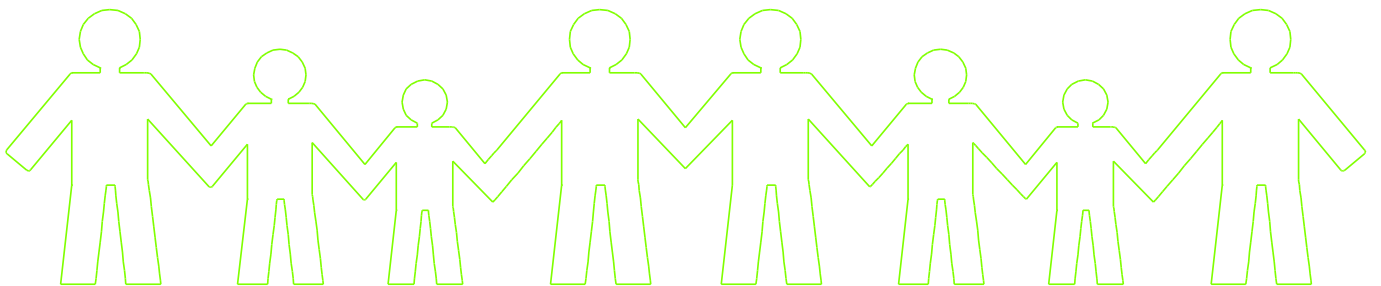


DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG PARENT FORUM





YOUR P&F CONTENTS

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1.1 WHAT IS A P&F ASSOCIATION

Parental engagement has always been a strong ethos of a Catholic school. The church tells us that parents, as the first and primary teachers of their child have responsibility for their education. The engagement of parents therefore in the learning and development of their children during their school years is central to that ethos.

Schools recognise the importance of this primary role and encourage strong collaboration, interaction and partnership with parents and carers in a variety of formal and informal ways.

The primary formal mechanism for the engagement of parents is by establishing a Parents & Friends Association (P&F). This is a formal structure in a school community which facilitates this involvement and contribution of parents and carers in the faith-life and educational goals of the school.

It exists to:

- formally recognise the role that parents/carers play in the education of their children;
- provide a collaborative, accessible forum for parents to meet formally and regularly with school staff to discuss matters pertaining to the education of students;
- provide a parental perspective to assist the Principal in decision making;
- allow parents to be informed and educated about the faith-life and educational goals of the school;
- promote appropriate social contact among Parents & Friends;
- foster effective partnerships between parents, students, staff, Parish and Diocese; and
- to raise funds to provide resources to enrich the learning environment of the school.

1.2 LIMITATION

A P&F has no authority over:

- school staffing issues;
- educational issues relevant to specific students; and,
- financial decisions without consultation with, and approval of, the school Principal.

A P&F has no legal entity separate from the School. It is a consultative body established under the auspices of the Principal.

It therefore must recognise the need to act with respect for:

- the authority and responsibility of the Principal in making decisions relating to the school and/or any activity using the school's name;
- the role of the Parish Priest with regard to decisions involving school/Parish property and;
- the established protocols of the school and Parish.

1.3 MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the P&F is open to:

- all parents/carers of students attending the school;
- school staff;
- friends of the school who are interested in furthering the aims and objectives of the P&F Association; and
- the Principal and Parish Priest who are ex-officio members of the Association.

Note: Ex-officio members are members by right of office held. They have the same rights as ordinary members, including voting, however, they do not always choose to exercise these rights. An invitation to all meetings should be extended to all ex-officio members.

1.4 MANAGEMENT

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The P&F is managed by the Executive Committee.

It is the function of the Executive Committee to:

- plan, manage and organise the smooth running of the P&F;
- ensure the P&F works collaboratively and cooperatively with the Principal and Parish Priest;
- ensure the P&F's financial accountability in accordance with its Constitution;
- organise regular General meetings of the P&F;
- conduct Executive Meetings prior to each General Meeting with the Principal;
- set up and supervise any Committees of the P&F as required; and
- represent the P&F at school and parish events as required.

The Executive consists of the:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary; and
- Treasurer

Ex-officio members are the Principal and the Parish Priest.

