

Decision Making Policy

This procedure is applicable to: all Department for Education employees at Paringa Park Primary School.

Document control

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Revision Record

Date	Version	Revision description
May 2021	2	Minor updates

1. Title

Paringa Park Primary School Decision Making Policy.

2. Purpose

Good decision making is a critical factor in long term effectiveness of a school. It can contribute significantly to:

- the achievement of organisational goals
- the maximising of parent involvement
- an increase in the morale, wellbeing and productivity of staff
- the enhancement of children's learning.

3. Scope

The Education Act, regulations and administrative instructions detail clear expectations for principals and governing council with regard to school based decision making.

All individuals and groups within a school community have the right to participate and be fairly represented in relevant decision making. Involvement of members of the school community will vary according to the issue under consideration.

A school community consists of the students, staff, parents/caregivers and organisations within the local area. Where these appropriate stakeholders are involved in decision making it is a more satisfying and professionally rewarding place for students, staff and parents. It is a true community.

Decisions are made using a process of consultation with individuals and groups. Staff, parents and children may participate in decision-making processes related to issues in which they have an interest, stake or expertise.

The school's organisational structure may provide opportunities for people to make decisions on matters related to their roles and in accordance with established policies and procedures.

4. Objectives

At Paringa Park Primary School our decision making practices will be characterised by:

- democratic principles ensuring consultation, ownership and evaluation
- an inclusive approach ensuring the needs of children as learners and teachers as professionals are paramount.

Decision making works well when:

- inclusive practices are in place
- there is an atmosphere of trust and respect
- decisions are made within a framework of a shared vision, values and agreed goals
- people feel supported, considered and rewarded for their contribution
- stakeholders accept and support decisions made, although the decision may not always be their preferred position
- the modes of decision-making vary according to needed of the groups and participants are clear on the process
- people's roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and expectations made explicit
- consultation and participation are routine aspects of the decision making process

- processes are clear for information sharing, deliberation, negotiation, participation and making decisions
- organisational support ensures the implementation of decision into practice
- timelines are set and met.

The above objectives and principles underpin our decision making policy and accompanying procedures.

5. Procedure detail

In any school decision making process the principal/leadership retains the power of veto even if agreed and appropriate decision making processes are used. In such circumstances this needs to be communicated with all stakeholders why the power of veto was implemented.

Decisions arrived at must not:

- contravene Department for Education guidelines or be illegal
- affect the safety and wellbeing of children by placing them at risk, contravene the school guiding principles or equity principles.

Individual decisions

- these informed decisions are made when action is mandated by the Department for Education or an individual exercises their judgement to facilitate smooth day to day operations
- if the decision or proposal only impacts on the individual staff member making the decision (or their core business) then the decision can be implemented
- such decisions, however, must be made within the school's broad policies and Department for Education regulations.

Collaborative decisions

- groups share ideas and make collaborative decisions to give direction for a particular purpose. If the decision or proposal falls within the group's mandate (see group responsibilities) and affects only the group (or their primary stakeholders), the decision is implemented
- groups are responsible for ensuring that any decisions are taken in the best interests of their key stakeholders and any decisions, are made within the school's board policies and Department for Education
- individual members should demonstrate professionalism and transparency.

Consultative decisions

- these are decisions that will impact the whole staff, school and/or wider community. These may require consultation with all key stakeholders. The degree of consultation will depend on the gravity of the decision or change, and whom it is likely to affect.

Emergency decisions

- principal or principal's nominee will have emergency decision-making powers when an urgent decision must be made and the situation makes it impossible to follow the usual decision-making process.

Committees/lead teams

Committees are required to review regularly their progress in achieving stated goals and objectives.

Individuals and groups are committed to equal opportunity and inclusivity principles when making decisions.

Committees are structured to encourage participation in decision-making and assist with information flow. Vacancies are filled by either an election process at the beginning of each year; or for the beginning of term 2 for the staff PAC (Personnel Advisory Committee) or by volunteering.

