

IMPROVING
SCHOOL
GOVERNANCE

5

SCHOOL COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Published by the Regional Services Group
Department of Education and Training
Melbourne
February 2018

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Authorised by the Department of Education and Training
2 Treasury Place, East Melbourne, Victoria, 3002.
ISBN 978-0-646-98559-6

5.0 Introduction

Goal

This module serves to provide school council presidents with a better understanding of:

- their role and responsibilities as a school council president
- what makes a school council effective
- how to lead school council meetings
- how to engage the community in the school and its objectives.

Overview

The school council president is a parent or community member (not a Department employee) who serves as chair of school council meetings. The president is elected annually by all school council members.

The school council president (president) must be able to run effective meetings, work effectively with all council members and with the principal, to lead the development of the broad direction and vision of the school. An effective president is a key component of a cohesive school council. The president needs to understand the responsibilities of the role and the structure of government schools, and to have a constructive working relationship with the principal, other school councillors and the community.

Being school council president is an important and prestigious responsibility. The president represents the school in the wider community and must be prepared to champion the school, its students and its staff. The role can be time-consuming but very rewarding.

This training module will help those people elected president of their school's council and those aspiring to the role of president to understand the nature and extent of the role and to develop the skills and knowledge to perform their responsibilities successfully.

5.1 Role and responsibilities

Why is this topic important?

All school council members should know and understand their roles and responsibilities, and the functions and objectives of the council, particularly the president. The president, with the principal, provides leadership, establishing the environment in which the council can operate effectively.

On completing this unit, the participant should be able to:

- understand the skills required of an effective president
- understand the roles and responsibilities of a president.

The effective president

The role of president requires leadership and management skills.

An effective president is assertive, neutral, task-focused and aware of the big picture. A good president knows the boundary of their authority and the authority of the school council as a whole, and understands and respects privacy and confidentiality obligations. A good president knows when to delegate.

A good president is available to the school and to the other members of school council when needed. The president should have a strong and successful working relationship with the principal, and the support of all school council members.

Before nominating for president, a candidate should consider what they could bring to the position. Do they have an understanding of the school, its direction and its needs, or the time and willingness to learn this? Do they have the patience and commitment to develop good working relationships? Are they prepared to be a role model in the school community for professionalism, integrity and sound judgement?





Role of the president

The president has a strategic role to play in representing the vision, mission and purposes of the school, and ensures school council fulfils its role and functions. As the chair of council meetings, the president ensures relevant matters are discussed, that there is full participation at meetings and that effective decisions are made.

The president's duties include:

- developing and working with the community towards a shared vision for the school
- actively participating in the core review panel in the school's four-year review cycle
- endorsing key school planning and reporting documents on behalf of the council
- being an effective spokesperson and advocate
- chairing meetings of school council
- representing the school in public forums with the principal
- promoting the school and its principal to the community.

Following the election of the president and other office-bearers, the principal will inform the school community and the Department of the names of the council members and office-bearers. The president will be provided with an eduMail email address to receive regular communications from the Department and should speak to the principal about setting up this account.

It is expected the president will access this account each week to be informed of Department communications, especially those relevant to school council business. This account will also be used to access the School Planning Online Tool (SPOT). This is important for endorsement of the School Strategic Plan, Annual Implementation Plan and Annual Report.

The president and the principal have distinct responsibilities as outlined below. They are to:

The principal

- provide council with timely advice about educational and other matters
- prepare the council's agenda in consultation with the president
- report regularly to council about the school's performance against its strategic plan
- ensure council decisions are acted on
- provide adequate support and resources for the conduct of council meetings
- communicate with the president about council business
- ensure that new council members are inducted
- record the president's details against the school council president eduMail account.

The school council president

- effectively chair council meetings (ensure everyone has a say in meetings and decisions are understood and recorded)
- be a signatory to contracts, the School Strategic Plan and financial accounts
- participate in the four-year school review as an active member of the core review panel
- endorse the school pre-review self-evaluation, terms of reference for school review, the school Annual Implementation Plan and Annual Report to the school community
- attest to school compliance with the VRQA registration requirements and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.
- preside at the annual public reporting meeting
- ensure council stays focused on improving student outcomes
- with the principal, be council's spokesperson and official representative on public occasions
- when council votes are tied, have the second or casting vote
- access email communications each week, from the Department through the president's eduMail account.

At times of principal recruitment and selection, the president or his or her nominee is a member of the principal selection panel appointed by the school council.

