

OAK PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL COUNCIL

What is a school council and what does it do?

All government schools in Victoria have a school council. They are legally formed bodies that are given powers to set the key directions of a school within centrally provided guidelines. In doing this, a school council is able to directly influence the quality of education that the school provides for its students.

Who is on the school council?

There are three possible categories of membership:

A mandated elected parent category.

More than one third of the total members must be from this category. Department of Education and Training (DET) employees can be parent members at their child's school.

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 one of these members.

An optional community member category.

Its members are coopted by a decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or experiences. DET employees are not eligible to be community members.

The term of office for members is two years. Half the members must retire each year and this creates vacancies for the annual school council elections.

Why is parent membership so important?

Parents on school councils provide important viewpoints and have valuable skills that can help shape the direction of the school.

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

How can you become involved?

The most obvious way is to vote in the elections, which are held in February or March each year. However, ballots are only held if more people nominate as candidates than there are positions vacant.

In view of this, you might seriously consider:

- standing for election as a member of the school council
- encouraging another person to stand for election.

Do I need special experience to be on school council?

No. What you do need is an interest in your child's school and the desire to work in partnership with others to help shape the school's future.

What do you need to do to stand for election?

The principal will issue a notice and call for nominations following the commencement term¹ each year. All school council elections must be completed by the end of March. For parents, this notice will probably be given to your child so you may need to check with them whether it has been sent home.

If you decide to stand for election, you will need to arrange for someone to nominate and second you as a candidate in either the parent category or DET employee category. Once the nomination form is completed, return it to the principal within the time stated on the notice of election.

If there are more nominations received than there are vacancies on council, a ballot will be conducted in the two weeks after the call for nominations has closed.

Remember:

Ask at the school for help if you would like to stand for election and are not sure what to do.

Consider standing for election to council this year.

Be sure to vote in the elections.

Contact the principal for further information.