

Newsletter

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

MS HELENE HIOTIS

1ST EDITION

1ST FEBRUARY 2021

The right to learn.
The right to be treated with respect.
The right to be safe.

"Being the best you can be"



Welcome Back

I hope everyone had a safe, relaxing and enjoyable holiday. I look forward to another exciting and productive year of teaching and learning at Bentleigh Secondary College.

A very warm welcome to all the new students and their families. You are embarking on a wonderful learning journey which will be enhanced by always trying your personal best. Our college provides you with facilities and resources which are yours to use to maximise your learning opportunities.

I am pleased to report that the college continues to build upon our successes. We welcomed our Year 7 students to our College and we congratulate all the students on their 2020 VCE results, which demonstrates our commitment to continual improvement and growth.

I would like to acknowledge the exemplary work by all teachers and educational support staff to ensure the school is recognised as a provider of exemplary government education characterised as a hub of educators, learners and leaders.

We also congratulate our College Dux, Yulin Martin Gu who received an exemplary ATAR score.

Please find details pertaining to 2021 School Council Elections.



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SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTION 2021

MS HELENE HIOTIS – PRINCIPAL

The Department of Education and Training has approved the commencement of the electoral process for the election of School Councillors for 2021. Please see attached Fact Sheet.

Membership

Our School Council consists of six parents, four staff members, two elected student members, four community members and the Principal.

Terms of Office

School council members are elected (or co-opted in the case of community members) for a two year term. Half the membership is elected or co-opted each year creating vacancies for the annual School Council election.

The term of office and rights and responsibilities of community (i.e. co-opted) members are the same as those of elected councillors.

Retiring School Councillors

The following members of School Council, while eligible for re-election, retire at the March meeting:

Parents: Mr Andrew Clarke, Mr Anthony Sutton and Ms Mary Lambas
Staff: Mr Marc Koenig (for Leanne Winfield) and Mr Arun Karunaratne (for Schy Prewett)
Student: Ms Anja De Klerk

Proposed Timeline for Elections

Friday 5 February	Call for nominees (Nomination Forms available at General Office or email bentleigh.sc@education.vic.gov.au to request a form)
Friday 12 February	Nominations close 4.00pm
Thursday 18 February	Nominations displayed at school Election held if required
Thursday 25 February	Close of ballot 4.00pm Votes counted
Wednesday 17 March	School Council Meeting

Voting

If the number of nominations exceeds the vacancies in either the parent or staff electorates, an election will be necessary. All parents are entitled to vote for parent representatives and DET employees can vote for staff representatives.

Methods of Voting

There are three ways in which you can record your vote on the official voting form during the period Thursday 18 February until Thursday 25 February at 4.00pm.

- (a) Post your vote to school to arrive by 4.00pm on Thursday 25 February;
- (b) Vote in person at school at the General Office, between 8.30am and 4.00pm during the period Thursday 18 February until Thursday 25 February.

Nominations of Candidates

There are three distinct categories of elected members of School Council parents, students and DET employees.

Parent Member Category

Parents of a student(s) at the school, who are DET employees, are now eligible for election to this category. However, there is a limit on the number of DET parent members for a given School Council configuration. (The total of DET employee members and DET parent members must be less than half of the total number of School Council.)

Student Member Category

To be eligible for election to this category, a student must be enrolled at the school.

DET Employee Member Category

To be eligible for election to this category, a person must be a DET employee and either: a parent of a student at the school, and/or employed to work at or for the school.

Role of School Councillors

School Councillors play an important role in decision-making and the management of our school. They donate many hours to the sub-committees of Council; Finance, Facilities and Policy & Accountability. Councillors belong to one sub-committee; they also attend monthly council meetings and represent the college at many functions. Our senior school leaders (College Captains and College Deputy Captains play an integral role in School Council) and may be co-opted as community members.

