



**P&C**

# **PRESIDENT'S & VICE-PRESIDENT'S GUIDE**

**THE ESSENTIAL RESOURCE  
FOR P&C PRESIDENTS &  
VICE PRESIDENTS**

**COMPLIES WITH THE  
P&C CONSTITUTION 2019**

2nd EDITION OCTOBER 2022

Every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the information contained herein, but no responsibility is taken for any lack of coincidence with the *School Education Act (1999)*, the *School Education Regulations (2000)*, the *Associations Incorporation Act (2015)* and the *Associations Incorporation Regulations (2016)*. These Acts of Parliament, together with the P&C Constitution 2019 are the definitive documents in this area.

All references to meeting protocol have been taken from  
*Foyster & Carr's 'take the CHAIR'* produced by the Australian Rostrum Council. See also Appendix C  
of the WACSSO Constitution and Rules.  
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## P&C Finances eLearning Course

This must-do course consists of seven short modules covering all major P&C finance matters. The more members that complete the course, the stronger your P&C's financial governance will be.

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\*For Standing Orders and Rules of Debate, please see the *Effective Meeting Guidelines* booklet.

# The Role of P&C Associations

Parents and Citizens' Associations are established under the School Education Act 1999 for the purpose of supporting a strong government school system, for the benefit of the students.

The P&C Association at your school helps you and your children by:

- ♦ giving parents an opportunity to learn about the school's policies and programs;
- ♦ organising ways in which parents can share in shaping and developing school policies so that they reflect the broad agreement and support of the school community;
- ♦ bringing parents together to share information and views;
- ♦ assisting the school to build positive attitudes to students and their families;
- ♦ stimulating community interest and participation in education;
- ♦ raising funds and providing additional resources and amenities for the benefit of children attending government schools.

Where both a P&C Association and a School Council/Board exist in a school it is expected that they will have different functions but operate in a complementary way.



The purpose of the guide is to not only outline the roles and responsibilities of the P&C President, but also to provide some ideas and tools to enhance their skills.

So, what exactly does a P&C President do?

## Role of the President

### **Vital link between parents and the school administration.**

The President acts as the vital link between the parent body and the school administration and needs to develop and nurture a good working relationship with both.

### **Observes Constitutional formalities.**

Put simply, ensuring that you and all members of the P&C abide by your P&C's constitution. This is particularly important when handling disputes or the possible suspension or expulsion of P&C members. They are also responsible for any communication between the government authority responsible for administering the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015* and the Association.

### **Chairperson for the P&C Association's meetings.**

To effectively run meetings the chairperson requires knowledge of meeting procedure and protocols. However, well-run meetings also require the Chairperson to have an understanding of group dynamics, the ability to use their interpersonal skills to get the best out of all members and to deal effectively with the difficult situations that can occur.

### **Ensures all office bearers fulfil their duties.**

A knowledgeable President is vital to the smooth operation of any organisation. Good Presidents recognise the importance of their role and ensure that, in addition to knowing the scope of their powers, they are aware of their responsibilities. They must not only understand their own role but have a good working knowledge of the other office bearer roles too.

### **The public face of the P&C handling media enquiries and all external enquiries.**

As President, you are the public face of the P&C. When media enquiries are directed to you as the President of the P&C, you are representing ALL of the parents at your school, not just the financial members of the P&C. At no time should you be giving a personal opinion.

### **Signatory to accounts.**

You have the right and responsibility to sign cheques, documents and conduct and authorise EFT transactions for the P&C.

### **Ex officio member of all sub-committees.**

By virtue of your title, you are a voting and speaking member of all sub-committees.

### **Effectively manage any P&C paid employees e.g. Canteen worker, Uniform shop worker.**

As the Principal Employer of any P&C employees.

*Also refer to P&C Constitution Rule 15.0*

# What skills or characteristics are required by Presidents?

P&C Presidents should:

- have the confidence of the community with which they are working in that they;
  - are aware of the different sections within that community; and
  - are aware of protocols of different cultures and are able to communicate cross-culturally.
- understand the group members' strengths;
- have a good working knowledge of the subject under discussion/ the issues facing the group; but presents a neutral position on the issues being discussed;
- deal with how things are done (the process), rather than with what is done (the content);
- value as relevant, everything that happens at the meeting, and everyone who attends it;
- enable everyone to have the opportunity to express their view;
- understand what being *representative\** means;
- trust the ability of the group to work through processes and achieve its task;
- trust themselves to do the job well;
- believe that the value of the group is greater than the sum of its parts;
- keep the meeting purpose in mind at all times;
- get the job done, and done on time;
- are comfortable with managing and resolving conflict;
- act naturally and openly;
- be enthusiastic;
- stimulate discussion;
- laugh at themselves and with others;
- support, guide and inform members and involve them in decision making;
- act on decisions that have been made;
- not dominate proceedings;
- not allow interruptions;
- keep members to the agenda;
- know which topics relate to *operations or governance\*\** and which relate to school management (responsibility of school principal); and
- know who may vote at the meeting.

Read the above list again and tick those skills that you feel you already possess. Now look at the skills you haven't ticked and think about how you could either gain these skills or improve your performance in them.

*\*Being representative means standing or acting on behalf of your committee. You support the majority view even though it may conflict with your own opinion.*

*\*\*Governance is the process of decision making. P&Cs should aim for good governance, which is transparent, accountable, inclusive, responsive and efficient.*



# 1. Link between parents and school administration.

As President, one of your key tasks is to be an effective link between parents and the school administration.

So, what does this mean exactly? It means you need to be able to establish and maintain successful working relationships with both groups to pass information, concerns and issues from one group to the other, and back again.

These relationships can be easily achieved through clear, open, frequent and honest communication.

To ensure these relationships are successful, sometimes you will have to carefully plan exactly what you want to say, to whom and when – particularly if the issue relates to you or your child!

## Here are some tips to further enhance your communication skills:

### 1. *Have commitment and perseverance*

Start communicating fully and openly yourself. Ask yourself what your P&C hopes to achieve in the coming year. What specific things does everyone need to do to help get it there? How can you encourage others to help you achieve the goals?

### 2. *Start spreading your message*

Make sure everyone knows you value what they do and that their contribution makes a difference. Your members need to know this, and they won't unless you communicate it.

### 3. *Do what you say*

Most people aren't born great communicators. We all need training, practice and feedback to keep getting better at it. Helping yourself and others to communicate is a real investment in your association.

### 4. *Earn the respect of others*

We can't influence people if they don't respect us. A good communicator is someone who's genuinely interested in people and understands their way of looking at things, even if it's different to your way. A good communicator can state ideas and points of view clearly and in a way that doesn't cause offence. People become better communicators once they acknowledge that deep down inside, we're all pretty similar. Remember, you are supposed to be working towards the same goals. There are a number of ways in which you can make people feel comfortable with others. We can do this through our body language or our voice, or the way we use words, or we can establish points of common interest or experience.

*"Make sure everyone knows you value what they do"*

## The power of the voice

Try saying the following sentences out loud, each time putting heavy emphasis on the words underlined:

- “I never said you stole the money.”
- “I never said you stole the money.”
- “I never said you stole the money.”
- “I never said you stole the money.”
- “I never said you stole the money.”
- “I never said you stole the money.”
- “I never said you stole the money.”

Here you have a sentence of only seven words, and it can have seven completely different meanings. Our voices give us away. Watch the way you emphasise words as that can cause someone to misinterpret what you’re saying.

## The power of body language

The body speaks louder than words. We all read body language to some extent and the better we're able to understand it, the more effective we're going to be as communicators and as people. Knowing how to read and use body language is a useful communication skill.

There are two basic groups of body language postures: **OPEN/CLOSED** and **FORWARD/BACK**.

**OPEN/CLOSED** is the most obvious. People with arms folded and legs crossed, and bodies turned away are signalling that they are rejecting messages. People showing open hands, fully facing you and both feet planted on the ground are accepting them.

**FORWARD/BACK** indicates whether people are actively or passively reacting to communication. When they are leaning forward and pointing towards you, they are actively accepting or rejecting the message. When they are leaning back, looking up at the ceiling, doodling on a pad or cleaning their glasses they are either passively absorbing or ignoring the message.

## The power of listening

The better we listen, the more we learn about how to persuade people, because we discover what's important to them and find out about their world. Actively listening to others obliges them to listen to us. It's like saying "Okay, you've had your say and I've listened, so now I'll have my say while you listen to me."

Listening helps us to build better relationships. It also helps us find out what's really going on, which means we can make better decisions, solve problems more effectively and reduce the number of conflicts and disputes.

The words 'listen' and 'silent' use the same letters but are quite different things. If we're just silent, we end up listening like a stunned mullet and we really need to listen with our hearts and eyes and our minds as well as our ears. Listening is really hard work and doesn't come easily to most of us. It needs practice.

## 2. Observe Constitutional formalities

So, what does this mean for you? All you have to do is ensure that your P&C is abiding by the rules which govern P&C Associations.

Please take some time now, to discover exactly what these rules are and their implications for your P&C.

The formal operating guidelines which govern P&C Associations are:

1. School Education Act 1999.
2. School Education Regulations 2000.
3. Associations Incorporation Act 2015
4. Associations Incorporation Regulations 2016
5. P&C Constitution 2019
6. Terms of Reference (Sub-committees)
7. Any By-laws of the Association.

Furthermore, businesses that operate on school premises or employ people must adhere to current legislative requirements. It is a P&C's responsibility to ascertain which, if any of the following are applicable to their circumstances (this is not an exhaustive list):

1. Commercial Tenancies (Retail Shops) Agreements Act 1985 (WA)
2. Fair Work Act 2009
3. Federal Privacy Act 1988
4. Food Act 2008 (WA)
5. Food Regulations 2009 (WA)
6. Industrial Relations Act 1979 (WA)
7. Long Service Leave Act 1958 (WA)
8. Minimum Conditions of Employment Act 1993 (WA)
9. Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984 (WA)
10. Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 (WA)
11. Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (WA)
12. Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981(WA)

Relevant industry awards are a high priority in conjunction with applicable *Acts*.

Historically, P&C Associations have operated school canteens and uniform shops, though schools may also look at alternative ways that these businesses can operate.

