

SCHOOL COUNCIL

TERMS OF REFERENCE

LATHLAIN PRIMARY



**MODEL TERMS OF REFERENCE
FOR UNINCORPORATED COUNCILS/BOARDS
Effective: July 2018**

CONTENTS

1	Name of Council.....	2
2	Definitions	2
3	Purpose of Council	2
4	Functions of the Council	3
5	Limits of Functions	4
6	Qualifications for membership of Council	4
7	Roles of Office Bearers	5
8	Elections and appointment of members.....	7
9	Council meetings and proceedings.....	9
10	Quorum at Council meetings	11
11	Motions at Council meetings.....	11
12	Resolutions at Council meetings	12
13	Closing an ordinary Council meeting to the public	13
14	Disputes and Mediation	13
15	Cessation or termination of membership of the Council.....	14
16	Transition provisions.....	15

1 Name of Council

The name of the Council is
LATHLAIN PRIMARY SCHOOL COUNCIL.

2 Definitions

In these rules, unless the contrary intention appears-

- “Annual public meeting” is the annual meeting in which the Council presents to the school community an annual report based on the Council’s functions **(SER r.117)**.
- “Board” means the council of an Independent Public School."Council" means the Council referred to in rule 1, established in **SEA s.125**.
- “Director General¹” means the chief executive officer of the Department of Education as defined in **SEA s.229**.
- “Ordinary meeting” means a meeting held by determination of the Council **(SER r.115(1))**.
- “Parent” in relation to a child, means a person who at law has responsibility –
 - For the long term care, welfare and development of the child; or
 - For the day to day care, welfare and development of the child **(SEA s.4)**.
- “PCA” means **Parliamentary Commissioner Act 1971**.
- “Minister” means a body corporate with the name “Minister for Education” **(SEA s.214(1))**.
- “SEA” means **School Education Act 1999**.
- “SER” means **School Education Regulations 2000**.
- “Special meeting” means a meeting of the Council called for by written notice to the chairperson by parents of students at the school for a specific purpose **(SER r.118)**.
- “Student” means a person who is enrolled at the school **(SEA s.4)**.
- “Terms of Reference” means these rules that will apply to the Council and members.

3 Purpose of Council

3.1

The Council is formed with the fundamental purpose of enabling parents and members of the community to engage in activities that are in the best interests of students and will enhance the education provided by the school.

¹ All but one of the functions of the Director General mentioned henceforth have been delegated from the Director General to the Deputy Director General, Schools, under the current delegation instruments.

4 Functions of the Council

4.1

The Council has the following functions:

To take part in:

- a) establishing and reviewing from time to time, the school's objectives, priorities and general policy directions **(SEA s.128(a)(i))**;
- b) the planning of financial arrangements necessary to fund those objectives, priorities and directions **(SEA s.128(a)(ii))**;²
- c) evaluating the school's performance in achieving them **(SEA s.128(a)(iii))**; and
- d) formulating codes of conduct for students at the school **(SEA s.128(c))**.

4.2

With the approval of the Director General to:

- a) take part in the selection of, but not the appointment of, the school principal or any other member of the teaching staff **(SEA s.129(2))**³.

4.3

To approve:

- a) of a charge or contribution determined by the principal for the provision of certain materials, services and facilities **(SEA s.99(4))**;
- b) of the costs determined by the principal to be paid for participation in an extra cost optional component of the school's educational program **(SEA s.100(3))**;
- c) of the items determined by the principal to be supplied by a student for the student's personal use in the school's educational program **(SEA s.108(2))**; and
- d) of an agreement or arrangement for advertising or sponsorship in relation to a government school **(SEA s.216(5))**.

4.4

To determine in consultation with students, their parents and staff a dress code for students when they are attending or representing the school **(SEA s.128(d))**.

