



# Students on school council: What you need to know

## What is a school council?

All government schools in Victoria have a school council. The school council is a group of people who are given powers to set the key directions of a school. This means that a school council is able to directly influence the quality of education that the school provides for its students.

## What does a school council do?

The school council can make big decisions about the way the school is run that affect students. These might include:

- Overseeing the school's finances (raising money, developing budgets).
- Creating the school's strategic plan, which says what the school should focus on for the next few years.
- Setting and reviewing school policies, such as student safety, curriculum development, student and staff behaviour, or uniform policy.
- Reporting to the school community and the Department of Education and Training (DET) about the school.
- Promoting the school to the wider community.
- Hiring a new Principal.

The school council doesn't do things like employ staff or work directly with students at the school - that's the job of the principal.

## Why are students on school council?

- There are two spots on the school council for students of the school (if your school is a government secondary school in Victoria).
- The school council makes big decisions about the way the school is run, which directly affect students!
- It's really important for students to be active participants in decisions that affect them and their education.

## What do I need to know to be on school council?

- You don't need to be an expert in governance, but it helps if you're keen to learn!
- Each councillor brings their own skills and knowledge to the role.
- No one knows what it's like to be a student at the school more than YOU! You have expert knowledge about the student experience at your school.
- The DET provides free face-to-face and online training to support councillors to understand their role and learn new skills, such as reading financial reports.

## Who else is on the school council?

- School employees, including the principal
- Parents
- Students
- Sometimes other members of the local community

## Are school leaders offered the positions first?

- No, student leaders are not automatically elected to the student member category for school council.
- The school must run a separate nomination and voting process for the school council student member positions. This must be open to any student in Year 7 and above.
- There are some strict rules about how this election has to be run.
- Some schools might ask the School Captains or other student leaders to come to school council meetings, but they must also have two proper student members.

## Why would I join the school council as a Student member?

- Being on school council is a great way to understand how your schools works.
- It's a fantastic opportunity to bring a student's perspective to decisions that affect you.
- It's a great chance to learn a lot of new skills, for example how to work with different people, how to understand financial reports, how to run formal meetings, and lots more!

## How do I nominate and how do elections work?

- Your principal arranges the elections and there are strict instructions about how the elections are run.
- The elections are held in March every year.
- Your principal should call for nominations, and you can nominate yourself or another student.
- Every student should be sent information about how to vote.
- Make sure you vote and encourage other students to do the same!

## What else do I need to know?

- Generally, students sit on school council for two years each.
- One Student member position becomes vacant each year.
- You aren't allowed to share the role with another student.

If you have any questions you can contact [students@vicsrc.org.au](mailto:students@vicsrc.org.au) or visit the Department of Education and Training's website:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/election.aspx>