



**EDITHVALE
PRIMARY
SCHOOL**
SCHOOL NUMBER 3790

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CALL FOR SCHOOL COUNCIL NOMINATIONS

8 February 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians

If you are one of the many parents of our great school community who like to be involved with many aspects of Edithvale Primary School - we'd love to have you join us on School Council.

Those with a desire to work with other enthusiastic and creative parents to help shape our School's future are keenly sought after and encouraged to nominate (or be nominated) to become a member of a dynamic School Council.

Nominations are now open for four parent member vacancies and one staff vacancy on our School Council. If you are an enthusiastic parent interested in getting more involved and having a say in what our school is doing, or know someone who is, we would love to hear from you. We are looking for people who are committed to improving the educational outcomes for all our students.

Effective councils have a broad range of experience, skills and expertise. Face-to-face and online training is also available to help councillors develop the skills and knowledge for the job. Parents find their involvement satisfying and may also find that their children feel a greater sense of connection to our great school.

Nomination forms, for either self-nomination or to nominate someone else, are available from school reception. Nominations close on Monday 15 February at 4pm.

Participating as a School Council member is a rewarding and challenging experience. The School Council supports us to provide the best possible educational outcomes for our great students.

School Council plays a key role in developing and enacting our vision in collaboration with all members of the school community. Councillors are actively involved in fundraising activities, the school environment- through the buildings and grounds group, and reviewing policies to ensure that Edithvale Primary is an excellent school.

If you are interested in joining us in 2021, please pop in to the office for a chat and I can answer any questions you may have about the election process, the role of School Council and the training that is available. More information is available by following the link below.

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/management/community/Pages/schoolcouncilselection.aspx>

I look forward to hearing from you and wish you all the very best in this process.

Yours faithfully

James Whitla - Principal

SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS - FUNDAMENTALS:

ELECTORATES:

Each school council operates according to Ministerial Order (Constitution of Government School Councils) 2020 (Ministerial Order 1280) that details the objectives, functions and powers of a council and, for each individual school council, its size and composition.

There are two separate electorates within our school community:

- Parent electorate; and
- School employee electorate.

Parent electorate of the school

The parent electorate of the school includes each parent of a student of the school, except those who are Department employees engaged in work at, and for, the school. A parent of a student at the school, who is a Department employee but does not work at or for the school is included in the parent electorate. These parents are classified on council as 'Department employee parents'.

'Parent' includes a guardian or person who is liable to maintain or has the actual custody of a student of the school.

If a Department employee is elected to the parent category (Department employee parent) of the school where their child is enrolled but where they do not work, they are counted as Department employees for school council meeting quorum requirements. Parent members must comprise more than one-third of the council's total membership according to the Ministerial Order 1280 Constitution of Government School Councils.

School employee electorate of the school

The school employee electorate of the school includes the principal of the school and school employees engaged in work at, and for, the school.

The principal and school employees of a school are, and can only be, school employee members of the school council. The principal is automatically included in the school employee membership category and has full voting rights. Members of the school employee electorate are also considered 'Department employees'.

Department employees

- a. means a person employed:
 - I. Under Part 2.4 of the Education and Training Reform Act (2006) or by the Secretary under the Public Administration Act 2004; or
 - II. for 8 hours or more per week in either an ongoing capacity or a fixed term of at least 90 days:
- b. includes a person employed by a school council of a government school (for example, maintenance or grounds person, cleaner) for 8 hours or more per week in either an ongoing capacity or for a fixed term of at least 90 days

HOW TO NOMINATE/VOTE

- Nominations for school council election: Candidates can now choose two ways for nomination:
- Self Nomination (Schedule 5A and 5C)
- Nomination by an eligible person (Schedules 5B and 5D). There is no requirement to have a seconder.
- Where the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies, a ballot is required.
- Votes may be posted to the principal or placed in the ballot box at the school on any day up to the closure of the ballot. Further details on how votes may be lodged will be provided when ballot papers are sent to the electorate of the school.

Notice of election and call for nominations

An election is to be conducted for members of the school council of

Edithvale Primary School

Nomination forms may be obtained from the school from *Monday February 8, 2021*).

The ballot will close at 4.00pm on Monday February 15, 2021. Nominations must be lodged by this time.

Following the closing of nominations, a list of the nominations received will be posted at the school.

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

Membership category

Parent member

Term of office	Year
From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in	2021
to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in	2023

Number of positions: 4

Membership category

DET employee member

Term of office	Year
From the day after the date of the declaration of the poll in	2021
to and inclusive of the date of the declaration of the poll in	2023

Number of positions: 1

Following the closing of nominations, a list of the nominations received will be posted at the school.

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.

Principal signature



James Whitla

Appendix A:

Fact Sheet No 1. School council elections – Information for parents

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 is able to directly influence the quality of education that the school provides for its students.

Who is on the school council?

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

- A mandated elected Parent member category – more than one-third of the total members must be from this category. DET employees can be Parent members at their child's school as long as they are not engaged in work at the school
- A mandated elected DET employee member 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 – members are co-opted by a decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or experiences. 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 a fourth category of membership:

- A mandated elected Student member category, 2 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 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.

Do I need special experience to be on school council?

Each member brings their own valuable life skills and knowledge to the role. However, councillors may need to develop skills and acquire knowledge in areas that are unfamiliar to them. 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.

How can you become involved?

The most obvious way is to vote 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.

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 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 an 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.

What do you need to do to stand for election?

The principal will issue a Notice of Election and Call for Nominations following the commencement of Term 1 each year. All school council elections must be completed by the end of March unless the usual time line has been varied by the Minister for Education.

If you decide to stand for election, you can arrange for someone to nominate you as a candidate or you can nominate yourself in the Parent member category.

DET employees whose child is enrolled in a school in which they are not engaged in work, are eligible to nominate for Parent membership of the school council at that school.

Once the nomination form is completed, return it 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 following the receipt of your completed nomination.

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

Remember

- Consider standing for election to school council this year.
- Ask at the school for help if you would like to stand for election and are not sure what to do.
- Be sure to vote in the elections.
- Contact the principal for further information.