The key roles and responsibilities of the Executive Office-bearers are as follows:

PRESIDENT AND CHAIRPERSON

Role of President

It is the President's role to:

- provide leadership and direction for the P&F;
- work collaboratively and cooperatively with the Principal and Parish Priest;
- promote the aims and objectives of the P&F;
- support other members of the Executive Committee;
- schedule, plan and preside over meetings of the P&F as Chairperson*;
- schedule, plan and preside over meetings of the Executive Committee; and
- attend to incoming and outgoing correspondence as presented by the Secretary between meetings and follow up on action arising from previous meetings.

* this can be allocated to another member of the Executive where appropriate.

Role of Chairperson

The President is normally the Chairperson of P&F meetings.

It is the Chairperson's role is to:

- properly convene each General Meeting in accordance with the Constitution;
- ensure an agenda is prepared and circulated with the help of other Executive members;
- ensure a quorum is present at each meeting;
- ensure the punctual start and finish of meetings as stipulated in the agenda;
- ensure all motions and amendments are put in clearly understood terms and relate to the business of the meeting;
- ensure that control of the meeting is maintained; and
- after impartially hearing all views on a matter and with the consent of the meeting declare that discussion is closed and put a question/motion to the vote. This can be done via a show of hands or via secret ballot as required.

The Chairperson's role in discussions at meetings:

The Chairperson must remain impartial in a discussion. They must ensure that all points on both sides are raised and thoroughly debated. If the President when acting as Chairperson has strong views on the matter being discussed then they should step down from the Chair for that particular discussion to enable him or her to speak from the floor. The Vice President or another Executive member can take the Chair for the duration of the discussion.

The Chairperson's role in voting at meetings:

The Chairperson can exercise a casting vote if voting is tied. In the case of a tied vote the President is generally advised to vote to maintain the status quo.

VICE PRESIDENT

The main role of the Vice President is to fulfil the role of President in his or her absence or when required. It may be viewed as a learning experience for a parent wanting to take on the role of President in the future.

Key responsibilities include:

- chairing P&F meetings when the President is absent; and
- assisting the President in attending official school and parent functions.

SECRETARY

It is the role of the Secretary to:

- organise meetings (including agenda, venue, meeting notification etc);
- record the minutes of Executive and General Meetings;
- attend to inward and outward correspondence;
- distribute minutes, information and correspondence to P&F members as required; and
- maintain a record of P&F minutes, the P&F Constitution and correspondence.

The Secretary is central to the efficient operation of the P&F.

An effective Secretary needs good organisational skills and an ability to collaborate with the President/Chair. Also needed is the ability to establish a good working relationship with the office staff

of the school regarding P&F matters such as display of minutes of meetings; promotion of events (posters, fliers); collection of mail; items and dates for the school newsletter etc.

Preparation for meetings

The Secretary should:

- ensure that members are notified of date, time and venue of meeting;
- receive agenda items in accordance with the Constitution;
- develop the agenda in consultation with the Executive Committee;
- list pertinent correspondence that requires the meeting's attention; and
- advise the Chairperson of any visitors and list apologies.

At the meeting

The Secretary should:

- record attendance (an attendance book can be used or each name can be recorded in the minutes);
- provide copies of the agenda for attendees;
- record all important discussions and decisions made;
- have available any documents that relate to the agenda; and
- distribute important reports and other incoming material as required.

Between meetings

The Secretary should:

- complete the minutes as soon as possible after the meeting;
- attend to all correspondence required by the meeting or Chairperson;
- list all inward and outward correspondence in a record book and file copies of all letters written;
- record any P&F property and co-operate with the Treasurer on all relevant matters; and,
- regularly clear mail and keep the President fully informed on all issues.

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

Should include:

- start and finish times;
- a list of those present, apologies and date of next meeting;
- a record of all decisions and motions (including names of movers and seconders); and,
- a concise summary of reports given and discussions had at the meeting.

and should be written:

- in a succinct, accurate, objective and professional way; and
- to avoid interpretation, opinion and prejudice.

(Sample minutes can be found at Appendix A)

The P&F Executive may also decide to provide a summary of the minutes in the school newsletter with the permission of the Principal. A sample can be found at Appendix B.

TREASURER

The role of Treasurer is to ensure all financial dealings of the Association are carried out and recorded in an effective and transparent way. Complete records must be kept in order to protect the Association and themselves.

