kananook School Council is 13-15 members – 8 Parent, 5 Department employee and 1-2 Community members if required. (The school council may approve a change to the total number of school council members and/or the composition of the school council. Refer to Ministerial Order No. 52)

### **Office bearers**

The Kananook School Council will have the following office bearer positions:

- President
- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Assistant Treasurer
- Secretary
- Assistant Secretary

Office bearers will be elected at the first meeting of the School Council after declaration of the poll each year.

### **Election of office bearers**

In the election of an office bearer, if the votes are tied, the School Council will decide the outcome by either holding a new election or drawing of lots. If a new election is held and is also tied, the School Council may decide the election by the drawing of lots or decide to conduct further elections until the election of office bearers is decided.

### **Sub-committees**

The Kananook School Council will have the following sub-committees:

- Finance
- Education
- Facilities and Environment
- Communication
- Kananook Out of School Hours (KOOSH)

Each sub-committee will be chaired by a member of School Council unless otherwise decided by council. A sub-committee must include at least one School Council member and have at least 3 members.

### **Meetings**

#### **Regular**

The school council will meet twice a term on a Thursday. Meeting dates will be scheduled for the year. The meeting will commence at 4.30 pm and will finish no later than 5.20 pm unless an extension of 10 minutes is agreed to by the School Council. Meetings will be held in the staffroom.

#### **Annual General meeting**

The school council will call a public meeting in February/March each year and at that meeting will:

- (a) report the proceedings of the Council for the period since the date of the previous public meeting; and
- (b) present the Annual Report published by the Council; and
- (c) if the accounts of the School Council have been audited, present a copy of the audited accounts.

The School Council may, from time to time, call additional public meetings.

#### **Extraordinary meeting**

- An extraordinary meeting of the School Council may be held at any time decided by the Council, if all members are given reasonable notice of the time, date, place and object of the meeting.
- The president of the School Council or, in the absence of the President, the principal must call an extraordinary meeting of the School Council if either of them receives a written request to do so from 3 members of the School Council.
- The president or the principal must call a meeting under the preceding paragraph by sending a notice to all School Council members giving the members reasonable notice of the time, date, place and object of the meeting.
- The business of an extraordinary meeting will be confined to the purpose for which it is called.

#### **Open and closed meetings**

School council meetings would normally be open to the school community and conducted according to standard meeting requirements. **Visitors or observers** can be present at the council meetings with the agreement of the principal and a decision of council. **Visitors** have a right to speak but must do so through the person chairing the meeting (usually the school council president). **Visitors** have no voting rights. **Visitors** are expected to comply with School Council principles and etiquette (pages 3 and 4).

There may be times when the School Council meeting, or part of the meeting needs to be closed. Meetings can only be closed when the majority of school councillors vote to do so because the issue under discussion is sensitive and requires confidentiality or for the reporting back of a principal selection panel process. School Council should then go back into open session once the topic under discussion has been concluded.

#### **Quorum for meetings**

- For a quorum to be achieved at a Council meeting, 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 DEECD employees. Any parent members on the Council who also work for the Department are counted as DEECD employees for the purpose of a quorum.
- If at the end of 30 minutes after the appointed time for a meeting of the School Council, there is no quorum present, the meeting will stand adjourned to a time and place determined by the School Council members present.
- A member of the School Council may be present at a Council meeting, in person or by video conferencing or teleconferencing.

#### **Length of meetings and extensions of meeting times**

If business has not been concluded within 1 hour and 20 minutes, the presiding member shall ask the members whether they wish to defer the rest of the business until the next meeting or to extend the meeting. A motion is necessary if council wants to extend the meeting. The meeting will be extended for no more than 10 minutes.

#### **School Council decisions**

- Decisions of the School Council will be by a majority of those eligible to vote and who are present at the meeting, where the majority are non DEECD members. A vote by proxy is not valid.
- Members will vote on a matter and the number of votes for and against will be recorded in the minutes.
- Voting will normally be by a show of hands, but a secret ballot may be used for particular issues.

#### **Tied votes**

When a vote is tied (i.e. an even number of people are for and against a decision), the president (presiding member) has a second or casting vote.

#### **Absence of the president and other members from a meeting**

If the president is unable to preside at a School Council meeting, the Vice President will chair the School Council meeting.

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

### **Conflict of interest**

If a School Council member or a member of his or her immediate family has any direct conflict of interest (including a financial interest) in a subject or matter under discussion at a School Council meeting, that councillor:

- must declare the conflict of interest
- must not be present during the discussion unless invited to do so by the person presiding at the meeting
- must not be present when a vote is taken on the matter
- may be included in the quorum for that meeting.

### **Extended leave of a council member**

- A member of the School Council may apply in writing to the president for extended leave of up to 3 consecutive meetings.
- If a member of School Council is granted extended leave, the membership of that member is excluded in determining the requirement for a quorum of not less than half the members currently holding office.

### **Agenda**

The principal shall ensure an agenda is prepared for each regular meeting and distribute the agenda, draft minutes from the previous meeting and meeting papers such as sub-committee reports, principal's report to School Council members no less than four days before the meeting. General Business agenda items may be submitted to the Principal prior to the next meeting. Queries relating to the financial report may be submitted to the Treasurer prior to the meeting.

