

*Ferny Creek Primary School*

## **School Council Handbook**

**A Guide for School Councillors,  
Parents and Staff  
to the workings of School Council**

# *Ferny Creek Primary School*

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## **1. Introduction**

This handbook will be reviewed at the beginning of year by the newly elected Council. It is to be read in conjunction with the Education Act 1958, the Education Regulations 2000 and the Council's Constituting Order, all of which take precedence over this handbook.

Councillors may also make reference to:

'Making the Partnership Work' Part 1-Roles and Responsibilities and Part 2-Rules and Procedures

## **2. School Council Code of Practice**

The Ferry Creek Primary School Council acknowledges the provisions of the Education Act and all other Government legislation and guidelines within which all School Councils must operate.

### **2.1. Values**

In accordance with these regulations Ferry Creek Primary School Council has the following values:

- ✿ Our primary focus is on the development of policies and supporting mechanisms which help the children at Ferry Creek Primary School achieve optimum learning outcomes, in the best possible environment that we can provide.
- ✿ We acknowledge our responsibility to both the school community and the broader community in maintaining regular communication with our parents and staff, in particular, actively seeking their feedback on matters of importance and encouraging attendance at meetings.
- ✿ We support informed and democratic decision making and good business practice.
- ✿ We will operate in a way which supports the work of school staff .
- ✿ The privacy of individuals will be respected
- ✿ Members of Council are expected to be loyal and committed representatives of our school community.
- ✿ We encourage Council members to develop their expertise in relation to their roles, responsibilities and duties.

### **2.2. Behaviours**

To reflect the above values we will exhibit the following behaviours:

- ✿ Policies will be drafted and reviewed in consultation with the school community

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- ✿ School Council meetings will be held on a regular monthly schedule as decided at the first meeting of a new council and will be open for anyone from the school community to attend.
- ✿ Minutes, agenda, financial summary and tabled reports are distributed to all members of council at least three days prior to each monthly meeting.
- ✿ Meeting procedures and decision-making processes will operate as detailed in this Handbook.
- ✿ Sub-committees consisting of School Council members, staff and parents will be formed each year to assist Council and to involve the wider school community.
- ✿ Sub-committees will have the responsibility of monitoring performance and making key recommendations to the Council
- ✿ Sub-committees will report to the Council at each meeting and to the school community regularly.
- ✿ School Councillors will provide good notice to the President on matters of General Business for inclusion in the agenda of Council meetings.
- ✿ To reflect our commitment to involvement of the wider school community in decision making, the School Council invites Parents' Club to provide one co-opted community member onto Council.
- ✿ Councillors will declare conflict of interest where appropriate.
- ✿ Individual staff, parents or students will not be discussed at Council meetings.
- ✿ Public comment related to School Council business is the responsibility of School Council President and Principal.

### **3. General Purpose of the Council**

The Council is the governing body of the School. It determines appropriate educational policies within the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) guidelines which will ensure that the aims of the School are achieved. In addition Council controls the School monies and other resources.

### **4. Composition of Council**

#### **4.1. Composition**

The constituting order of Ferny Creek Primary School confirms the composition of Council as:

- ✿ 8 elected Non-DEECD parents
- ✿ 4 DEECD employees other than the Principal
- ✿ the Principal, who is the Executive Officer
- ✿ up to 2 co-opted community members, one of whom is invited from the Parent's Club.

Elected members of the Ferny Creek Primary School Council have two-year terms of office with half retiring on or before the 31st March of each year (as determined at the November

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meeting). Co-opted members of the School Council have the same voting rights as other Councillors and also have two-year terms which terminate on the same date. Elections are conducted according to DEECD regulations and guidelines.

## **4.2. Office Bearers**

### **4.2.1. President**

The President is elected by all members of the Ferny Creek Primary School Council and may not be a Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) employee.

The President shall:

- act as chairperson of all meetings of Council
- decide recommendations for each item of correspondence in collaboration with the Executive Officer
- conduct the business of Council under agreed rules and any standing orders adopted from time to time.
- act as a signatory to the Council financial accounts, contracts and Charter.
- be an ex-officio member of all Council committees
- be the spokesperson for the Council and its representative on public occasions

### **4.2.2. Vice President**

The Vice President will be a non-DEECD employed member of Council to allow the Vice President to chair meetings in the absence of the President.

The Vice President shall:

- act as chairperson of all meetings of Council in the absence of the President, and otherwise represent the President as required.

### **4.2.3. Executive Officer/Principal**

The Principal is a full member of Council and is its Executive Officer.

