

Fig Tree Pocket State School – an Independent Public School

School Council Charter

Introduction and Context

The School Council is established pursuant to legislation passed by the Queensland Parliament, namely Chapter 6 of the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) (the Act). It operates in accordance with a Constitution adopted and approved pursuant to the Act.

School Council Object

The object for which school councils are established is "to improve student learning outcomes ". This sets the context for all that the School Council does.

School Council functions

The Act confers particular functions on the School Council in order that it can guide "the broad strategic direction of the state school for which it is established". These are mainly advisory and strategic in nature with the specifically stated functions as follows:

- Monitoring the school's strategic direction;
- Approving plans, policies and documents of the school of a strategic nature (including "the annual estimate of revenue and expenditure for the school");
- Monitoring the implementation of the plans, policies and other documents approved by the School Council;
- Advising the Principal about strategic matters.

The Act also sets out the matters over which the School Council does not have authority stating that it may/does not:

- interfere with the management by the Principal of the day-to-day operations of the school and its curriculum;
- make operational decisions about the use of teaching or learning resources at the school;
- make decisions about the individual teaching style used within the school;
- make decisions that are contrary to law or to a written policy of the Department of Education and Training (the Department);
- have control over funds, entry into contracts, the ownership of property or the ability to sue (or be sued) in relation to and on behalf of the school.

Statement of School Council's Governance Functions within the context of the School Council Object and Functions

Working with the Principal: The School Council is responsible for forging a strong and productive mutually trusting working relationship with the Principal for the benefit of the School, by ensuring:

- (a) openness and honesty in all matters;
- (b) a close working relationship between the Chair and the Principal; and
- (c) regular ongoing reporting by the Principal to the School Council in a form which is meaningful and relevant.

The School Council will not:

- (a) interfere with the management by the Principal of the day to day operations of the School and its curriculum nor circumvent the Principal on School management matters; or
- (b) make operational decisions about the use of teaching and learning resources.

Accountability: The School Council will provide accountability by ensuring:

- (a) a clear written statement of role and responsibilities for the School Council (namely this Charter) exists and is lived by the School Council;
- (b) appropriate transparent management reporting systems are agreed with the Principal and consistently used;
- (c) regular effective communication with key stakeholders including the P&C, with and through the Principal, and including prompt publication of approved minutes of meetings;
- (d) adequate avenues exist for people seeking bona fide communication with the School;
- (e) active monitoring of the performance of the School against approved strategic plans and objectives;
- (f) expenditure of money and use of resources is consistent with the approved plans; and
- (g) that a respectful, ethical and transparent organisational culture is fostered.

Monitoring and supervising: The School Council is responsible for monitoring the implementation of agreed plans and policies of a strategic nature (including budgets) and will do so by ensuring it receives and reviews:

- (a) regular reports from the Principal against approved plans; and
- (b) regular financial reporting, with explanation from the business services manager where appropriate.

Strategy: The School Council is responsible for monitoring the School's strategic direction and will do so by ensuring:

- (a) the School Council plays an active role in gathering information about and advising on strategic matters;
- (b) the whole School Council is engaged in the strategic planning and review processes;
- (c) inclusion of proper consideration of risks, opportunities and stakeholder views in all strategic planning;
- (d) inclusion of clear measurable financial and other objectives in all strategic plans;
- (e) preparation of business plans and annual estimates of revenues and expenses (budget) consistent with and to support agreed strategic plans; and

- (f) monitoring and performance review of the School against approved strategic plans and objectives.

Policy: The School Council is responsible for the development of appropriate policy affecting strategic matters and will do so by ensuring:

- (a) organisational and operational policies of a strategic nature are approved by the School Council where appropriate and otherwise the School Council is aware of them;
- (b) there is clear delineation between School Council policy and policy which is the Principal's responsibility to develop and monitor; and
- (c) active monitoring of all School Council approved policies.