SCHEDULE 4

Notice of Election and Call for Nominations

An election is to be conducted for members of School Council of Bentleigh Secondary College

Nomination forms may be obtained from the school and must be lodged by
4.00pm on Friday 12 February 2021

**The ballot will close at 4.00pm on
Thursday 25 February 2021**

Following the closing of nominations, a list of the nominations received will be posted at the school. The terms of office, membership categories and number of positions in each membership category open for election are as follows:

Membership	Term of Office	Number of Positions
Parent Member	17 March 2021 to 15 March 2023	3
DET Employee Member	17 March 2021 to 15 March 2023	2
Student Member	17 March 2021 to 15 March 2023	1

If the number of nominations is less than the number of vacancies, a notice to that effect and calling for further nominations will be posted in a prominent position at the school.

Helene E. Hiotis
Principal

STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE

The Department of Education and Training (DET) does not provide personal accident insurance for students. Parents and guardians are responsible for paying the cost of medical treatment for injured students, including transport costs. Student accident insurance policies are available from private insurance companies. These cover a range of medical expenses not covered by Medicare.

HOMEWORK CLUB

Mr Yianni Georgiou, After School Homework Co-ordinator

Homework Club will commence on Monday 10 February in Library L12 and will operate as follows:

Tuesday 8.15am to 8.45am
Wednesday 8.15am to 8.45am
Wednesday 3.30pm to 4.30pm

SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTIONS - INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

WHAT IS A SCHOOL COUNCIL AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

All government schools in Victoria have a school council. They are legally constituted bodies that are given powers to set the key directions of a school within statewide guidelines. In doing this, a school council is able to directly influence the quality of education that the school provides for its students.

WHO IS ON THE SCHOOL COUNCIL?

For most primary school councils, there are three possible categories of membership:

- A mandated elected Parent category – more than one-third of the total members must be from this category. Department employees can be Parent members at their child's school as long as they are not engaged in work at the school.
- A mandated elected school employee category – members of this category may make up no more than one-third of the total membership of school council. The principal of the school is automatically one of these members.
- An optional community member category – members are coopted by a decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or experiences. Department employees are not eligible to be community members.

A small number of school councils have Nominee members.

For all schools with a Year 7 and above cohort, there is an additional category of membership:

A mandated elected student member category, with two positions.

Generally, the term of office for all members is two years. The term of office of half the members expires each year, creating vacancies for the annual school council elections.

WHY IS PARENT MEMBERSHIP SO IMPORTANT?

Parents on school councils provide important viewpoints and have valuable skills that can help shape the direction of the school.

Those parents who become active on a school council find their involvement satisfying and may also find that their children feel a greater sense of belonging.

DO I NEED SPECIAL EXPERIENCE TO BE ON SCHOOL COUNCIL?

Each member brings their own valuable life skills and knowledge to the role. Councilors may need to develop skills and acquire knowledge in areas that are unfamiliar to them. What you do need is an interest in your child's school and the desire to work in partnership with others to help shape the school's future.

HOW CAN YOU BECOME INVOLVED?

The most obvious way is to vote in the elections, which are held in Term one each year. However, ballots are only held if more people nominate as candidates than there are positions vacant.

In view of this, you might consider

- standing for election as a member of the school council
- encouraging another person to stand for election.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO STAND FOR ELECTION?

The principal will issue a Notice of Election and Call for Nominations following the commencement of Term one each year. All school council elections must be completed by the end of March unless the usual time line has been varied by the Minister.

If you decide to stand for election, you can arrange for someone to nominate you as a candidate or you can nominate yourself in the Parent category.

Department employees whose child is enrolled in a school in which they are not engaged in work are eligible to nominate for parent membership of the school council at that school.

Once the nomination form is completed, return it to the principal within the time stated on the Notice of Election.

You will receive a Nomination Form Receipt in the mail following the receipt of your completed nomination.

Generally, if there are more nominations received than there are vacancies on council, a ballot will be conducted during the two weeks after the call for nominations has closed.

REMEMBER

- Ask at the school for help if you would like to stand for election and are not sure what to do
- Consider standing for election to council this year
- Be sure to vote in the elections.

Contact the principal for further information.

FACT SHEET 4. INFORMATION FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN SEEKING ELECTION TO SCHOOL COUNCIL

WHAT IS A SCHOOL COUNCIL AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

All government schools in Victoria have a school council. School councils are legal entities that are given powers to set the broad directions of a school in accordance with their constituting Orders and the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*. In doing this, a school council is able to directly influence the quality of education that the school provides for its students.