The Principal shall:

- ensure adequate advice is given to Council on educational and other matters such as statutory, regulatory and Government policy issues
- ensure adequate support, information and resources are provided for the conduct of Council meetings in accordance with the meeting timetable determined at the start of each year.
- provide all Council members with minutes of the previous meeting, agenda, reports of committees and financial reports by the Friday prior to the Council meeting.
- notify the Council of any apologies received

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- ensure that minutes of the meeting are recorded
- table all correspondence relevant to the meeting
- write all correspondence authorised by Council
- be an ex-officio member of all Council committees.

## 4.2.4. Minutes Secretary

The minutes secretary is responsible for maintaining records of the proceedings of the Council meetings, and distributing a copy of the minutes within 1 week of each meeting.

## 4.2.5. Treasurer

The treasurer must ensure that the financial reports as required by the School Council for approval at a Council meeting are accurate, and distributed to Councillors prior to each Council meeting.

## 4.2.6. Executive

An Executive consisting of the President, Vice President, the Principal and one other Council member nominated by the President may act on behalf of the Council on any urgent matter or at any time when it is not possible to call a full meeting of the Council. Any decision by the Executive must then be discussed and ratified at the next Council meeting.

## 4.2.7. Signatories for accounts under the control of Council

The Principal and one of either, the President, or one other Council member nominated by the Council.

## 4.2.8. Sub-committees of the Council

Council will determine which sub-committees it requires and will review the need for each annually.

The sub-committees and convenors are generally

Education, Policy and Planning

Buildings and Grounds

Finance

After School Care

School Promotion and PR

FCPS 2020

The Parent's Club is not a sub-committee of the Council and operates with its own constitution, however the general principles that apply to sub-committees also apply to the Parent's Club.

As recognition of the relationship between the Council and the Parent's Club, a Parent's Club representative will be invited to be one of the co-opted community members on Council.

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The Council may approve the setting up of working parties to assist in the work of Council and the above sub-committees.

Membership of sub-committees shall be decided at the first meeting of Council after the annual Council elections, when Councillors will nominate their preferences for sub-committee membership.

Each subcommittee (which must consist of at least three members) shall elect a convener who is a member of Council.

Membership of sub-committees shall be extended to include members of the school community and interested community members with special expertise or interest in the area of the sub-committee.

All sub-committees are formed to advise Council and have no decision-making powers. Sub-committee meetings are to be held at a time to be determined at the March Council meeting. A report from each sub-committee meeting, in the format as included in this document, will be forwarded to each Council member with the agenda of the next Council meeting. The convener of the sub-committee, or nominee, will present comments and recommendations from the sub-committee minutes to Council.

Council Sub-committees shall:

- ✿ recognise that, within the School, the Council is the ultimate decision making body in the formation of policy
- ✿ in their areas of responsibility, recommend courses of action to the Council
- ✿ provide the Council Executive Officer and the President with the information required for Council meetings.
- ✿ implement Council policy decisions as directed
- ✿ prepare submissions for programs to be considered when budgets are prepared

## **5. Council Meetings**

### **5.1. General**

Council will meet at 7:30 on the dates nominated in the annual timetable in this manual.

The Council will publish a report annually on its activities and present a statement setting out the School's income and expenditure for the previous calendar year.

Quorum for a Council meeting is not less than one half of the total membership provided that there is a majority of members present who are not DEECD employees.

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An extraordinary meeting of Council may be held at any time decided by Council, provided all members are given reasonable notice of the time, date, place and purpose of the meeting. An extraordinary meeting may also be called upon written request by three members being given to the President, Vice President or Executive Officer of the Council, who must then convene a meeting by sending a notice to all Councillors advising the time, date, place and purpose of the meeting. The business of any extraordinary meeting must be confined to the subject for which it is convened.

If a member of the Council or an immediate family member has any direct pecuniary interests in a subject or matter under discussion at a Council meeting, that member must declare it and not be present when a vote is taken on the matter, but may be included in the quorum of the meeting.

## **5.2. Decision Making by Council**

A decision of the majority of members eligible to vote and present at any meeting of Council is the decision of the Council.

## **5.3. Meeting Procedures**

Normal meeting procedures will be followed as defined by Council and may vary from strict rules of debate to a less formal procedure appropriate to sub-committee meetings.

All decisions of Council shall require formal voting.

All members of Council including the Principal have one vote. If votes are tied, the presiding member has a second or casting vote. Voting will normally be by show of hands, but Council may resolve to hold a secret ballot on a particular item of business.

Visitors are welcome as observers, however if matters to be discussed are of a confidential nature Council may declare the meeting as "closed". When a meeting is closed, observers cannot be present. Observers cannot vote but can speak if invited by Council.

## **5.4. Agenda**

A sample agenda for Council meetings is included in this handbook and generally includes the following:

- ✿ A general outline of the order of the meeting

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- ✿ A statement of correspondence sent and received relating to Council business
- ✿ Copies of any correspondence to be debated by Council
- ✿ Reports from each sub-committee including recommendations requiring a Council decision.
- ✿ General business to be discussed including any recommendations requiring a Council decision

The Agenda is to be sent to Councillors by the Friday before each Council meeting. Councillors wishing to add items to the agenda after it has been distributed may make a request when invited at the start of the meeting, these items will generally be discussed last and may be deferred to the following meeting.