Building relationships

The president needs to build strong working relationships with the principal, other councillors and the community. The president supports the principal in their role.

To build the relationship with the **principal**, the **president** can:

- upon being elected, meet the principal to discuss key aspects of the school
- with the principal, develop a shared understanding of the school's direction and its priorities, as stated in the School Strategic Plan
- arrange to meet the principal on a regular basis ahead of every school council meeting to discuss the agenda, issues to be tabled and any background information that needs to be circulated
- keep up to date with school matters that may affect school council and the community
- inform the principal of community matters that may be relevant to the school
- introduce the principal to key members of the school community as necessary, particularly if the principal is new to the school
- be available if the principal needs to discuss matters relevant to the school
- understand the role of the principal and those matters of the school that are operational and therefore not the responsibility of the school council
- respect the privacy and confidentiality obligations of school council matters shared by the principal.

To build the relationships with **school councillors**, the **president** can:

- be a good listener and ensure all councillors have the opportunity to be heard
- be willing to meet individual councillors to understand their particular situation
- welcome and encourage new councillors to be active participants at meetings
- share council tasks between members as appropriate.

New councillors are briefed on existing school issues and processes. The principal will provide new councillors with a background information package which may include:

- School Strategic Plan
- Annual Implementation Plan
- Annual Report to the school community
- council Standing Orders
- code of conduct for school councillors
- information about the Department's values and ethical decision-making
- current school policies (or where to access them)
- minutes of last council meeting
- list of common education acronyms
- council members phone numbers and email addresses (with consent of the members)
- folder or binder in which to file council paperwork.

The **president** can build relationships with the **wider school community** by:

- attending school events such as music concerts, art exhibitions and athletic sports and speaking with staff, students and families
- considering meeting local government officers and the local Member of Parliament, with the principal.

5.2 Characteristics of an effective school council

Why is this topic important?

A strong, united council with a clear vision and a willingness to contribute positively is a feature of a successful school.

On completing this unit, the participant should be able to:

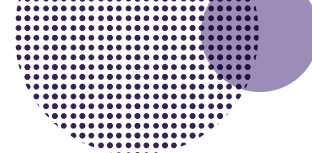
- understand what makes a school council successful
- understand the role the president plays in an effective council.

The importance of good governance

Good governance enables the council to perform efficiently and effectively and to respond strategically to changing demands and educational challenges.

Good governance relies on the professional leadership of the principal, the president, the school council and effective meeting procedures.

In an effective school, school council processes are characterised by a mutual sharing of information, knowledge and ideas. There is a focus on open communication where all members are able to exchange information, share experiences, express different perspectives, pose questions, clarify viewpoints, explore relevant research and develop a shared vision and way forward. Good governance also involves ensuring decisions are made and implemented appropriately.



What makes a school council effective

An effective school council is one that:

- focuses on improving student learning outcomes and educational opportunities
- involves the community in conversations about key educational issues and challenges
- is actively involved in the development of the School Strategic Plan
- promotes meaningful parent and community participation and actively seeks the views of its community
- has a clear understanding of its roles and responsibilities
- includes members who represent the diverse views of the school community
- has a clear and consistent process for decision-making
- maintains high ethical standards
- has members with trust and respect for one another
- evaluates and communicates with the school community about its activities
- regularly reviews and evaluates its own performance
- appropriately delegates to individual members and sub-committees
- devotes time to its own growth and development, through induction and training.

An effective school council should support the development of strategic partnerships to assist the school achieve the goals in the School Strategic Plan. For example, council members should consider and discuss opportunities to work with organisations outside the school in areas such as fundraising and facilities development.

It is good practice for a council to establish Standing Orders to assist the council to operate effectively and efficiently. Standing Orders should be reviewed each year following completion of the election process.

The *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017* set out certain legal requirements in relation to the operation of school council meetings. These requirements cannot be overridden by the Standing Orders determined by a school council. In addition to these legal requirements, councils are also encouraged to provide additional guidelines, which might cover agendas, meeting etiquette and length of meetings.



Roles of school council members

It is the responsibility of the principal and the president to ensure council members understand their role.

There is no legal requirement for a council to have a vice-president, but many do. The vice-president can chair meetings when the president is absent. The vice-president is also a non-departmental employee.

It is recommended that a council elect a treasurer who is not an employee of the Department.

