# SCHOOL COUNCIL SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

School councils play a key role in Victorian government schools, supporting the school to provide the best possible educational outcomes for students.

The effectiveness of a school council relies both on the skills and expertise of its individual members and on council working as a team.

Under the *Public Administration Act 2004*, school councils are required to assess their performance on an annual basis. By using this self-assessment tool early in the life of the new council, a council will be able to assess its strengths and identify areas where it would benefit from development and training. It is also good governance practice for a school council to regularly review its operation and effectiveness and this could be done by revisiting the tool, or parts of it, later in the year.

The sections of this self-assessment tool correspond to the Department’s *Improving School Governance* (ISG) training modules. Links to the appropriate modules are provided under each section of the tool.

This self-assessment tool consists of a series of statements that school councillors can discuss as a group. A council can then rate itself holistically using the ratings scale and descriptors below.

Lower ratings will indicate possible areas for development and training. Training information is provided on the last page of the tool.

+Rating scale

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 emerging  | We are beginning to do this |
| 2 evolving | We are working this into our systems and routines |
| 3 established | We consistently do this and we do it very well |

## Governance

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School council: | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| * members have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
 |  |  |  |
| * understands the legislative framework of the Acts, regulations and ministerial orders that underpin their authority.
 |  |  |  |
| * discussions and actions collectively reflect an understanding of and commitment to the Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities
 |  |  |  |
| * discussion and decisions reflect an understanding of their role and the differences between the **governance** role of council and the **operational** role of the principal and school administration.
 |  |  |  |
| * is able to identify and manage apparent and actual conflicts of interest.
 |  |  |  |

## School council operations

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| School council: | Yes | No |
| * uses a set of Standing Orders that are reviewed annually
 |  |  |
| * meets with an appropriate quorum at least 8 times per year
 |  |  |
| * circulates meeting agenda and papers to members at least five days prior to the meeting
 |  |  |
| * takes meeting minutes to record items discussed and decisions made
 |  |  |
| * has delegated school council powers and functions where appropriate.
 |  |  |
| * uses subcommittees and working groups to effectively manage school council business.
 |  |  |
| * holds a public meeting annually to report on the proceedings of council for the period since the previous public meeting, present the Annual Report to the School Community and present a copy of the accounts of the council, if they have been audited.
 |  |  |

Further information about governance and school council operations is found in *the Improving School Governance*, governance module on the DET website: **Governance** [(pdf - 6.2mb)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/governance/governanceph.pdf) [(docx - 398kb)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/governance/ISGGovernance.docx)

## Strategic planning for school improvement

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| * The school council has a shared purpose focused on the best possible educational outcomes for students at their school.
 |  |  |  |
| School council understands: |  |  |  |
| * the school’s values, vision and mission
 |  |  |  |
| * the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO) and school improvement cycle
 |  |  |  |
| * and uses data to evaluate and report on school performance
 |  |  |  |
| * its role in the development and monitoring of key processes and documents, including:
	+ School Strategic Plan.
	+ Annual Implementation Plan.
	+ Annual School Self-Evaluation.
	+ Annual Report to the School Community.
 |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| * *For schools who are participating in reviews*, school council understands its role in the four yearly Pre-review Self-Evaluation and School Review.
 |  |  |  |

Further information about the role of the school council in strategic planning is found in the *Improving School Governance*, strategic planning module on the DET website: **Strategic planning**  [(pdf - 3.66mb)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/governance/strategicplanningph.pdf) [(docx - 3.78mb)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/governance/ISGStrategicPlanning.docx)

## Finance

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School council: | 1 | 2 | 3  |
| * understands its role with respect to budgets, procurement, financial controls and reports.
 |  |  |  |
| * appropriately fulfils its role in approving the annual school budget and monitoring expenditure.
 |  |  |  |
| * appropriately fulfils its role with respect to the school’s internal controls and financial reports.
 |  |  |  |
| * appropriately fulfils its role with respect to fundraising, as specified in the Schools Finance Manual.
 |  |  |  |

Further information about the finance role of school councils is found in the *Improving School Governance*, finance module on the DET website: **Finance** [(pdf - 546.76kb)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/governance/financeph.pdf) [(docx - 313kb)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/governance/ISGFinance.docx)