All P&C Associations must be incorporated to comply with Section 145 of the School Education Act 1999. Once incorporated, the P&C Association takes on the obligations specified in the *Associations Incorporation Act (2015)* as well as those already specified in the *School Education Act 1999*. These obligations are written into the P&C Constitution.

Important clauses of these Acts are, for example, that the P&C Association must:

- nominate a financial year (P&C Constitution Rule 4.0)
- hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) once (and only once) in each calendar year [*Associations Incorporation Act 2015, Section 50 (1)*]. This AGM must be held within 4 months of the end of the Association's financial year (P&C Constitution Rule 23.1.1) For the majority of P&C Associations the financial year ends on December 31st.

- ensure that adequate financial records are kept showing transactions and financial position [*Associations Incorporation Act 2015, Section 66, P&C Constitution Rule 17.8 & 21.0*].
- present an annual financial report (or audit/review as required) to its members at each Annual General Meeting [*Associations Incorporation Act, Section 70*]. Copies of the annual financial statements (and any relevant audit or review report) must be given to the Principal of the school and to WACSSO [*School Education Act 1999, Section 147(b), and P&C Constitution Rule 17.12*].
- maintain a Register of Members and make this register available to members upon request [*Associations Incorporation Act 2015, Section 53 & 54 and P&C Constitution Rules 6.6 and 16.3*].
- maintain the Association's Rules (the Constitution, and where applicable, By-laws) and make these rules available to any member who requests them [*Associations Incorporation Act 2015, Section 35*].
- maintain a record of the names and addresses of office bearers and Executive Committee members elected at each Annual General Meeting and make this record available to any member on request [*Associations Incorporation Act, Section 53 & 54, P&C Constitution Rule 6.2*]. This information must also be given to the Principal of the school and WACSSO [*School Education Act 1999, Section 147(a), and P&C Constitution Rule 16.5*] by 30<sup>th</sup> April each year. WACSSO provides an online Officer Bearers form for this purpose.

The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety will investigate any breaches of the Association Incorporations Act (2015)

These Acts and Regulations also place certain limitations on the Association's authority. P&Cs must ensure that:

- the annual subscription fee does not exceed \$1.00 [*Education Regulation 124(2)(a), P&C Constitution Rule 7.1*].
- it does not attempt to exercise any authority over the teaching staff of the school, or the day to day management of the school [*School Education Act 1999, Section 143(2)(a)(b)(c), P&C Constitution Rule 3.0*].
- all profits are spent to the benefit of children attending a government school [*School Education Act 1999, Section 143(3)*].
- they become incorporated within three months after being formed [*School Education Act 1999, Section 145(2)*].
- all Associations adopt a constitution that has been approved by the Minister for Education [*School Education Act 1999, Section 145(3)*].

# Executive Committee Constitutional Responsibilities

Executive Committee Composition (P&C Constitution Rule 11.0)

Schools of over 200 students	Schools of 200 students or less
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ President</li> <li>✓ Vice-President</li> <li>✓ Honorary Secretary</li> <li>✓ Honorary Treasurer</li> <li>✓ Not less than 3 other financial members</li> <li>✓ Principal (ex-officio)</li> </ul> <p>TOTAL: 8 people (min)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ President</li> <li>✓ Vice-President</li> <li>✓ Honorary Secretary / Treasurer</li> <li>✓ Not less than 2 other financial members</li> <li>✓ Principal (ex-officio)</li> </ul> <p>TOTAL: 6 people (min)</p>

The members of the Executive Committee are voted into these positions at the Annual General Meeting. They are responsible for managing the affairs of the association when it isn't possible for all members to meet. A **person is not to be a member of the Executive Committee** if they are:

- (a) a person who is, according to the *Interpretation Act 1984 section 13D*, a bankrupt person or a person whose affairs are under insolvency laws;
- (b) a person who has been convicted, within or outside the State, of —
  - (i) an indictable offence in relation to the promotion, formation or management of a body corporate; or
  - (ii) an offence involving fraud or dishonesty punishable by imprisonment for a period of not less than 3 months; or
  - (iii) an offence relating to an association incurring a debt while insolvent.

There are also some specific obligations stated with respect to members of the Executive Committee, who must:

- Declare any direct or indirect personal or pecuniary interest in a contract or proposed contract [*Associations Incorporation Act 2015, Section 42*]. The committee member is also not allowed to participate in any discussions or voting relating to such a contract [*Associations Incorporation Act 2015, Section 43*]. (P&C Constitution Rule 26.4)
- Have duty of good faith, care, diligence and proper purpose [*Associations Incorporation Act 2015, Sections 44, 45*]. (P&C Constitution Rule 14.2 (i) and (ii))
- Not use his or her position or information obtained by the association to: gain an advantage for the officer or another person; or cause detriment to the association [*Associations Incorporation Act 2015, Sections 46, 47*]. (P&C Constitution Rule 14.2 (iii))
- Not allow the P&C Association to incur debt while it is insolvent or incur a debt that will cause the Association to become insolvent [*Associations Incorporation Act 2015, Section 127*]. (P&C Constitution Rule 14.2)
- Hand over all documents and records pertaining to their Executive Committee role once their membership of the Executive Committee ceases [*Associations Incorporation Act 2015, Section 41*]. (P&C Constitution Rule 13.3)

Failure to comply with any of these requirements may result in a fine from the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety, therefore it is important that all members of the Executive Committee are aware of both their own and the P&Cs obligations under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015*.

## The P&C Constitution

The Constitution currently used by incorporated P&C Associations was developed by WACSSO in conjunction with Crown Law solicitors, the Minister for Education, and the Department of Education's legal advisers. It is important that all members of the P&C Association, particularly the Executive Committee members and Office Bearers are aware of the implications and requirements of the Constitution. Some of the features of a standard P&C Constitution are discussed below.

### Name (P&C Constitution Rule 1.0)

This is the name as it appears on the Certificate of Incorporation issued to the Association by the Commissioner for Consumer Protection. Present a professional image by using it (including 'Inc.') on the Association's letterheads, receipts and bank accounts. Any committees (e.g. canteen) which have been given the power to operate a bank account should show the full P&C Association name with the relevant committee name in brackets, e.g.:

*Anytown Primary School Parents and Citizens'  
Association Inc.  
(Canteen Committee)*

### Objects (P&C Constitution Rule 2.0)

The objects are the P&C Association's statement of goals and purpose, and are specified in the *School Education Act 1999, Section 143*. These objects enable P&C Associations to:

- act as a formal, recognised parent forum for discussion of educational issues;
- develop community interest and gather community opinion on educational issues;
- nominate a member to apply for the School Council/Board;
- promote the interests and well-being of the children attending the school;
- work to bring about greater cooperation between the school and the home; and
- provide additional resources and facilities for the school.



### Powers (P&C Constitution Rule 3.0)

The powers of the Association enable the P&C to carry out its objects. Powers of the P&C Association include the power to:

- raise funds;
- borrow or invest money;
- operate bank accounts;
- purchase, lease or hire property;
- appoint or remove employees (e.g. canteen, uniform shop);
- appoint sub-committees;

- set the financial year.
- make representations to the school administration, the Education Department and to government either directly or through WACSSO; and
- affiliate with WACSSO Inc.

### Income and Property (P&C Constitution Rule 5.0)

P&C funds, over and above administrative costs, can only be spent to benefit children attending a government school. Funds cannot be transferred to any individual P&C Association member.

*"funds can only be spent on administration costs and to benefit children attending a government school"*

The majority of P&C Associations are not registered for the Goods and Services Tax (GST). To avoid paying the GST component on items purchased for the school, use the following process:

- Discuss the proposed purchase at a P&C General Meeting and ensure that there is a resolution in the minutes showing the Association's intention to purchase that particular item.
- Ask the Principal, in writing, to purchase the item. The school is registered for GST and will be able to claim back the GST component of the purchase price.
- Give the school a cheque for the purchase price less the GST component. This money is a conditional donation to the school funds. The Goods and Services Tax Ruling GSTR 2012/2 allows P&Cs to make donations to non-profit organisations (schools only) and to specify what the money is for, as long as there is no material benefit to the giver (the P&C) and the donation is made voluntarily.

WACSSO believes the following are examples of inappropriate use of P&C funds:

- teachers' morning teas, tea funds, allowances;
- items for the staff room, such as tablecloths, dishes, microwaves for example;
- staff or administrative computers and equipment;
- gifts, presentations, flowers, newspaper notices;
- wine and cheese for Annual General Meetings, cartons of beer for 'busy bees';
- donations to outside organisations, such as charities, service clubs, non-government schools and private individuals.

As the P&C Association is a non-profit organisation, it is inappropriate for it to have large amounts of money invested unless it is intended for the purchase of large items of equipment such as air conditioning.

**The school community has every right to expect that the money they help raise during the school year will be spent to benefit their children during the time they are at school.**

### Membership, Fees and Renewals (P&C Constitution Rules 6.0 & 7.0)

Anyone over the age of 18 can join a P&C Association. Membership is on an individual basis with no provision for family membership (P&C Constitution Rule 6.1).

Payment of a voluntary donation – such as those requested on school resource lists - does not give automatic financial membership to the P&C Association.

Anyone wishing to join the P&C Association may do so at any General Meeting of the P&C (Annual General Meeting, Special General Meeting or General Meeting). The Principal of the school is automatically a member of the P&C Association and the Executive Committee (ex officio) and is therefore exempt from paying any membership fees. The P&C Association determines the amount of the subscription, up to a maximum of \$1 per year, per person [Regulation 124(2)(a), School Education Regulations, P&C Constitution Rule 6.4 & 7.1].

All renewal subscriptions become payable at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Association (P&C Constitution Rule 7.2).

### The Executive Committee (P&C Constitution Rules 11.0 & 12.0)

As mentioned before, the Executive Committee comprises the office bearers and committee members elected to the Executive Committee at the Association's AGM. The P&C members delegate the responsibility of managing the Association's affairs in between General Meetings to the Executive Committee.

Executive Committee positions must be renewed at every AGM. The Principal is automatically a member of the Executive Committee but may not be elected to any of the office bearer positions.



