

Position Description

Chair – Somerville House School Council



PMSA

The PMSA – Presbyterian and Methodist Schools Association – owns four of Queensland's well-known independent schools: Brisbane Boys' College, Clayfield College, Somerville House and Sunshine Coast Grammar School (the Group). Established in 1918, the PMSA is a joint mission of the Uniting Church of Australia, Queensland Synod and the Presbyterian Church of Queensland.

The PMSA's mission is to provide outstanding teaching and learning environments for our students and staff in schools built on Christian teachings. The PMSA's vision is to build communities based on Christian foundations, by providing teaching and learning environments of excellence, permeated by Christian faith and actions.

The PMSA Board, through its constitution and By-Laws has resolved to form the Somerville House School Council. The School Council has delegated authority by the Board to govern the actions of Somerville House within the parameters, guidelines and frameworks set by the Board. The School Council reports regularly to the Board.

Position objective

The Chair is the leader of the School Council and much is expected of them, from their expertise and time commitment, to their dedication in driving continual improvement and innovation.

The Chair and the School Council are also expected to be highly skilled in running a complex, high-risk organisation and to understand and learn the nuances and specifics of running an educational institution in a not-for-profit governance system.

The Chair is a member of the School Council who provides leadership to, and sets the tone for, the School Council and the school.

The Chair must display outstanding community leadership and stewardship, acting at all times in the interest of the school community, advocating the School's excellence and pursuing continual improvement and innovation to ensure the School continues as a leader within the community.

The Chair will maintain a public presence within the School community so as to foster enthusiastic support for the School's ideals and goals while retaining a firm commitment to PMSA policies and values.

The Chair is directly responsible for the management of the School Principal and will work collaboratively with the Principal to ensure metrics and indicators regarding the School's enrolments, commercial, financial, operational and pastoral care are developed, tracked and reviewed regularly.

The Principal, whilst an employee of the PMSA, reports to the Chair, and the Chair is responsible to the School Council and the PMSA Board.

The Chair and School Council are also expected to provide strategic direction into the School's annual Business Plan and will work collaboratively with the Principal and the Executive to ensure this occurs.

Expectations of the Chair

School Council Responsibilities

The Chair is responsible for leadership of the Council including:

- Supporting and promoting the values of the PMSA.
- Act as a liaison between the School Council and the PMSA Board and Group Office.
- Setting & steering the culture of the School Council and School Executive.
- Being the public face of the School Council and maintaining an appropriate public profile for the Group and within the school communities.

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- Facilitating proper information flow to the School Council and Board.
- Facilitating the effective functioning of the School Council, including managing the conduct, frequency and length of School Council meetings.
- Communicate the views of the School Council in conjunction with the Churches, School Board, CEO, to employees, parents, broader stakeholders and to the public.

In performing his/her role, the Chair's responsibilities also include:

- Setting the agenda for the matters to be considered by the School Council.
- Seeking to ensure that the information provided to the School Council is relevant, accurate, timely and sufficient to keep the School Council appropriately informed of performance, finances, affairs, opportunities, and challenges to the School, and of any developments that may have a material impact on it.
- Seeking to ensure that communications with stakeholders, regulators, employees, parents and the public are timely and relevant.
- Reviewing their leadership style and the effectiveness of the School Council.
- Facilitating open and constructive communications amongst School Council members and encouraging their contributions to School Council deliberations.
- Liaising with and counselling, as appropriate, School Council members.
- Leading corporate governance issues, including being aware of a conflict of interest and managing any such conflicts.
- Ensure the School Council addresses all the major strategic issues that can affect the School's prosperity, reputation and sustainability.
- Maintain an effective and consultative working relationship with the School Principal through regular discussion of issues pertaining to the school and the School Council, with the regularity of the meetings to be set by the School Council.
- In conjunction with the School Council, set the KPI and reporting metrics of the School Principal.
- In conjunction with the School Council, lead the annual review of the School Principal, ensuring a strategic review of the School Principal's performance against the set KPI's.

PMSA Responsibilities

- Regular reporting to the PMSA Board as set out in the School Council Charter.
- Promote role modelling and collaborative working relationships between PMSA Group Office and PMSA Board to ensure that the Group and School Council priorities are understood and coordinated.
- Attend School Chair meetings.
- Comply with any obligations prescribed under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act.
- Act in accordance with any conduct requirement prescribed under the PMSA Code of Conduct.

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Skills and Attributes

- Proactive commitment to the PMSA's Christian ethos, mission, vision, values and frameworks.
- A thorough understanding of the trends and issues in school education, specifically those within independent schools.
- GAICD or equivalent qualification or Board governance experience.
- Extensive working knowledge of corporate governance and the ability to facilitate governance processes and ensure regulatory compliance.
- Demonstrated leadership with the ability to inform and brief fellow School Council members on current organisational matters and strategies and the ability to lead constructive and timely discussion and debate, drawing on the expertise of the School Council.
- Have a strong understanding of the School's business and financial model and key elements which drive their performance.
- Have extensive experience in motivating, managing and dealing with people.
- Have extensive experience in meeting fiduciary duties and responsibilities, acting ethically, having appropriate independence, putting the organisation's interests before personal interests.
- Have the ability to inspire the individual contribution and participation of each School Council member to fully utilise their collective expertise to set the aims, strategies and policies of the School Council.
- Engage and effectively communicate with all stakeholders.
- Have a self-awareness and self-management that allows the Chair to empathetically manage situations where strong emotions are present.
- Demonstrates good business instinct and acumen.
- A willing participant with a genuine interest in the organisation and its business.
- Committed to principles of corporate social responsibility – to behave ethically, to create value for the Group, and to empower and partner with school communities to build capacity and capability for the ongoing sustainability of the PMSA.
- Have the ability to commit to Council Meetings and where required sub-committees including preparation for meetings and review of documents. Attendance at key school community events and regular meetings with the School Principal. Noting this is a volunteer role, there is flexibility in how the Chair commits their time, in recognition of work-life balance and priorities.