## Policy development and review

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School Council understands: | 1 | 2 | 3  |
| * the role and purpose of policy in school governance.
 |  |  |  |
| * which school policies fall within its powers and functions and has processes in place to ensure those policies are appropriately reviewed, approved and recorded on a school register (see guidance below).
 |  |  |  |
| * how to develop policies consistently with DET guidance and resources (for guidance, see information on school policies template below).
 |  |  |  |
| * how to write school policies that are accessible to the community, which achieve their intended purpose and best meet the needs of the school, its students and the community (including alignment with the School Strategic Plan and address educational, social and cultural diversity).
 |  |  |  |
| * which school policies require further community consultation and the nature and extent of this consultation for each policy.
 |  |  |  |

Further information about policy development and review is found in the *Improving School Governance*, policy and review module on the DET website: **Policy and review** [(pdf - 1.72mb)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/governance/PolicyandReviewph.pdf) [(docx - 1.0mb)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/governance/ISGPolicyReview.docx) 

The School Policy Templates Portal [Consolidated Policy Review and Communications Spreadsheet (15 July 2019).xlsx](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edrms/keyprocess/cp/PublishingImages/Pages/Forms/EditForm/Consolidated%20Policy%20Review%20and%20Communications%20Spreadsheet%20%2815%20July%202019%29.xlsx) lists those policies that are relevant to school councils and whether the policy requires or does not require school council approval and when consultation is recommended. The portal requires an Edumail account and is accessible by principals and school council presidents. [School Policy Templates Portal](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/policyportal.aspx)

## Community engagement

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School council… | 1 | 2 | 3  |
| * understands the benefits of engaging with the community
 |  |  |  |
| * includes members who reflect the diversity of their community.
 |  |  |  |
| * knows and engages with the school’s community to build productive relationships
 |  |  |  |
| * productively leads consultation with the community through meetings, surveys and informally
 |  |  |  |
| * shares information using reports, newsletters, social media etc, with the school community, as appropriate
 |  |  |  |
| * members support school council decisions in the school community.
 |  |  |  |

## School council president

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The school council president… | 1 | 2 | 3  |
| * understands their leadership role and responsibilities and those of the principal.
 |  |  |  |
| * understands the characteristics of an effective school council
 |  |  |  |
| * runs school council meetings appropriately according to the Standing Orders
 |  |  |  |
| * engages all members in frank, open and respectful discussion
 |  |  |  |
| * understands the processes for effectively making decisions
 |  |  |  |
| * effectively resolves conflict, disagreements, concerns and complaints.
 |  |  |  |

Further information about community engagement and the role of school council president is found in the Improving School Governance, school council president module on the DET website: **President** [(pdf - 378.55kb)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/governance/schoolcouncilpresidentph.pdf)  [(docx - 158kb)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/governance/ISGPresident.docx)

## Previous school council training completed:

Total number of members on your school council:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Training Modules | Number of current school councillors who have completed the module in the past two years |
| Governance |  |
| Strategic planning |  |
| Finance |  |
|  N/A |  |
| School Council president |  |

NB. Ideally, everyone on council will view the induction video and complete governance training, then sufficient members will have completed training in the other modules so that they will be able to advise and, where appropriate, lead council in these areas.

**From the self-assessment…**

Training / projects / actions to address areas identified for school council’s development:

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### The Department provides face to face training to school councils of Victorian government schools. The training is based on the Improving School Governance (ISG) materials that have been widely distributed to schools.

The ISG has five modules: governance; strategic planning; finance; policy and review and the school council president

Synergistic offers the face to face training free of charge, and delivered locally to schools and school councils, in four modules: governance; strategic planning; finance and the school council president.

To book training, please contact Synergistiq by email, phone or on line on:

 (03) 9069 5598 or

via email: sct@synergistiq.com or online,: [School council training](http://www.synergistiq.com/councillortraining/)

An on-line version of the ISG school council training will be available in 2020. Details of how to access the on-line training will be communicated to school councils in term one, 2020.

An induction video for school councillors, as well as PDFs of the five ISG modules can be accessed through the Department website at: [**School councils -School governance support materials**](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/management/community/Pages/schoolcouncils.aspx#link60)