All school council members have a responsibility to:

- come prepared and ready to contribute at school council meetings
- attend school events and seek to understand the school's operations
- support the president and the principal
- actively promote the school to the community
- comply with the code of conduct for school councillors and behavioural expectations
- set out in the Department's values.

Features of an effective school council are included in the table below:

Feature	Detail
An effective council works together	The council should be seen by all members as being greater than the sum of the individuals of which it is comprised. Discussions may be lively however the council's decision overrides individual opinion.
Members set aside their own special interests	Members add value through personal skills and experience, but must be prepared to set personal interests aside for the good of the overall situation and to prevent any potential, perceived or real, pecuniary or non-pecuniary conflicts of interest.
Council offers strong support to the principal and school	Council members should ask searching questions and provide relevant, constructive criticism; however they should avoid sharing negative opinions outside of council meetings and gossip.
Council stays focused on its objectives and functions	Council members understand their responsibilities as distinct from those of the principal.
Council is led by a strong president	Council elects a strong and capable individual to be its president, one who will have the respect of the principal, the council and the community.
An effective council thinks strategically	Decisions and actions reflect and support the future directions of the school.
Real discussions are followed by real decisions	Council members attend meetings, having prepared carefully and are ready to contribute. Differences are left at the discussion table and decisions acted upon promptly.
Council builds trust in its community	Council develops and maintains a record of trust through its responsible actions and good communication.

Resources and links

Education and Training Reform Act 2006

→ www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/consol_act/eatra2006273/

Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017

→ www.education.vic.gov.au/about/departement/legislation/Pages/act2006regs.aspx

Victorian Public Sector Commission Codes and Standards – Code of Conduct for Directors

→ vpsc.vic.gov.au/resources/code-of-conduct-for-directors/

School Councils

→ www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/management/community/Pages/schoolcouncils.aspx

School Policy and Advisory Guide – School Councils

→ www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/councils.aspx

School Policy and Advisory Guide – Ethical Decision-Making

→ www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/ethicaldecisionmaking.aspx

School Planning Online Tool (SPOT)

→ apps.edustar.vic.edu.au/spot

For further advice on their role and responsibilities, school council members can email the School Operations and Governance Unit at: school.council@edumail.vic.gov.au

5.3 How to run effective school council meetings

Why is this topic important?

Well-conducted meetings are critical to an effective school council. There must be at least eight meetings a year and at least one every term. The president, as the chair, is responsible for the conduct of the meetings.

Many school councils have sub-committees and working groups that also meet regularly. Their conduct should be no less effective than those of school council.

At the end of this unit, participants should be able to:

- recognise the features of an effective meeting
- confidently chair successful school council meetings.

Features of an effective meeting

Meetings are held to allow council to make decisions related to its functions. Meeting dates should be set at the start of the year by the principal and the president to suit the school's calendar. They should not be scheduled at the same time as other important school events.

Effective and accountable decision-making in meetings requires:

- a clear definition of how the council conducts its business as outlined in the Standing Orders
- a carefully prepared agenda
- papers relevant to specific agenda items circulated in advance
- an expectation that all members will prepare adequately for the meeting
- frank and open discussion
- accurate and timely records of decisions
- ability and willingness to seek independent and external professional advice when necessary
- a sub-committee structure that supports and enables much of the work of school council.

Decision-making

Council decisions are made by a majority of the members eligible to vote and present at the meeting, provided the majority are non-Department employees and not less than one half of the members currently holding office are present.

All decisions of council are voted upon. The numbers for and against should be recorded in the minutes. The principal is a voting member. Where votes are tied, the president has a casting vote.

All motions must be recorded. The motion mover and seconder, and the outcome must be minuted.

There is no provision for proxies to vote on school council matters at a meeting. However, a councillor may be present at a meeting by videoconferencing or teleconferencing.

Setting the agenda

- The principal in consultation with the president should set the council meeting agenda with enough time to distribute it to all members of the council, along with any reports or background material prior to the meeting. As executive officer of council, it is the principal's responsibility to ensure school council members are suitably resourced.

The agenda lists business that council will discuss during the meeting. A simple agenda may include:

- welcome and apologies
- minutes of the previous meeting (voted upon)
- business arising from the minutes
- principals report
- reports from sub-committees including finance sub-committee
- general business
- correspondence (incoming and outgoing)
- close.

If a council does not have sub-committees, the principal may introduce the finance and other reports.