If the P&C Association members meet on a regular basis, the Executive Committee may not need to meet at all. However, the Executive Committee may need to meet to deal with urgent matters of business.

The minutes of an Executive Committee meeting should be presented to the next General Meeting of the P&C Association for adoption. Any resolutions made by the Executive Committee need to be taken with accountability to the full P&C membership. This is not negotiable and is essential for keeping all activities of the P&C transparent to all members.

Refer P&C Constitution Rules 6.4, 12.5, 14.1 & 14.7.

### P&C Association Books and Documents (P&C Constitution Rule 20.0)

Any member of the P&C Association may inspect the books and documents of the Association. The Treasurer is responsible for the financial books and the Secretary for all other books and documents. Members may request a copy of any records of the Association which must be granted, however permission to remove any of the books and documents must be obtained from the Executive Committee, who may require the member to provide a statutory declaration setting out the purpose for which the copy or extract is required and declaring that the purpose is connected with the affairs of the Association. It is an offence under the Associations Incorporation Act 2015 for a member to disclose or use the information obtained from the Register of Members or record of office holders for a purpose that is not directly connected with the affairs of the Association.

Any appointed auditor/reviewer has the right to inspect the financial records at any time.

Refer P&C Constitution Rules 20.1, 20.1.1 & 22.5.



## Common Seal (P&C Constitution Rule 29.0)

The Common Seal is a rubber stamp that bears the operating name of the P&C Association and the words "Common Seal". An incorporated P&C Association may choose to possess and use a common seal (P&C Constitution Rule 29.0). It may be used when signing documents such as workplace agreements, committee terms of reference, contracts, etc. A resolution must be passed to use the Common Seal and the Secretary must keep a record of the documents that have been stamped with it.

Any two (2) of the President, the Vice-President, the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurer may countersign the affixation of the Common Seal.

## Amending the Constitution (P&C Constitution Rule 31.0)

The Constitution can only be altered with the approval of WACSSO and the Minister for Education. If the P&C Association wishes to amend its Constitution, it will need to:

- have the proposed amendment passed by a three-quarters majority of financial members present at a General Meeting of the P&C (as this is a Special Resolution); and
- submit the proposed amendment, in writing to WACSSO, for the approval of the Department of Education and WACSSO State Council; then
- WACSSO will submit the approved amendment to the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) as this will affect every P&C in Western Australia.

However, some clauses of the Constitution are prescribed by the *School Education Act 1999* and *School Education Regulations 2000* or the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015* and therefore cannot be altered. Check with the WACSSO office if you are unsure of the validity of your proposed amendment.

A simpler process to altering the Constitution would be for the P&C General Meeting to adopt a By-law. For example, the P&C may decide "that all reports must be submitted in writing 7 days before a General Meeting", and this would be written as a By-law of the Association. However, it is important to note that "*By-laws cannot diminish the power of the Constitution in any way*". For example, you couldn't reduce the number of members required for a quorum by passing a By-law.

**Remember** the Constitution always takes precedence over any adopted By-laws.

## Ethical Considerations

An honest and ethical organisation needs to be run with certain standards of behaviour. Being clear about your standards is one of the most important things to keep in mind.

Your first responsibility is to see that your P&C Association is run on a firm, democratic, moral foundation and within statutory and constitutional guidelines. An ethical organisation will ensure that there is full accountability for all its actions. Remember too that every member is a part of the decision-making process. People will never be fully committed to your P&C Association if they are not allowed a voice in planning, decision-making, fundraising and allocating the funds raised.

*"Your first responsibility is to see that your P&C Association is run on a firm, democratic, moral foundation"*

If you are aware of your responsibilities under the P&C Constitution which abides by; the *School Education Act 1999*, the *School Education Regulations 2000*, and the *Associations Incorporation Act 2015*, and if you are honest and careful in what you do, and you act in

good faith with the P&C's best interests in mind, then you are limiting the possibility of any claims of mismanagement.

### Suspension/Expulsion from the P&C (P&C Constitution Rule 9.0)

Rule 9.0 of the P&C Constitution allows for the suspension OR expulsion of a financial member of the Association. Ex-officio members are exempt from this rule. This rule is to be used as a last resort for committees that have members who frequently act contrary to the aims and rules of the P&C or who have convictions for offences deemed prejudicial to the interests of the P&C.

The process to suspend or expel is a rigorous one that begins with a complaint being made against a member. A series of meetings will follow that allow the parties involved to make submission and then ends with a recommendation (if required) to a Special General Meeting for a vote to be passed by Special Resolution (75% majority). The full process can be found in the P&C Constitution.

The Executive Committee can also declare vacant the seat of any of its members including Office Bearers. Rule 14.3 of the Constitution permits this if the member frequently misses meetings, has criminal convictions or persistently fails to perform the duties of their position. The President of the P&C should attempt to develop an understanding of the reasons why the member is not performing before a move is made to remove them. There are often authentic reasons for these issues and an in-depth, casual and confidential chat may resolve the issue.

### Disputes Resolution (P&C Constitution Rule 28.0)

Often when there is no formal process for dealing with disputes between members the dispute becomes personal and potentially toxic. Rule 28.0 of the P&C Constitution sets out a process that is overseen by the President of the association. This rule also allows for mediation to take place if requested by a party to the dispute that does not want the P&C Executive Committee to handle the dispute. If the Executive Committee is permitted to handle the dispute, then the President will guide the committee in making a final determination. The Executive Committee will need to make sure they have very valid reasons for the determination.

## 3. Chairperson for the P&C Association's meetings

Another key role for the President is to effectively chair the meetings of the P&C (P&C Constitution Rule 15.1).

The meeting is the heart and soul of the P&C and nothing is more guaranteed to divide a P&C than a meeting that is poorly run by an ill-informed and unprepared Chairperson. Regular, effective, face-to-face communications are essential for building and maintaining successful P&Cs. Meetings should be run according to a set of formal rules (Rules of Debate and Standing Orders) as outlined in P&C Constitution Rule 26.2. The influence of the Chairperson makes a big difference to the effectiveness of all P&C meetings.

A common characteristic of a great Chairperson is that they have poise. The word POISE can stand for:

**Planning:** a good plan helps the Chairperson be effective.

**Observation:** a great Chairperson observes the group members and applies that information to the plan.

**Instruction:** to make a group work effectively together, sometimes timely instruction is appropriate.

**Sensitivity:** working with the moods, emotions and passions of the group is part of facilitating.

Evaluation: what you learn from each meeting you chair.

Running meetings is not easy and there are whole books written on the subject. The following are some of the key skills required in running meetings:

1. **Comprehensive knowledge of the P&C Constitution and formal meeting procedure.**  
The Chairperson must know the operating rules of the Association (Constitution). It is also useful to understand Rules of Debate and Standing Orders even if you don't run your meetings that way.
2. **The ability to facilitate group discussions.**  
A facilitator is a person who helps move a meeting/discussion/debate along smoothly and fairly. Group discussions can often quickly become social chats if they are not well facilitated.
3. **Skills in dealing with conflict and disagreement in the group.**  
This guide will provide you with some very basic ideas for dealing with problems in your meetings. The best way to gain more information is to read, view or listen to some of the more popular resources available online.
4. **Knowledge of positive and negative group roles that members take on.**  
Get to know the strengths and weaknesses, if any, of all the P&C members. Learn how to get the best from them.
5. **The ability to lead problem solving and planning activities without imposing your view.**  
The Chairperson should not influence the meeting to the extent that they impose their opinions on the decision-making. However, there will be times when it is necessary for you to take the initiative to move a discussion along. Try to phrase your comments in as neutral a manner as possible.

Any problems that you experience as the President of the P&C will often come back to one or more of the above points. Some of these you can learn to do well, others take time. It can be extremely difficult for a person to effectively control a meeting that involves several of their friends, unless the group understands quite clearly from the outset the scope of the Chairperson's authority through the use of Standing Orders and Rules of Debate.



# Chairing Effective Meetings

## Develop a clear mission and purpose

Even though it seems obvious that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss P&C involvement in education and providing funds for extra amenities, reiterating the goals with everyone involved is important.

Many parents think that the only function of the P&C is to raise funds. The reality is that P&C Associations don't have to raise a single cent if they choose not to.

## Meeting Code of Conduct

Work with your members to develop a Code of Conduct that governs behaviour at the meeting. WACSSO can provide a suggested Code of Conduct to use as a foundation for developing your own. People will be more inclined to follow guidelines if they have been involved in creating them. Review the Code of Conduct on a regular basis and refer members to it when required.

*"Work with  
your  
members to  
develop a  
Code of  
Conduct"*

## Types of Meetings and notice required

### General Meetings

A General Meeting is an ordinary meeting of the P&C at which normal business is discussed. General Meetings are open to any member of the school community; parents, staff and local community members. Non-members may not speak at the meeting unless permission has been granted by the Chairperson. Only financial members of the P&C can vote at the meeting.

Under the P&C Constitution at least one General Meeting must be held each term (P&C Constitution Rule 23.2). Many P&Cs hold monthly meetings, whilst others may choose to meet once a term. All members must be given seven days' written notice of a General Meeting. If a financial motion (to spend the P&C funds) is to be moved at the meeting, then 7 days' notice of that motion is also required. Ideally, when the notice of meeting is sent out, it will also list financial motions. (P&C Constitution Rule 24.1)

Minutes of a General Meeting are adopted at the next General Meeting.

### Annual General Meetings

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) must be held in every calendar year, within four months of the end of the Association's financial year (P&C Constitution 23.1.1). Ideally, this should be held at the same time each year. For the majority of P&C Associations the financial year ends on December 31<sup>st</sup>. Seven days' written notice of the meeting must be given, and the meeting must be advertised (WACSSO recommends at least two weeks' notice) (P&C Constitution Rule 24.1)

The AGM is the same as a General Meeting with two special functions:

1. the election of the P&C Office Bearers and Executive Members; and
2. the presentation of the Annual financial statements, review or audit (whichever is applicable).

In addition, it is customary for the President and the sub-committee convenors to present an annual report of their activities during the past year. General Business may be dealt with at an AGM; however, it is recommended that only items of business which must be dealt with immediately should be placed on the agenda.