4.5

To provide advice to the principal of the school on:

- a) a general policy concerning the use in school activities of prayers, songs and material based on religious, spiritual or moral values being used in a school activity as part of religious education **(SEA s.70)**; and

² The principal submits the school's budget to the Council for consideration, endorsement and inclusion in the school development plan. Endorsement from the school council must be obtained for any major revision to the budget, which has an impact on the original programs and priorities (Section 5.1.4 Department of Education's *Financial Management in Schools Finance and Accounting* policy)

³ A council of a school that is not an Independent Public School may apply to the Director General or delegate to take part in the selection of, but not the appointment of, the school principal or any other member of the teaching staff. The Director General's delegate for a school that is not an Independent Public School is the Deputy Director General, Schools; and only for schools in their region the Regional Executive Director. An Independent Public School board takes part in the selection of, but not the appointment of, the school principal. An Independent Public School board may apply to the Director General or delegate to take part in the selection of, but not the appointment, of any other member of the teaching staff. Where the school is an Independent Public School, the Director General's delegate is the school Principal.

- b) allowing time for the special religious education of students in the school, but the total number of hours so allowed in a school year is not to exceed 40 **(SEA s.69(2))**.

4.6

To promote the school in the community **(SEA s.128(b))**.

4.7

To note the school's Funding Agreement (with Schedules).

5 Limits of Functions

5.1

The Council cannot:

- a) intervene in the control or management of a school **(SEA s.132(a))**;
- b) intervene in the educational instruction of students **(SEA s.132(b))**;
- c) exercise authority over teaching staff or other persons employed at the school **(SEA s.132(c))**; or
- d) performance manage the principal or any other Department of Education employee **(SEA 132(c))**;
- e) intervene in the management or operation of a school fund **(SEA s.132(d))**; and
- f) purchase property **(SEA 131)**;

5.2

The Council is not permitted to borrow money, or obtain funds for the school.⁴

5.3

The Director General may give directions in writing to a Council with respect to the performance of its functions, either generally or in relation to a particular matter, and the Council is to give effect to any such direction **(SEA s.135(1)(2))**.

6 Qualifications for membership of Council

6.1

Membership of the Council will be drawn from the following categories:

- a) parents of students at the school **(SEA s.127(1)(a))**;
- b) members of the general community **(SEA s.127(1)(b))**;
- c) staff of the school **(SEA s.127(1)(c))**;
- d) the principal is automatically a member of the Council **(SEA s.127(2))**;
Staff who are also parents or community members will only serve on the Council in their capacity as a Department of Education employee. Such a person will only be on the Council in the category of staff membership **(SEA s.127(3))**.

*Guideline*The number of members is determined by the council however it must be at least 5 and not more than 15. (SER r.106(1)(a)(2))

If the council is a joint council the Director General will determine the number and composition of members. (SER r.106(1)(c)).

6.3 The number of members of the Council will be up to twelve members

6.4

The Council will determine its composition:

- a) having regard to the nature of the student population of the school and the social, cultural, lingual, economic or geographic factors that may be relevant to the school (**SER r.107(1)(a)(i)**);
- b) having regard to the functions of the Council and any changes in those functions (**SER r.107(1)(a)(ii)**); and

6.5

The composition of the council will be:

- i. One members of the general community;
- ii. Up to three staff of the school in addition to the principal;
- iii. Six parents;
- iv. a member of another association of the school referred to in **SEA s.149** in relation to the school or group of schools that the school belongs (**SER r.107(1)(b)(i)(ii)(iii)(iv)**).

Guideline

An example of another association referred to in SEA s.149 (see iv above) is an alumni association, but not a Parents and Citizens' Association. A Parents and Citizens' Association may nominate in the membership category of parents or general community members as is relevant to the nominee (SER r.107(3)). See 8.3.

6.6

Parents and members of the general community will form the majority of the members of the Council (**SEA s.127(4)**); and at least one of this majority will be a parent member (**SER r.107(2)**).

6.7

The Council may co-opt a member of the local community to be a member of the Council for such period, or in relation to such matters, as determined by the Council where that person's experience, skills or qualifications would enable him or her to make a contribution to the Council's functions (**SER r.112**).

6.8

Students at the school who are not members may attend Council meetings and take part in discussions, but without having a right to vote or being counted in determining a quorum (**SEA s.140(b)**).

