# Mandatory student membership on secondary school governing council

# Exemption process

Student members on secondary school governing councils offer valuable insights that can enhance school governance and local decision-making. Schools with secondary enrolment must have 2 student member positions on their governing council, unless the school has sought and received an exemption from this requirement.

Small, rural, or special purpose schools or schools with exceptional circumstances may request an exemption if the governing council feels it may not be able to meet this requirement. If this is the case, the principal and governing council chairperson must submit a request by completing the below form.

An exemption is only valid for 1 school year. It is not intended to remove student input, but rather to give your school and governing council the opportunity to explore other ways of involving students.

Your application should outline how the governing council plans to incorporate student voice into its discussions and decisions through one of the approved alternative models:

**Establishing a student voice subcommittee**

A student voice subcommittee will need to be established and approved by the council. The membership of the committee will consist of a minimum of 3 members, including at least 1 governing council member who will provide the conduit between the subcommittee and the governing council. This will ensure there is a channel for council to hear from the students.

A *student voice subcommittee terms of reference template* has been developed for your council to amend and adopt.

**Student attendance at council meetings**

The governing council’s meeting agenda will be amended to include a new standing item that will mandate that students be invited to attend each council meeting. How they engage will be determined by the nature of the discussions/decisions, for example advice on important issues, input into discussions, presentations of information, and reporting on the activities of the Student Representative Council (or similar group).

The completed form must be submitted to your school's Education Director for endorsement before requesting formal approval from the Minister for Education, Training and Skills (or their delegate) via the Site Governance Team at [education.sitegovernance@sa.gov.au](mailto:education.sitegovernance@sa.gov.au). **This process must be completed by the end of Term 2, 2025.**

Once the exemption has been approved, the governing council must implement the agreed-upon alternative arrangement.

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# Exemption form

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| Name of your governing council: | | |
| Our governing council is seeking an exemption from having 2 student members on our governing council for the following school year:       *i.e. 2026* | | |
| Please tick the box(es) that best describes your school:  Special schools (Disability, Youth Education Centre)  Small school (less than 50 students enrolled in years 7 and above)  Rural/ regional / remote  Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander / Anangu  Other: | | |
| Please describe why your governing council feels it is unable to meet the mandated requirement to have 2 students in your membership, for example exceptional circumstances. *(Limit your response to less than 100 words)* | | |
| Please indicate which alternative model your governing council intends to implement to enhance student involvement in local decision-making throughout the exemption period.  Establishing a student voice subcommittee  Student attendance at council meetings  If applicable, please provide any further information: | | |
| **School Principal**  ………………………………....…………  Name and signature  Date:      /     / | **Governing Council Chairperson**  ………………………………....…………  Name and signature    Date:      /     / | **Education Director**  ………………………………....…………  Name and signature  Date:      /     / |

**Site Governance team use only**

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| After reviewing the circumstances, the request for an exemption from having two student members on the governing council has been:  Approved for       for the year  *(council name) (insert year)*    Not approved. |
| If applicable, any additional comments: |
| **Minster for Education, Training and Skills (or their delegates) approval**  ………………………………....…………  Caroline Fishpool, Lead Director, Conditions for Learning  Date:      /     / |