Usually, councils ask members to submit items for general business ahead of the meeting so they can be included on the agenda. It is for the president to determine if other general business matters raised at the meeting, that are within a function of the school council, will be discussed. There may not be sufficient time for the discussion. The president should decline to discuss any matters unrelated to a function of the school council.

When discussing the proposed next meeting agenda with the principal, the president should ask:

- Does the item fit within a function of the council?
- Is the item operational (and thus a responsibility of the principal)?
- Should the item be dealt with elsewhere?
- Does the item warrant council's time?



Chairing the meeting

As chair, the president should open the meeting on time and call council members to order. To ensure an effective meeting, the president should:

- have a good understanding of the constituting Order of the council, the code of conduct for school councillors and the standing orders of council
- have sought a briefing with the principal ahead of the meeting on any complex or sensitive issues
- manage the discussions during the meetings to ensure business is expeditiously addressed. For this, the chair needs to understand the powers of the chair and be willing to use them judiciously to ensure that council keeps to the point. These powers include the authority to bring discussions to a conclusion and bring on a vote
- ensure that no councillor dominates a discussion and encourage all councillors to express an opinion
- before calling for a vote, summarise points made in the discussion
- be prepared to delegate contentious matters to individuals or sub-committees for more research or discussion
- keep an eye on the scheduled closing time of the meeting and try to pace the discussion to complete the business by that time
- call for a specified extension of time if that is required
- ensure that councillors know the date, time and venue of the next meeting before officially declaring the current meeting closed
- ensure that the decisions of the council are correctly recorded. When council approves the minutes, the chair presiding at that meeting signs the minutes.

Stages of the meeting

School council meetings should follow a consistent format. An agenda should be prepared and distributed with draft minutes from the previous meeting and any reports from the principal and president, finance and other sub-committees, to council members no less than five days before the meeting.

Minutes of the meeting

Accurate minutes should be made of every meeting of school council, and of its sub-committees. Minutes form a record of the council's activities and decisions and actions that need to be taken.

Councils should appoint a minute-taker at the beginning of each year. If this person is not a member of school council, they must act as a silent observer without voting rights.

When school council minutes are submitted for confirmation, only questions regarding their accuracy are to be raised. The chair of that meeting must sign the minutes once council has accepted them as being a true and accurate record of the meeting.

The minutes should be sent to the principal and president as soon as possible after a meeting for comment, and then distributed, by the principal, to all members of council before the next school council meeting, where they are considered and accepted.

The school council should keep the community informed about its operations by publishing a report following each meeting in the school newsletter and/or on the school website.

A person does not have a right to access the minutes of a school council meeting or other documents or records of a school council under the *Freedom of Information Act 2000*.



Managing conflict and the conduct of meetings

At times, some school councils may experience members expressing strong conflicting views. There may be occasions where individual members are not working cooperatively with other councillors. It is the president's responsibility, as chairperson, to manage any conflict or conduct issues that arise during the course of a meeting.

The principal is responsible for managing any matters that extend beyond the meeting.

Some strategies for the chairperson dealing with difficult situations include:

- dealing respectfully with all comments and contributions
- using clearly understood protocols to ensure all views are represented
- stopping one individual dominating the meeting
- bringing the discussion back to school council's core objectives, which include: assisting in the efficient governance of the school; ensuring that decisions affecting students of the school are made in students' best interests; enhancing the educational opportunities of students of the school; and ensuring the school and the school council complies with its legal obligations

- delegating the discussion to a sub-committee, or to a future school council meeting
- anticipating matters that might result in conflict between members and introducing them in a way which seeks to minimise tension
- being prepared to let an aggrieved member express their view, but then being prepared to close the debate
- reminding members of the code of conduct for school councillors
- not taking sides and treating an individual's grievance as legitimate.

The president should be mindful of council members acting contrary to the code of conduct or speaking against council decisions to members of the community. The principal and the president may need to meet the individual separately and remind them of their obligations under the code of conduct.

Resources and links

Victorian Public Sector Commission Codes and Standards – Director's Code of Conduct

→ vpsc.vic.gov.au/resources/code-of-conduct-for-directors/

School Policy and Advisory Guide – School Councils

→ www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/councils.aspx

School Councils

→ www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/management/community/Pages/schoolcouncils.aspx

For further advice, school council members can email the School Operations and Governance Unit at: school.council@edumail.vic.gov.au

5.4 Engaging the school community and beyond

Why is this topic important?

