



Introduction to Mitcham Girls High School Governing Council

A Guide for Prospective Members

What is a Governing Council?

- It is the major governing body of the school.
- It is a legally formed body that is given powers to set the key directions of a school.
- It plays an important role in school accountability and improvement processes.
- It endorses the school's Statement of Purpose, and Annual Report.

Objectives of Governing Council

- Assist in the efficient governance of the school.
- Ensure students' best interests are primary.
- Enhance the educational opportunities for students.
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.

What is the function of Governing Council?

- Establish the broad direction and vision of the school (every five years).
- Contribute to the development and monitoring of the Site Improvement Plan.
- Develop, review and update school policies: Student Behaviour Management, School Dress Code, Fundraising, Finance.
- Raise funds for school-related purposes.
- Approve the annual budget and monitor expenditure.
- Report annually to the school community and to DfE.
- Stimulate interest in the school in the wider community.
- Provides support to the Principal in determining the strategic direction of the school.

Governing Council does not ...

- Make decisions in relation to the daily operations of the school.
- Employ teaching staff.
- Represent sectional interests.
- Determine class allocations.
- Discuss individual issues between teachers and students and/or parents
- Purchase land or buildings.
- Enter into hire purchase agreements or obtain credit or loan facilities, unless authorised by the Minister.

Who is on Governing Council?

- There are three categories of membership:
 - Parent members
 - Staff members
 - Community (co-opted) members (optional)
- School councillors are elected for a two-year term.
- Terms, rights and responsibilities of community members are the same as those of elected councillors.

Governing Council Sub Committees

- School councillors would normally sit on at least one sub committee. Sub committees meet once or twice a term.
- Sub Committees:

Finance

The Finance Committee supports the Governing Council, through the Treasurer, to set the Materials and Services Charges for the year; review the proposed budget and check the monthly financial statements presented by the Finance Officer.

Physical Resources

This committee has an input into the development of grounds and buildings so that students can work in an environment that is comfortable, safe and aesthetically pleasing.

Fundraising

Supports fundraising activities in conjunction with the Physical Resources Committee to improve resources for students.

Canteen

The Canteen Committee provides input into the running of the Canteen which aims to provide a financially viable, hygienic food preparation and supply service, adhering to DfE guidelines.

Uniform

The Uniform Committee has the responsibility of regularly reviewing the Uniform Policy and taking advice from parents, students and staff on possible changes to the Dress Code. The committee works closely with students, parents and the Uniform Supplier on issues of quality, uniform styles, costs, etc.

What is the Role of Governing Council Members?

- All school councillors need to respect other members' opinions and support and uphold all council decisions.
- Parent members bring expertise and views to council on behalf of the whole school community.
- DfE members bring educational expertise and views to council on behalf of the whole school community.
- Community representatives tend to bring individual expertise to assist council in specific decisions.

Do I have what it takes to be on Governing Council?

- You need to be keen, but you don't need to be an expert.
- You need to be able to work in a team.
- You do need to be prepared to commit the time needed to ensure the work of council gets done.
- Governing Councils work best when they have people from a variety of backgrounds and have different experiences.

Why would I want to be on Governing Council?

- It's a great way to get involved and have a real say in what your school is doing for its students.
- It's a very good way to help present and future students of the school.
- Your children may feel a greater sense of belonging with the school.

What is the Workload?

- Governing Council must meet at least eight times each year, twice per school term.
- Meetings should be restricted to approximately 2 hours duration.
- Councillors are expected to sit on at least one sub committee.
- Sub committees generally meet at least once each term.

What About the Elections?

- The AGM is held in February or March each year.
- If more candidates nominate than the number of positions available, under the Constitution the principal or delegate will conduct an election prior to the Annual General Meeting (AGM). If the school does not receive nominations to fill all positions, an election will not be conducted, and the candidates will automatically become members.
- If you decide to stand for election, you can arrange for someone to nominate you as a candidate or you can nominate yourself.
- All eligible school community members will be invited to vote electronically in the week prior to the AGM if an election is required.