



# THE EFFECTIVE P&C ASSOCIATION





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The information contained in this document is in accordance with the:

- Associations Incorporation Act 2015;
- Associations Incorporation Regulations 2016;
- School Education Act 1999;
- School Education Regulations 2000; and,
- P&C Constitution 2019.



Every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the information contained herein.

The School Education Act 1999, School Education Regulations 2000, Associations Incorporation Act 2015 and the P&C Constitution 2019 are the definitive documents in this area.

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# P&C Associations

P&C Associations are an officially recognised forum where anyone over the age of 18 who is interested in the welfare of government schools can meet to discuss educational issues.

The objects of a P&C Association are to promote the interests of the school or group of schools for which it is formed (P&C Constitution Rule 2.0) through:

- cooperation between parents, teachers, students and members of the general community;
- assisting in the provision of resources, facilities and amenities for the school or schools; and,
- the fostering of community interest in educational matters.

*School Education Act 1999, part 3, division 8, subdivision 2, section 143 (1).*

P&Cs give parents an opportunity to:

- learn about their school's policies and programs;
- actively participate in shaping and developing school policies;
- come together with other parents to share information and views;
- assist the school in building positive attitudes to students and their families; and,
- help raise funds to provide extra resources.

### ***The P&C Constitution***

The Constitution used by P&C Associations affiliated with WACSSO was developed in conjunction with Crown Law solicitors, the Minister for Education, the Department of Education's legal advisers, DMIRs and WACSSO. It is important that all members of the P&C Association, particularly the Executive Committee members, are aware of the implications and requirements of the Constitution. According to the School Education Act 1999 any changes to the P&C Constitution must be approved by the Minister for Education.

### ***P&C Composition***

The P&C Office Bearers are the President, Vice President, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer. The Executive Committee consists of these Office Bearers, the Principal and at least 3 other financial members for a large school (>200 students) or at least 2 others for a small school (<=200 students), as per P&C Constitution Rule 2.0. Office Bearers and Executive members are elected at the Annual General Meeting.

Most P&Cs also have Sub-Committees. The Convener and their respective Committees are elected at the Annual General Meeting, and financial members of the P&C can nominate themselves to be on these Committees. Each Sub-Committee must have a 'Terms of Reference' to operate by which is specific to that Committee. Sub-committee reports and requests are brought to the General Meeting. The President is always an 'ex officio' member of all the Sub-Committees on the P&C Association, and ALL Sub-Committees must include at least one member of the Executive Committee.

## P&C Office Bearers

### *President*

The President is the meeting Chairperson, the public face of the P&C and can be a link between parents and school administration.

During a meeting, the President must ensure there is a motion to be voted on and they conduct productive/orderly meetings by:

- Maintaining control
- Ruling on points of procedure
- Stopping people from speaking out of turn
- Encouraging participation by all members
- Closing debate by summing up

The President is also a signatory to the bank accounts, ensures other Office Bearers fulfil their duties, handles media and all external enquiries, observes legal formalities and is an ex officio member of all Sub-Committees.

### *Vice President/WACSSO Liaison*

The Vice President is the understudy of the President and will undertake the President's duties if they are unable to do so, including chairing meetings when the President is absent or has a conflict of interest. The Vice President can be a member of Sub-Committees and is a signatory to the bank accounts. They also hold the role of WACSSO Liaison and are responsible for reporting to the P&C - at each General Meeting - on what is currently happening in education and P&Cs within Western Australia. The Vice President must stay informed of the latest news by following WACSSO's communication channels.

## ***Secretary***

The Secretary maintains the Association's non-financial records. In fulfilling this duty, they must:

- Post notice of meetings and advise of financial motions
- Assist the Chairperson in drawing up the agenda
- Record minutes
- Deal with correspondence
- Maintain membership records
- Be a signatory to the bank accounts
- Observe legal formalities

It is important that when taking the minutes, the Secretary documents what decisions were made, who will follow up on the resolution and the timeframe.