## **6. Responsibility of Council Members**

Each member of Council is expected to:

- ✿ regularly attend meetings of Council
- ✿ thoroughly scrutinise reports etc. before each meeting
- ✿ be a member of at least one sub-committee of Council
- ✿ maintain confidentiality as required
- ✿ as an elected member, have a prime responsibility to the interests of Council above that of any particular part of the electorate
- ✿ maintain an awareness of education developments
- ✿ participate in professional development activities pertinent to the operation of School Councils.
- ✿ be respectful of the privacy of individuals and refrain from discussing the details of individual students or parents.

School Council is NOT responsible for

- ✿ The day to day operation of the school
- ✿ Appointment of teaching staff
- ✿ The performance of teaching staff
- ✿ Implementation of policies
- ✿ The development of teaching programs

## **7. Key responsibilities of School Council Sub-committees**

The following key responsibilities have been determined by the School Council and reflect the Councillors' common understanding of those responsibilities.

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## **7.1. Education policy and Planning**

### Terms of Reference.

- ✿ To put in place a systematic review of existing policies including performance against them
- ✿ To develop a timetable for policy review
- ✿ After Council approval of draft policies consult with the school community to further improve the policy prior to final submission of the policy to Council for adoption
- ✿ As directed from time to time by Council, consult with the School community and make recommendations to Council on aspects of the School's educational and other policy.
- ✿ As directed from time to time by Council make recommendations to Council on the approval of camps and excursions taking due regard of Department of Education, Employment and Training safety guidelines.
- ✿ To put in place a systematic review of performance against the Charter goals
- ✿ To develop a timetable for the review process
- ✿ To monitor parent and teacher satisfaction via the Parent and Teacher Opinion Surveys.

## **7.2. Finance**

### Terms of Reference.

- ✿ To draft a Global budget that reflects the Strategic Plan priorities and is in accordance with DEECD financial management policies and guidelines
- ✿ To make recommendations to Council for short and long term financial planning in line with charter goals and priorities
- ✿ To monitor the program budget and ensure that expenditure and income is meeting the budgeted amounts
- ✿ To ensure that all DEECD financial management policies and guidelines are followed.
- ✿ To provide Council with the financial reports it requires
- ✿ To bring to Council's attention any non compliance with policies and procedures or any item which could lead to the budget not meeting Council's expectations.
- ✿ To ensure that audit recommendations are implemented

## **7.3. Building and Grounds**

### Terms of Reference.

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- ✿ To develop short and long term plans for improvements to the buildings and grounds taking into account the available funds
- ✿ To arrange presentations to Council on significant or contentious issues to ensure the Council is making a fully informed decision.
- ✿ To arrange and run working bees

## **7.4. Promotion and Public Relations**

Terms of Reference.

- ✿ To promote the school community and activities in a positive light both within the school and in the wider community
- ✿ Seek opportunities to promote the school
- ✿ Meet regularly to plan promotions
- ✿ Liaise with other groups such as Parents' Club, Before and After School Care, Lunch Order Service, etc. to promote activities in the school

## **7.5. Before and After School Care:**

Terms of Reference.

- ✿ ensure that the before and after school care program meets the needs of its customers and works in with the day to day activities at the school
- ✿ To ensure that B&ASC functions in accordance with the requirements of the Council and the DEECD
- ✿ provide Council with an annual profit and loss report and a projection for the coming year
- ✿ ensure that the requirements of School Council are carried out

## **7.6. FCPS 2020:**

Terms of Reference.

- ✿ Establish links and partnerships with local community groups to the benefit of the school or local community.
- ✿ Build relationships between older members of the local community and the school community
- ✿ Look for innovative ways to better use the schools assets and grounds for the benefit both the school community and wider local community.
- ✿ Become a forum for innovative ideas.

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## **7.7. Other key responsibilities of School Council**

The following additional responsibilities that the School Council has must be carried out when appropriate:

### **7.7.1. Developing the Strategic Plan**

Responsibility:

To consider the results of the Triennial Review and develop a new Strategic Plan which incorporates the requirements of DEECD and the school community.

To ensure that the Strategic Plan reflects the vision and priorities of the school community

### **7.7.2. Reporting annually to the school community**

Responsibility:

To ensure the school community is informed of the activities of School Council, including an audited copy of receipts and expenditure for the previous calendar year

To ensure the school community is aware of the reporting meeting

To review the activities of council for the previous calendar year

Sub-committee conveners to present a summary report of the sub-committee performance to the July meeting

### **7.7.3. Developing the student code of conduct**

Responsibility:

To develop the code of conduct through a process of community consultation

To ensure a copy of the code of conduct is made available to students and parents.