WHO IS ON THE SCHOOL COUNCIL?

For all schools with a student cohort of Year 7 and above, there are several possible categories of school council membership:

A mandated elected parent member category – more than one-third of the total members must be from this category. Parents and Guardians of children attending the school are eligible for membership in this category.

A mandated elected school employee member category – members of this category may make up no more than one-third of the total membership of school council. The principal of the school is automatically a member of this category.

A mandated elected student member category (two positions) – members of this category are enrolled at the school and in Year 7 or above.

An optional community member category – members are co-opted by a decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or expertise. DET employees are not eligible to be a Community member.

A small number of school councils have Nominee members.

HOW LONG IS THE TERM OF OFFICE?

Generally, the term of office for all members is two years. The term of office of half the members expires each year, creating vacancies for the annual school council elections.

WHY IS STUDENT MEMBERSHIP SO IMPORTANT?

Students have a unique perspective on learning, teaching and schooling. Electing Student members onto school council allows all students to have a say in the future direction of their school and ensures student input into decision making.

Student representation on secondary school councils will assist in the development of students' skills, including leadership skills, and communication skills.

DOES MY CHILD NEED SPECIAL EXPERIENCE TO BE ON SCHOOL COUNCIL?

Each member brings their own valuable skills and knowledge to the role. However, councillors may need to develop skills and acquire knowledge in areas that are unfamiliar to them in order to perform their duties as a councillor.

Student members are encouraged to attend the Department's free, face-to-face school council training, using the Improving School Governance modules to support them to undertake their role. Training is also available online.

WHAT DOES MY CHILD NEED TO DO TO STAND FOR ELECTION?

The principal will issue a Notice of Election and Call for Nominations following the start of Term 1 each year.

If your child decides to stand for election, they can arrange for a student in Year 7 or above to nominate them as a candidate or they can nominate themselves for the Student member category.

Once the nomination form is completed, it should be returned to the principal within the time stated on the Notice of Election. A Nomination Form Receipt will be issued following the receipt of the completed nomination.

If one student vacancy is available and one student nominates, then the student is duly elected.

Unlike the parent or school employee member categories, if two student member positions are available and in the first call for nominations only one nomination is received, the student is not automatically declared elected. The principal will immediately post, in a prominent place in the school, a notice calling for further nominations. These nominations are to be received within three school days from the closing of the first call for nominations.

If after the second call for nominations one other nomination is received, then both students are appointed to council.

If there are more nominations received than there are vacancies on council, a ballot will be conducted during the two weeks after the call for nominations has closed.

The principal will distribute ballot papers and will provide clear instructions to the voters and candidates. Voters may only vote once in a ballot. The two candidates with the highest number of votes will be elected to council.

SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETINGS

School councils must meet at least eight times a year and at least once per school term. The president chairs all meetings and all members of the council are expected to attend.

Councillors can attend meetings in person or by videoconferencing or teleconferencing.

Following the school council elections, council members will determine an appropriate time and location to hold meetings throughout the year. For example, council may agree that meetings will take place on the first Wednesday of each month in the school library.

For most school councils, meetings are located at the school and are held in the evening to ensure the majority of members can attend. Meetings typically last for around 2.5 hours.

You will need to discuss and arrange transport options to and from the meeting with your child. The school council does not provide transport.

The principal, in consultation with the school council president, will ensure an agenda is prepared for each regular meeting and will distribute the agenda, draft minutes from the previous meeting and meeting papers such as subcommittee reports, principal's and president's report to school council members. These documents will be distributed approximately five days before the meeting. All members, including Student members are expected to read all documents and prepare in advance of each meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

If your child, as a member of council, or their immediate family has a direct conflict of interest, including a pecuniary* interest, in a matter under discussion at a school council meeting, that member must declare the conflict of interest and must not be present during the discussion unless invited to do so by the person presiding at the meeting. The member will not be involved in any voting associated with the matter at hand.

*For this purpose, pecuniary is defined as: relating to or consisting of money.

