

Schedule 5E: Self-nomination form for Student member category

I wish to declare my candidacy for an elected position as a Student member on the
school council.

Candidate's details

Name

Residential Address:

Contact phone (mobile or landline):

Email:

Statement	Yes (Mark with an x)	No (Mark with an x)
I am enrolled in year 7 or above at this school		
I have discussed standing for election to school council with my parents or guardians		
I have a sound understanding of the obligations and level of commitment required to participate on school council		

I am prepared to serve as a Student member of the above-named school council.

I hereby declare that I am not:

- an undischarged bankrupt
- of unsound mind
- currently serving a sentence for an indictable offence; or
- a registrable offender within the meaning of the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*.

Signature of candidate

Date:	
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You will be notified when your nomination has been received.

Personal information provided in this form is collected as part of the school council election nomination process. The information may be used to determine your eligibility as a candidate. Your personal information may be disclosed as a result of inspection prior to the commencement of voting or at any time up to one year from the declaration of the poll.

Your name will be included in a list of school council candidates and nominators (where applicable) posted in a prominent position at the school and for candidates, on a ballot paper (where applicable).

Further, the name, membership category, gender, term of office, office held (if any) of school council members and notification whether the member is an employee of the Department will be forwarded to

the Department by the principal by 30 April each year as a record of council membership and may be used for statistical purposes.

You can access your personal information by contacting the principal on:

If you choose not to give some or all of the information requested your nomination may not be accepted.

If you have any queries about the school council nomination process, please contact the principal.

Fact sheet No 3. Information for students seeking election to council

What is a school council and what does it do?

All government schools in Victoria have a school council. School councils are legal entities that are given powers to set the broad directions of a school in accordance with their constituting Orders and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. In doing this, a school council is able to directly influence the quality of education that the school provides for its students.

What are some of the duties of a school councillor?

The school council has particular functions in setting and monitoring the school's direction.

School councils have three main responsibilities:

- **Finance:** overseeing the development and expenditure of the school's annual budget and ensuring proper records are kept of the school's financial operation.
- **Strategic planning:** participating in the development and monitoring of the school strategic plan.
- **Policy development and review:** developing, reviewing and updating selected policies that reflect a school's values and support the school's broad direction outlined in its strategic plan.

Other key functions of school councils may include:

- raising funds for school related purposes
- maintaining school grounds and facilities
- entering into contracts
- reporting annually to the school community and the Department
- creating interest in the school in the wider community
- representing and taking the views of the community into account
- regulating and facilitating after-hours use of school premises and grounds
- operating a children's service at the school.

Why is Student membership so important?

Students have a unique perspective on learning, teaching and schools. 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.

Student representation on secondary school councils will assist in the development of students' skills, including leadership skills and communication skills.

Do I need special experience to be on school council?

Each member brings their own valuable skills and knowledge to the role however, councillors may need to develop skills and acquire knowledge in areas that are unfamiliar to them in order to perform their duties as a councillor.

Student members are encouraged to acquire this knowledge by attending the Department's free face-to-face Improving School Governance school council training to support them to undertake their role. Training is also available online.

Who is on the school council?

For all schools with a student cohort of year 7 and above, there are four possible categories of school council membership:

- **A mandated elected Parent category** – more than one-third of the total members must be from this category. Parents and guardians of children attending the school are eligible for membership in this category.
- **A mandated elected DET employee 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.
- **A mandated elected Student category (2 positions)** – members of this category are enrolled at the school and in year 7 or above.
- **An optional Community member category** – members are co-opted by a decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or expertise. DET employees are not eligible to be a Community member.

How many Student member positions are there on school council?

All Victorian government schools with a student cohort of year 7 and above will have **two** mandated Student member positions on school council.

Can I share the role with another student?

Councillors are not permitted to share their role. Councillors are elected to council and are expected to attend all meetings and serve their full term of office.

Are school captains and SRC representatives offered a position on council before other students?

While being the school captain, vice-captain or a member of the SRC can provide valuable leadership experience, no students can be offered a position in the Student member category based on their standing within the school.