School Council Roles

Chair: The Chair:

- (a) assures the integrity of the School Council's processes;
- (b) represents the School Council as appropriate to outside parties;
- (c) ensures that there is rigour in advice and decision-making through robust discussion and a culture which encourages appropriate questioning and enquiry about all matters put before the School Council for decision;
- (d) is empowered to chair School Council meetings in accordance with the Constitution and accepted meeting convention; and
- (e) develops a close working relationship with the Principal, liaising with the Principal between School Council meetings to ensure optimum efficiency in the presentation of all recommendations to the School Council and for the ongoing support and monitoring of the Principal on behalf of the School Council.

Secretary: The Secretary:

- (a) gives primary support to the operations and effective administration of the School Council and School Council meetings;
- (b) works closely with the Chair and the Principal, liaising between School Council meetings to ensure ongoing co-ordination of meetings, plans and management of correspondence of the School Council;
- (c) keeps full and correct minutes of the proceedings of School Council meetings and ensures minutes are promptly distributed to members following each meeting; and
- (d) ensures a transparent process exists for the safe custody and access to all books, documents, records and registers of the School Council, which are accessible to any person within the School community.

Members (including the Chair and Secretary): Each School Council member will:

- (a) understand the School Council Constitution;
- (b) comply with the Code of Conduct (see further below);
- (c) be familiar with the School's strategic plan;
- (d) understand and accept the School's values;

- (e) work co-operatively and engage in constructive conversations and decision making in support of the strategic responsibilities of the School Council;
- (f) liaise with relevant stakeholder and School community groups on matters concerning the School Council and the interests of the School;
- (g) use best endeavours to attend School Council meetings as required; and
- (h) actively promote and portray a positive image of the School Council.

Relationship Between the School Council, the School and the P&C

The School Council and the P&C share mutual interest in the success of the School. The P&C President is an automatic member of the School Council and the Chair (or delegate) attend P&C meetings. Each of the School Council and the P&C have a valuable contribution to make to the life of the School and its Community. The School Council and the P&C will work together in a way that best promotes and achieves success for the School recognising and allowing each to focus on their specific objectives, functions and interests.

School Council Code of Conduct (Extracted from Constitution)

This Code of Conduct sets the expected standards of conduct for all school council members. It has been adopted to aid all members of our school community to work as a cohesive group in partnership with the school.

The code is intended to promote and maintain the highest standard of ethical behaviour by school council members. Members of school councils should adhere to the Code of Conduct at all times. This code applies to each member of a Queensland state school council established under the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*.

Integrity and impartiality

School council members will:

- act in the best interest of the total school community at all times;
- conduct and present themselves in a professional manner;
- act with courtesy and demonstrate respect for all persons, whether fellow school council members, school staff, parents/carers, students, community members;
- remain objective and avoid personal bias at all times;
- build open and honest communication;
- represent all members of the school community;
- act ethically and with integrity at all times;
- declare any conflicts of interest and not misuse their office to advance individual views or for personal gain;
- make fair, transparent and consistent decisions;
- provide objective and independent advice;
- engage with the school community in a manner that is consultative, respectful and fair;
- listen and be tolerant of the views and opinions of others, even if those views and opinions differ from their own;
- draw upon personal and professional insight (background and experience) when reviewing information.

Promoting the public good

School council members accept their commitment to:

- be responsive to the requirements of the school community;
- engage the school and wider community in developing and effecting school priorities, policies and decisions;
- seek to achieve excellence in educational outcomes for all students at the school;
- listen and respond to issues and concerns regarding strategy and policy.

Commitment to the system of government

School council members will:

- offer constructive, impartial and professional feedback when consulted regarding official school priorities, policies and decisions;
- work within the boundaries of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, the *Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017*, and Department of Education policies and procedures relevant to school council operations.

Accountability and transparency

School council members will:

- treat official information with care and use it only for the purpose for which it was collected or authorised;
- respect confidentiality and information privacy (about the school, community members, staff or students) at all times and not disclose confidential information
- store official information securely;
- not use confidential or privileged information to further personal interests.