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## **OSPS School Council Update – 13/8/2019**

Dear Parents,

The OSPS School Council met on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> August following the completion of the most recent election. We all acknowledge that this year's process has been far from ideal and thanks those parents that nominated earlier in the year and those that nominated for this recent election for their willingness to assist the school.

All parent representatives take their role on Council seriously and voluntarily give up their time and energy to assist the school's staff and administration to continue to provide the best for our kids. We have faith in the staff of this terrific school that their interests always lie with the children and that decisions affecting them are afforded the attention they deserve and appropriate rigour is applied. We, your School Council, do our best with the information we have to assist that decision making and provide as much rigour to the process as possible. We thank you for your votes and entrusting us with this responsibility. It is not taken lightly.

### Office Bearers

The Council Office Bearers for the remainder of this year were elected at this meeting and are as follows;

School Council President: Cam Davies

School Council Vice-President: Sam Diplaris

School Council Secretary: Marg Floros

It was agreed that a decision the position of Treasurer would be held over to the next SC meeting.

In addition, we were advised by Ron that Kate Rawlinson had informed him of her decision to vacate her position on the Council. Kate has served on the Council for six years and provided great service during this time. In particular holding roles of Secretary and Vice-President and playing a key role working with Region and the staff at OSPS during the review of the election process this year. We would like to sincerely thank Kate for all her hard work.

Kate was due to vacate her position at the end of this year and Council will make a decision on whether to fill this casual vacancy for the remainder of the year at its next meeting.

With one Kate leaving Council, we welcomed another with Katie Parr joining for the first time. We look forward to Katie's contribution to the Council.

## **Community Positions**

SC discussed the two community positions for the remainder of this year and agreed that we would continue the practice of inviting a representative of the Parent Group to fill one of those positions. It was felt the Parent Group play such a critical role at OSPS with such a large student and parent base and that a close working relationship with Council was not only required but extremely advantageous.

We discussed the second community position and the merits of co-opting a member for a full year term, or bringing in subject matter experts as required for shorter period when specific projects required additional input. Before making a final decision on this matter the Council will conduct a review of the skill set of all members with the goal of identifying skills gaps that we feel need to be addressed.

## **School Council Governance and Effectiveness**

There was acknowledgement from Principal Ron Cantlon that the school needs to improve some aspects of its record keeping and improve attention to detail when communicating with parents. Council and the school commit to working together to provide better communication of Council structure, decisions and activities.

A number of weeks ago Kate Rawlinson and Campbell Davies met with Ron to develop plans to improve some aspects of School Council governance. These included ensuring councillors had a good understanding of their responsibilities and access to department guidelines for the Council charter. The school also committed to providing pre-reading for meetings earlier to councillors to allow more informed discussions at meetings in a bid to improve Council effectiveness.

Your School Council welcomes feedback and correspondence – we always have - and as such have created a dedicated email address that will ensure correspondence is delivered to School Council. Details for how to contact School Council can be found here <https://oakleighsouthps.vic.edu.au/parents/#council>

Parents are reminded that the various Facebook pages that exist for the sharing of information between parents are not appropriate channels for direct communication with the school or with School Council.

## **Robotics Lab**

The concreting work for the Lab begins this week and construction is on track at this stage. Council discussed the development of a committee to oversee the promotion and use of the facility for the school and surrounding community. A decision on the makeup of that committee will be made at a future meeting.

This project has been a significant win for the school. Credit must be given to the school for the foresight to not only develop robotics as part of the curriculum but for their earnest pursuit of the Pick My Project grant

Special thanks must go to Katreen Cook the driving force behind this application.

Winning the grant to have this facility installed will have benefits for the school long after any of us have kids attending.

## **Car Park**

Council realises this is an emotional topic and it is one that finds a place onto every SC meeting agenda. The process has been a complicated one and just when the school and parent groups feel like they are getting somewhere, a few steps back have to be taken.

Current Dept of Education recommendations for the site are completely unacceptable and the school as well as Monash Council have indicated their strong opposition to them. Further correspondence with the Minister for Education and the Department will be entered into asking all for their support in developing the car park properly.

Council acknowledges the work of parent Shona Elford, Principal Ron Cantlon and Monash Councillor Stuart James, as well as many others, for their efforts in trying to keep the car park and keep our kids safe.

## **OSPS Strategic Plan**

The Strategic Plan is always a big project for the school and Council and this year we are due to deliver the plan in Term 4. We will soon be entering a phase of self-evaluation gathering feedback from teachers, students and parents. Council will work with the staff to assist with the development of the parent survey and format for focus groups.

## **Parent Opinion Survey**

The survey of parents in relation to the Strategic Plan mentioned above is separate to the *Parent Opinion Survey* recently distributed to approximately 30% of our parent body. Council reminds all parents that they have a responsibility to the school and their kids to provide open and honest feedback on the schools performance and to please respond if they have received this survey. The deadline was extended by the Department to Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> August.

## **Maintenance Report**

Andrew Holman provided an update on works around the school. Plants have been installed along the laneway fence to provide added privacy and beautify that side of the school. Positive feedback has been received and this work will continue long the laneway.

The car park recently had many potholes filled and will be monitored over coming weeks to ensure recent rains do not undo all the hard work.

Council discussed a proposal by Andrew to plant a series of trees along the front of the school to provide some sun protection as well as beautify the front of the school and added privacy. Parents are encouraged to assist however they can, by potentially sponsoring or donating a tree, or participating in a planned working bee.

## **School Swimming Program**

Council has discussed in recent months the need to review our school swimming program. Numbers continue to decline and the program is becoming less and less affordable for fewer participants. Council discussed the changing school community and reduced importance placed on this aspect of the curriculum by some families.

Before any decision is made, a survey of all parents, whether children participate or not, will be distributed. Your feedback regarding what you like, don't like and why your kids do or do not participate is greatly appreciated. More will be communicated on this in coming weeks.

## **Our Role**

Council wishes to reassure all parents that the development of the school for the benefit of our children is of paramount importance to all of us and the school's staff. This school has grown enormously over the past decade and the strain this has placed on staff and the administration can be known only by those intimately involved. With hundreds more students come hundreds more parents, hundreds more issues and hundreds more people wanting their issue resolved immediately above all else.

Council would like to remind parents that our teachers, support staff and office staff are people, like you, with all the same challenges life throws at us. None of us are perfect but we are all trying our best.

Delivering the best for our kids is a team effort between the school and us as parents. A little compassion and understanding both ways will go a long way to making this wonderful school even better.

Council thanks parents for their understanding this year while the issues with Council positions have been resolved and we look forward to working with the school to deliver more great programs and facilities for our kids.

**Kind Regards,**

**OSPS School Council**