The minutes of the AGM should be confirmed at the next General Meeting of the Association, thus confirming all resolutions passed at the AGM including the election of office bearers.

### Special General Meetings

Special General Meetings differ from General Meetings in that only the business of which notice has been given can be discussed. These meetings are usually called in an emergency and no other business should be discussed. As with General Meetings, members must be given 7 days' written notice of a special General Meeting.

A special General Meeting may be convened by the President or Honorary Secretary, or by request of 20% of the financial members of the P&C (a requisition).

If the special General Meeting has been called as the result of a requisition, the Chairperson should invite one of the requisitionists to be the mover of the motion dealing with the matter to be discussed.

Minutes of a special General Meeting are adopted at the next General Meeting of the Association.

### Executive Committee Meetings

The Executive Committee usually meets in between General Meetings of the Association to discuss items of an urgent or ongoing nature, and/or to set the agenda for the General Meeting. 48 hours' notice is required to be provided to all Executive Committee members. Many P&C Associations find it unnecessary for the Executive Committee to meet on a regular basis. If a financial motion (to spend the P&C funds) is to be moved at the meeting, then 48 hours' notice of that motion is also required. Therefore, when the notice of meeting is sent out, it must also list financial motions (P&C Constitution Rule 24.2).

Any member of the P&C is eligible to attend Executive Committee meetings, however, only duly elected (and *ex officio*) members of the Executive are entitled to vote. Observers may request permission to speak. The Executive should be aware of confidential agenda items such as items dealing with employees and ask any guests to leave the room while these matters are being discussed.

It is crucial that Executive Committee Meeting minutes be presented to the next General Meeting of the P&C for ratification. As well as being a requirement of good governance, it keeps all decisions transparent and helps prevent the perception that a 'purple circle' is operating.

### Sub-Committee Meetings

Sub-committee meetings are very often more informal than general P&C meetings. However, members should not lose sight of the fact that the meetings should be short and productive. It is not necessary to produce minutes of sub-committee meetings although you may prefer to do this. Sub-committee convenors must, however, report to the P&C General Meeting (P&C Constitution Rule 18.7). A report template for sub-committees can be found on the WACSSO website.





# The Meeting

## Prior to the Meeting

Develop the agenda ahead of time with as much input from everyone as possible. Encourage members to give plenty of notice, either to yourself or the P&C Secretary, of items they wish to discuss. These can then be placed on the agenda. Place the important items early in the meeting and, where possible, suggest time segments for each item. Then, stick to the agenda. If the P&C executive believe a proposal or motion does not fit with the objects of the P&C then it should not be included on the agenda.


Make sure that any reports and/or background papers about which decisions need to be made are circulated before the meeting so they can be read and considered.

If a member of the school community wishes to propose a financial motion (to spend P&C funds), they will need to give the P&C seven (7) days' notice for a General Meeting and 48 hours' notice for an Executive Meeting. Financial motions cannot be raised during the meeting (P&C Constitution Rule 24.0)

Both the notice of meeting and the Agenda should have the meeting start time and finish time listed at the top. Members need to be able to plan their day or evening around the meeting so it is vital they know when it will finish and that the Chairperson ensures the meeting does finish on time (unless there are extenuating circumstances).

The order of business on a typical agenda for a General Meeting would look something like this:

## AGENDA

- 
1. Open and Welcome
  2. Acknowledgment of Country
  3. Confirm quorum
  4. Apologies
  5. Introduce and welcome members
  6. Confirmation of previous minutes
  7. Business arising
  8. Correspondence
  9. President's Report
  10. Treasurer's Report
  11. Other Reports (Sub-Committees, Principal)
  12. General business - listed and unlisted
  13. Date and venue of next meeting
  14. Close meeting

For a sample Agenda & Minutes, please refer to the Secretary's Guide page 12 – 13.

# The actual Meeting

## Before the meeting starts

- Try to arrive early. This enables you to select a good seat and to talk with other members and the Principal.
- Ensure the Secretary has extra copies of the agenda and reports. It is also a good idea to have laminated copies of the P&C Constitution that can be distributed and then collected at the end of the meeting.
- Be aware of new potential members. Make them feel welcome, provide them with a copy of the agenda, P&C Constitution and WACSSO's Effective P&C Association booklet. Suggest they sit with an experience P&C member that can guide them (P&C Constitution Rule 6.2).
- Begin meetings with an activity that makes people feel comfortable being there. This can be the sharing of a positive or funny story from school, something personal that has happened, or one of many group exercises. The warm-up activity can make the meeting flow more smoothly and help build group cohesion.
- Alternatively, pick out a section of the P&C Constitution and spend a few minutes discussing its importance to the effective operation of the P&C.



*"have laminated copies of the P&C Constitution that can be distributed"*

## Opening the meeting

- Always start the meeting on time out of respect to those members who arrive on time. You will need to be aware, however, that some people may follow different time scales, and if there are latecomers, welcome them, give them a moment to settle, and then tell them what the group is doing.
- The Chairperson must ascertain that a quorum is present. A quorum is the prescribed number of members who must be present to constitute a valid meeting. The quorum must be present always during the meeting otherwise business cannot be validly transacted (P&C Constitution 25.0).
- If notification has been given beforehand, a financial member may attend the meeting while not being present in the room. As long as it is by a form of real-time communication using voice or video, a member may be deemed to be present. The time that person joined and left the meeting as well as the method of communication should be noted in the minutes.

### Quorums required for P&C meetings

#### **Schools over 200 students**

##### Executive Meeting

- 5 Executive Committee and *ex officio* members

##### General Meeting

- 8 financial and *ex officio* members

#### **Schools of 200 students or less**

##### Executive Meeting

- 3 Executive Committee and *ex officio* members

##### General Meeting

- 5 financial and *ex officio* members

- It is customary for the Chairperson to ask for apologies. Some P&Cs maintain an attendance book for meetings, which is passed around before the meeting begins. An apology must be by formal notice. Absent members who have not given official notification are not listed as apologies.

## Acknowledgment of Country

Taking the time to Acknowledge Country, or including a Welcome to Country at an event, reminds us that every day we live, work, and dream on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lands. Only Traditional Owners/Custodians of the land on which the event takes place can deliver a Welcome to Country, however, any person can offer an Acknowledgment of Country. There is no specific wording for an Acknowledgment of Country; just be sincere and, if possible, do some research on the Country you are acknowledging. Suggested wording could include:

*I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today. I would also like to pay my respects to Elders past and present.*

For more information see: <https://www.reconciliation.org.au/acknowledgement-of-country-and-welcome-to-country/>

## Welcome and introduction

- Welcome members and organise any introductions – take special care to introduce new members. Remind members to sign the attendance register and to join if they are not already a member. Explain the purpose of the meeting. This is not only useful for new members but will help remind existing members of their role.
- Reiterate any ground rules that have been developed by the P&C e.g. Code of Conduct; agreements about confidentiality of discussion; one person speaking at a time; respect for other people's opinions etc.
- Where appropriate, advise of housekeeping details e.g. time and length of meeting breaks, location of toilet facilities etc. This will be necessary for new members and visitors to the meeting.
- Set a time frame for the meeting and stick to it.

## During the meeting

Conduct the business according to the agenda but remember that the Chairperson does have the right to change the order of business if considered necessary.

The agenda provides a guide for the meeting, determining the order of the business to be discussed. Listing your business on an agenda also helps to ensure that no item of business is forgotten. Items of an urgent nature or requiring a decision at the meeting can be placed high on the agenda to ensure that they are dealt with and not deferred to the next meeting if all the business cannot be completed. For this reason, the order of the agenda could change at every meeting. The Chairperson is responsible for prioritising the agenda items.

## Confirmation of Minutes

It is every member's right and duty to have read the previous minutes of the last meeting before the current meeting. For this reason, draft minutes should be circulated at least two weeks before the next scheduled meeting (P&C Constitution Rule 26.2).

Members present at the meeting need to check that what they observed was accurately recorded. Any corrections that need to be made to the minutes must be made **before** they are confirmed. **Minutes can only be corrected to accurately reflect what occurred, they cannot be amended to show a change of occurrence or opinion.**

The Chairperson would normally ask if the meeting will accept the minutes as a true and correct record and put this to a vote (a simple show of hands). Once confirmed, the minutes **cannot** be altered in any way.



Motion to be put to the meeting:

*“That the minutes of the meeting of ..... be confirmed as an accurate record.”*

OR

*“That the minutes of the meeting of ..... with the following amendment(s)  
..... be confirmed as an accurate record.”*

If an Executive Committee Meeting has been held since the last General Meeting, then the minutes of that meeting must be ratified at the next General Meeting (P&C Constitution Rule 14.7). Members at the General Meeting may not object to resolutions made at the Executive Meeting during the ratification process. If they feel strongly against a resolution passed by the Executive Committee, they can move a motion to rescind that resolution (7 days' notice). This is no different than the process for a normal motion.

## Business Arising from Minutes

The Chairperson should ensure that discussion on the business arising from the minutes is limited to actions which have occurred (or not occurred) since the last meeting, and not provide an opportunity for those not present at the previous meeting to re-debate the resolutions which were adopted.

## Correspondence (In/Out)

Correspondence can be loosely defined as *communications from a party external to the P&C and its membership, and relevant to the core business of the association.*

Ensure you have a process for collecting and sorting the P&C mail and email. This should be done on a regular basis and not left until the week of a P&C meeting, or even worse, the day of the meeting!

Circulate relevant correspondence to members prior to the meeting. Mail does not have to be read to the meeting unless someone specifically requests that the Secretary do so.

Members may ask for clarification on any item of correspondence, but this must be done through the Chairperson, never directly to the Secretary. A vote would normally be taken that correspondence “in” be *received*; correspondence “out” be *approved*.

It is good practice for business arising from correspondence to be dealt with as it arises and not be deferred to General Business.

## Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer must always present written reports to the meeting (if possible, these should be circulated to members prior to the meeting) (P&C Constitution Rule 17.11). Treasurers' reports can be difficult to understand, so it is good practice for the report to contain a summary of the main points. (See the Treasurer's Guide for composition of the report and examples – available from [www.wacssso.wa.edu.au](http://www.wacssso.wa.edu.au).)

