



PARKSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL  
GOVERNING COUNCIL

Standing Orders

Revised April 2021

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# 1 Guiding Principles of Standing Orders

Governing Councils must conduct their affairs in a manner consistent with recognised meeting practices modified, where necessary, to meet local conditions and the cultural diversity and needs of their communities. Standing Orders for Councils are not prescribed in the Education Act or the Education Regulations, however the Department for Education (DFE) has provided Model Standing Orders to guide Governing Councils, to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Governing Council Constitution.

## Principles:

1. These Standing Orders are intended to ensure that Governing Council procedures are fair and contribute to open, transparent and informed decision-making.
2. These Standing Orders reflect the level of formality appropriate for the nature and scope of the responsibilities exercised at Parkside Primary School Governing Council meetings.
3. These Standing Orders are designed to give the community and decision-makers confidence in the deliberations undertaken at the meeting.

# 2 Governing Council Meetings

4. The meeting schedule for the year will be set at the first meeting of Council for all Council and dates for sub-committee meetings will be set on a term-by-term basis by each Convenor.
5. The Constitution requires the Council to hold an ordinary meeting at least twice in each term and an Annual General Meeting.
6. The Constitution requires the council to hold an Annual General Meeting, once per year (not longer than 16 months apart).
7. The constitution, relating to sub-committees requires the Finance Advisory Committee to meet at least once each term.
8. Notice of meetings will be sent in writing to all members 7 days prior to the date of the meeting.
9. Meetings will start at 7.00pm, shall continue until all business on the agenda is disposed of and should finish no later than 9.30pm.
10. Any member may move that the debate or meeting be adjourned in the event of an individual item exceeding 30 minutes or a meeting continuing past 9.30 p.m.
11. Council will deal with the items of business set down for the meeting in the order in which they appear on the agenda unless otherwise determined by the Chairperson.
12. Under the agenda item "Other Business" members can seek to have additional items addressed at the meeting or be placed on the agenda to be dealt with at a later time
13. Meetings of Council (other than the AGM) are not open meetings. Attendance at meetings of Council by persons other than members of the Council will be by invitation of the Chairperson or resolution of the Council.  
(See Section 3 in relation to the Annual General Meeting.)

# 3 Sub-Committees

14. The Governing Council will determine which sub-committees will be formed to assist the council.
15. Each sub-committee is required to have terms of reference and membership which is approved by the council and reviewed annually.
16. Each sub-committee is to report to the Governing Council at the next meeting and provide the minutes of its meeting (either confirmed or unconfirmed) for noting.

## **4 Annual General Meeting**

17. The Constitution requires a General Meeting of the school community to be held at least once annually, with no more than 16 months lapsing between AGMs.
18. An AGM must be held to elect Councillors, to discuss the finances of the Council or for any other reason relating to the affairs or functions of the Council.
19. At least 14 days written notice of the AGM must be given to the school community, specifying the date, time and place of the meeting.
20. The AGM is chaired by the Chairperson. The Principal acts as Returning Officer for the election of Governing Council members.
21. Nomination, voting and election of Governing Council members shall be in accordance with the DFE "Returning Officers' Guide to Governing Council Elections" with reference to Parkside Primary School Governing Council Election documentation.
22. Proxy voting is not permitted at the Annual General Meeting.

## **5 Attendance**

23. To ensure expeditious and effective conduct of Council and sub-committee business, Councillors are expected to attend at least 70% of meetings scheduled.
24. Apologies should be forwarded to the Chairperson or the Secretary by phone or e-mail 48 hours prior to the meeting wherever possible. It will be assumed that Councillors are attending a meeting unless an apology is submitted.
25. A quorum is the fixed minimum number of Council members who must be present to make the proceedings valid. A quorum at a meeting of the Governing Council is a simple majority (half plus one) of the filled positions on the Council (currently 6). If after 30 minutes from the meeting start time a quorum is not present, the meeting must adjourn.
26. Should the number of apologies lead the Chairperson to suspect that a quorum will not be formed, the Chairperson will consult with the Executive Committee to re-schedule the meeting to the next closest practical date, bearing in mind that Council is required to meet at least twice a term.
27. Meetings will be called to start at 7.00 pm on Tuesdays as identified in the Governing Council meeting calendar. If a quorum is not present within 20 minutes of the starting time, the meeting will be re-scheduled.
28. If a Councillor is absent from three consecutive meetings without leave of absence approved by the Council, their membership of the Council will cease. Acceptance of an apology at a Council meeting will be deemed a grant of leave of absence. This must be noted in the minutes.

## **6 Agenda**

29. The agenda of Council shall be set by the Executive, being made up of the Principal, Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.
30. The Executive Committee will meet in the week prior to the next scheduled meeting to determine the content and priorities of the agenda.
31. The agenda and associated papers will be distributed to Council members at least 3 days prior to the next scheduled meeting wherever possible.
32. All Councillors have a responsibility to contribute items to be considered for inclusion in the agenda.
33. Submission of agenda items should be made to the Chairperson or Secretary before the Executive Committee meeting for the next scheduled meeting.

## **7 Preparation for Meetings**

34. Councillors are required to contribute to the formulation of the agenda.
35. Councillors are required to read all information distributed prior to meetings to allow them to make fully informed decisions at meetings.

## **8 Visitors to Meetings**

36. Governing Council is elected to represent the views of the school community in the running of the school. While Governing Council meetings are normally conducted as closed meetings, by prior arrangement members of the school community can meet with Governing Council to discuss a particular issue.
37. Where possible invited guests or individuals who would like to present an item to Council for consideration will be accommodated first on the agenda and required to leave at the conclusion of discussions relating to their item.
38. Visitors to meetings are not eligible to vote.

