

# Developing Standing Orders

A School Representative Body may develop Standing Orders designed to assist it to operate effectively and efficiently. It is good practice to establish Standing Orders and review them each year following completion of the election process.

Standing Orders typically comprise:

- Reference to the Constitution – which lists the membership structure (*by membership category and numbers*)
- An outline of Office Bearer positions and committees
- A description of meeting procedures - how the School Representative Body will operate including
  - length of meetings
  - agendas
  - minutes
  - quorum requirements
  - meeting arrangements
  - open and closed meetings
  - effective decision making
  - member absence from meetings
  - arrangements for extensions of meetings
  - meeting etiquette

The Northern Territory Education Regulations set out certain requirements in relation to meetings of School Representative Bodies.

These requirements cannot be overridden by the Standing Orders.

School Representative Bodies are also encouraged to include information to assist them to effectively and efficiently conduct meetings. This information may cover agenda, meeting etiquette, length of meetings and making informed decisions.

# Sample Standing Orders

(NAME OF SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE BODY)

## STANDING ORDERS

### SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE BODY MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the School Representative Body according to our Constitution is a total of X members:

- X Parent Members
- X Teachers Members
- X Invited Members
- X students (for senior schools only)
- Principal

### OFFICE BEARERS

The School Representative Body must have the following Office Bearer positions:

- Chair
- Treasurer
- Secretary

### ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

In the election of an Office Bearer, if the votes are tied, the School Representative Body will decide the outcome by holding a new election. If a new election is held and is also tied, the School Representative Body may decide to conduct further elections until the election of Office Bearers is decided. The Education Act does not allow for any member to have a deciding (*casting*) vote in the event of a tied decision.

The Chair has one vote **only**, the same as every other member.

### COMMITTEES

Each committee will be chaired by a member of the School Representative Body unless otherwise decided by the Body. A committee must include at least one School Representative Body member and have at least 3 members. The School Representative Body will have the following committees:

#### **Example only;**

- Finance & Facilities
- Infrastructure
- Grounds and Landscaping

# Meetings

## REGULAR

**Example only;** The School Representative Body will meet twice a term on the first Monday of each month. The meeting will commence at 6.00 pm and will finish no later than 7.30 pm. A motion to extend the meeting for a maximum of 15 minutes must be carried unanimously.

## QUORUM FOR MEETINGS

School Representative Body business cannot proceed unless a quorum is present.

For a quorum to be achieved at a meeting not less than one half of the elected School Representative Body members must be present.

A member may be present at a meeting in person or by video conferencing, teleconferencing or by telephone on speaker.

## MOTIONS

A motion is a formal proposal to take an action of some kind which a School Representative Body considers, discusses and votes on. Once a motion is passed, it becomes a resolution. A Motion Register should be maintained, recording the actual motion, action officer/officers and date for action.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

The School Representative Body will hold its AGM by 15 March each year and at that meeting will:

- Report the proceedings of the representative body for the period since the date of the previous Annual General Meeting through the Chair and Principal
- Present a copy of the Audited accounts

## SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING (SGM)

A Special General Meeting of the School Representative Body may be held at any time decided. The Chair must convene a Special General Meeting when they receive a written request to do so from any of the below:

- Three (3) members of the School Representative Body
- The Chief Executive of the Department
- The Education Minister

The Chair must call a meeting under the preceding paragraph by sending a notice to all members and providing at least three (3) days' notice of the time, date place and object of the meeting.

The business of a Special General Meeting will be confined to the object for which it is called.

## SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE BODY DECISIONS

- Decisions of the School Representative Body will be by a majority of those eligible to vote and who are present at the meeting

- A vote by proxy is not allowed
- Members will vote on a matter and the number of votes for and against will be recorded in the minutes
- Voting will normally be by a show of hands, but a secret ballot may be used for particular issues
- A casting vote is where a presiding person, usually a Chair, has an additional vote where there is a tied decision. In a School Representative Body, the presiding person **does not** have a casting vote as per Regulation 27(10)

### **ABSENCE OF THE CHAIRPERSON AND OTHER MEMBERS FROM A MEETING**

If the Chair is unable to run a School Representative Body meeting, the members will elect a member of the body to Chair the meeting (*other than a teacher, or Principal*). If a member is unable to attend a meeting, an apology should be submitted to the Secretary prior to the meeting.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

If a School Representative Body member or a member of his or her immediate family has any direct conflict of interest (*including a financial interest*) in a subject or matter under discussion at a meeting, that member:

- Must declare the conflict of interest
- Should not participate in deliberations or vote as a member of the representative body in respect of any contract or arrangement in which the member is financially interested and where they otherwise have a conflict of interest

### **AGENDA**

The Secretary shall ensure an agenda is prepared for each general meeting and distribute the agenda, draft minutes from the previous meeting and meeting papers such as committee reports, Principal and Treasurer reports to School Representative Body members no less than five (5) days before the meeting.

### **OPEN AND CLOSED MEETINGS**

Meetings will generally be open to the school community but the School Representative Body may decide that only members may be present at a meeting or part of a meeting where sensitive matters are being discussed. The School Representative Body may decide that those members who have declared a conflict of interest will not participate in the discussion on that agenda item.

### **LENGTH OF MEETINGS AND EXTENSIONS OF MEETING TIMES**

If business has not been concluded within 2 hours, the Chair shall ask the members whether they wish to defer the rest of the business until the next meeting or to extend the meeting. A unanimous motion is necessary if members want to extend the meeting. The meeting will be extended by no more than 15 minutes.

### **MINUTES**

The Secretary will ensure a record of each meeting is kept and draft minutes are prepared after each meeting and distributed to members.

The minutes will record:

- Type of meeting (*e.g. General, Special, Annual General Meeting (AGM)*)
- Date, time and venue of meeting

- Names of attendees and apologies received from members
- Name of Chair
- Declarations of conflict of interest
- Record of the business of the meeting including:
  - Decision on the minutes of the previous meeting
  - Inward and outward correspondence
  - Reports from Principal and Treasurer
  - Reports of any services or committees tabled at the meeting
  - Decisions of the meeting
  - Motions
  - Names of movers and seconders
  - Whether the motion was carried or rejected
  - The number of votes for and against

When the minutes are submitted for confirmation, only questions regarding their accuracy as a record of the meeting are to be raised. Once the minutes have been accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting, they are to be signed by the Chair of that meeting.

Business arising from the minutes is dealt with after the minutes have been confirmed.

### **SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE BODY PRINCIPLES**

The School Representative Body will operate according to the following principles:

- Respectful partnerships
- Clear and honest two-way communication
- Transparent processes
- Democratic, informed decision-making
- Personal and professional integrity
- In the conduct of meetings, the following etiquette will be observed by members:
  - Only one person talks at a time
  - All requests to speak are directed to the Chair
  - All speakers are listened to in respectful silence
  - No 'side conversations' are held
  - Members shall listen to the discussion carefully in order to avoid making points that have already been made or asking questions which have already been answered
  - When the Chair indicates that the topic of discussion is closed, no further comments are made
  - Members shall not use jargon
  - Members will ensure that all electronic devices (*such as mobile phones*) are silenced
  - Members shall stay calm regardless of how difficult or challenging the topic
  - Members will act in accordance with our 'Code of Conduct'