

Attracting and retaining volunteers

P&Cs are led and run by volunteers. Each year, many P&Cs worry that there won't be enough volunteers who put their hands up to sit on the committee, hold Office Bearer roles and/or volunteer to run events and initiatives.

Promoting your P&C

Here are some ideas that P&Cs have used over the years to help recruit and retain volunteers:

- Shout it from the rooftops! Use social media, What's App groups, email lists and, if the school is amenable, place notices by each classroom to promote the P&C. If you are a parent, chat with other parents at school pick-up or school events to spread the word about your need for volunteers.
- Reach out to former volunteers to see if they'd like to rejoin. Remember that volunteers do not have to have a child enrolled at the school. Be creative with your messaging and make it fun!
- Emphasise the benefits of volunteering. You could do this by highlighting the personal benefits of volunteering, such as making new friends and contributing to the community, or by highlighting the professional benefits, like small business management skills and networking opportunities.
- Ensure everyone knows how essential the P&C is, and that without them, there would be no canteen, uniform shop, school fete, disco, colour run or whatever is particularly popular in your community.
- Highlight the benefits the P&C brings to students - helping at school has proven benefits to children's education and social outcomes.
- Focus on how much fun being on the P&C is for volunteers, and how much purpose it brings to individuals looking to engage in their child's education.
- Make your pitch short and pithy, but clear. Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the committee and let potential volunteers know what is expected of them (time commitment, what kind of tasks they would be involved in and so on).
- Get current committee members involved. Encourage current and former committee members to spread the word and reach out to their own networks.
- Be flexible. Offer a variety of volunteer opportunities with different time commitments to accommodate different schedules and interests. Where practical, allow online attendance to meetings and ensure meeting times and regularity will work for most. Importantly, make sure meetings are run efficiently, run to time and are not longer than needed.
- Put effort into retaining your current volunteers. Thank volunteers for their time and effort, and make sure they feel valued and supported in their role. There are some great resources to help with volunteer recognition on the Volunteering WA website.
- Employ staff where practicable. Can you afford a paid canteen manager and uniform shop manager or bookkeeper? Perhaps it's time to invest in employees.
- Engage local businesses. Perhaps a local bookkeeping service will provide one of their employees on a pro bono basis to assist the P&C Treasurer.
- Contact Centrelink about providing you with a volunteer under their 'Volunteering and mutual obligation requirements' program, or any other program for which your P&C may be eligible.
- Ask other P&Cs in your area about their hints and tips. If you're not sure where to start, reach out to your State Councillor who can help connect you with other P&Cs in your region.