P&C documents that must be archived are the minute books and document register. All correspondence that is not of an ongoing issue need not be retained for longer than 12 months, provided they have been listed in the correspondence log.



### *Treasurer*

The Treasurer maintains the Association's financial records. It is important to establish and maintain simple procedures for handling the Association's money. Essential procedures include:

- Always issue receipts;
- 2 people to count money and the receipt signed by both (P&C Constitution Rule 17.3);
- bank all money received;
- 2 people to sign cheques or authorise online transactions (ensure those in a direct relationship don't co-sign);
- sight an invoice before authorising any transactions; and
- never sign blank cheques.

The Treasurer is responsible for preparing and presenting a written report for every General Meeting (P&C Constitution Rule 17.11), including an up-to-date bank reconciliation, a copy of the most recent bank statement and a statement of receipts and payments. Other responsibilities include:

- Preparing the annual financial report for the AGM, auditor or reviewer as required;
- management of all the P&C's accounts, including overseeing ALL Sub-Committee accounts; and
- completing tax, superannuation, and employee entitlements as necessary.

All financial records must be kept for a minimum of 7 years, however personnel records of employees must be kept for the time of their employment and for 7 years after termination/resignation.



### ***Principal***

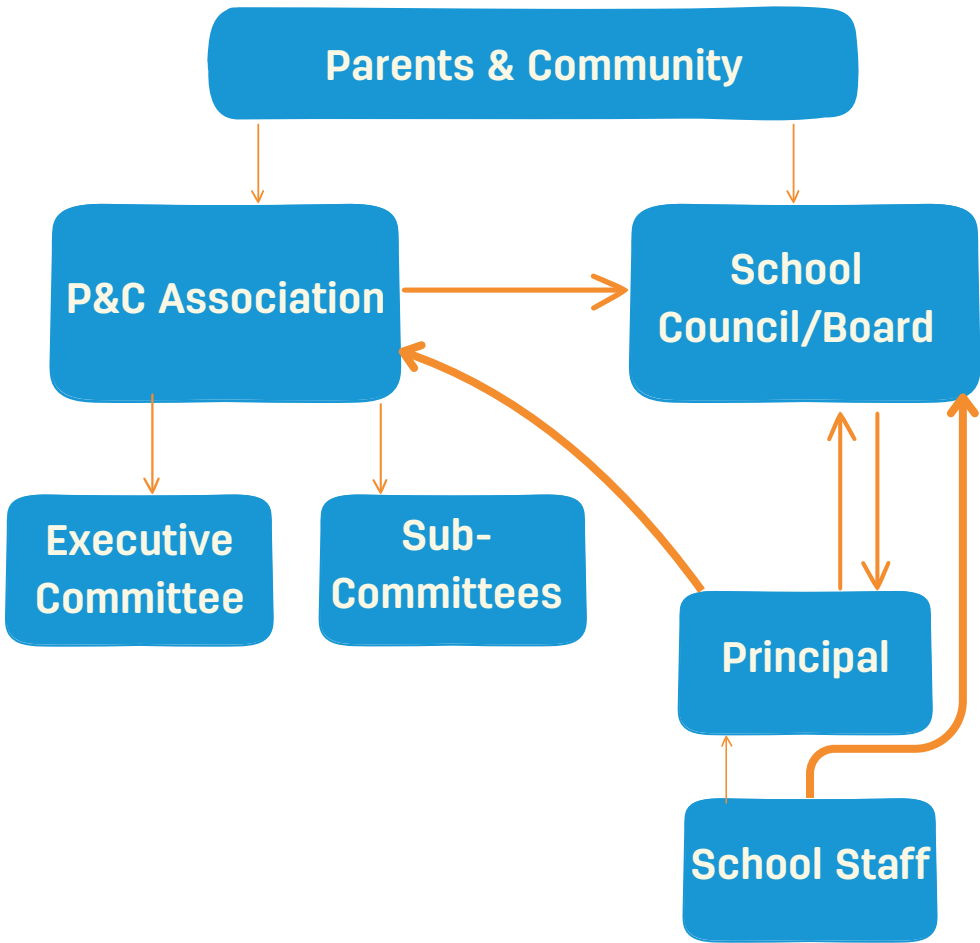
The Principal is an ex officio member of the Association and Executive Committee and, as such, has the same rights and responsibilities as any other member. If the Principal is also a financial member of the P&C, they may be counted in the quorum for all meetings.

