Information for Parents

School Council Elections 2015

What is a school council and what does it do?

All government schools in Victoria have a school council. They are legally formed bodies that are given powers to set the key directions of a school within Departmental provided 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?

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 employed 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 of this category 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.

Why is parent membership so important?

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

Those parents who become active on a school council find their involvement satisfying in itself and may also find that their children feel a greater sense of belonging.

How can you become involved?

The most obvious way is to vote in the elections, which are held in February or March each year. 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.

Do I need special experience to be on school council?

No. 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. You may be interested in Education, School Development, Finance or our 30th Birthday project team.

What do you need to do to stand for election?

The principal will issue a notice and call for nominations following the commencement Term 1 each year. All school council elections must be completed by the end of March.

If you decide to stand for election, you will need to arrange for someone to nominate and second you as a candidate in either the parent category.

DET employees whose child is enrolled in a school in which they are not employed are eligible to nominate as parents for the school council where their child is enrolled.

Once the nomination form is completed, return it to the principal within the timeframe stated on the Notice of Election Schedule.

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 council this year.
• Be sure to vote in the elections.

The key dates are set out below.

If you decide to stand for election, you will need to arrange to be nominated and seconded by persons who are eligible for the same category as you will stand for. The principal can provide information about these categories.

Once the nomination form is completed, return it to the principal within the time stated on the notice of election.

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

Timetable to be followed:

Notice of election and call for nominations ........................................... Monday, 16th February 2015
Close of nominations ........................................................................... Monday, 23rd February 2015
Display list of candidates, nominator & seconder .................. Wednesday, 25th February 2015
If required prepare ballot papers and distribute on or before ............. Friday, 27th February 2015
Close of ballot ..................................................................................... 4pm, Thursday, 5th March 2015
Declare the poll .................................................................................... Tuesday, 10th March, 2015
Meeting for co-opted members if required ..........................4pm, Wednesday 11th March, 2015

New council becomes operational from the day following the declaration of the poll.
Elect office bearers at meeting chaired by Principal on Tuesday 17th March, 2015 at 7pm - AGM.
First normal meeting chaired by President on Tuesday 17th March, 2015 at 7.30pm.

Contact the Principal for further information.