School captains and SRC members are not automatic council members. Voting for student leaders at the school, such as school captains and SRC representatives is a distinct and separate process to voting for Student school council members.

Any student interested in being a Student member of their school council is required to run for election like other council members.

How long is the term of office?

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.

In 2018 only, one student was elected for a one year term of office and one student was elected for a two year term of office. From 2019, students will be elected to council for a two year term of office.

Do I serve the one year or two year term of office?

Where the members in the Student member category have been elected by ballot to their positions, the member in Student member category with the greater number of votes shall serve the longer term of office (two years), and the member with the second highest number of votes shall serve the shorter term of office (one year).

For the purpose of ranking the candidates, if there is a tie between some or all of the candidates standing for election the ranking of the candidates will be determined by the drawing of lots.

Where the members in the Student member category have not been elected by ballot to their positions (an equal number of students were nominated for the same number of Student member positions), the members in that member category may decide (by agreement amongst themselves) the term of office for each member in that membership category. Failing agreement, the term of office shall be determined by the drawing of lots.

The one and two year term of office positions allocated to the two Student members means, from 2019, it is likely that one student will be elected each year.

What do I need to do to stand for election?

The principal will issue a Notice of Election and Call for Nominations following the start of Term 1 each year.

If you decide to stand for election, you can arrange for a student in Year 7 or above at your school to nominate you as a candidate or you can nominate yourself (self-nomination) for the Student member category.

Once the nomination form is completed, it should be returned to the principal within the stated time. You will receive a Nomination Form Receipt following the receipt of the completed nomination.

Are there any rules on how I campaign?

Campaign literature supporting Student member candidates for school council elections may only be distributed and posted in certain places and times as designated by the principal of your school.

School resources may not be used to support candidates.

The principal may invite candidates to prepare a brief statement to be distributed with each ballot paper. The length is specified by the principal and is usually no longer than 150 words.

Nominations for school council

Unlike the Parent or DET employee member categories, if two Student member positions are available and in the first call for nominations only one nomination is received, the student is not automatically declared elected. The principal will immediately post, in a prominent place in the school, a notice calling for further nominations. These nominations are to be received within three school days from the closing of the first call for nominations.

If after the second call for nominations one other nomination is received, then both students are appointed to council.

After the second call for nominations if the total number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies then all nominees will go to ballot. The two students with the most votes will serve as the Student members on school council.

How do I know which students are standing for election?

If the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacant positions, an election process will be held.

Student names will be listed in random order on the voting slip.

The principal may invite candidates to prepare a brief statement to be distributed with each ballot paper.

Can I attend council meetings with my child?

School council meetings are normally open to the school community. Visitors or observers can be present at a council meeting with prior agreement of the principal and a decision of council. A request to attend must be forwarded either to the principal or president.

There may be times when, for the purpose of confidentiality or other reasons, a council meeting needs to be closed and only the appointed members can attend.

I am a parent member of the council. Can I be a member of the same council as my child(ren)?

Yes, relatives are allowed to be members of the same council.

What if my child cannot attend a council meeting?

If a member is unable to attend a meeting, an apology should be submitted to the principal prior to the meeting.

A member of the school council may apply in writing to the president for extended leave of up to three consecutive meetings.

What if my child decides they no longer want to be a member of council?

The Department strongly encourages students to consider the time commitment of being on council prior to running for election.

Your child should discuss resigning from council with the principal or school council president.

A school councillor is required to formally submit their resignation from council in order to no longer be considered a member.

Code of conduct for school councillors

School councils in Victoria are public entities as defined by the *Public Administration Act 2004*. School councillors must abide by the Code of Conduct 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)
- **use the position appropriately** (not use the position as a councillor to gain an advantage)
- **act in a financially responsible manner** (observe all the above principles when making financial decisions)
- **exercise due care, diligence and skill** (accept responsibility for decisions and do what is best for the school)
- **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:

- a) the exercise of a power or the performance of a function of a councillor, or
- b) 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.

For further information please contact the school principal.