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SCHOOL COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS

GENERAL PURPOSE OF THE COUNCIL:

The Council is the legally formed body that is given powers to set the key directions of a school. It is the major governing body of the school that, within DET guidelines, decides the future directions for the school. School Council also determines appropriate educational policies within Directorate guidelines which will ensure that the aims of the school are achieved. In addition Council controls the school's monies and resources.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK:

School Council operates under a framework provided by the:

- Education and training Reform Act 2006 [the Act]
- Education and Training Regulations 2007 [the Regulations]
- Individual school's constituting Order

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP:

The constituting order of Cranbourne West Primary School states the composition of the Council is:

- 8 elected parent members, who represent more than one third of school councillors
- 4 elected DET employee members other than the Principal
- the Principal [Executive Officer]
- Up to 2 co-opted members from the school community. It should be noted that community membership is optional and that these positions are co-opted, rather than elected. DET employees are not eligible for co-option to this category. Community members have the same voting rights as elected members.

Elected members of the Cranbourne West Primary School have two year terms of office with half retiring annually on 31st March of each year. Co-opted members of Cranbourne West Primary School have two year terms which also terminate on 31st March. Elections are conducted according to the Education Regulations 1988 (amended 1993).

CASUAL VACANCIES

Should a casual vacancy occur on Council, this vacancy is filled by council co-opting a person from the appropriate category who then completes the rest of the term of office of the retiring member.

OFFICE BEARERS

The Regulations require there be at least two office bearers – the president and the executive officer.

- **Chairperson**

- The Chairperson is elected by all members of Cranbourne West Primary School Council and may not be a DET employee. The office of Chairperson of Cranbourne West Primary School Council should not be open to the same person for more than four consecutive years. The Chairperson should act as chairperson of all meetings of Council, decide recommendations for each item of correspondence in collaboration with the Executive Officer and/or Secretary, conduct the business of Council under agreed rules and any standing orders adopted from time to time and be an ex-officio member of all Council committees.

- **Executive Officer**

The Principal is a full member of Council with the same voting rights as other councillors and apart from acting as Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of Council policies and for informing Council on educational, statutory, regulatory and Government policy issues. The principal shall provide adequate advice to Council on educational and other matters, ensure the decisions of Council are implemented and see that appropriate resources and support are provided for the conduct of Council meetings.

Council shall also elect from its members the following office bearers:

- Vice Chairperson – The Vice Chairperson is elected by all members of school council. It is recommended that this position be held by a non DET employee. In the absence of the Chairperson, act as Chairperson at Council meetings and otherwise represent the Chairperson (NB. Only a non DET employed member of Council can chair meetings).
- Treasurer – The convenor of the Finance Sub-Committee is appointed by school council. It is recommended this position be held by a non DET member of council. The Treasurer shall present to Council a monthly statement of the financial position of Council and ensure that all Council accounts are audited according to regulations.
- Minute Secretary – The Minute Secretary may either be an elected member of school council or a person appointed to this role who is not a member of school council and therefore has no voting rights. The Secretary shall provide all Council members with minutes of the previous meetings, agenda, reports of committees and financial reports, notify Council of any apologies received, ensure that minutes of the meeting are recorded, table all correspondence relevant to the meeting and write appropriate correspondence authorised by council.

Signatories for accounts under the control of Council:

The Principal [or Vice Principal] together with either the School Council Chairperson or Vice Chairperson as nominated by the Council.

Committees of the Council

Sub-committees assist council with its workings. They report regularly at Council meetings, provide advice and make recommendations to council, which has the final responsibility for decisions. School Council Sub-Committees shall operate within individual sub-committee policies as ratified by School Council.

Council will determine which committees it requires and will review the need for each annually. The committees may comprise the following unless Council decides otherwise:

* Policy Management * Finance * Uniform * Infrastructure

The Council may approve of working parties to assist in the work of the above committees. Membership of sub-committees shall be decided at the first meeting of Council after the annual Council elections, when councillors will nominate their preferences for committee membership. Some negotiation may be necessary to achieve general balance of size and representation. Each committee shall elect a convenor. Membership of committees shall be extended to include interested community members with special expertise or interest in the area of the sub-committee. The full membership of the sub-committees will be as listed and approved by the Council.

Meetings

School Council meetings will be held at least twice a term on the second Monday of each month commencing at 7pm unless otherwise decided by Councillors. If members are unable to attend the meeting, they are expected to send their apology prior to the meeting.

School Council must also hold at least one public meeting each year to report to the school community on its activities and to present the Annual Report which includes a statement of the school's income and expenditure for the previous calendar year.

An extraordinary meeting of Council may be held at any time decided by Council, provided all members are given prior notice of the time, date, place and purpose of the meeting. An extraordinary meeting may also be called upon written request by 3 members being given to the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson or Executive Officer of the Council, who must then convene a meeting by sending a notice to all councillors advising the time, date, place and purpose of the meeting.

If a member of the council or an immediate family member has any direct financial interests in a subject or matter under discussion at a Council meeting, that member must declare it and not be present when a vote is taken on the matter, but may be included in the quorum of the meeting.

Decision Making By Council

A decision of the majority of members eligible to vote and present at any meeting of Council is the decision of the Council. If votes are tied, the Chairperson has a second or casting vote. All decisions of Council shall require formal voting. All members of Council including the Principal have one vote. Voting will normally be by show of hands, but Council may resolve to hold a secret ballot on a particular item of business.

An executive consisting of the Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer and the Principal may act on behalf of the Council on any urgent matter or at any time when it is not possible to call a full meeting of the Council. Any decision by the executive must then be discussed at the next Council meeting.

Proxies

Eligible members of council must be present at a meeting to be part of the decision making process. There is no provision in the Act or the regulations for proxies.

Meeting Procedures

Normal meeting procedures will be followed as defined by Council and may vary from strict rules of debate to a less formal procedure appropriate to committee meetings. Meetings are to commence at 6.15 p.m. or at a time previously agreed to by councillors.

Visitors are welcome as observers, however if matters to be discussed are of a confidential or private nature council may declare the meeting [or part of the meeting] as "closed" via a motion. When a meeting is closed observers cannot be present. Observers cannot vote but can speak if invited by Council.

Agenda

The agenda and minutes from the previous meeting and any relevant reports will be distributed to all councillors no less than one week prior to the meeting. Business arising from the previous minutes will be itemised in the agenda.

Responsibility of Council Member

Each member of Council is expect to:

- Regularly attend meetings of council.
- Agree to observe the principles of the School Council Code of Conduct.
- Thoroughly scrutinise reports etc. before each meeting.
- Be a member of at least one sub-committee of Council.
- Maintain confidentiality as required.
- As an elected member have a prime responsibility to the interests of Council above that of any particular part of the electorate.
- Maintain an awareness of education developments.
- Participate in at least one annual professional development activity pertinent to the operation of School Councils.

Council Committees General Guidelines

All Council Sub-Committees shall:

- Recognise that, within the School, the Council is the ultimate decision making body in the formation of policy.
- In their area of responsibility, recommend courses of action to the Council.
- Implement Council Policy decisions as directed.
- With the approval of Council, have the power in any particular year to co-opt any person whose special talent will benefit the work of the committee.

The Convenor of a Council Committee shall:

- Call all meetings and provide all committee members with an agenda prior to the meeting.
- In the event of his/her absence, nominate another member of the committee to act as chairperson of the meeting.

School Use Only

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