

School Council Induction Program

Preamble

Moonee Ponds West Primary School Council recognises the importance of an induction program to ensure that new councillors are provided with an understanding of;

- the framework within which school councils operate
- what school councils do
- school council operations
- important features of the school.

The training program will help councillors to understand their roles and responsibilities so that they;

- feel comfortable at meetings
- are able to contribute fully to the workings of council
- feel supported and valued by other members
- have their skills recognised and utilised for the benefit of the students and the school.

The Induction Program

The president and the executive officer (Principal) are responsible for ensuring that new council members receive appropriate induction. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (The Department) does provide a range of information on school councils, including roles and responsibilities, elections, operations and strategic planning, policy and induction. Visit:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/schoolcouncil.aspx>

Before the first meeting

- The school council president and/or principal will contact all new councillors to welcome them, offer support and answer any initial questions.
- The president and/or principal will also discuss with the new councillors the areas of expertise that they have or that they wish to develop. This will be taken into account when roles and committee membership are being decided.
- The principal/school council president will convene an induction meeting of new councillors prior to their first council meeting. This meeting is to;
 - give a historical overview of the role of school council and outline its current role
 - clarify the roles of committees, council and the principal; explain how council operates, -go through a typical set of council papers and the most recent annual report
 - explain the school strategic plan and its priorities within a state-wide context
 - explain the contents of the resource folder
 - answer questions which new councillors have.
- New council members will receive a package of material which includes;
 - the School Council Standing Orders
 - the School Council Code of Conduct
 - The Departments induction training module taken from *Improving School Governance (2011)*
 - the School Council Induction Policy
 - access to the school Strategic Plan and the Annual Implementation Plan;
 - a contact list for council members and who each represents;
 - a list of teachers, room numbers, year levels and student numbers in each class.

Ongoing support

“Induction is not an event but a process. As familiarity with council roles and responsibilities increases, the interests of a councillor expand and it becomes pertinent to seek additional information and training to make the most of the role. Councils should plan for ongoing professional development of its members.” (April 2013, The Association of School Councils Victoria)

The president/principal will ensure that s/he shows awareness of the needs of new councillors by explaining processes and issues.

At the start of the first few meetings councillors will introduce themselves. Experienced school councillors will welcome and support new members, specifically taking care not to use jargon. At the first meeting after each new council is elected, there should be a discussion on how councillors can best represent the school community. After the first school council meeting there may be a second meeting of new councillors to discuss the financial responsibility, processes of council and answer questions.

School councillors will have training programs organised by outside agencies drawn to their attention and there will be support to attend them. They will also be notified of school information programs.

After the second new councillors’ meeting, councillors can identify whether further information would be useful on key aspects of the school philosophy and curriculum approach and policies concerning student welfare and discipline.

Review of induction program

This induction program will be reviewed each year by school council at the first meeting of the year.

Endorsed by School Council - 24th of February 2014