The work of the school council needs to be known and understood by the school community, including families, students, staff and other stakeholders. If the community shares and has input into the vision and values of the school council, and has participated in the process, then the community is likely to offer greater support.

Council should have in place ways of communicating its decisions to the community, to enable consultation and receive feedback.

At the end of this unit, the participant will understand:

- the importance of community consultation and engagement
- how to establish two-way communication with the school community.



Sharing information

School council members are drawn from the key stakeholders of the school: parents, staff and the wider community. As individuals, they bring diverse views to the council for working together to develop a shared vision for the improvement of student outcomes. Council decisions can affect the school and its stakeholders, and they generally need to be communicated to, and understood by the community.

Minutes should be taken at every school council meeting and accepted by the council as a fair and accurate record. Although they serve as a record of all decisions they are not public documents.

The principal, as executive officer of the school council, should keep the community informed about the operations of the school council by publishing a report following each meeting.

There are various channels the principal can use to report to the community about the operations of the school council, including:

- school website
- school newsletter
- direct mail to families
- emails to families and students.

Councils should be wary of “word-of-mouth” communication or using third parties to broadcast decisions. At times, school council may consider the local media an appropriate channel for their news and information.

Another key opportunity for the community to be informed of the school council activities is at the public reporting meeting a council must hold at least once each year. At this meeting the school council reports on the proceedings of council since the date of the previous public meeting. The council must present the Annual Report and, if council accounts have been audited, a copy of the audited accounts at the meeting.

Some school councils use this public meeting as a celebration and recognition of the school’s achievements as well as an acknowledgement of those who have contributed to the school over the previous year.

Interpreters and translators may need to be provided at these meetings to ensure that all families can understand the information being presented and engage in the discussions.

The president as spokesperson

The president is spokesperson for the school council, and not the school. The principal has the dual responsibility to represent the school and the school council to the community.

The president should be prepared to explain school council policies, plans, priorities and activities. Some presidents, in consultation with the principal, write articles for the school newsletter to explain council actions, or attend parent meetings.

There are occasions when the president may be required to speak to the community, such as:

- at information nights for prospective students and their families. The president may be called upon to explain the role of council and its activities – and to seek expressions of interest from parents willing to join council
- at graduation ceremonies. The president may take this opportunity to thank families for their support of the school and the students
- at special ceremonies, such as the opening of new school buildings or the dedication of new facilities.

In this role, the president is a key asset for the school in engaging with the community.



Consultation with the community

School council should be prepared to consult with the school community and, as needed, with the local community. School council is legally required to inform itself and take into account any views of the school community for the purpose of making decisions related to the school and its students. There are some issues, such as the school dress code, into which the school community must have input.

However, consultation with the community does not mean the community makes the decision. Council seeks the opinion, advice and views of the community and then makes its decision.

Consultation shows the community that:

- opinions, ideas and contributions of others are valued
- the matters discussed are not always straightforward
- assistance is sought and welcomed
- people have different points of view about the best way forward.

Community forums or focus meetings allow interested community members to contribute to the council's decision-making.

In planning a forum or focus meeting, ensure all voices can be heard, and consider use of interpreters/translators and protocols for enabling all to participate.

Other ways of consulting the community may include:

- inviting specific individuals to a council meeting to provide information or expertise to assist the council
- online surveys.

Where councils have sub-committees, members of the wider community should be invited to participate. This can be an excellent introduction to the work of the school council. Sub-committees make recommendations to council, so it is an opportunity for opinions and ideas to be heard. Sub-committees must have at least three members including at least one school council member.

Council meetings are normally open to the school community and conducted according to standard meeting requirements as described in the Standing Orders. Visitors or observers can be present at council meetings with the agreement of the principal and a decision of council. Visitors have a right to speak but must do so through the person chairing the meeting (usually the president).

Engaging the community

Consultation provides members of the school community with an opportunity to provide input into the decision-making process of council. However, it can sometimes mean that only the vocal few have their ideas and opinions heard. On key issues, school council should seek direct input and engagement from its community in addition to consultation.

This approach to community engagement can be extended to the president and principal regularly conducting small invitee community forums.

The aim is to engage the community in school council work and to also reflect the school community's input through the decision-making process. The result of such actions is a greater belief and confidence by the community in its school council.