*“The Treasurer must always present written reports to the meeting”*

The Treasurer should also present a list of accounts for payment for approval by the meeting. Careful attention should be paid to this list, as this is where the P&C's money is being spent. The meeting must vote to *receive* the Treasurer's Report.

## Other Reports

Other reports may consist of the Principal's, P&C sub-committees and Vice-President/WACSSO Liaison.

Sub-committees must provide written reports (P&C Constitution Rule 18.7) and, if possible, have them circulated prior to the meeting. This will forego the necessity of verbal reports being given at the meeting, and discussion can begin straightaway on the matters raised or the recommendations contained in the report so they can be voted on. It will also make the Secretary's life a lot easier!

It is up to the Chairperson to control the time taken for these reports and the questions asked of the person giving each report. However, members should ask for points of clarification if there is anything that they feel have not been made clear.

The meeting votes to *adopt* reports if they contain recommendations that need to be acted upon. Otherwise, the meeting can vote to *receive* all the reports.

## General Business

This is the time for debate on items and motions that have been placed on the agenda before the agenda was circulated.

Members should be encouraged to submit new general business items to the Secretary, or the Chairperson, before the agenda is prepared and circulated – these are called 'motions on notice'. This enables appropriate positioning of any new items on the agenda having regarded all other matters to be considered.

**It is far easier for the chairperson to control the debate when it starts with a motion. There will be much less inappropriate, irrelevant or repetitious discussion.**

## Other Business

Any item of business which arises after the circulation of the agenda should be declared at the beginning of the meeting, and placed appropriately on the agenda, having regarded its urgency and giving preference to those items which were advised at the appropriate time (i.e. before the agenda was prepared). This section of the meeting should be brief. Unfortunately, sometimes it can be hijacked by members with personal agendas. This is not the time for this. Respectfully recognise their business, remind them of proper agenda procedure and finish time, and then tell them to contact you after the meeting so the matter can be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

## Closure

The Chairperson thanks everyone for attending, thanks any special guests, confirms the date of the next meeting and closes the meeting.

## After the meeting

Certain actions need to be taken immediately after a meeting. If these are delivered, then the next meeting will run more smoothly.

- Confirm action item plans and follow-ups (people often need to be reminded of what they have agreed to do);
- Ensure minutes are checked by the Chairperson for accuracy before circulating to members. These minutes should be labelled 'DRAFT CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES' until they are approved at the next meeting;

- Determine the time frame for circulation of minutes, new reports, background papers, and the next agenda;
- Everyone wants to know what was discussed and decided in the meeting. Try to post the minutes within 48 hours in a prominent place in the school. Distribute them to all financial members of the P&C and anyone else who is interested.



# Rules of Debate and Standing Orders

Standing Orders are the rules that govern the conduct of the meeting (see the Effective Meeting Guidelines booklet for the Rules of Debate and Standing Orders for use at other meetings, State Council, P&C Associations, School Organisations, Annual Conference and other meetings).

P&Cs are often tempted to run informal meetings with little or no procedure. There is a case to be made for the relaxation of procedure at certain times and under certain circumstances, but there must be underlying rules. Once the Chairperson loses control of a meeting it is very difficult to regain it, and almost impossible if there are no rules of procedure.

If Standing Orders are strictly followed, no discussion is permitted except on a motion or amendment, which has been moved, seconded and accepted by the Chairperson. The Chairperson may also request that the motion or amendment be put in writing.

Many P&C Associations have a meandering discussion first and then formulate a motion to be voted on. This should be done in reverse with a motion being put to the meeting first followed by debate and then a vote.

## Substantive Motions

Many P&Cs allow free discussion, without first requesting a motion. There are a number of disadvantages to this:

- It is difficult to know whether the discussion is relevant, as the issue or problem hasn't been clearly identified by a motion. This can result in the meeting becoming confused, with several issues becoming mixed up together.
- The discussion is easily side-tracked onto other related and sometimes, unrelated issues. This in turn can mean that the original problem remains unresolved.
- The discussion can be unproductive with no decision being made.

A substantive motion is simply a formal proposal that an action be taken, that something previously done be approved, or that the meeting express an idea or opinion about something. Motions serve two specific purposes:

- Ensuring that everyone in the meeting is clear on the issue being discussed and voted upon; and
- The Secretary can accurately record the decision of the meeting in the minutes.

No matter how relaxed the meeting may be, the Chairperson should always insist that decisions are made by way of a vote on a motion.

Motions usually begin with the word "that" and should be:

- clearly worded, so that everyone can understand them;
- expressed in positive terms; and
- recorded in such a way that it is clear "who" is to do "what" and by "when".

The person who presents the idea to the meeting is the "mover". Before a motion can be discussed it requires a "seconder", i.e. another person who agrees that the idea should be discussed. If the motion isn't seconded, it lapses and is not discussed.

Once the motion has been seconded, the mover then explains the reason for presenting it to the meeting and what it is hoped it will achieve. The meeting is

*"No matter how relaxed the meeting may be, the Chairperson should always insist that decisions are made by way of a vote on a motion"*

then able to debate the motion. The motion becomes a **resolution** after it has been agreed to by the meeting.

## The Debate

Standing Orders provide a framework which helps to control debate on a motion and ensure the smooth functioning of the meeting. The rules of debate include:

- time limit restrictions on speakers, unless the meeting grants the speaker an extension. This is particularly useful in avoiding lengthy sermons! The time limits are generally 4 minutes for the mover of the motion, 2 minutes for speakers for or against the motion, and 2 minutes for the mover's right of reply;
- sequence of speakers - each speaker must state whether they speak for or against the motion and state his/her reasons. The Chairperson should ask if anyone wishes to speak against a motion first. If there are no speakers against the motion, there is little point in endlessly discussing something that everyone obviously agrees with, and the vote should be taken right away;
- each speaker may speak only once to a motion, except the mover who has the right of reply. This ensures that the discussion doesn't become repetitive;
- when taking speakers for or against a motion ensure that no more than two speakers speak successively for or against a motion. For example, if two speakers have spoken in favour of a motion and there are no opposing speakers, the debate is closed and the Chairperson immediately takes a vote on the motion. This helps to ensure a balanced debate, by not allowing one viewpoint to dominate. It also helps to ensure that speakers stick to the point.
- the person who is speaking should be standing.

Remember, the purpose of this framework is not to gag debate, but to ensure that it is orderly, productive and time efficient.

## Amendments

An amendment is a proposal to alter a motion in some way and is frequently used to make the original motion more acceptable to the meeting. This usually involves adding, deleting or substituting words with the intention of improving the original motion.

An amendment must have a mover and be seconded. The amendment is then debated and voted on before being incorporated into the original motion. There is no limit to the number of amendments which can be moved, as long as they are relevant and do not change the intent of the original motion. The Chairperson must use their discretion in accepting amendments since too many can result in confusion.

Amendments may be put forward to amend the previous amendment and these must be dealt with in the sequence decided by the Chairperson.

Example – Anytown P&C Association is holding a Quiz Night and the debate focuses on when and where it will be held. In the past they have used the ABC Club which costs xx dollars.

Mr Smith puts the motion -

"That the Anytown P&C Association Quiz Night be held at the ABC Club on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October."

Mr Jones has made enquiries and found out that the P&C can use the local Scout Hall at no cost. He proposes an amendment to the original motion –

"That the Anytown P&C Association Quiz Night be held at the Scout Hall on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October."

(The intent of the motion has not been changed).

## Voting

Every financial and *ex officio* member, including the Chairperson, is entitled to one vote. The P&C Constitution does not allow for proxy voting – only members present at a meeting are entitled to vote. Observers at meetings are not permitted to vote. Once the voting on a motion has begun, no one should either enter or leave the room.



Voting is usually taken by a show of hands, unless a ballot is required under the Association's rules or a ballot/division has been requested by the meeting. The majority of motions are decided by a simple majority of votes.

If any member disputes the count, he/she is entitled to ask for a recount. Such a request must be made as soon as the result of the vote is announced. The Chairperson can also demand a recount if the will of the meeting isn't clear.

If the recount is disputed, members can ask for either a ballot or a division to clarify the vote.

In the event of a tied vote the motion is lost.

## Ballots and Divisions

Any two members may request that a decision be taken by a ballot or a division. Such a request can be made either before or on the declaration of the result of a vote and would normally override the previous vote. Although slower than a show of hands, the result is not open to dispute.

In the case of a ballot, the Chairperson should appoint returning officers to distribute ballot papers, count the votes and advise the Chairperson of the result. If the debate has been vigorous with strong emotions roused, members may feel intimidated if they have to vote by show of hands. Some people find that they vote to appease dominant members, school staff, or friends and not the way they would prefer to vote. A ballot can overcome this problem.

In the case of a division, those for the motion generally stand on one side of the room with those against standing on the other side. The important point in a division is that the names are recorded.

## Dissent

When a vote is taken by division, the names of those dissenting are recorded automatically. When the vote is by ballot or show of hands, anyone dissenting may request that the dissent be recorded, and this may be done at the Chairperson's discretion. Dissenters are under obligation to comply with the decision; however, the recording of dissent exonerates them from all consequences of the decision.

## Procedural Motions

Procedural motions relate to the conduct of the meeting and are used to draw the members' attention to an irregularity in the proceedings. Following are some of the most common procedural motions:

### Point of Order

This procedural motion may be used when:

- the remarks of the speaker are irrelevant to the motion being discussed;

- the speaker has used “improper” language i.e. has sworn, become abusive, etc;
- a member is speaking twice to a motion, out of turn or for longer than is allowed;
- a proposal is made which is against the spirit of the P&C Constitution;
- a proposed motion is contrary to a previous resolution of the P&C Association; or
- an amendment is improperly proposed.

Any member may raise a Point of Order at any time – thus interrupting the speaker. The Chairperson must give an immediate ruling on a point of order and the Chairperson’s ruling is final.

*“Any member may raise a Point of Order at any time”*

## The Closure

The form of this motion is “That the question be now put.” This motion can be moved at any time during debate, even interrupting a speaker. It may not be moved nor seconded by anyone who has spoken to either the motion or subsequent amendments. If the closure motion is carried, the mover of the original motion may exercise the right of reply, after which the question must be put. If the closure motion is defeated, discussion continues.