7 Roles of Office Bearers

7.1

Chairperson

The role of the chairperson is to:

- a) work in partnership with the Principal;
- b) ensure a wide variety of people are considered for membership and that members are representative of the school community, for example gender, social, cultural, lingual, economic or geographic factors relevant to the school;
- c) chair and convene Council meetings (**SER r.115(2)**);
- d) ensure minutes of meetings are taken and reviewed;
- e) provide leadership to the Council;
- f) manage the business of the Council;
- g) declare the result of decisions and motions;

- h) uphold Council decisions;
- i) works with the Principal to induct members;
- j) ensure the Council stays focused on supporting the school to achieve the best outcomes for students;
- k) prepare and present an annual report to members and the school community at annual public meetings **(SER r.117(c))**;
- l) comply with any directions of the Council in relation to the venue and time of meeting and giving notice of the meeting **(SER r.115(2))**;
- m) resolve disputes as required;
- n) represent the school in the community and at formal functions; and
- o) facilitate mediation meetings as required.

7.2

Secretary⁵

The role of the secretary will be a school support officer, paid to attend Council meetings, and is to:

- a) attend meetings, take notes and write minutes
- b) distribute minutes to members within 14 days of the meeting
- c) support creation of an agenda, liaising with the Chairperson, Principal and receiving agenda items from other members
- d) distribute the agenda to members five days prior to meetings
- e) co-ordinate the correspondence of the Council;
- f) ensure that full and correct minutes of the meetings and proceedings of the Council are kept in a minute book and are signed off by the chairperson after every meeting;
- g) serve formal notice to Council members and the community at the direction of the chairperson, for:
 - i. ordinary, special and annual public meetings; and
 - ii. motions;
- h) keep and maintain in an up to date condition a register of the members of the Council and their postal and residential addresses;
- i) keep a list of nominees of members of the general community that may be appointed to the Council in the category of general community membership **(SER r.108(2)(b))**;
- j) keep and maintain this Terms of Reference and have copies of this Terms of Reference available to all members;
- k) ensure every member has access to inspect the records and documents of the Council;
- l) have custody of all books, documents, records and registers of the Council; and
- m) have custody of all other records held by the Council.

Guideline

In regard to the secretary's record keeping role (h) (secretary) it may be useful to have two custodians of the records and documents of the Council, in the event that the first custodian is unavailable.

NB Please note that it is advisable to obtain consent first, as Councils may be in breach of the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth) by keeping phone numbers on the register without consent.

⁵ Schools may provide support to the council through the school support staff who may undertake the role of the secretary.

7.3

A member may at any reasonable time inspect the books, documents, records and securities of the Council. Members may make a copy of or take an extract, but have no right to remove the books, documents, records or registers of the Council.

8 Elections and appointment of members

8.1

Members of the Council are appointed for a term not exceeding three years (**SER r.110(1)(a)**).

8.2

Members may be reappointed for a further term once or more than once (**SER r.110(1)(b)**).

8.3

The Parents and Citizens' Association may nominate one of its members to be considered for membership of the Council in the membership category of parents or general community members as is relevant to the nominee (**SER r.107(3)**).

Guideline

A Parents and Citizens' Association can nominate one of their members for either a) a parent or b) a community member position depending on the individual circumstances of the nominee. If the Parents and Citizens' Association nominates a parent member, that nomination is treated the same as any other parent nomination and is required to face an election (with all parents voting and all parent candidates considered, not just Parents and Citizens' Association members) if there are more nominations than positions.¹ If the Parents and Citizens' Association nominates a community member, that nomination is treated the same as any other community nomination and is considered by the Council with the other community member nominees. Community members are appointed, not elected.

8.4

Any member appointed or elected to a casual vacancy on the Council will hold office for the residual period of the predecessor's term of office (**SER r.110(2)**).

8.5

The chairperson is elected by and from its membership (**SEA s.127(6)**).

Guideline

It is good practice for the Council to review on an annual basis, for example at the first meeting of the year, who will undertake the role of Chair.

8.6

The principal of the school will invite nominations from all persons in each category to fill vacancies in the Council membership (**SER r.108(1)**).

Guideline

*People who are eligible to nominate for a category are also eligible to vote for that category. That is, only parents vote for the parent members, only students vote for the student members and only staff vote for the staff members. (**SER r.109**) Each parent whose name and address has been provided to the school at the time of the application for enrolment is eligible to nominate and is to be provided with the opportunity to vote where an election is to be held. (**SER r.109**) For example, where a parent position becomes vacant on a Council of a secondary school in Term 4, all parents are to be provided with the opportunity to nominate (and vote if an election is to be held). This would include the parents of Year 6 students whose enrolment has been accepted for the following year.*

8.7

If there are more nominees than places available on the Council:

- a) the principal will conduct an election to appoint parents, staff and students **(SER r.108(2)(a)(c)(d))**; and
- b) in the category 'community members' the choice of nominee will be decided by the Council rather than by election **(SER r.108(2)(b))**.

