

## SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2024

Each year school council elections take place in Term 1 and the process must be completed by 31 March 2024. There are four separate electorates within a school community:

- Parent electorate
- DET employee electorate
- Student electorate
- Community

### *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 are given powers to set the broad direction of a school, in accordance with Ministerial Order 1280 Constitution of Government School Councils, and the Education and Training Reform Act 2006. In doing this, a school council may directly influence the quality of education for students.

### *Who is on the school council?*

For most primary school councils, there are several possible categories of membership:

- **A mandated elected parent member category** – more than one-third of the total members must be from this category. Department employees can be parent members at their child's school providing that they are not engaged in work at the school.
- **A mandated elected school employee member category** – members of this category make up no more than one-third of membership. The principal of the school is automatically one of these members.
- **An optional community member category** – members are co-opted by a decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or experience. Department employees are not eligible to be community members.
- A small number of school councils have **nominee members**.
- For all schools with a Year 7 and above cohort, there is an additional category of membership:
- **A mandated elected student member category, two positions.**

Generally, the term of office for all members is two years. The term of office of half the members expires each year, creating vacancies for the annual school council elections.

### *Why is parent and student membership so important?*

Parents on school councils provide important viewpoints and have valuable skills and a range of experiences and knowledge that can help inform and shape the direction of the school.

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

Students have a unique perspective on learning, teaching, and schooling and having student members on school council allows students to have a say in the future direction of their school and ensures student input into decision making. Mandating student representation on secondary school councils will assist in the development of students' skills, including leadership skills and communication skills.

### *DET Employees on School Council*

The principal as ex-officio member and executive officer is responsible for providing council with timely advice about educational and other matters and reporting regularly to council about the school's

performance against its strategic plan. The role of all DET Employees on School Council is to ensure a strong focus on improving student learning outcomes and involving the council in conversations about key issues and challenges in education. All staff are actively involved in the development and implementation of the School Strategic Plan and Annual Implementation Plan.

### ***Do I need special experience to be on school council?***

Each member brings their own valuable skills and knowledge to the role, however, in order to successfully perform their duties, councillors may need to gain some new skills and knowledge.

It is important to have an interest in your child's school and the desire to work in partnership with others to help shape the school's future.

### ***Code of conduct for school councillors***

School councils in Victoria are public entities as defined by the *Public Administration Act 2004*.

School councillors must comply with the Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission. The Code of Conduct is based on the Victorian public sector values and requires councillors to:

- **act with honesty and integrity** – be truthful, open and clear about their motives and declare any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest and duty
- **act in good faith in the best interests of the school** – work cooperatively with other councillors and the school community, be reasonable, and make all decisions with the best interests of students foremost in their minds
- **act fairly and impartially** – consider all relevant facts of an issue before making a decision, seek to have a balanced view, never give special treatment to a person or group and never act from self-interest
- **use information appropriately** – respect confidentiality and use information for the purpose for which it was made available
- **exercise due care, diligence and skill** – accept responsibility for decisions and do what is best for the school
- **use the position appropriately** – not use the position as a councillor to gain advantage
- **act in a financially responsible manner** – observe all the above principles when making financial decisions
- **comply with relevant legislation and policies** – know what legislation and policies are relevant for which decisions and obey the law
- **demonstrate leadership and stewardship** – set a good example, encourage a culture of accountability, manage risks effectively, exercise care and responsibility to keep the school strong and sustainable.

### ***Indemnity for school council members***

School councillors are indemnified against any liability in respect of any loss or damage suffered by the council or any other person in respect of anything necessarily or reasonably done, or omitted to be done by the councillor in good faith in:

the exercise of a power or the performance of a function of a councillor, or

the reasonable belief that the act or omission was in the exercise of a power or the performance of a function of a council.

In other words, school councillors are not legally liable for any loss or damage suffered by council or others as a result of reasonable actions taken in good faith.

### ***How can I become involved?***

By participating in, and voting in the school council elections, which are held in Term 1 each year. However, ballots are only held if more people nominate as candidates than there are positions vacant.

In view of this, you might consider:

standing for election as a member of the school council

encouraging another person to stand for election.

***What do I 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. Council elections must be completed by 31 March, unless varied by the Minister for Education.

If you stand for election, you can arrange for someone to nominate you as a candidate or, you can nominate yourself in the parent member category. You can only be nominated by another member of the same electorate that you are eligible for (e.g. a member of the parent electorate may only nominate another parent of that electorate)

Department employees with a child enrolled at a school where they are not engaged in work, are eligible to nominate for parent membership at that school.

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.

Generally, if there are more nominations than vacancies a ballot will be conducted in the two weeks after the call for nominations has closed.

I invite any parents and students interested in becoming a member of the School Council to consider nominating. Should you need further information please contact me.

A Notice of Election and Call for Nominations is displayed on the next page.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shane Kruger', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Shane Kruger  
Principal



## NOTICE OF SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTION AND CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

An election is to be conducted for members of the School Council of Lilydale Heights College.

If you decide to stand for election, you can arrange for someone to nominate you as a candidate or you can nominate yourself. Nomination forms are available from the General Office and must be lodged by **3:30 pm Monday 19 February 2024**.

***Please attach to your nomination form a separate statement (250 words) which outlines the experience, skills, and attributes you have which make you a suitable candidate. These will be published to the school community in the event of a ballot.***

Once the nomination form is completed, return it to the General Office, and you will receive a Nomination Form Receipt confirming receipt of your completed nomination.

Following the closing of nominations, a list of the nominations received will be posted at the School on **Tuesday 20 February 2024**. If there are more nominations received than there are vacancies on Council, a ballot will be conducted. **The ballot will close at 3:30 pm on Monday 4 March 2024**.

The terms of office, membership categories and number of positions in each membership category open for election are as follows:

<b>Membership Category</b>	<b>Number of positions</b>	<b>Term of Office</b>
<b>Parent member</b>	<b>5</b>	From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll (Thurs 7 March 2024) to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 2026
<b>Student member</b>	<b>2</b>	From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll (Thurs 7 March 2024) to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 2026
<b>DET employee</b>	<b>2</b>	From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll (Thurs 7 March 2024) to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 2026
<b>Community member</b>	<b>2</b>	From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll (Thurs 7 March 2024) to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in 2026

*If the number of nominations is less than the number of vacancies, a notice to that effect and calling for further nominations will be posted in a prominent position at the school.*

### TIMELINE FOR ELECTION PROCESS

Notice of election and call for nominations	Monday 12 February 2024
Closing date for nominations	Monday 19 February 2024
The date by which the list of candidates and nominators will be displayed	Tuesday 20 February 2024
The date by which ballot papers will be prepared and distributed	On or before Monday 26

	February 2024
Close of ballot	Monday 4 March 2024
Vote count *(if required)	Tuesday 5 March 2024
Declaration of poll	Thursday 7 March 2024
First Council meeting to co-opt Community Members & elect Office Bearers (Principal will preside)	Thursday 21 March 2024