

The P&C and Principal Relationship

The P&C Association is the forum for parents and citizens in government schools who have an interest in their children's education. P&Cs are the only not-for-profit bodies in the whole of Western Australia that have the right to exist under an Act of Parliament (School Education Act 1999). Associations work best to benefit students when the whole team is a cohesive unit. As the school's leader and site manager, the Principal plays an integral role in the P&C - they have rights and responsibilities like any other member of the P&C.

It is essential for Principals to familiarise themselves with the services available from WACSSO, as well as P&Cs governance and reporting requirements. The WACSSO P&C Handbook is a great first step. The WACSSO office is pleased to assist with P&C matters.

When the Principal and P&C work together to achieve the same goals:

THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ACTS AS ONE IN THE INTERESTS OF THE STUDENTS.

P&C PLANNING AND BUDGETING COMPLEMENTS THE EFFORTS OF THE SCHOOL STAFF TO ENHANCE EDUCATION WITHIN THE SCHOOL.

The role of the Principal on the P&C

- ✦ is an *ex officio* member of the Executive Committee and Association and, as such, has the same rights and responsibilities as any other Executive member.
- ✦ can propose motions, vote, and be elected to a Sub-committee. They can't be an Office Bearer or signatory to accounts. Teachers and other school staff who are financial P&C members may take on those roles.
- ✦ cannot overrule decisions rightfully made by the P&C, unless that decision attempts to exercise authority over the day-to-day management of the school.
- ✦ cannot abolish the P&C (Only the Director General of the Department of Education has this power).
- ✦ can be counted in the quorum for all meetings.
- ✦ is the site manager of the school and as such provides the final approval for activities held on school property.



The Principal cannot attend a P&C meeting and sends the Deputy Principal, who is not a P&C member, instead. Can the Deputy vote?

No, there is no allowance in the P&C constitution for proxy voting. Voting is usually by show of hands following discussion, so a person must be present at a meeting to listen to all sides and register a vote. The Deputy Principal must become a financial member of the P&C in order to vote, unless they are acting in the Principal's role full time for an extended period.



Can the Principal edit and change P&C Meeting minutes?

No, the P&C minutes are the responsibility of the P&C Secretary to produce in a clear unbiased and professional manner. If for some reason the correct process is not being undertaken, the P&C Executive or WACSSO can suggest appropriate changes before distribution to the general P&C members.



Can the Principal delegate the running of the P&C to the MCS?

The school's Manager of Corporate Services (MCS) does not have an authority role on the P&C unless they are an Office Bearer, and even then their powers only extend to what the P&C Constitution allows. MCS are not managers of the P&C finances and cannot direct the decisions and actions of the Association.

P&C Meetings

- ✦ As an *ex officio* member of the P&C the Principal has the right to attend and participate in General and Executive Committee Meetings.
- ✦ Meetings are a great opportunity for the Principal to provide an update or report to members on school affairs, and to take questions from parents. An objective of the P&C Association (in the P&C Constitution and the Education Act) is the fostering of community interest in educational matters. The Principal's knowledge and experience is very valuable here. If the Principal cannot attend a meeting, they can send a delegate, such as the Deputy Principal.
- ✦ On occasion, a parent may wish to raise a matter or concern relating to an interpersonal issue or regarding an individual child at the school. The P&C is not the forum for this, and as such the discussion should be redirected to a meeting between the parent and Principal at another time.
- ✦ The Principal can propose any motion at a meeting. It is a requirement that at least seven days' notice (General Meeting) and 48 hours' notice (Executive Committee Meeting) is provided for financial motions and that requests for funds are presented in a clear and researched format.
- ✦ It is recommended that the Principal familiarise themselves with the duties of the office-bearing roles and the reporting requirements for each meeting – as an Executive member, they have a responsibility to encourage strong governance processes.
- ✦ Each year after the Annual General Meeting and before 30 April, the P&C must provide the Principal with a list of office bearers' contact details and the audited financial statement.

HOLDING A MEETING BETWEEN THE PRINCIPAL AND PRESIDENT PRIOR TO THE P&C MEETING HELPS DEVELOP NOT ONLY THEIR RELATIONSHIP, BUT ALSO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY. THE P&C IS CRITICAL TO THE SMOOTH FUNCTIONING OF THE SCHOOL.

Fundraising

An Object of a P&C within the P&C Constitution is assisting in the provision of resources, facilities and amenities for the school. At the beginning of the year after the AGM it is a good idea to hold a special general meeting to set the P&C's budget and priorities for the year. It often works well at this meeting if the Principal provides a 'Wish List' of items the school would like the P&C to fundraise for. The meeting can discuss and agree on items they will work toward providing. It is important to note however that P&Cs are not obliged to fundraise, though most do!

P&C Business

P&Cs have the ability to operate businesses such as a canteen or uniform shop, to service the school.

- ✦ Sub-committees for these businesses may be formed.
- ✦ The Principal cannot make an independent decision to close a canteen, have control over the employees or dictate what is sold in the canteen as long as it is operated according to the Department of Education's Healthy Food and Drink Policy. Their input is the same as any member of the P&C or a sub-committee formed for that purpose.
- ✦ The Principal should ensure they fully understand their role and the P&C's role in uniform supply contracts as directed by the Department of Education.
- ✦ P&Cs running businesses should be aware of obligations such as the Work Health Safety Act 2020 and WorkCoverWA.