

## **STATE ELECTION INFORMATION**

### **SCHOOLS AS POLLING PLACES**

Under the *WA Electoral Act 1907* Section 109 “Certain buildings to be used free”, public schools in Western Australia may be used as polling places on election day free of charge.

Through the WA Electoral Commission, a State electoral returning officer will contact the principal of a school which is a potential polling place for the 2017 State election. The returning officer will make arrangements with the principal to inspect the facilities and be given the name of a school staff member to be the liaison person. The principal is required to extend full site access and cooperation to the returning officer during the process.

If a school is chosen as a polling place, political parties and candidates for the election cannot be given access or approval to enter the school for the purpose outlined above before the morning of the election. This includes attaching posters to the outside of the school fence.

The WA Electoral Commission may be given access to the school before the election to set up the polling place. This access should not compromise the orderly conduct of the school and teaching and learning programs. The principal can negotiate this access which may be after school finishes on Friday 10 March 2017.

The WA Electoral Commission can provide some financial consideration for additional security, cleaning and the like that may be required. This will be discussed directly by the WA Electoral Commission with the principal.

The choice of location for polling places in each school is critical in terms of accessibility (including wheelchair and disability access) and comfort for electors and polling officials. Rooms of a suitable size and with adequate lighting, ventilation and entry/exit points are required.

The principal does not need to complete the Department’s Licence for Use of School Premises or any other Department documentation.

#### **Contact**

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## **WORKING FOR THE WA ELECTORAL COMMISSION**

Blanket approval is hereby provided by the Director, Employee Relations, for Department staff to be employed by the WA Electoral Commission for the State election on 11 March 2017

Staff are not required to lodge an application under section 102 of the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*.

Each staff member should advise their line manager before accepting employment with the WA Electoral Commission to ensure there is no impact on the operations of their school/workplace.

### **Contact**

Employee Relations

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## DEPARTMENT STAFF STANDING FOR ELECTION

- WA public sector staff (includes all Department of Education staff) may nominate for seats in the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council of State Parliament according to the WA Electoral Commission's [Eligibility Guide for Membership of State Parliament](#).
- The writs for the election will be issued on 1 February and the nomination period is from 2 February to 12.00noon on 9 February for nominations endorsed by political parties and 12.00noon on 10 February for nominations not endorsed by political parties.
- A staff member who nominates as a candidate for the election must take leave for the election period commencing on the first working day after nomination. This means that they are not allowed to be at work. The leave may be paid leave if this leave has been accrued or unpaid leave. Applying for and taking leave, as well as the Department approving leave, for this purpose are authorised under the [Electoral Regulations](#) (Regulation 28).
- Under the Electoral Act, a person is only a candidate for the election from the time of nomination (from 2 February to either 9 or 10 February as above). While some people may refer to themselves before this time as being the candidate for a certain seat, they may be a particular political party's nominated candidate but they are not a candidate for the election until they nominate formally. Therefore, they continue to be a staff member of the Department and must abide by all public sector and Department employment arrangements and policies (see 7 below).
- The election period ends when a candidate for the election withdraws their nomination or is declared elected or is not elected. At this time, the candidate for the election can resume employment with the Department.
- Chief executive officers, senior executive service positions and positions prescribed under the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal are not eligible to nominate for or be elected to Parliament so must resign before nominating. Subject to some conditions, staff required to resign may be entitled to re-enter public sector employment should they withdraw their nomination or not be elected.
- Staff intending to nominate as a candidate for the election must abide by all current employment arrangements and policies (including but not limited to the [Public Sector Code of Ethics](#); Public Sector Commission Administrative Instructions [102 – Official Communications](#), [711 – Official Information](#) and [728 – Media and Public Communications](#); and Department of Education's [Code of Conduct](#) and [Telecommunications Use policy](#)) in the lead up to the nomination period and before they are required to either take leave or resign. More information about these codes and instructions is in the section entitled 'Other Information'.
- It is recommended that staff considering nominating as candidates for the election seek advice from the WA Electoral Commission.

### Contact

Employee Relations  
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## **MEMBERS OF SCHOOL COUNCILS/BOARDS**

The role of school councils/boards is determined by the *School Education Act 1999* and *School Education Regulations 2000*. Each council/board should strive to support their school to provide high quality education programs for students at that school.

In doing so, members are expected to maintain an apolitical stance which means that members should not disseminate political materials or use the school or its resources for personal or political purposes.

The board should manage any real or perceived conflicts of interest in a proper and transparent manner.

If a council/board member is planning to nominate as a candidate for the election it may be appropriate for this member to not attend council/board meetings in the period leading up to the election.

*School Education Act 1999* (Section 121): Information intended to generate support for a political party (orally or in writing) is not permitted on school premises. This means that a State/Federal Member of Parliament or a candidate for election is prohibited from providing information that is intended to generate support for a political party or person; and a principal is prohibited from including such information in any school communications.

*School Education Regulations 2000* (Regulation 72): Use of school premises that conflicts with the ethos and values of the school is not permitted. This means that school premises must not to be used for purposes intended to generate support for a political party or person. Therefore, no political campaigning is permitted on school premises.

## **MEMBERS OF P&Cs**

Parents and citizens associations are separate legal entities from schools. Members are expected to act in ways that are consistent with their constitutions.

In dealings with P&C members and at P&C meetings, principals must be mindful of their obligations as public sector and Department of Education employees.

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### **Contact**

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## **OTHER INFORMATION**

The [Public Sector Code of Ethics](#) applies to all staff. It includes minimum standards of conduct and integrity to be complied with in the areas of personal integrity, relationships with others and accountability.

Public Sector Commission Administrative Instructions provide directives for staff in the areas of:

- [102 – Official Communications](#) regarding restrictions on staff of communicating with a Minister, the Public Sector Commissioner or a chief executive officer of another department;
- [711 – Official Information](#) regarding restrictions on staff of providing information obtained in the course of their official duties; and
- [728 – Media and Public Communications](#) regarding restrictions on staff of providing information to the media or public on agency policies and activities.

The Department of Education's policies apply to all staff. They cover the full range of areas of school management, human resources, corporate management, safety and welfare, and finance and administration.

The [Code of Conduct](#), for example, provides a set of general principles to guide staff in their conduct as employees. It includes an expectation that staff maintain high standards of behaviour in all activities and environments associated with their employment. There are six principles covering personal behaviour, communication and official information, fraudulent and corrupt behaviour, use of public resources, record keeping and use of information, and conflicts of interest.

Under the [Telecommunications Use policy](#) staff are not permitted to use telecommunications to transmit messages of a party political nature or personal broadcast messages.

### **Contact**

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