

Roles and Responsibilities: the function of School Council

The role of school council is outlined in the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. In essence, the role of school council is one of helping to set the long term future for the school and maintaining oversight (not management) of the school's operation. **It is not about running the school – that is the job of the principal.**

The responsibilities of school council include:

- Contributing to the development of the school strategic plan (the document that tells people what the school wants to achieve in the future and how it plans to get there);
- approving the annual budget (the financial plan for the calendar year that tells people how the school is going to provide money so it can implement its strategic plan in that year) and monitoring expenditure;
- developing, monitoring, reviewing and updating policies (guiding principles designed to influence decisions, actions that the school makes);
- developing, reviewing and monitoring both the **Student Engagement Policy** (how the school expects students to behave, how bullying will be managed and the school's approach to managing student behaviour) and the [School Dress Code](#) (this includes how students are expected to dress during school hours including traveling to and from school, if the school has a uniform and what that looks like, and any arrangement with clothing suppliers that the school might enter into);
- informing itself and taking into account the views of the school community when making decisions regarding the school and the students
- arranging for the supply of the things needed for the conduct of the school (such as goods, services, materials and equipment), including pre-school programs
- providing meals and refreshments for students and staff and charging for this
- raising money for things that the school needs
- making sure the school's grounds and buildings are maintained
- entering into contracts for things like cleaning the school or a school council building project
- regulating and facilitating the after hours use of the school premises and grounds
- creating interest in the school within the community
- making a recommendation to the Secretary regarding [principal selection](#).

What school council does not do

- School council does not manage the day to day running of the school. For example, it does not employ teaching staff, decide which classes students will be assigned to, or sort out issues relating to individual teachers and students and/or parents.
- School council does not discuss individual issues relating to teachers, staff or parents – these are very clearly management roles, and therefore the principal's job.

- School councillors are not appointed to represent specific interest groups or permit special interests to dominate the agenda of the council.
- School council is also not allowed to purchase land, buildings or motor cars, and it cannot enter into hire purchase agreements or obtain credit or loans, unless it is given permission by the Minister.

Role of school council members

- Parent members on school council bring their experience as parents at the school and the views of the wider school community to school council meetings.
- DEECD employees bring their educational expertise to school council meetings.
- Community members, if they are on school council, most often bring a particular skill to school council. They might bring accounting skills or building skills or some other skill that the school is looking for at that time.

Note: an example of a school council code of conduct can be found at

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/schoolcouncils/operations.htm>

Where do I find out more?

For further information on strategic planning, the annual budget, and policy development, see <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/management/governance/schoolcouncils/strategicplanning.htm>.

For further information on the role of school council, see the DEECD publication [*Making the Partnership Work*](#)