

SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS



Our School Council constitution allows for the election of eight parent representatives, five Department of Education representatives and two community representatives. In 2018, we have 6 parent rep positions (4 x 2 years & 2 x 1 year) and 2 staff rep positions (2 years) open for election.

The School Council members whose term is up are:

Parents Reps: Nicole Crivari, Vanessa Dingle, Peter Harley and Dona Tantirimudalige

Community Rep: Michelle Friend

Department Reps: Danni Hoffinger and Sue Willoughby

Thank you for the time that you have given the Berwick Fields community and for committing to our Council, in the interest of all of our students. We have appreciated your support, critical lens and genuine care.

Please note that if these members would like to continue on School Council they must renominate.

Below is some information that might assist you in your decision to nominate for School Council.

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 key directions of a school within state-wide guidelines. In doing this, a school council is able to directly influence the quality of education that the school provides for its students.

WHO IS ON THE SCHOOL COUNCIL?

For most school councils, there are three possible categories of membership:

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

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

WHY IS PARENT MEMBERSHIP SO IMPORTANT?

Parents on school councils provide important viewpoints and have valuable skills that can help inform and shape the direction of the school. Those parents who become active on a school council find their involvement satisfying and may also find that their children feel a greater sense of belonging.

WHAT ARE THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL COUNCIL AND ITS MEMBERS?

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 Policy (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.

Responsibilities of School Council Members include:

- Regularly attending meetings of School Council
- Thoroughly reading reports before each meeting.
- Maintaining confidentiality as required.
- Having a prime responsibility to the interests of Council above that of any part of the school community.
- Placing on the School Council meeting agenda items of a policy nature that cannot be addressed by normal management procedures i.e. Principal.

DO I NEED SPECIAL EXPERIENCE TO BE ON SCHOOL COUNCIL?

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

HOW CAN YOU BECOME INVOLVED?

The most obvious way is to vote in the school council elections, which are held now. However, ballots are only held if more people nominate as candidates than there are positions vacant.

In view of this, you might seriously 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?

Below is the Nomination Form and copies are available from the school office from today, February 10th, and will need to be returned by 4pm on Thursday, February 17^h to the office. Nominations received after 4:00pm on this date cannot be accepted. You will receive a Nomination Receipt following the receipt of your completed nomination.

The timeline for School Council elections is as follows:

- Notice of election and call for nominations: Friday February 9th.
- Close of nominations: 4pm on Friday February 16th
- Prepare ballot papers and distribute (if required): Monday February 19th
- Close of ballot: 4pm on Friday February 23rd
- First meeting of new School Council: Monday 19th March at 7:30pm, in the staff room

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.

REMEMBER

- Ask at the school for help if you would like to stand for election and are not sure what to do
- Consider standing for election to school council this year
- Be sure to vote in the elections.

Amanda Ellaby

Ellaby.amanda.a@edumail.vic.gov.au

Schedule 5A - Nomination form for Parent Member Category

I wish to declare my candidacy for an elected position as a parent member on the **Berwick Fields Primary 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.

I am an employee of the Department of Education and Training but not engaged in work at and for the school

Yes / No (please circle)

I am prepared to serve as a Parent member of the above-named school council. I hereby declare that I am not:

- an undischarged bankrupt
- of unsound mind
- currently serving a sentence for an indictable offence; or
- a registrable offender within the meaning of the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*.

Signature of Candidate: _____ Date: __/__/____

You will be notified when your nomination has been received.

Please return this form to the office by 4pm Friday February 17th.

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, 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 and Training 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 8786 9988

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.

Schedule 5A - Nomination form for DET Member Category

I wish to declare my candidacy for an elected position as a DET employee member on the **Berwick Fields Primary 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.

I am an employee of the Department of Education and Training and engage in work at and for the school

Yes / No (please circle)

I am prepared to serve as a DET employee member of the above-named school council. I hereby declare that I am not: an undischarged bankrupt

- of unsound mind
- currently serving a sentence for an indictable offence; or
- a registrable offender within the meaning of the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*.

Signature of Candidate: _____ Date: __/__/__

You will be notified when your nomination has been received.

Please return this form to the office by 4pm Friday February 17th.

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.

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