Addressing concerns and complaints

A president is likely, from time to time, to receive a complaint about the school, either verbally or in writing. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the following steps can be taken:

- if the complaint relates to a function of the school's council, then the matter should be brought to the attention of the council. Ask the complainant to put their concern in writing and address it to the council. The complaint should be discussed at a council meeting. The principal as the executive officer should contact the complainant advising how the matter has been or is proposed to be resolved
- if the matter relates to the operation of the school, for example, a complaint regarding a teacher, class structure, subject timetable, or similar, the complainant should be advised the matter is not a school council matter and should be directed to contact the principal to discuss their concerns. The principal would then manage the complaint
- a written complaint should be noted on the council meeting agenda as incoming correspondence with no further action required from the council
- if the complaint is about the principal, the complainant should be advised to contact the regional office.

Many complaints arise from miscommunication or lack of communication. A culture of respectful and appropriate communication from the council may reduce complaints.

Some concerns raised by parents are complex; however in all cases an open, consistent approach that is courteous, efficient and fair best addresses parent concerns. Such an approach provides opportunities to build partnerships between schools and families.

When dealing with complaints, the principal and the president must ensure confidentiality and privacy of the matter.

The Department requires schools to develop a policy and procedures to address parent complaints. This policy should be developed by the principal in collaboration with parents and the school community and be consistent with the Department's parent complaints policy.

Resources and links

School Policy and Advisory Guide – School Councils

→ www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/governance/Pages/councils.aspx

School Councils

→ www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/management/community/Pages/schoolcouncils.aspx

School Policy and Advisory Guide – Parent Complaints

→ www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/community/pages/parentcomplaints.aspx

For further advice, school council members can email the School Operations and Governance Unit at: school.council@edumail.vic.gov.au

Handout A1

How effective is your leadership

As president you have a responsibility for the effectiveness of your council. You help set the agenda for council meetings, chair the meetings and act as a spokesperson for school council. Use this chart to assess your effectiveness and that of your council.

	Never	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Always
1. I meet the principal before every school council meeting to discuss the agenda and any issues of concern.									
2. I make myself available to the principal and the school whenever needed.									
3. I am open, fair and candid in my dealings with all council colleagues.									
4. I support all council colleagues and ensure they are heard at council meetings.									
5. I look for opportunities to build relationships with others in the local community, particularly influential individuals and groups.									
6. I understand and refer to the school council code of conduct and Council Standing Orders at every meeting.									
7. Our school council meetings are conducted according to Standing Orders and always run to time.									
8. Our school council minutes are a true and accurate record of our meetings.									
9. I make it my business to report back to the school community after every school council meeting.									

10. Three things I might do to increase the effectiveness of my leadership are:

a)

b)

c)

Handout B1

Scenarios for school council presidents

As president, how do you handle these situations?

Situation	Response
<p>1. Your council meeting is about to start. Your membership according to the council constituting Order is 14 (seven parent members, four Department staff members including the principal, and three community members). Two of your parent members are Department employees and one community position remains unfilled.</p> <p>Present at tonight's meeting are the principal, three teachers, two community members (including the president) and four parents, one of whom is a Department employee. Do you have a quorum?</p>	
<p>2. One council member continually dominates school council meetings no matter what agenda item is being discussed. You are aware that some other members hardly speak at meetings.</p>	
<p>3. You receive a letter from a parent upset at how the principal has handled a situation that resulted in her son being suspended for three days. The parent believes the suspension was not warranted and the principal was victimising her son. The parent wants this matter raised at school council and plans to attend the next council meeting to see that it is.</p>	
<p>4. You are about to close the school council meeting when a council member indicates he wishes to have a matter discussed. He starts by saying some parents are concerned about the behaviour of a teacher outside school hours.</p>	

Handout B1

Scenarios for school council presidents

As president, how do you handle these situations?

Situation	Response
<p>5. Your council has been considering a contentious issue for several meetings. Finally a motion has been put and the voting sees five votes for and five votes against. As president and chair, your vote went for the affirmative. Now what do you do?</p>	
<p>6. The finance sub-committee has recommended that council not renew the council's contract with the current cleaners. It recommends the school should hire a new cleaner, who is the brother-in-law of the principal.</p>	
<p>7. School council decides it is time to review the school dress code and sets up a working party to consider this. Department policy states the community must be consulted on changes to the school's dress code. How should you proceed?</p>	
<p>8. As president of the school council, you are approached by a small group of staff members who would like to have a discussion with you about the school. You feel this is positive and agree to meet with them. At the meeting the group begins to make direct comments about their dissatisfaction with some teacher colleagues and the principal.</p>	