8.8

Only those people eligible for a position are eligible to vote for representatives for that position **(SER r.109(1)(2)(3)(4)(5))**.

8.9

Parent members are to be elected from and by parents **(SER r.108(2)(a))**.

Parents eligible to vote are:

- a) each parent whose name and address has been provided to the school **SEA s.16(1)(b)(ii)(I) (SER r.109(1)(a))**; or
- b) if neither parent's name and address has been so provided in relation to a particular student, each person who is responsible for the student **(SER r.109(1)(b))**.

8.10

Staff members are to be elected from and by the staff of the school **(SER r.108(2)(c))**. Staff members who are eligible to vote are each person who is employed at the school under **SEA s.235(1)**, and whose usual place of work is at the school **(SER r.109(3))**.

8.11

There will not be an election to appoint community members. The Council may appoint suitably qualified persons from the list of nominees by vote in a meeting **(SER r.108(2)(b))**.

8.12

There will not be an election to appoint co-opted members. The Council will appoint a person of the local community having such skills, experience, or qualifications as would enable the person to make a contribution to the Council's functions for a specified time period **(SER r.112)**.

8.13

A person will not vote in respect of more than one category of membership of the Council **(SER r.109(5))**.

8.14

Voting in Council elections will be conducted in written form (as opposed to a show of hands).

8.15

The school principal is responsible for the proper conduct of all elections **(SER r.108(2))**.

8.16

A person who wishes to nominate to serve on the Council will notify the school principal in writing using the prescribed nomination form by the due date in order to be considered. The principal will keep a record of nominations received.

8.17 Appointments to the Council will not be made until after a Screening Clearance Number has been issued by the Department of Education’s Screening Unit (as is applicable to the membership category).⁶

9 Council meetings and proceedings

9.1

The Council must meet together to undertake Council functions for not less than four ordinary meetings in each year.

9.2

Ordinary Meetings

a) “ordinary meeting” means a meeting held by determination of the Council (**SER r.115(1)**); and

b) A Council must hold at least four (4) ordinary meetings per year.⁷

9.3

The chairperson will give to the school community not less than fourteen days formal notice of an ordinary meeting.

Guideline

It may be useful to give 14 days formal notice of an ordinary meeting and to specify in the formal notice -

a) when and where the ordinary meeting concerned is to be held; and

b) the agenda.

9.4

The Council determines that formal notice will be in writing via formats/tools decided by the Council. These will include the term planner and school newsletter.

Guideline

The Council defines formal notice. It may be useful to define formal notice as in writing via mail, fax or email. It may be useful to set out in the formal notice when and where the meeting is to be held, and the agenda.

NB: In some situations, such as remote schools, verbal notification may be considered appropriate.

9.5 Annual public meeting

a) “Annual public meeting” is the meeting held once in every calendar year that is open to the public (**SER r.117(a)**).

b) An annual report will be presented at the meeting to advise the school community of the performance of the Council in relation to its functions since the previous annual public meeting (**SER r.117(c)**).

9.6

The chairperson will give to all members and parents not less than 14 days formal notice of an annual public meeting (**SER r.117(b)**).

Guideline

It would be useful to specify in the formal notice –

a) When and where the annual public meeting is to be held;

b) The agenda, for example -

i. First, the consideration of the annual report of the school council;

ii. second, any other business requiring consideration by the school council at

⁶ Criminal History Screening policy and procedures and School Councils and Boards policy and procedures

⁷ School Compliance Program, Schools Resourcing and Support, Department of Education

9.7

A special meeting:

- a) Is a meeting called for by families of students at the school for a particular purpose **(SER r.118)**.
- b) will be held by determination of the Council **(SER r.115(1))**; or
- c) will be called for by:
 - i. at least 20 families of students at the school **(SER r.118(1)(b)(i))**;
or
 - ii. at least half the number of families of students at the school, whichever is the lesser number of families, **(SER r.118(1)(b)(ii))**;
and
 - iii. a formal notice to the chairperson, which will state the purpose for which the special meeting concerned is required; and be signed by the families who called for the special meeting.