## **9 Minutes**

39. Minutes will be kept of all meetings and will be an accurate record of all resolutions of the meeting. Minutes will be concise, unambiguous, and sufficiently clear to be followed by persons not present at the meeting
40. Minutes are a permanent record and signed copies are required to be kept.
41. All motions will be recorded and read back to ensure they are correct.
42. The minutes will contain a list of those present, apologies, names of guests or observers, outcomes of business in the order it was dealt with, copies of reports, copies of incoming and outgoing correspondence and state the date and time of the next meeting.
43. Minutes of Governing Council belong to the Council and are to be made available to any member. However, Council may also choose to release the minutes or make them available more publicly. If a member of the school community makes a request through the Chairperson to have access to minutes, Council will make a determination in relation to the access.

## **10 Action Items**

44. Action items will be noted in the minutes, with the name of the Councillor responsible for the task.
45. Councillors who agree to perform a task for Council are required to report on the progress of their activity to the Executive Meeting. This will allow the Executive Committee to place the item back on the agenda as appropriate.

## **11 Responsibilities of Office Holders**

46. The Principal and Governing Council Office Holders will be open to all ideas and suggestions and value all contributions made by Councillors.
47. Respectful debate will be encouraged.
48. All relevant information must be made available to Councillors in sufficient time to allow proper consideration of issues.

## **12 Conduct at Meetings**

49. The Chairperson of the Governing Council shall chair Council meetings. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson, shall chair the meeting. If there is no deputy the Council members shall choose one of the members to chair the meeting.
50. A person addressing the Council shall be heard in silence unless a point of order is raised. All discussion will be directed through the Chairperson with only one person to speak at a time.
51. The Chairperson shall maintain order and conduct the meeting in accordance with these Standing Orders.
52. When the motion is called for a vote, discussion will conclude, and the motion will be read, moved and seconded before the vote is taken.
53. All Councillors are expected to contribute to discussions and to behave appropriately and respect the rights of others to have and express their point of view.
54. A member of Council must not, while at a meeting:
  - (a) behave in an improper or disorderly manner; or
  - (b) cause an interruption or interrupt another member who is speaking.
55. Personal attacks directed at Councillors, staff or other members of the school community are not acceptable.
56. The Chairperson will rule on any instances of interruptions or improper meeting conduct by members. The Chairperson may seek an apology, have a short adjournment, ask the member to leave the meeting or adjourn the meeting until the next scheduled date. The Chairperson's ruling will be final.

## **13 Conflict/Difficult Discussions**

57. Each member needs to be clear when discussing a topic raised for discussion.
58. Each member should manage and remove their personal emotions from the topic being discussed.
59. If members cannot reach consensus on the topic being discussed within 30 minutes, the Chairperson can, at their discretion call:
  - a tea break for 10 minutes to give members a break and to regain their composure.
  - cease the conversation and reconvene the topic of discussion at end of the meeting
  - where appropriate, move the agenda item to the next meeting for continued discussion and additional information.
60. The Chairperson has the discretion to declare a topic of discussion closed, if they determine the discussion is unproductive and becoming negative – to preserve relationships on council.
61. All members shall remain calm and professional regardless of how difficult or challenging the topic.

## **14 Motions**

62. A motion is required to have a proposer and a seconder, and it is put to the Council for consideration.
63. A motion shall lapse if there is no seconder.
64. A motion shall be decided on a show of hands unless a secret ballot has been requested.
65. The Chairperson has a deliberative vote only, therefore in the event of a tied vote, then the motion must be taken as defeated (as per the Constitution). No member, including the Chairperson has a casting vote.
66. If a member abstains from voting they have exercised their right to refrain from voting. A decision on the motion is arrived at by those persons present and voting. Abstaining does not count as voting and that member cannot be counted in relation to the total numbers for or against the motion.

## **15 Voting**

67. The Chairperson shall read out the motion before a vote is taken.
68. A motion shall be decided on a show of hands unless a secret ballot has been requested.
69. At the request of any member of Council a motion shall be decided by a secret ballot.
70. A secret ballot must be conducted for a contested election or a special resolution to remove an office holder from office.
71. The Chairperson has a deliberative vote only, in the event of a tied vote, the motion must be taken as defeated. The Chairperson does not have a casting vote.
72. If a member abstains from voting they have exercised their right to refrain from voting. A decision on a motion is arrived at by those persons present and voting. Abstaining does not count as voting and that member cannot be counted in relation to the total numbers for or against the motion.
73. For the purposes of voting on a special resolution, each Councillor is entitled to appoint another Councillor as his / her proxy by notice on the Parkside Governing Council Special Resolution Proxy Voting Form.

## **16 Confidentiality**

74. Councillors will from time to time be required to consider confidential, sensitive or private information. Councillors must respect the confidentiality of matters discussed at Council meetings and use care and discretion in discussing Council matters outside the meeting. If in doubt, Councillors should refer to the Chairperson or the Principal.

## **17 Alterations to Standing Orders**

75. Any Councillor can propose changes to the Standing Orders at any Council meeting.
76. Proposals for a change to Standing Orders must be submitted in writing to the Secretary before the Executive Meeting for the next scheduled meeting, to allow circulation to Councillors.
77. These Standing Orders may be amended by resolution carried by a majority of those present and voting.