The Chairperson must remember to put the closure motion first, then if it is carried, the actual question (motion). This particular procedural motion is a useful device for those who feel that too much time is being devoted to a particular issue.

## Rescinding Motions

Sometimes the effect of a motion needs to be cancelled. This requires a rescission motion. When faced with a rescission motion, the Chairperson should consider the situation carefully before accepting the motion.

In principle the rescission should not be allowed at the same meeting at which the original motion was carried. The resolution represents the collective will of those present when it was put and should not be overturned lightly. However, the Chairperson needs to be flexible – it would be silly to deny a rescission motion in those rare occasions when circumstances change before the close of the meeting that make the resolution unworkable or impractical. For example, you may delegate responsibility for a task to a person who then hears during the meeting that they have been successful in obtaining a job interstate.

## Guidelines for Rescission

- A motion to rescind should not be allowed at the same meeting at which the resolution was carried except in unusual circumstances, and then by a two-thirds majority of those present and entitled to vote.
- A rescission motion cannot be moved if the resolution has been carried out. For example, it is pointless to rescind a resolution regarding expenditure if the money has already been spent.
- At least seven days’ notice in writing must be given to the Association if you wish to bring a rescission motion at a subsequent meeting.
- A rescission motion is debated in the normal manner.

### “That the Debate be Adjourned”

This motion is used when you would like to return to the debate at a later time (either at the current meeting or at some future time) and is useful when the meeting has insufficient information to make a decision. You cannot interrupt another speaker to bring this motion and you will need a seconder. The only debate required on this motion is to decide when the debate on the original motion may be resumed. This motion cannot be moved by anyone who has already taken part in the debate.

### “That the Matter be Referred to a Sub-Committee”

Another useful motion when the meeting has insufficient information to make a decision, but this one allows the meeting to refer the matter to a committee to research and report back. Any debate on this motion would be limited to the meeting giving directions as to when the committee's report is to be ready for consideration. Needs a seconder and you cannot interrupt another speaker.

### “That the Previous Question be Recommitted”

When debate has been lengthy, and several motions have also been debated and passed, members may feel that they've voted the wrong way in the confusion. This motion allows the question, in its final form, to be put again. The motion needs a seconder and must be passed by a two-thirds majority of members present and eligible to vote. This motion should only be used to take a second vote and not be used as an excuse to re-debate issues.

### “That the Chairperson's Ruling be Disagreed With”

Any member disagreeing with a ruling from the Chairperson can bring this motion. It must be seconded before it is accepted by the Chairperson.

Once accepted, the Chairperson is temporarily replaced by another member of the Association (usually the Vice-President). The mover of the motion is then able to explain why he/she disagrees with the Chairperson, and the Chairperson is able to explain the ruling. No other member is entitled to speak.

The motion is then put in a positive form *“That the Chairperson's ruling be upheld”*. Therefore, those disagreeing with the Chairperson must vote **against** the motion.

A motion of dissent is not a motion of no-confidence in the Chairperson. It is a simple statement of disagreement. The Chairperson continues to chair the meeting after the vote, whether or not the ruling is upheld.

### Suspension of Standing Orders

This would normally only be used if the meeting was following strict meeting procedures. It needs a seconder and must be passed by a two-thirds majority of members present and eligible to vote. If carried, the meeting goes into committee and unrestricted discussion can take place (without regard to time limits on speakers, etc.) This is a useful motion if you have an issue you want to discuss, but not a motion. Suspension of standing orders allows the meeting to discuss the issue and formulate a plan before presenting a motion. You will need another motion to return to Standing Orders, at which time a substantive motion can be presented. Discussion that takes place out of Standing Orders is not recorded.



## Election Procedure for all Office Bearer roles and Executive and Sub-Committee positions

- The Order of election will be: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Executive Committee
- Nominations are called for the position. After a brief period allowing for nominations, nominations are then closed. The Chair will then read out the nominations for the role.
- There is no seconding of nominations. Once a member nominates, their nomination is accepted.
- If there is only one nomination for a position the nominee is declared elected unopposed.
- If there are multiple nominations then an election must be held by ballot. The Chair may ask each nominee to speak to their nomination.
- Ballot papers are distributed and collected by the returning officers. The returning officers will leave the room to count the ballot, write down the result and hand the result to the Chair upon return.
- The Chair will then announce the result.
- If there is a tie of votes between two or more candidates, the result will be declared by lot which means drawn out of a hat.
- There is no scope for a recount of ballots and a second ballot is not permitted. The first ballot result is the outcome. Members may not see the ballots.
- The Chair directs the Returning Officers to destroy the ballot papers.
- New Office Bearers, Executive Committee members and other newly appointed positions take effect after the meeting concludes.

## 4. Ensure all Office Bearers fulfil their duties.

So, let's now take a quick look at the roles of the other Office Bearers. More details about the Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary can be found in guides similar to this one and are available at [wacssso.wa.edu.au](http://wacssso.wa.edu.au).

### The Honorary Secretary

The Secretary is responsible for:

- posting notice of meetings in writing;
  - assisting the President to draw up the agenda;
  - recording minutes of the meeting;
  - dealing with correspondence;
  - maintaining membership records;
  - being a signatory to accounts; and to
  - observing statutory and constitutional formalities.
- Refer P&C Constitution Rule 16.0



# The Honorary Treasurer

The Treasurer's role is to:

- establish and maintain simple procedures for handling the Association's money;
- always issue receipts;
- Count and sign off on all monies received with another member;
- making sure two members count and sign off on all monies;
- bank all money received;
- have two people to sign cheques and always avoiding conflict of interest;
- always sight an invoice before signing cheques, and **never** sign blank cheques;
- prepare and present a written report for every General Meeting;
- prepare annual financial statements or books for review/audit (whichever is applicable);
- have overall responsibility for all P&C accounts including all sub-committees; and
- complete GST related documents if required.



Refer P&C Constitution Rule 17.0

*See page 32 for the role of the Vice-President.*

## Sub-Committees

Sub-committees:

- are formed to perform specific tasks on behalf of the P&C;
- elect members at a General Meeting (preferably the AGM);
- are governed by a 'Terms of Reference', which is a flexible document outlining the roles and responsibilities of the sub-committee;
- may elect a Convenor (not a 'President'), Secretary and/or Treasurer;
- present a written report to every General Meeting with recommendation for consideration;
- must have their decisions approved at a General Meeting of the P&C; and
- may meet as often as they wish.

Refer Secretary's guide pages 9 – 11 for more information on Sub-Committees and how to form one.  
Refer Constitution Rule 18.0.



## 5. The public face of the P&C handling media enquiries and all external enquiries.

As President, you are the public face of the P&C and usually its official spokesperson. When media enquiries are directed to you as the president of the P&C, you are representing ALL of the parents at your school, not just the financial members of the P&C. At no time should you be giving a personal opinion.

### Why me?

There may be several reasons why a reporter wants to talk to you:

- You're the official spokesperson for an organisation or event.
- A reporter has asked for someone to respond to a specific school or youth-related story.
- In response to an event, the reporter wants a "reaction clip" (a five- to ten-second bite) that offers an emotional response.
- The reporter wants a fresh perspective and an honest point of view. (That's attractive to reporters who are used to media-savvy spokespeople who always feed them the same lines.)



For more definitive information on how to deal with the media refer to the WACSSO *Media Guide*.

## 6. Signatory to accounts

You have the right and responsibility to sign cheques or authorise online banking transactions (EFT) for the P&C. Avoid conflict of interest always by never signing cheques for yourself or any person you have a direct relationship with. Cheques and EFT require two signatures from any of the following people: you, the Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and one other financial member appointed for that purpose at the AGM. The President should also be mindful that two signatories that have a direct relationship do not authorise (sign) the same transaction. (P&C Constitution Rule 17.6.1).

## 7. *Ex officio* member of all sub-committees (P&C Constitution Rule 18.6)

The term *ex-officio* means by virtue of office or official position. Hence by virtue of being President, you have the same rights as any member of the sub-committee as specified in their Terms of Reference (P&C Constitution Rule 18.2). See p17 for more information about sub-committees. Because of the volume of business being undertaken by P&C Associations, it is no longer possible for all matters to be fully discussed at General Meetings. The use of sub-committees has become an essential part of an effective P&C.

Sub-committees may be formed to perform specific tasks e.g. fundraising sub-committee, or to research and develop recommendations on behalf of the P&C. They do not have the authority to act on their own behalf, unless this power has previously been given to them by the P&C in the committee's Terms of Reference. The "Terms of Reference" is a flexible document that details the sub-committee's powers and responsibilities. The P&C Association can make changes to a sub-committee's Terms of

Reference and these should be re-adopted by the P&C at each AGM. A variety of Terms of References that cover many different sub-committees, can be found at [wacsso.wa.edu.au](http://wacsso.wa.edu.au).

Members of sub-committees are elected at the P&C's Annual General Meeting or at the time the committee is formed and must all be financial members of the P&C Association (P&C Constitution Rule 18.4). There should also be a member of the P&C Executive Committee on each sub-committee (P&C Constitution Rule 18.5). Paid employees of the P&C (e.g. canteen staff) may participate as observers only and do not have voting rights on the committee that deals with their employment (P&C Constitution Rule 19.1 (v)).

After the sub-committee is formed, it may elect its own Convenor and, if required, a Secretary and/or Treasurer. The sub-committee determines the time and place for its meetings.

Decisions of the sub-committees are subject to the approval of the full P&C and sub-committees must report to the P&C General Meeting (P&C Constitution Rule 18.7). If finances are involved the sub-committee must submit a financial report to each General Meeting.

The Honorary Treasurer of the P&C is responsible for **all** funds received and expended by any sub-committee. Cheques drawn against sub-committee bank accounts may only be signed by those people authorised to do so under the approved P&C Constitution (P&C Constitution Rule 17.6).

