

Appendix A: Fact sheets

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 set the broad direction of a school and provide oversight of school decisions and finances. Their roles are guided by rules and laws including Ministerial Order 1280 (Constitution of Government School Councils) 2020, the *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.

Who is on the school council?

There are several possible categories of school council membership:

- **parent membership category** – members of this category must make up more than one third of the school council's total membership. A parent member can be any person who has parental responsibility for a student enrolled at the school.
- **school employee membership 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.
- **community membership category** – if a school council includes a community membership category, members are co-opted by a decision of the school council. The decision may be based on their special skills or to provide broader representation of diversity in the school community. Department of Education employees are not eligible to be community members on school council.
- **nominee membership category** – a small number of school councils have nominee members.
- **student membership category** – all schools with a Year 7 and above student cohort have a student membership category with 2 positions allocated, unless they have sought an exemption. Refer to **School Council Elections: Guidance**.

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 and let you know where you can get a nomination form.

You can nominate yourself in the parent membership category by filling in the nomination form.

Parent members are required to hold a valid Working with Children Clearance (WWCC) to nominate for a position on school council. The only exception to this requirement is parents who are also teachers and hold a current VIT registration.

If you work at your child's school, then you are not eligible to run in the parent membership category, but you can nominate for the school employee membership category.

If you work for the Department of Education somewhere other than your child's school, then you are eligible to nominate for parent membership at that school. However, there is a limit to the number of department employees who can hold office in the parent membership category. Check with your school's principal.

You must 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.

How do I get a Working with Children Clearance, and does it cost money?

You can apply for a Working with Children Check (WWCC) through the **Services Victoria website**.

School council members are volunteers which means that applying for a WWCC is free.

When applying for a WWCC, parents must:

- nominate the Department of Education as the organisation they are working for when applying for a Working with Children Check
- provide evidence of their Working with Children Clearance as soon as practicable after receiving it (or via the school council nomination form).