



Role of Governing Council

Governance in schools and preschools is the responsibility of the governing council whose role is directed by the [constitution](#) and [code of practice](#). In this model of governance:

- The cooperative role of governing council and school staff is emphasised.
- Management and governance are clearly separated.
- The focus is on improving student learning outcomes.
- The broad directions are set and monitored by the governing council.
- The site leader and staff are responsible for reporting.
- Joint areas of accountability are minimised.

Governing Councils:

- **Set Broad Direction** (In conjunction with the site leader)
The governing council identifies and incorporates, where possible, student, parent and community input and values into the broad direction of the school. The principal/preschool director brings the staff perspective to these undertakings. The broad direction may include a future vision, a statement of purpose and a set of values that clearly focus on improving student learning.
- **Develop Broad Directional Policy**
The governing council develops broad policy statements that facilitate the achievement of the school vision and broad direction.
- **Initiate and Approve Recommendations and Strategies**
All recommendations must conform with government policy, industrial agreements, DECD policy and direction and site decision making structures.

Principals work with parents, staff and students to develop recommendations and strategies to achieve the broad site directions jointly set with the governing council. These strategies will include but are not restricted to:

- A Site Learning Plan that is developed in consultation with the staff and community through the [sub committee](#) structures. This plan must incorporate state and federal requirements as well as local priorities that will achieve the broad direction set by the governing council.
- The allocation of resources to best achieve the objectives of the Site Learning Plan. Resource allocation must take into account risk management, sustainability and industrial and [accountability](#) requirements. The budget recommendation will be developed with the [Finance Advisory Committee \(FAC\)](#) and staff and must be directed towards the Site Learning Plan. Draft budgets and the final recommendation will be presented to the governing council by the Treasurer. The governing council has final responsibility for budget approval.

Through decision making structures and groups within the school, principals and directors will engage the staff and parents in the development of the Site Learning Plan. Similarly groups such as the Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC) and the [Finance Advisory Committee \(FAC\)](#) are involved in the recommended allocation of resources that make up the annual budget and resource planning strategies. These plans are presented to the governing council for comment and approval.

Monitor Progress

The governing council monitors the site budget and progress towards the broad directions set and the targets of the Site Learning Plan. This is done at each governing council meeting where the principal and treasurer provide information and data as a part of their reports against the plans, priorities and budget. A summary of these forms the basis of the Annual Report.

Report Progress

Management and Leadership

Site management and educational leadership is the responsibility of the principal and staff. It is not a part of the governance role involving the governing council and wider community.

If individual community members have an issue with a staff member they should attempt to resolve the matter directly with the staff member at an early stage. If this is not successful then the matter should be referred to the principal.

If individual community members are concerned with management decisions or have an issue with the principal they must discuss these with the principal and if not satisfied with the result then refer the matter to the District Director.

Functions of the Governing Council

In the context of the Governing Council's joint responsibility with the Principal for the governance of the school, the Council must perform the following functions:

Involve the school community in the governance of the school by:

- Providing a focus and a forum for the involvement of parents and the school community
- Identifying the educational needs of the local community and the attitude of the local community to educational developments within the school; and
- Ensuring that the cultural and social diversity of the school community is considered and the particular needs of all student groups are appropriately identified.

In conjunction with the principal, set the broad direction and vision of the school

In conjunction with the principal strategic planning for the school including:

- Developing, monitoring and reviewing the objectives and targets of the strategic plan.

In conjunction with the principal determine policies for the school including policies for the safety, welfare and discipline of students.

Approve the school budget and monitor the application of the total financial resources available to the school through the regular review of budget.

In conjunction with the principal monitor and review the Site Learning Plan.

- Report to the school community and the Minister on:
- The strategic plan
- Finances of the school
- Operational plans
- The Council's operations.

The Governing Council must be responsible for the proper care and maintenance of any property owned by the council.

