

Moonee Ponds West Primary School



School Council Code of Conduct

School councils in Victoria are public entities as defined by the Public Administration Act 2004. School council members must abide by the Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities (Code of Conduct), issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission. The Code of Conduct is based on the Victorian public sector values.

<https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Code-of-Conduct-for-Directors-of-Victorian-Public-Entities-2024.pdf>

Accountability

School council is accountable to and must report to, both its local school community and the Department of Education and Training (the Department).

Principles

The underlying principles of all aspects of school council include the promotion of:

- **Respectful** partnerships
- Clear and **honest two-way** communication
- **Transparent** processes
- **Democratic**, informed decision-making
- Personal and professional **integrity**.

Meetings should be welcoming, constructive, productive and people should feel comfortable to contribute.

Members of the school community should feel welcome to attend school council meetings as observers, except where the meeting is not open to people other than school council members. Meetings can only be "closed" when the majority of school councillors vote to do so because the issue under discussion is sensitive and requires confidentiality or for the reporting back of a principal selection panel process.

Conflict between school council members will be dealt with respectfully and fairly and in a manner that both reflects this and is seen to reflect this. That is, in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

School council is not an appropriate forum for the discussion of individual school staff, students, parents/carers, or other individual members of the school community. Advocating positions, based on individual views or the views of a small number of people is also not appropriate.

Councillors are in a privileged position within the school and community and professionalism is important at all times. The school community includes students, teachers, parents/carers and local partnerships. The council standing orders and code of conduct apply in all school community interactions.

If councillors are approached about an individual issue the council member must treat such discussion with discretion. The councillor should always encourage the individual to speak with the classroom teacher in the first instance, followed by the Principal or relevant member of the leadership team.

If the issue relates to a school strategic policy, process or procedure the Councillor is encouraged to raise the issue with the Principal in the first instance. Where appropriate, and within the jurisdiction of council, the issue can be placed on the council agenda.

The Principal of MPW is responsible for all operational aspects of the school, including the teaching and learning.

Member Responsibilities

The responsibilities of Members of Council are to:

- abide by all legal requirements, regulations and Department policies and guidelines
- maintain a thorough understanding of, and comply with, the Standing Orders and Code of Conduct
- understand the strategic priorities for MPW, school values and act in the best interests of the organisation as a whole, particularly focusing on the best interests of students
- read papers in advance of the meeting
- embrace the solidarity principle that applies once a decision has been made, and demonstrate collective accountability and responsibility for the decision taken
- demonstrate active listening and provide each member with the opportunity to speak and ask questions
- ensure that a diverse range of views and perspectives are considered, and explicitly and respectfully engage with differing viewpoints
- behave in a civil and respectful manner at all times
- respect the need for confidentiality and privacy with regard to sensitive matters that might arise at school council meetings especially where there are matters of a personal nature relating to staff, students or parents.
- consult the whole school community when strategic direction is being developed
- actively participate in sub-committees and meetings
- if unable to attend a meeting, submit an apology to the Business Manager prior to the meeting
- speak through the chair of the meeting.

Conflict of Interest

If a school council member or immediate member of their family has any direct conflict of interest (which may be of a financial, reputational or other nature) in a subject or matter under discussion at a school council meeting, the member:

- must declare the conflict of interest
- must not be present during the relevant discussion unless invited to do so by the person presiding over the meeting
- must not be present when a motion or vote is taken on the matter.
- may be included in the quorum for that meeting

Review of School Council Code of Conduct

The school council code of conduct will be reviewed each year by school council at the meeting following the completion of the annual school council election process. It can be reviewed more regularly where needed.