In term 1 an Areas of Responsibilities document is developed for and by staff which includes a list of committees and lead teams which contribute to decision making and published. For these teams, site leaders are responsible for ensuring that:

- meeting dates are publicised and agendas available to members prior to meetings on the staff drive
- inclusive practices and effective teamwork characterise meetings
- minutes of meetings are recorded on the staff drive
- decision making processes to be used are negotiated and acceptable to the group
- when decisions are made the person responsible for implementation is identified in the minutes
- the role of the team is explained and individual members are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

Decisions

The four decision making processes that govern decisions made at Paringa Park Primary School are:

1. mandated and accepted decisions
2. consulted then accepted decisions
3. consensus
4. voting

(refer part 8 Definitions and abbreviations)

Any issue

An issue may be brought to the attention of the relevant person (e.g. a staff member, parent or student leader). Alternatively, the chairperson of the appropriate committee may be asked to include issue(s) on the agenda for the next meeting.

If neither of these alternatives suits, the matter should be taken to a member of the leadership team. The issue will be discussed at leadership level, resolved and the decision communicated in the minutes.

or

The issue will be discussed at leadership level and referred to a relevant forum for a decision or further consultation.

or

The issue will be discussed at leadership level and an ad hoc committee, consisting of interested staff, established to deal with it.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Party / parties	Roles and responsibilities
Principal and leadership team	<p>Is accountable to the Chief Executive for the educational leadership and management of the school, and to the Governing Council for the implementation of the school’s Strategic Plan and the Site Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Is incumbent on the principal to establish decision making procedures which give opportunity for staff and other members of the school community to participate as appropriate.</p>

	The principal is responsible for ensuring there is a mutual understanding of the roles and responsibilities of individuals and groups.
Teachers	Teachers, under the Education Act/Regulations, are responsible to the principal for the welfare and development of children in their care, participating in the development and review of policies and actively assisting in the general management of the school. In relation to decision making, it is their responsibility to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participate in decision making and use the decision-making structures that are in place • ensure that the decisions they make in relation to teaching and learning, or their job, follow the principles above.
Ancillary staff	Ancillary staff are responsible to the principal for providing quality support services, participating in the development and review of policies and actively assisting in the general management of the school.
All	Those affected by a decision are given an opportunity to participate in the process so that their views may be considered. The introduction of new policies and procedures or major changes to existing policies must be ratified by the governing council. Established committees are expected to consult more widely (i.e. outside the immediate group) on occasions when insufficient information is available. Decisions are recorded in minutes of meetings and the person or group responsible for implementation is identified in the documentation. This documentation is saved on the staff drive.

7. Monitoring, evaluation and review

This policy will be reviewed by Personnel Advisory Committee (PAC) and governing council in consultation with staff and students, as required.

8. Definitions and abbreviations

Term	Meaning
Staff	Refers to employees, professional service providers, other paid education and care participants at the department sites/services (through contracts and agreements) and tertiary students on placement.
Governing Council	The governing body of the school elected by the school community; is responsible for complying with relevant legislation and established constitutions. Governing Council provides advice to site leadership to drive and support good governance with in department.
Decision-making Processes	Mandated - those made outside the school by the Department for Education/Government of SA, which are required 'to be accepted' e.g. Enterprise agreement, Mandatory Reporting, Site Improvement timelines.

	<p>Consulted then accepted decisions – As above with the added component of information gathering to ascertain the impact on school and community members given the particular culture and context of the school.</p> <p>Consensus – The idea/initiative/decision/proposal to be made is put forward. It is put forward with a significant/appropriate amount of lead-time and in written form if appropriate. It is put forward honestly, openly and transparently. Each relevant member of the team/community reflects on whether they have listened to the proposal and whether or not they have been listened to. If they have listened and been listened to, the process moves on. If not, then the proposal is re-visited. Members of the team/community do not need to like the decision. They do however, need to be able to live with the decision. If they can live with the decision, the process moves on. If they cannot live with the decision, they need to communicate why they can't live with it and suggest the most minor change that would need to be made, so that they could live with it. Members of the team/community agree to support the decision until the agreed review date.</p> <p>Voting – A show of hands/secret ballot where a majority (60%) ensure the decision is made and implemented until it is reviewed.</p>
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9. Associated documents

10. References

Governance Framework

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/doc/decd-governance-framework>

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/decd-governance-framework.pdf?v=1593569054>