The Treasurer is responsible for:

- keeping accurate records of receipts and expenditure;
- issuing receipts for all money received;
- banking money promptly and maintaining proper financial records;
- paying all accounts authorised by the meeting as soon as possible;
- maintaining petty cash to reimburse small expenses as required;
- presenting a financial report at each General Meeting showing current receipts and expenditure and the outstanding balance;
- organising an annual audit of all accounts and presenting an annual financial report at each Annual General Meeting;

The Treasurer will also need to establish a good working relationship with the office staff of the school regarding collection of bills, invoices, storage of cash etc.

Accounting Procedures

The following items are suggested accounting practices:

- arrange for monthly bank statements and reconcile deposit and cheque books with the statements;
- keep the cash book up to date so that it can provide information if and when required;
- pay all accounts by cheque or EFT and record all payments;
- petty cash is best managed by an imprest system whereby the Association authorises a cheque for a certain amount for Petty Cash expenditure. The agreed level of petty cash is maintained by the Treasurer;
- maintain separate profit and loss accounts for major functions e.g. social events, fundraising projects and for regular trading e.g. canteen, uniform shop; and,
- prepare a budget for the financial year in consultation with other members of the Executive as a means of forward planning and to determine cash flow. The P&F then knows what its fixed commitments are and whether there are funds available to meet them.

1.5 COMMITTEES

A P&F may choose to set up committees to carry out particular functions on its behalf. This is a useful way to include as many parents as possible in the work of the P&F.

Committees should:

- where possible include at least one member of the Executive Committee;
- report their progress either at the regular General Meeting or at the invitation of the Executive;
- should have a specific Terms of Reference and limited and well-defined areas of responsibility;
- always work collaboratively with the Executive Committee to promote the objectives of the P&F;
- if they operate their own accounts operate through the Treasurer for reporting and auditing purposes.

Two types of committees:

- Standing Committees which are appointed or elected to carry out specific, ongoing activities or functions e.g. finance committee, uniform committee, canteen committee.
- Temporary Committees which are established for specific limited purposes and go out of existence when the job is completed e.g. fete committee.

APPENDIX A

Sample P&F meeting minutes

Meeting of P&F Association

31 March 2013

Meeting opened at 7:30 with a prayer.

Present: 1: List names or 2: State 24 people as per Attendance Book

Apologies: List name of apologies

Item	Discussion / Decision	Action required	By Whom?	By When?
Opening	President opened with a prayer then welcomed new members and thanked people for their participation. She reminded all of upcoming...			
Minutes of previous meeting	Accepted without change. Moved K Muller Seconded: S Forsythe			
Business arising from minutes 28 February 2013	Installation of the playground equipment has been completed. Application for Healthy Lifestyles Grant has been forwarded, awaiting reply.	Invite local member to officially open Assign working party to coordinate	Secretary to contact Executive	End of April When it is received
Correspondence	Letter noted from Krispy Kremes – motion put by L Stewart not to proceed with fundraisers that are unhealthy: Seconded: W Forest	Fundraising committee to source healthy fundraising options	Fundraising committee	Ongoing
Reports: Principal	Principal provided school goals for 2013. School annual plan identified areas for fundraising. Eg. Purchase of books, a data projector and the need to update the garden in the front. Principal commented how much children were enjoying the shade structure which the P&F has installed late last year.	Include in Summary of Meeting for School Newsletter	Secretary	Prior to events
Treasurer's	T. Nasune presented the Treasurer's Report and moved that it be accepted. Seconded B Collins Motion put by Treasurer to set Petty Cash at \$200. Seconded by K Helm Motion passed.	Report to be filed with minutes. Cheque to be drawn and signed.	Secretary Treasurer	ASAP ASAP
Sub-Committee Reports: Fundraising	The Fundraising committee submitted their plan for activities for this year. There was much discussion and it was agreed to proceed with their suggestions.	Make arrangements with Treasurer as required, \$500 float to be made available for small purchases before event.	Treasurer	Prior to events
Canteen	The Canteen Committee reported a profit of \$xxx for the last year. The Canteen Co-ordinator suggested that it was time to consider replacing the drinks freezer as it did not stay very cold.	Canteen supervisor to obtain quotes for new fridge and liaise with Executive to see if Healthy Lifestyles Grant funds could contribute to cost.	Canteen supervisor	By next meeting 30 April.
Uniform	Hats have not been selling recently and it was agreed that the principal would promote purchase of hats in newsletter.	Principal to liaise with Uniform committee.	Principal	Future newsletters