9.8

The chairperson is not to convene a special meeting if the purposes of the proposed meeting are not relevant to the Council's functions **(SER r.118(3))**.

9.9

A special meeting is to deal only with matters relevant to the purposes set out in the notice received by the chairperson **(SER r.118(4))**.

9.10

The chairperson will give to all members and the school community not less than seven days formal notice of a special meeting.

Guideline

It may be useful to give to all members and the school community 14 days formal notice of a special meeting. It may be useful if the notice specifies -

- a) when and where the ordinary meeting concerned is to be held; and*
- b) the agenda.*

9.11

The chairperson will convene the special meeting within 30 days of receiving the request in writing.

9.12

The chairperson may, with the consent of a meeting at which a quorum is present, and must, if so directed by such a meeting, adjourn that meeting from time to time and from place to place.

9.13

No business will be transacted at an adjourned meeting other than business left unfinished or on the agenda at the time when the meeting was adjourned.

9.14

When a meeting is adjourned for a period of 30 days or more, the chairperson will give formal notice of the adjourned meeting as if that meeting were a fresh meeting.

9.15

The Council will agree on the manner that the secretary will communicate notice of ordinary, special and annual public meetings to members and the school community.

9.16 Meetings for the Council and the Parents and Citizens' Association are to be held separately.

9.17 Subject to this Terms of Reference, the Council will determine its own procedures **(SEA s.136)**.

10 Quorum at Council meetings

10.1

At a meeting 60% per cent of members present in person at a Council meeting constitute a quorum.

Guideline

At a meeting 60 per cent of members present in person could constitute a quorum. The number should be determined taking into consideration the requirement for an absolute majority of all members for a motion to be passed. See 12.7

10.2

If within 30 minutes after the time specified for the holding of a meeting of which formal notice has been given:

- a) a quorum is not present, the meeting lapses and will be rescheduled;
or
- b) otherwise than as a result of a request, notice or action, the meeting stands adjourned until such time as the Council agrees to reconvene the meeting.

10.3

If within 30 minutes of the time for the resumption of adjourned meeting a quorum is not present, the members who are present in person may nevertheless proceed with the business of the meeting as if a quorum were present.

11 Motions at Council meetings

11.1

A motion may be moved by a member with full voting rights, and voted on by a member with full voting rights, at an ordinary meeting, special meeting, or annual public meeting.

11.2

The chairperson will be given seven days' notice of a motion to be proposed at a meeting.

Guideline

It would be reasonable for the chairperson to be given 7 days formal notice of a motion to be proposed at a meeting.

11.3 The chairperson will give five days formal notice to members that a motion will be proposed at a meeting.

Guideline

It would be reasonable for the chairperson to give 5 days formal notice to members that a motion will be proposed at a meeting.

11.4

The Council will agree on the manner that the secretary will communicate notice of motions to members and the school community.

12 Resolutions at Council meetings

12.1

Each Council member is entitled to one vote only (**SER r.119(3)**).

12.2

A co-opted Council member is not entitled to a vote (**SEA s.140(a)**).

12.3

Students attending Council meetings that are not members do not have a right to vote or be counted in determining a quorum (**SEA s.140(b)**).

12.4

Procedures for counting of votes will be show of hands unless a secret ballot is agreed upon by members prior to a vote being taken.

12.5

Voting on issues will be recorded in the minute book.

12.6

A decision of the Council will not take effect unless it has been made by an absolute majority (**SER r.119(2)**).

12.7

An absolute majority, in relation to a Council for a school, means a majority comprising enough of the current members of the Council for their number to be more than 50 per cent of the number of offices (whether vacant or not) of members of the Council (**SER r.119(1)**).

Guideline

If a council has 15 positions then an absolute majority is 8 votes. If only 8 members attend a meeting, 8 votes are required to form an absolute majority.

12.8

A motion put to the vote:

- a) may be moved and voted on at an ordinary, special or annual public meeting; and
- b) will be decided by an absolute majority of votes.

12.9 A motion which is passed will be declared by the Chairperson as a resolution. A declaration by the Chairperson is evidence of the fact.

