

SP HO5: Scenarios and responses

Scenario	Response
<p>Scenario 1:</p> <p>You are a school council President at a government secondary school. As required by Ministerial Order 1098) you have two student members in your school council. Although they have the same role and responsibilities as other council members, including full voting rights, you find their views are often overlooked or minimized by councillors (both parent and staff members), and this has resulted in the students being reluctant to put forward their views of the student community. You're looking to find a way to more actively include their views.</p>	<p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with the principal and discuss your concerns. As preparation for this meeting, bring some examples of the behaviours you have noticed and the impact that this had on the student members. • Consider using a protocol where all council members views are sought at points throughout the meeting. • With the principal meet separately with the student members and ask them what support they need to enable them to be heard at Council. This might include additional training, active support during the meeting, providing information in a student-friendly way, etc. Stress that the views of the school students are really important for council to undertake its work effectively.
<p>Scenario 2:</p> <p>It appears that two members of school council meet prior to each school council meeting to agree what they want to talk about and the approach they will take when responding to agenda items. This has resulted in their voices being those that are most frequently heard, often shutting down other views and potentially distorting the views of council.</p>	<p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a meeting revisit the standing orders and stress the importance of all views being heard at council. • Consider using protocols that engage all voices and actively seek differing views. The principal will be able to help in sourcing these protocols. • If their behaviour does not change, discuss with the principal and consider having a conversation with the council members outside of the meeting.

Scenario 3:

One school council member continually dominates school council meetings, no matter what agenda item is being discussed. You are aware that some other members hardly speak at meetings.

Response:

- Have in the standing orders (meeting etiquette), that all conversations go through the chair.
- Use phrases such as, "Let's see what other members think."
- If one council member still dominates the meeting, discuss with the principal and consider having a conversation with the council member outside the meeting.

Scenario 4:

You are the newly elected president of a school council that has had a largely unchanged membership for six years. You joined council for the first-time last year and were encouraged to nominate for president this year. You're excited about the opportunities this presents, however you have already experienced a reluctance of council members to change any aspect of how they currently operate. This includes a lack of preparation for meetings from both parents and staff members, a reluctance to stay focused on the governance work of council and instead the desire to chat about what's happening in classrooms, and the adding of agenda items at the meeting for discussion.

Response:

- At your next meeting, ask councillors what they're hoping to achieve in the current year. Acknowledge the experience they bring to the table and share with them your excitement at being President and what you are hoping to achieve.
- Using the standing orders as a guide, discuss now the meetings can be made as effective as possible, ensuring the focus stays on the work of school council and is directed at ensuring the best possible outcomes for the students. Use examples to highlight the difference between the governance role of council and operational role of the school leadership (eg. what's happening in the classroom).
- Ask the principal to source training for the whole of school council using realistic situations for discussion, based on your experience.
- Download and use the [meeting template](#) from the Department's website. Explain to Councillors how items can be put on the agenda in advance of the meeting.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that you and the principal are both in agreement on the focus and effective running of school council meetings. • Suggest the School council use the Department's School Council Self-assessment Tool to assess their strengths and help identify areas for further training and development. Explain that all councils are required to undertake this self-assessment annually and by doing this earlier in the year Council will be able to make the most of the training and development options.
<p>Scenario 5:</p> <p>You are about to close the school council meeting when a school council member indicates they wish to have a matter discussed. They start by saying some parents are concerned about the behaviour of a teacher outside school hours.</p>	<p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is <u>not</u> a matter for school council. • The president should stop the member speaking and suggest the issue is raised with the principal outside of the meeting. • If a councillor wants to raise an issue, it should be discussed with the president/principal in advance of the meeting. • Take the opportunity to explain the process by which items are added to the agenda and stress that this needs to occur in advance of the school council meeting.