### **Minutes**

- The principal will ensure a record of each meeting is kept and draft minutes are prepared after each School Council meeting and distributed to School Council members prior to the next School Council meeting. In addition to members receiving a hard copy, minutes will also be emailed. The principal may delegate this responsibility to another person.
- The minutes will record the type of meeting (regular, extraordinary or public); date, time and venue of meeting; names of attendees and apologies received from members; name of presiding officer; a record of the business of the meeting including the decision on the minutes of the previous meeting; inward and outward correspondence and reports of any sub-committees tabled at the meeting; and decisions of the meeting including motions and any amendments, names of movers and seconders, whether the motion was carried or rejected and the number of votes for and against.
- When School Council minutes are submitted for confirmation; only questions regarding their accuracy as a record of the meeting are to be raised.
- Once the minutes have been accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting, they are to be signed by the School Council President or the person who presided at the meeting.
- Business arising from the minutes is dealt with after the minutes have been confirmed.

### **Kananook School Council principles**

The primary considerations in making decisions are the school's values and what is in the best interests of students.

The Kananook School Council will operate according to the following principles:

- **Respectful** partnerships (any conflict between school council members needs to be dealt with respectfully and fairly).
- Clear and **honest** two-way communication
- **Transparent** processes
- **Democratic**, informed decision-making
- Personal and professional **integrity**.

### **Accountability**

- Kananook School Council is accountable to and must report to, both its local school community and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
- School councillors will abide by all legal requirements, regulations, DEECD policies and guidelines.

## **Representation**

- All councillors are expected to represent all members of the school community. Members are not there to represent just one viewpoint, or the view of an individual. School councillors will therefore regularly seek the views and opinions of the whole school community, especially when major policies are being developed.
- A Council member who is approached by a parent with a concern relating to an individual is in a privileged position and must treat such discussion with discretion, protecting the confidentiality and privacy of the people involved. If the issue relates to an operational matter of the school, the parent should be encouraged to speak with the principal or the classroom teacher. However, if the issue relates to a school policy or procedure, it should be put on the agenda for discussion at the next school council meeting, where it will be dealt with in a generic sense to protect the privacy of individuals involved.
- Councillors should observe the need for orderly council meetings and that council needs to “speak as one voice” in the public arena, once a decision has been made.

## **Confidentiality**

- Councillors should respect the need for confidentiality and privacy with regard to sensitive matters that might arise at school council meetings especially where there are matters of a personal nature relating to staff, students or parents.
- Kananook School Council meetings are not an appropriate forum for the discussion of individual school staff, students, parents, or other individual members of the school community.

## **Etiquette**

In the conduct of meetings, the following **etiquette** will be observed by members:

- Only one person speaks at a time.
- All requests to speak are directed to the presiding member.
- All speakers are listened to in respectful silence.
- No ‘side conversations’ are held.
- Members shall listen to the discussion carefully in order to avoid making points that have already been made or asking questions which have already been answered.
- When the presiding member indicates that the topic of discussion is closed, no further comments are made.
- Members will ensure that all electronic devices (such as mobile phones) are silenced and no calls are taken during the meeting.
- Members shall stay calm regardless of how difficult or challenging the topic.
- Council members stay focussed on the aim of improving student outcomes.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of School Council**

The role of school council is outlined in the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. In essence, the role of school council is one of helping to set the long term future for the school and maintaining oversight (not management) of the school's operation. It is not about running the school – that is the job of the principal.

The responsibilities of school council include:

- contributing to the development of the school strategic plan (the document that tells people what the school wants to achieve in the future and how it plans to get there);
- approving the annual budget (the financial plan for the calendar year that tells people how the school is going to provide money so it can implement its strategic plan in that year) and monitoring expenditure;
- developing, monitoring, reviewing and updating policies (guiding principles designed to influence decisions, actions that the school makes);

- developing, reviewing and monitoring both the **Student Engagement and Inclusion Policy** (this includes how the school expects students to behave, how bullying will be managed and the school's approach to managing student behaviour) and the **School Dress Code** (this includes how students are expected to dress during school hours including traveling to and from school, if the school has a uniform and what that looks like, and any arrangement with clothing suppliers that the school might enter into);
- informing itself and taking into account the views of the school community when making decisions regarding the school and the students
- arranging for the supply of the things needed for the conduct of the school (such as goods, services, materials and equipment), including pre-school programs
- providing meals and refreshments for students and staff and charging for this
- raising money for things that the school needs
- making sure the school's grounds and buildings are maintained
- entering into contracts for things like cleaning the school or a school council building project
- regulating and facilitating the after-hours use of the school premises and grounds
- creating interest in the school within the community
- making a recommendation to the Secretary regarding principal selection.

#### **What school council does not do**

- School council does not manage the day to day running of the school. For example, it does not employ teaching staff, decide which classes students will be assigned to, or sort out issues relating to individual teachers and students and/or parents.
- School council does not discuss individual issues relating to teachers, staff or parents – these are very clearly management roles, and therefore the principal's job.
- School councillors are not appointed to represent specific interest groups or permit special interests to dominate the agenda of the council.
- School council is also not allowed to purchase land, buildings or motor cars, and it cannot enter into hire purchase agreements or obtain credit or loans, unless it is given permission by the Minister.

#### **Role of school council members**

- Parent members on school council bring their experience as parents at the school and the views of the wider school community to school council meetings.
- DEECD employees bring their educational expertise to school council meetings.
- Community members, if they are on school council, most often bring a particular skill to school council. They might bring accounting skills or building skills or some other skill that the school is looking for at that time.
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