CAN I ATTEND COUNCIL MEETINGS WITH MY CHILD?

School council meetings are normally open to the school community. Visitors or observers can be present at a council meeting with prior agreement of the principal and a decision of council. A request to attend must be forwarded either to the principal or president.

There may be times when, for the purpose of confidentiality or other reasons, a council meeting needs to be closed and only the appointed members can attend.

I AM A PARENT MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL. CAN I BE A MEMBER OF THE SAME COUNCIL AS MY CHILD(REN)?

Yes, relatives are allowed to be members of the same council.

WHAT IF MY CHILD CANNOT ATTEND A COUNCIL MEETING?

If a member is unable to attend a meeting, an apology should be submitted to the principal prior to the meeting.

A member of the school council may apply in writing to the president for extended leave of up to three consecutive meetings.

WHAT IF MY CHILD DECIDES THEY NO LONGER WANT TO BE A MEMBER OF COUNCIL?

The Department strongly encourages students to consider the time commitment of being on council prior to running for election.

Your child should discuss resigning from council with the principal or school council president.

A school councillor is required to formally submit their resignation from council, in writing to the principal, in order to no longer be considered a member.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR SCHOOL COUNCILLORS

School councils in Victoria are public entities as defined by the *Public Administration Act 2004*. School councillors must abide by the Code of Conduct issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission. The Code of Conduct is based on the Victorian public sector values and requires councillors to:

act with honesty and integrity (be truthful, open and clear about their motives and declare any real, potential or perceived conflict of interest and duty)

act in good faith in the best interests of the school (work cooperatively with other councillors and the school community, be reasonable, and make all decisions with the best interests of students foremost in their minds)

act fairly and impartially (consider all relevant facts of an issue before making a decision, seek to have a balanced view, never give special treatment to a person or group and never act from self-interest)

use information appropriately (respect confidentiality and use information for the purpose for which it was made available)

use the position appropriately (not use the position as a councillor to gain an advantage)

act in a financially responsible manner (observe all the above principles when making financial decisions)

exercise due care, diligence and skill (accept responsibility for decisions and do what is best for the school)

comply with relevant legislation and policies (know what legislation and policies are relevant for which decisions and obey the law)

demonstrate leadership and stewardship (set a good example, encourage a culture of accountability, manage risks effectively, exercise care and responsibility to keep the school strong and sustainable).

INDEMNITY FOR SCHOOL COUNCIL MEMBERS

School councillors are indemnified against any liability in respect of any loss or damage suffered by the council or any other person in respect of anything necessarily or reasonably done, or omitted to be done by the councillor in good faith in:

a) the exercise of a power or the performance of a function of a councillor, or

the reasonable belief that the act or omission was in the exercise of a power or the performance of a function of a council.

In other words, school councillors are not legally liable for any loss or damage suffered by council or others as a result of reasonable actions taken in good faith.

For further information please contact the school principal.

SCHOOL COUNCIL INDUCTION VIDEO

The school council induction video provides a summary of the purpose and responsibilities of school councils as well as the roles and responsibilities of school councillors. The video can be viewed on the [Department's school Policy and Advisory Library – School Council Trainingy](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/school-council-training/policy). <
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IMPORTANT DATES

- 3 Feb House Swimming Carnival@ GECSAC Pool
House Activities at School P1-3
- 4 Feb Year 7 Learn House Choral Song practice in
Music/Drama classes and in Weekly Assembly
- 8 Feb House Chorals Rehearsals with House
Captains @ 3:25-4:25pm
- 15 Feb House Chorals Incursion Pds 1-6
All Students
- 22 Feb House Chorals Rehearsals @ 3:25-4:25pm
- 23 Feb OES 1/2 Trees Adventure & Lysterfield Park
- 25-26 OES 3/4 Grampians Camp
Feb
- 1-3 Mar Year 8 Tripod Incursion
- 3 Mar Year 7 Meet & Greet 5:30-7pm
- 4 Mar Symphonic Wind Incursion - PAC all day
(Rehearsal)
Symphonic Wind Performance 5pm
- 5 Mar Whole School Assembly after HG