Expenditure of sub-committee's surplus funds must be decided at a General Meeting of the P&C Association. The sub-committee may make recommendations, but the ultimate decision rests with the P&C Association. Remember, sub-committees have no ownership of surplus funds – the money belongs to the P&C and surplus should be transferred on a regular basis to the P&C's general account (P&C Constitution Rule 18.8).

## 8. Employer Responsibilities

Many P&C Associations in government schools in WA manage school canteens. Most school canteens employ at least one paid worker and use the services of several volunteers, usually parents from the school.

It is important that P&Cs understand what their roles and responsibilities are in regard to being a fair and reasonable employer. Operating the school canteen is no different from running a small business. You, or at least one member of your P&C who is confident in taking on this responsibility, must understand:

- types of employment – full-time, part-time or casual;
- probationary periods;
- minimum conditions for all employees;
- awards;
- record keeping;
- Single Touch Payroll;
- pay slips;
- superannuation;
- tax;
- workers' compensation;

- insurances;
- occupational Safety and Health (OS&H);
- recruiting the right people;
- job descriptions;
- performance management;
- grievance and discipline process;
- resolving disputes; and
- terminating employment.



Information on all the above can be obtained by contacting the Department Of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (Labour Relations) or the FairWork Ombudsman.

It is the responsibility of every individual P&C to seek clarification of their business activity status, so that the correct award is implemented.

It is important to note that this responsibility can be delegated to another member of your P&C who can take this duty on. This person may be:

- The Treasurer: who is already responsible for authorising the payment of wages and therefore must also understand awards, tax, superannuation, payslips and record keeping.
- A member of a sub-committee whose role is to manage the paid employee. This role should be defined in the Terms of Reference for this sub-committee to avoid confusion for the employee and to ensure someone stays current with changes to the laws surrounding employees (e.g. Awards, tax, OS&H, superannuation, insurance).

## The Role of the Vice President

### Understudy to the President

The main responsibility of the P&C Vice President is to act as an understudy to the President and at various times they may actually be required to step into that role. This is particularly true if the president is unable to chair meetings. The P&C Constitution 2019 (Rule 15.2) states that the Vice President will take on the responsibility of chairing meetings if the President is unavailable.

Some Vice Presidents may be considering nominating to be President in the future and use this role as an opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge of P&C governance and operations. Even if this is not the case, they should be familiar with the many facets of the President role detailed in this guide and in P&C Constitution Rule 15.0 which covers the Constitutional aspects of the President's role.

### Signatory to P&C accounts

The Vice President is a signatory to accounts along with the three other Office Bearers. This is not a duty or privilege that can be delegated to any other person and one that must be protected as it gives access to P&C finances. When the Vice President leaves office, they must ensure that their name is immediately removed (at the bank) as signatory to the accounts.

### WACSSO Liaison

As the WACSSO Liaison, the Vice President acts as the link between the P&C and WACSSO.

The major duties of this role are to:

- Monitor and share WACSSO Facebook posts on the P&C Facebook page where possible and relevant;
- foster relationships with like-minded P&Cs and community groups;
- encourage P&C members to attend WACSSO P&C training and Annual Conference; and
- be the main P&C contact for their local WACSSO State Councillor.

The Vice President should seek inclusion of a *WACSSO Liaison Report* (maximum five minutes) on the General Meeting agenda where they can:

- Speak about WACSSO activities and communications;
- provide their P&C with ideas shared from other P&Cs across WA; and
- report on current educational issues.

To be successful in these duties, the Vice President will need to stay current with all WACSSO communications, including Facebook, the fortnightly eNews and P&C Voice.

## Executive Committee representative on Sub-committees

The President of the P&C is *ex officio* of all sub-committees which means they have the right to attend, speak and vote at all sub-committee meetings without being nominated for or being elected to the sub-committee. The Vice President doesn't have this same right, but they may be elected as the Executive Committee's representative to any particular sub-committee (P&C Constitution 2019, Rule 18.5)

Having an executive member on the sub-committee is a requirement as they will act as the link between the sub-committee and the executive and ensure the sub-committee is following procedures consistent with the Constitution.

## Volunteer and member coordinator

If the P&C wants to attract more members and helpers, it is a good idea to have a dedicated Volunteer and Member Coordinator whose major responsibility is to make sure volunteers and members are attracted and retained. This may be a role the Vice President is willing to take on if they possess the following attributes and skills:

- Outgoing and confident – to be able to approach people in person, to be able to talk at an assembly or meeting.
- Creative – to design brochures, posters, flyers for hardcopy and for social media
- Organised – to keep volunteer records in a digital format (e.g. spreadsheets or a database), to help plan a yearly calendar of recruitment and member appreciation events.

## Some Additional Useful Information

### Information Gathering

P&C meetings deal with many issues – several which are dealt with on a regular basis e.g. fundraising. But often your P&C will be required to have input into school policies and even state level discussions. It will be necessary for you as the President of the P&C to have ways of gathering information and ideas from your members that can be fed back to the relevant authority, be it the School Council/Board, WACSSO or direct to a government enquiry.

The following are some ways in which you can gather this information.



## Rounds

“Rounds” are a simple, but effective, technique used to give everyone in the group the opportunity of giving their point of view. Ask each person in turn their viewpoint on an issue. Group members do not have to contribute if they don’t wish to. Rounds can also be used as a means of everyone introducing themselves to the group.

Rounds can be used at any stage in a meeting, for example as a warm-up exercise, or in the middle of the meeting to ensure everyone’s views on a matter are being considered.

## Working in Small Groups

Sometimes working in a large group does not allow for full participation. It can be a good idea to break into pairs or small groups (3-4 people).

The small group/pair may then feedback to the large group. You may sometimes also use small groups to air personal feelings about an issue. In this instance, it is not usually necessary to formally get feedback to the larger group.

## Brainstorming

The objective of a brainstorming session is to collect ideas from all participants without criticism or judgement. There are some rules you need to follow for conducting productive brainstorming:

- before a brainstorming session, define the subject clearly (usually a “what” or “how” question);
- allow time for all individuals to think before commencing discussion;
- encourage everyone to contribute – don’t hold back ideas even if they seem silly;
- allow no discussion during brainstorming – that will come later;
- no-one can criticise other people’s views, verbally or non-verbally;
- build upon ideas generated by others in the group;
- write all ideas on a whiteboard so that the whole group can easily scan them; and
- as President (and Chair), enforce the rules.



After brainstorming, refine the list of ideas so that you end up with, at most, the three most popular ideas to debate.

- Encourage everyone to prioritise 3-5 items;
- If several groups are brainstorming simultaneously, put the lists on the wall and allow for group feedback or time for members to read other groups’ ideas; and
- Have each person identify the ideas that could be achieved easily.

## Working with your P&C Team

### Identifying your Team Members

P&C meetings sometimes attract people who either are inexperienced in achieving group objectives or who resent being shown how to effectively contribute. It is a rare organisation that does not have one or two members who are challenging. Note that *challenging* doesn’t necessarily mean *wrong* or *troublemaker*.

Challenging participants probably do not feel they are being difficult to work with, only that the group is ignoring their position. The decision-making process is very important when working with groups. You must get agreement on each agenda item before you move on. This can sometimes be difficult due to competing ideas or competing personalities.

The bottom line is to ask the question, "Can everybody live with this decision?" That doesn't mean that everyone thinks it is the best decision. It means they can live with it, that it may have an area of compromise for them personally, but that on-the-whole it is a good decision.

As President and Chairperson, you will have to learn how to deal tactfully with all individuals to ensure that every meeting is a success. Ask your Vice-President to chair a meeting early in the new year to allow you time to watch the group dynamics at work. Within groups you will always find those who are builders, others who excel at maintenance and those who act as roadblocks.

<b>Group Builders</b>	
The Initiator	Suggests new/different ideas/approaches
The Opinion Giver	States pertinent beliefs about the discussion or others' suggestions
The Elaborator	Builds on suggestions made by others
<b>Group Maintenance Workers</b>	
The Tension Reliever	Uses humour or calls for a break at appropriate moments
The Compromiser	Willing to yield when necessary for progress
The Clarifier	Uses relevant examples, offers rationales, probes for meanings, restates issues
The Tester	Raises questions to test if group is ready to come to a decision
The Summariser	Tries to pull discussion together, reviews progress so far
The Harmoniser	Mediates differences of opinion, reconciles points of view
The Encourager	Praises and supports others in their contributions
The Gate Keeper	Keeps communications open, creates opportunities for participation
<b>Group Roadblocks</b>	
The Aggressor	Deflates status of others, disagrees and criticises
The Blocker	Stubbornly disagrees, cites unrelated material, returns to previous topics
The Withdrawer	Will not participate, has private conversations, takes copious personal notes
The Recognition Seeker	Boasts and talks excessively
The Topic Jumper	Continually changes the subject
The Dominator	Tries to take over, asserts authority, manipulates the group
The Special Pleader	Draws attention to own concerns
The Playboy/Girl	Shows off, tells funny stories, nonchalant, cynical
The Self-Confessor	Talks irrelevantly of own feelings and insights
The Devil's Advocate	More devil than advocate!

Table cited from HC Wedgewood's Fewer camels, more horses: Where Committees Go Wrong

*Take some time to think about how you would deal with the stereotypes described above. Remember, however frustrating the behaviour can be, each person has their strengths as well as weaknesses. Try to define the strengths of the various types described above. Consider how, as the President, you can bring out the best in these people.*



## Controlling a Meeting

Maintaining control is extremely important and as Chairperson, you have a duty to ensure that effective control is maintained always. However, the members also have a responsibility in this area. Encourage the members to increase their knowledge of meeting procedure, Code of Conduct and Rules of Debate. Make them aware that they have an important role in ensuring that proper order is observed during meetings and stress the importance of careful preparation.

Ensuring that all members are aware of the rules protects you from the member who manipulates proceedings, knowing that most of the other members do not know what it is all about. Many decisions are made at meetings simply by being bulldozed, unopposed, through the procedural route.

Ordered meetings ensure that all members receive equal opportunities to influence the meeting's decision-making processes. If all members had a similar view on all issues, there would be no need for any control mechanisms. Given, however, that parent organisations – like every other group in our society – are composed of very different individuals with very different values, beliefs, viewpoints and ideals about how goals can be achieved, the need for discussions which are ordered, and fair is essential.