To oversee the effectiveness of the codes implementation and evaluate success.

### **7.7.4. Developing the student dress code**

Responsibility:

The development of, or amendment to, a dress code in close consultation with its school community.

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## Policy Formulation Procedure

### ***Rationale:***

The development of new school policies should follow a clearly defined and consistent process.

### ***Goal:***

The process of policy formation and development is that all policies be developed in a consistent and inclusive manner. Policy development and approval is within the domain of the school council.

### ***Implementation:***

- Initiation of a policy by a person or group in accordance with School Council terms of reference.
- Working party is established to produce a draft paper.
- Draft paper is distributed to the Education, Policy and Planning Committee for review
- School Council considers policy and amends where necessary.
- School Council ratifies policy.
- Policy is published and implemented.
- All policies are available to the community at all times

### ***Format:***

Each policy statement shall contain:

- 1) Rationale
- 2) Goals
- 3) Implementation
- 4) Evaluation
- 5) An indication of when policy should be reviewed
- 6) Budget
- 7) Author / Person responsible and Policy date

### ***Evaluation and Review:***

This process should be reviewed at the end of each School Charter.

### ***Budget***

Not applicable to this policy

### ***Author/ Responsibility/ Date***

W. Barry / Principal / 2004

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## 8. School Council Timetable

	<i>Determining the general &amp; educational policy of the school. (EPP)</i>	<i>Developing the Strategic Plan</i>	<i>Monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school in relation to the goals and priorities in the school charter</i>	<i>Reporting annually to the school community</i>	<i>Approving and monitoring the school budget. (Finance Sub-committee)</i>	<i>Developing the student code of conduct</i>	<i>Generally stimulating interest in the school. (Publicity and PR)</i>
March		As required		Annual report presented to council,	Nominate cheque signatory. Approve Global Budget.		Report on previous years performance.
April							
May	Policy review timetable presented to Council			Audit report presented to Council			
June	Work Plan progress update		Staff Opinion survey results		Work Plan progress update		Work Plan progress update
July			Parent and staff opinion surveys distributed		Report on previous Semester performance.		
August							
September			Parent Opinion Survey				
October			Program Evaluations and Budget Implications. Work Plan progress update		Determine level of voluntary contributions		Work Plan progress update
November					Approve indicative Global Budget		
December					Approve Provisional Budget		
February							

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	<i>School council elections</i>	<i>Building And Grounds Sub Committee</i>	<i>Before and after school care sub-committee</i>	<i>FCPS 2020</i>			
March	Announce election results and elect Office Bearers and sub-committee conveners						
April							
May		Work Plan progress update	Work Plan progress update	Work Plan progress update			
June							
July		Present expenditure plan and plan of significant works	Profit and loss report and report on previous years performance				
August							
September							
October		Work Plan progress update	Profit and loss projections. Work Plan progress update	Work Plan progress update			
November	Approve dates for elections						
December							
February	Commence Council election process						

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## 9. Pro Forma School Council Agenda

### School Council Meeting Agenda

#### The key responsibilities of the school council:

- Determining the general educational policy of the school
- Developing the school charter
- Monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school in relation to the goals and priorities in the school charter.
- Reporting annually to the school community
- Approving and monitoring the school budget
- Developing the student code of conduct
- Generally stimulating interest in the school

The school council sets the vision, determines priorities, and ensures the school is responsive to the needs of the local community.

**Meeting to be held on Tuesday ? at 7:30 pm**

#### Present:

Executive Officer:

Parent members:

DET members

Co-opted members

	Item	Details	Action
1	Welcome:	Meeting opened at 7:30 PM.	
2	Apologies:		
3	Acceptance of Agenda:		Motion: "That the agenda as distributed be accepted" Moved: Seconded: c/
4	Minutes of Previous Meeting	As Distributed	Motion: "That the minutes of the meeting held on ? be accepted"



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			the official account be approved/ratified" <b>Moved:</b> <b>Seconded:</b> c/
10.7	Parent's Club	▪ As distributed	
10.8	Building and Grounds	▪ As Distributed	<b>Motion:</b> "That all reports be accepted" <b>Moved:</b> <b>Seconded:</b> c/
11	Business to be discussed at the next meeting.	▪	
12	Next Meeting:	Sub-committee meetings to be arranged by conveners School Council: ? at 7.30pm Subsequent meetings on ?.  Sub Committees	
13	Closure of meeting:	Time: pm	

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## 10. Sub-committee report Pro Forma

For the School Council Meeting to be held on.....

Sub-committee	
Date of last meeting	
Summary of information for council	1. 2. 3.
Recommendations requiring council decision	4. 5.
Date of next meeting	
Convenor	