13 Closing an ordinary Council meeting to the public

13.1

Meetings of the Council are generally to be open to the public **(SER r.115(3))**.

13.2

The Council will not close to members of the public an annual public meeting or special meeting **(SER r.115(3))**.

13.3

The Council may decide to close an ordinary meeting or part of an ordinary meeting if it deals with any of the following:

- a) a matter affecting a person who is employed at the school **(SER r.116(a))**;
- b) the personal affairs of any person **(SER r.116(b))**;
- c) a contract entered into, or which may be entered into, by the Council and which relates to a matter to be discussed at the meeting **(SER r.116(c))**;
- d) legal advice obtained, or which may be obtained, by the Council and which relates to a matter to be discussed at the meeting **(SER r.116(d))**;
- e) a matter that if disclosed, would reveal:
 - i. information that has a commercial value to a person and that is held by, or is about, a person other than the Council **(SER r.116(e)(i))**; or
 - ii. information about the business, professional, commercial or financial affairs of a person and that is held by, or is about, a person other than the Council **(SER r.116(e)(ii))**; and
- f) information which is the subject of a direction given **PCA s.23(1)(a) (SER r.116(f))**.

13.4

A decision to close an ordinary meeting or part of an ordinary meeting and the reason for the decision are to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting **(SER r.116(2))**.

14 Disputes and Mediation

14.1

The grievance procedure set out in this rule applies to disputes under these rules between:

- a) a Council member and another member;
- b) a Council member and the principal of the school;
- c) a Council member and the chairperson; or
- d) a Council member and co-opted members.

14.2

The parties to the dispute should meet and discuss the matter in dispute, and, if possible, resolve the dispute within 14 days after the dispute comes to the attention of all parties.

14.3

If the parties are unable to resolve the dispute at the meeting, a meeting may be held in the presence of a mediator.

14.4

The mediator will be-

- a) a person chosen by agreement between the parties; or
- b) in the absence of agreement-
 - i. in the case of a dispute between a member and another member, a person appointed by the chairperson of the Council;
 - ii. in the case of a dispute between a member or relevant non-member and the Council, a person who is a mediator appointed to, or employed with, a not for profit organisation.

14.5

A member of the Council can be a mediator.

14.6

The mediator cannot be a member who is a party to the dispute.

14.7

The mediator, in conducting the mediation, will-

- a) give the parties to the mediation process every opportunity to be heard;
- b) allow due consideration by all parties of any written statement submitted by any party; and
- c) ensure that natural justice is accorded to the parties to the dispute throughout the mediation process.

14.8

The mediator will not determine the dispute.

14.9

The mediation will be confidential and without prejudice.

14.10

If the mediation process does not result in the dispute being resolved, the parties may seek advice from the Regional Executive Director.

Guideline

Councils are encouraged to adopt a Code of Conduct, review the code regularly and include the code as part of the induction for new members.

15 Cessation or termination of membership of the Council

15.1

The office of a member of the Council becomes a casual vacancy if the member:

- a) becomes ineligible to hold office as a member (**SER r.111(1)(a)**);
- b) resigns by written notice delivered to the Council (**SER r.111(1)(b)**); or
- c) is removed from office by the Director General (**SER r.111(1)(c)**).

15.2

The Council may remove a person as a member of the Council on the grounds that the person:

- a) has neglected his or her duty as a member **(SER r.111(3)(a))**;
- b) has misbehaved or is incompetent **(SER r.111(3)(b))**;
- c) is suffering from mental or physical incapacity, other than temporary illness, impairing the performance of his or her function as a member **(SER r.111(3)(c))**; or
- d) has been absent, without leave or reasonable excuse, from three consecutive meetings of which the member has had notice **(SER r.111(3)(d))**.

15.3

The Council will not remove a person as a member unless the person has been given a reasonable opportunity to show that he or she should not be removed from office **(SER r.111(4)(a))**.

15.4

A decision of the Council to remove a person from office is to be made by resolution of a majority comprising enough of the members for their number to be at least two thirds of the number of offices, whether vacant or not, of members of the Council **(SER r.111(4)(b))**.

16 Transition provisions

16.1

At the final meeting each year, members of the Council will determine a schedule for reappointment or election of members for the following year.