

SCHOOL COUNCIL INDUCTION PROGRAM

Preamble

Moonee Ponds West Primary School Council recognises the importance of an induction program to ensure that new councillors:

- understand the workings of school council and its committees;
- feel comfortable at meetings;
- are able to contribute fully to the workings of council;
- feel supported and valued by other members;
- have their skills recognised and utilised for the benefit of themselves, the school and the children.

The Induction Program

Before the first meeting:

- The school council president and/or principal will contact all new councillors to welcome them, offer support and answer any initial questions.
- The president and/or principal will also discuss with the new councillors the areas of expertise that they have or that they wish to acquire. This will be taken into account when roles and committee membership are being decided.
- The principal/school council president will convene an induction meeting of new councillors prior to their first council meeting. The assistant principal will also attend. This meeting is to:
 - give a historical overview of the role of school council and outline its current role;
 - clarify the roles and power of committees, council and the principal;
 - explain how council operates, including the meeting procedure and how the agenda is set, councillors raise issues and decisions are made;
 - go through a typical set of council papers and the most recent annual report;
 - explain the school charter and its priorities within a statewide context;
 - explain the contents of the resource folder;
 - answer questions which new councillors have.
- New council members will receive a package of written material which includes:
 - a diagram of council, its committees and PA showing their relationship, with a statement on the role of each;
 - Department of Education 'Guidelines for School Councils';
 - the school Strategic Plan and 2007 Implementation Plan;
 - the 2007 Program Budget;
 - a list of council members with addresses, telephone numbers and who each represents;
 - a list of teachers at the school;

SCHOOL COUNCIL INDUCTION PROGRAM (Continued)

In the early days of council membership:

- The president/principal will ensure that s/he shows awareness of the needs of new councillors by running the meeting more slowly and clarifying processes and issues.
 - At the start of the first few meetings councillors will introduce themselves.
 - Experienced school councillors will welcome and support new members, specifically taking care not to use unclear jargon.
 - Each new member will have an experienced councillor allocated to sit with them at the first few meetings to provide clarification and support.
 - At the first meeting after each new council is elected, there should be a discussion on how councillors can best represent the school community and elicit issues of concern.
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- After the first school council meeting there will be a second meeting of new councillors to:
 - Discuss the financial responsibility and processes of council and look at the program budget;
 - Answer questions.

Ongoing support:

- School councillors will have training programs organised by outside agencies drawn to their attention and there will be support to attend them.
- They will also be notified of school programs like Lorraine Wilson's language evenings. New members can attend these if they need to.
- After the second new councillors' meeting consideration will be given to sessions on key aspects of the school philosophy, such as whole language and the welfare and discipline policy. The new councillors will decide what is needed. There will be support for further meetings of new councillors if they wish to continue

Endorsed by School Council: 12/8/2004