You can maintain control over an unruly meeting by calling disrupters to order, requesting disorderly members leave, refusing to allow rulings on procedure to be disrupted and by adjourning the meeting for a reasonable period to enable order to be restored.

Experience can make a big difference, but you will also need to gain the respect of the members. Remember that the members will often be inexperienced in meeting procedure and won't know what conduct is expected of them.

Members require clear guidelines and need to know the extent of their authority. Encourage their cooperation at the start of the year by explaining the P&C's objectives and the authority given to it. Discuss the conduct that is expected of members. Create a P&C Code of Conduct with your members and ensure everyone has a copy of it.

Once the ground rules have been established and the objectives clearly defined, then you can work towards encouraging fruitful contribution from all members.

You must encourage discussions that are reasoned, purposeful, free of personal abuse and relatively free of repetition.

A lot depends on your personality and style of management, but with experience you will gain confidence in your own ability to handle difficult situations as they arise, and your P&C team will understand the lengths they can go to!

Common sense is the most important ingredient, but there are some areas in which you must be knowledgeable:

- You must develop a thorough understanding of the P&C Constitution as well as some knowledge of Rules of Debate.
- You must present an impartial face, despite your private views on a given topic.
- If a meeting becomes difficult you have one very effective card up your sleeve – you may adjourn the meeting. Firstly, you should try to obtain a vote on the motion for an adjournment. If this is not possible you can exercise your right at a public meeting to adjourn the meeting for a reasonable

time to allow order to be restored. This is a drastic measure and should be used only when all other attempts to impose order have failed.

## How to Handle a Verbal Attack

What should you do if someone verbally attacks you in a meeting you're running? Thank the person for their comment, then break eye contact and proceed to your next point. Alternatively, ask the group to respond. At all costs, avoid a verbal duel with the person. Even if you win, you will lose the members' confidence that you can lead the group objectively.

Some tricks you can use for avoiding or defusing heated arguments include:

- When telling bad news, use "I" or "we" as if you "own it". When telling good news, say "You" as if the members own it.
- Restate a person's disagreement and ask if you understand it correctly. Be sure that the person feels you are taking the disagreement seriously.
- Focus on the issue, not the person. For example, if a person attacks an idea for no apparent reason, ask them to outline an alternative plan.
- Don't take it personally - challenging behaviour is often displayed to everyone, not just you. Don't take it personally, don't take it home with you, and don't lose sleep over it. If you have a session dealing with challenging behaviour, then take a deep breath to get oxygen into your brain. The brain uses more oxygen than any other organ, and if it hasn't got the oxygen it kind of seizes up and it doesn't work very well. So, take a deep breath or two so you can keep thinking clearly and keep your cool.
- Sometimes, things can get a bit tense and emotional, and it's a good idea to take a break. But, if we do this at the first hint of a problem; if we change the subject at the first sign of a conflict; or if we get all coy with our own emotions; we'll never achieve crystal clear communication, good relationships, or solve problems or all the other things that good communication helps us do.
- Be specific and honest when providing feedback. If we want to give someone a compliment or praise them for some work they've done, it's much more powerful to be specific. For example, you might say to a member: "I'm so glad you're in the team. The way you handle the canteen volunteers is just fantastic. You always get it right first time with them and I really appreciate it."
- Avoid railroading. Railroading is moving the conversation along at a fast pace and not giving a person the chance to say what they're really thinking. If we want to say something, it's far better to say it directly and clearly and courteously. We don't need to resort to threats and all the power stuff.

*"Don't take it personally – challenging behaviour is often displayed to everyone"*

## How to attract new members and retain them!

- Ask people to join the P&C. Research shows that while some people are more likely to volunteer than others, almost everyone can be recruited as a volunteer. About 80% of those directly asked to volunteer said 'yes.' This response rate is consistent across all economic, geographic, racial, gender, and age categories.
- The most productive route for volunteer recruitment is one-to-one, face-to-face personal request about a specific volunteer job. This technique is even more effective if the person doing the asking is themselves a volunteer (which demonstrates credibility) or is personally known to the person being asked.

- Keep a list of these people, their contact numbers and the activities they are happy to help with for future events, if they are not happy to sign up as P&C members.
- Monitor your social media for people who make comments and other contributions. They obviously have an interest in the P&C.
- Have a “bring-a-friend-night”; where each member of your P&C brings along a friend to uncover what happens in your meetings.
- Greet new members personally and introduce them (and all your members present) before the meeting begins. Create a welcome pack for potential new members outlining what your P&C do, and how they do it. It should also contain a copy of the constitution, a list of contact names of the Executive Committee members etc.
- Establish a buddy or mentor system for new members to ensure that after the meeting the connection is still established to encourage them to come back.
- Advertise what happens in your P&C meetings in the newsletter, on social media or on a notice board. No one ever joins in with something that is unknown or perceived to be a secret!
- Keep your meetings short and to the point by starting and finishing on time. Make sure the finish time is stated on the notice of meeting or the agenda. Conduct another meeting if you can’t get it all done in the one go – people are more likely to attend multiple meetings than those which drag on forever. You could also create a sub-committee to do a lot of the decision making and discussion processes. Hold a Special General Meeting to discuss the fair, open day, sports carnival and other events which take a lot of time establishing in terms of who will run the sausage sizzle, order and pick up the sausages, etc.
- Consider changing the timing of your meetings to encourage more people to come, by meeting their babysitting/child minding, travel and working constraints. Hence change the day, time, or even venue for meetings to suit the needs of your current and potential members.
- Delegate responsibilities when you go away or get too busy. Trust your P&C team to be able to handle the responsibility you give them. Sure, they may not do it as well as you can, but your trust and respect will enhance their self-confidence and motivate them to continue being an active member of the P&C.
- Establish a set of group rules with your P&C at one of the first meetings of the year that covers behaviour, listening and speaking practices, length of meetings and other formalities. Draw new members attention to these and at future meetings encourage any suggestions for development of your group rules. Evaluate your group rules throughout the year to ensure they continue to meet and satisfy the group’s needs and activities.
- Maintain contact with all members and help them stay linked to the P&C by emailing or calling them if they miss a meeting.
- Reward and recognise members appropriately for a job well done. Ensure that your recognition is timely, personal and honest. Recognition does not have to be extravagant. Quite often the simplest form is the most effective - praise, cards designed by the children, certificates, mention in the newsletter, at a committee meeting or on social media.

*“Keep your meetings short and to the point by starting and finishing on time”*

**(SCHOOL Name)**  
**PARENTS & CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION INC**  
**(Name of Sub-committee) SUB-COMMITTEE**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**1.0 NAME:**

- 1.1 The Committee shall be called the (School Name) Parents & Citizens' Association Inc. (name of Sub-committee) Committee.

**2.0 COMPOSITION:**

- 2.1 (a) Not more than 5 members, one of whom shall be a member of the P&C Executive Committee.  
(b) The President of the P&C shall be ex officio a member.  
(c) An employee of the P&C whose employment is related to the work of the sub-committee may attend meetings in an advisory capacity only.
- 2.2 The members shall be elected each year at a General Meeting of the P&C Association by and from the financial and ex officio members of the P&C. In the event of a position becoming vacant on the committee an election may be held at a General Meeting of the P&C to fill the vacancy.
- 2.3 The Committee to agree on a Convener, Treasurer and a Secretary.

**3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Subject to direction of the P&C Association the responsibilities of the Committee shall be:

- 3.1 The financial management of the (name of sub-committee) committee.
- 3.2 Establishing nutritional guidelines which are consistent with the Healthy Food and Drink Policy mandated by the Department of Education.
- 3.3 Acquiring all suitable stock and goods for business use, and ensuring all stock and goods are stored in suitable containers within the business.
- 3.4 Acquiring and maintaining suitable equipment provided that the annual expenditure shall not exceed the amount authorised by the P&C Association, which is \$XXXXX. Establishing a reserve account for the purpose of equipment replacement.
- 3.5 Operating a bank account at a level sufficient for the trading capital requirements of the business.
- 3.6 Recruiting volunteers as shall be considered necessary.
- 3.7 Providing reports for ratification to all General Meetings of the P&C Association and when required to the Executive Committee.
- 3.8 Establishing credit accounts with suppliers as required for the operation of the business, ensuring all deliveries take place in school hours.
- 3.9 Ensuring that Grievance Settlement/Dispute Resolution Procedures are followed.

**4.0 DUTIES OF CONVENOR:**

- 4.1 Convenor when present, shall preside at all meetings of the Committee. In the event the convenor is absent, the meeting shall elect a chairperson for the occasion.
- 4.2 The convenor shall ensure that a written report of the activities of the committee is presented to all General Meetings of the P&C Association (or executive committee) and at such times as directed by the General Meeting of the P&C association. The report to include a written financial report consisting of a statement of receipts and expenditure, up-to-date bank reconciliation statement and a copy of relevant bank statement/s and any recommendations requiring the attention of the P&C.

**5.0 DUTIES OF SECRETARY:**

- 5.1 The Secretary shall have custody of the documents of the Committee and shall keep a full and correct record of its meetings. These documents and records shall be made available to the P&C Association.

**6.0 MEETINGS:**

- 6.1 Meetings of the Committee shall be held at a time decided by the committee. Notice of the meeting should be at such times and places as determined by the committee provided that not less than forty-eight (48) hours' notice is given.

**7.0 QUORUM:**

- 7.1 A quorum shall comprise 50% + 1 (one) of the current membership of the Committee.

**8.0 VOTING:**

- 8.1 All members and ex officio members shall be entitled to one vote on any resolution or election at a meeting at which they are entitled to be present.
- 8.2 Voting shall be by show of hands by those present.
- 8.3 No proxy voting is acceptable.

**9.0 ALTERATIONS TO RULES:**

- 9.1 All proposed amendments to these rules must be approved by the General Meeting of the P&C Association.

**NOTES:**

Where the committee is established during the year the members are elected at a General Meeting of the P&C. All members of any committee of the P&C must be financial members of the P&C.

**THE COMMITTEE IS AT ALL TIMES RESPONSIBLE TO  
THE GENERAL MEETING OF THE P&C ASSOCIATION**





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