

School Advisory Councils

Agenda

Purpose

An agenda is simply a document that sets out what business will be considered in a meeting.

The agenda is an advance notice of a meeting and will need to be circulated at least a week prior to the meeting, with any important proposal having been highlighted and any relevant documentation also having been circulated.

Format

A properly structured agenda will assist the School Advisory Council to make the most of its meetings, and enable the members to make informed contributions on the basis of sound advice and constructive debate. A [suggested model](#) is available on the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACS) website.

Agendas should generally be short documents, ideally no more than one page. However, a brief explanatory note of every item, including what is likely to be discussed, will help attendees to prepare better and support the chair in running the meeting.

Council meetings will be structured to demonstrate that the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people are a central and fundamental responsibility of our schools.

As agendas are advance notice of meetings, they should contain:

- **Logistics:** The date, time and place of the meeting, its title and a list of invited attendees.
- **Housekeeping:** The welcome, prayer, welcome to or acknowledgment of country,¹ declarations, introductions and any apologies for absence. A [prayer resource](#) is available on the MACS website.

The following should be read during housekeeping prior to the items of business and any declarations made: All council, committee and working group members must disclose to the principal and chair of the council, committee and working group (as applicable) any personal interest or duty which relates, or may relate, to the business of the school, in order to ensure that any actual or perceived conflict of interest or duty is identified and appropriately managed. See MACS Conflict of Interest Policy for Employees, Contractors and Consultants.

Prior to the main items being discussed, there must be approval or amendment of previous minutes, and any matters arising from them that are not dealt with elsewhere in the agenda.

- **Items:** A list of the order in which items are to be discussed. This is the main course of the meeting and the order ensures the meeting achieves its purpose. This will later shape the minutes of the meeting. Sometimes these items can have discussion times listed alongside them to provide guidelines to the items' importance.

¹ An Acknowledgment of Country can be a way to show awareness of, and respect for, the traditional custodians of the land upon which a meeting or event is to take place. Its purpose is to recognise the continuing connection of Aboriginal people to Country, and is commonly delivered by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. A Welcome to Country is different to an Acknowledgment of Country, as it is a ceremony performed by a local Aboriginal person of significance (usually an Elder) to acknowledge and give consent to events taking place on their traditional lands.

- **Any other business (optional):** A well-run meeting, with a well-prepared agenda, should mean that nobody wishes to raise any other business (AOB). It is therefore strongly recommended that AOB will only be used as a way of raising issues for discussion at a future meeting or elsewhere. In this way, as per the Terms of Reference, we create opportunity for informed dialogue to take place rather than ‘off the cuff’ thinking.
- **Close:** A meeting should close by reviewing actions and deadlines set, and noting the details of the next meeting. It may contain a brief prayer to conclude and send forth.

Meeting agendas with logical links to the school’s strategic plan allow elected members to act strategically in meetings, spending the maximum time in productive and open discussion, and supporting planning for the future.

The secretary is to oversee that the agenda and papers are confirmed in sufficient time to allow for their distribution at least a week prior to the meeting.

Content

It is the role of the principal and chair to set the agenda for each meeting. Any agenda item for a School Advisory Council meeting should be discussed with the principal prior to it being included on the agenda.

Agenda items can be ordered in any manner of ways depending on local context. Items on the agenda can be ordered according to the particular strategic plan goal they relate to, so that the council is always thinking about the relationship between their work and the strategy. They can be developed through reference to the school year, using the calendar of events to determine what will arise at each of the four–eight meetings over the course of the year. In addition, important items can be made permanent or standing items on the agenda.

A list of *possible* agenda items for School Advisory Council meetings is as follows:

1. Child safety and safeguarding
2. Enrolments and enrolment policy
3. Curriculum developments
4. School Improvement Plan (SIP)
5. Annual Action Plan (AAP)
6. Annual Report to the School Community (ARSC)
7. Religious Education program
8. Marketing the school – use of social media for promotion
9. Updating the website
10. Use of school resources
11. Financial transparency around use of funding, and the setting and collection of fees
12. Discussion of school policies
13. Staff and student report to the council
14. Master plan
15. Capital works, capital development, funding submissions to the government and capital grants committee
16. Parent focus groups.