Continued				
Federation report	Meeting was advised by delegate T Sharpe that a full Council was elected at the AGM of the Federation. The next General Meeting of the Federation will be on _____ when guest speaker J Doe from the NSW Police will cover topics such as parties, drinking and drugs. The Special Needs Working Party will be hosting a talk for parents on Autism by Dr J Porter.			
Other reports	The special committee formed to organise the disposal of the old items from the storage area in the school has completed their task reporting that sales amounted to \$300 while the remaining items were donated to St Vincent de Paul's. The President congratulated the committee on a job well done and commented on how much better the area looked.			
General Business Committees for 2013	Some group discussion resulted in agreement that a new committee was required to coordinate guest speakers on educational topics for parents.	Terms of Reference to be prepared for new committee.	Executive Committee	For next meeting 30 April
Grounds Maintenance	Principal noted that there are not enough parents on the roster to maintain the grounds. Suggestions were made to research the cost of hiring a handy man to do the grounds and how much the P&F would be willing to contribute toward the cost.	Principal to organise quotes.	Principal	For next meeting 30 April
Uniforms	It was brought up that some parents would prefer a change in the sports uniform and requested that this should happen. The meeting was advised by the Principal that such a substantial change could only occur once the entire school population had been surveyed and consensus reached about any changes.	It was agreed to include a formal notice of motion for the next meeting that a change in uniform was being considered which would then commence the survey process if approved by an agreed majority of not less than 65% of all parents.	Principal to include in school bulletin.	Before next meeting.
Notices for Next Meeting	J Kruger requested that the matter of the need for air conditioning be put on the agenda for the next meeting.	Include in agenda of next meeting.	Secretary	
Next Meeting				
Tuesday 30 April				
Staff Room 7:30 – 9:00				



APPENDIX B

Sample Summary of minutes for publication

SUMMARY OF MINUTES FOR SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

P&F Meeting 31 March 2013

President welcomed 23 parents and the Principal to the meeting, thanking all for their participation over the past year. She reminded the meeting to watch the school newsletter for upcoming activities throughout the school year.

The Principal advised that installation of the playground was completed. Application was made to the federal government for the Healthy Lifestyles grant and the Executive is awaiting the reply. Once the grant is received a working party will be coordinated to determine how funds will be spent.

It was agreed that the Principal would include a summary of the school's annual plan in the newsletter to identify areas targeted for spending over the year. The principal remarked what a great improvement the shade structure has been to the school grounds.

The Treasurer noted in her report that the current balance is \$1 576.72. Fundraising activities projected for this year are: a Mother's Day stall, Trivia Night, and Lunch box orders but it was agreed not to have 'unhealthy' fundraisers like Krispy Kremes and Mars Bars.

The Canteen supervisor reported a profit for last month but said that we will need to purchase a new freezer since it doesn't stay very cold.

There is a problem with the hats not selling so it was agreed to promote and enforce their use in newsletters and on the playground.

Tracey Sharpe attended the Federation Annual General meeting and reported that a full complement of councillors was elected. The next General Meeting of the Council is on 14 May and the guest speaker is Police Detective

Jason Doe who will talk about partying, drugs and alcohol. The Special Needs Working Party will be hosting a talk on Autism by Dr J Porter on 27 May.

The committee specially formed to dispose of the old items in the storage space reported that some items were sold for \$300 while the rest were donated to St Vincent de Paul's.

The meeting agreed that a new committee would be appointed to coordinate guest speakers to talk on educational topics. It was also agreed that the school would get quotes for a maintenance person to keep the grounds since there were not enough parents on the roster.

A change in the winter sports uniform was suggested so there is a motion for the next meeting. **Please make an effort to attend the meeting** so that we can get a good idea if the majority of parents want such a change. Air conditioning for the library will also be on the agenda for the next meeting.

If you have any agenda items please forward them by _____. The next meeting is on Tuesday, 30 April at 7:30 in the Staff Room.