The Governing Council may perform such functions as necessary to establish and conduct, or arrange for the conduct of:

- Facilities and services to enhance the education, development, care, safety, health or welfare of children and students;
- Residential facilities for the accommodation of students.

The Governing Council may raise funds for school related purposes.

The Governing Council may perform other functions as determined by the Minister

The Governing Council may do all those acts and things incidental to the exercise of these functions.

The Governing Councils functions must be exercised in accordance with legislation, administrative instructions and the schools Governing Councils constitution.

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/sitegovernance/pages/default/Role/?reFlag=1>

Committees of Governing Council

Parents, staff and students can become actively involved in the governance of the site through the committee structure of the governing council.

Governing council committees can be categorised in three ways.

Mandated committees include the Finance Advisory Committee, Canteen Committee and Out of Hours Care Program Committee.

[Affiliated committees](#) include such groups as [Parents and Friends](#), [Aboriginal Community Voice](#) (formally Yurrekaityarindi) and Old Scholars Associations. Affiliated committees are relatively autonomous and have [their own constitution](#) that describes their relationship with the governing council. Affiliated committees are entitled to have a representative on the governing council.

[Subcommittees](#) are established by agreement at a meeting of the governing council. Subcommittees are established to assist the governing council carry out its function more effectively.

Governing councils and their committee members are immune from civil action under the [Education Act](#) and [Children's Services Act](#). Committee members, other than education department or governing council employees at a school or preschool, have volunteer insurance cover under determination #27 of the Commissioner for Public Employment. Refer to the [Administrative Instructions and Guidelines, Section 5](#), paragraph 56 for further information.

Department for Education & Child Development employees and employees of governing councils are covered under the [Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act](#).

<http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/sitegovernance/pages/default/Role/?reFlag=1>

Sub Committees

A governing council has the power to establish committees under its constitution. They are established by a resolution at a meeting of the governing council. Committees formed are not named or listed in the constitution and the governing council may vary them from time to time.

Committees assist the governing council to carry out its functions more efficiently and effectively by handling matters that require considerable discussion, development or planning. They may be established to give advice on such responsibilities as finance, buildings and grounds, education policy and community relations.

Governing council committees are seen as a valuable way of:

- ✓ assisting the council meet its array of responsibilities by expanding the number and range of people involved in governance and leaving the main body to focus on its broader governing role.
- ✓ broadening opportunities for more parents and caregivers, staff and other community members with particular expertise to be involved.
- ✓ providing other entry levels for the participation of interested parents and caregivers, community members and potential future council members.
- ✓ providing for the appropriate involvement of students and bringing student opinion to the attention of the council.
- ✓ increasing the involvement of staff and strengthening the link between site staff and the governance of the site.

Mandated Committees

Governing councils in schools, in accordance with their constitution, must establish a finance advisory committee.

In addition, governing councils must also establish committees where they are responsible for running a canteen, out of school hours care, School Watch or residential facilities. The [Administrative Instructions and Guidelines](#) provides details for the operation of such committees.

The governing council ensures that the work of mandated committees is clear and coordinated by determining the terms of reference for each committee. These include directions on:

Membership - Usually described as a core membership of 3 or more, with the ability for the committee to attract more members itself. Membership should include at least one council member.

Function - These are directly related to one or more of the governing council's functions under its constitution.

Consultation - Clarifying any requirements for the range and depth of consultation.

Tenure - Clarifying the committee's status as an ongoing standing committee or a working group with a specified task and an end date.

Reporting - Specifying the method and frequency of reporting to the governing council. Some committee reports, particularly financial reports, are required under the Administrative Instructions and Guidelines.

Operational powers - Clarifying the decision making powers of the committee and matters that must be referred to council for decision. Under the [Education Act](#) and the governing council constitution, the governing council may delegate some of its functions and powers to a committee. The governing council constitution or [Administrative Instructions and Guidelines](#) outline limitations.

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