The Principal can propose motions, vote, and be elected to a Sub-Committee. They can't be elected as an Office Bearer or be a signatory to accounts.

The Principal cannot overrule decisions legally made by the P&C unless that decision attempts to exercise authority over the day-to-day management of the school.



# School Community





# Some Legal Obligations of P&C Associations

## *P&C Associations must:*

- Hold an AGM once in each calendar year, within 4 months of the end of the P&C Association's financial year (i.e. if your P&C's financial year ends on 31st December, the latest your P&C can hold its AGM is 30th April).
- Maintain adequate financial records, showing transactions and financial position.
- Present annual financial statements, solvency statement, audit or review to the AGM as required. Copies must be given to the Principal and to WACSSO.
- Maintain a Register of the names and addresses of the Association's financial members and make this Register available to members upon request.
- Keep a copy of the P&C's rules (Constitution) and make these rules available to any member who requests them and to all new members.
- Maintain a record of the names and addresses of Office Bearers and Executive Committee members elected at the AGM and make this available to any member upon request. A copy of this information must also be given to the Principal of the school and the Office Bearer list provided to WACSSO by 30th April each year.
- Ensure each member pays a membership fee and that the fee per person does not exceed \$1.00.
- Ensure all profits are only to be expended for the benefit of students attending government schools in WA.

To meet legal requirements look out for the 'obligations checklist' provided within the annually supplied WACSSO P&C Handbook.

# WACSSO

WACSSO (the Western Australian Council of State School Organisations Inc.) is:

- The peak advisory body representing public school parents in WA.
- The network that links parents, P&C Associations, the community and important education stakeholders.
- Politically neutral and non-sectarian.
- Directed by policy determined by the majority of delegates attending each Annual Conference.
- Governed by a volunteer State Council whose members are elected by and from affiliated P&C Associations.
- Actively involved with the Department of Education, as well as Government and Non-Government Committees.

Services provided include:

- A staffed office to assist affiliates with issues relating to P&C Associations.
- WACSSO Annual Conference
- Free P&C training
- Public Liability and Volunteer Personal Accident Insurance
- Publications and assorted communications, including:
  - P&C Voice, WACSSO eNews
  - Social media content
  - President, Secretary, Treasurer Guides
  - Effective P&C and Effective Meeting Guidelines Booklets
  - Annual P&C Handbook
  - Brochures and Infosheets
  - Online resources and templates

# Types of Meetings

## *General Meetings*

This is the ordinary meeting of the P&C where normal business is discussed. These meetings are open to any member of the school community. Attendees who are not P&C members may not speak unless the Chairperson has granted permission and they do not have voting rights. At least one General Meeting must be held per term, with 7 days' notice and a quorum of 8 financial members (>200 students) or 5 financial members (<=200 students). The minutes are adopted at the following meeting.

## *Executive Committee Meetings*

The Executive Committee meets between General Meetings to discuss items of an urgent or ongoing nature and/or to set the agenda for the General Meeting. Most P&C Associations find it unnecessary for the Executive to meet on a regular basis.

Any member of the P&C is eligible to attend the Executive Committee meetings as an observer (with the permission of the Chair), however only duly elected and ex officio members of the Executive are entitled to vote. Only members of the Executive Committee can present motions. Observers who attend must request permission to speak. Minutes should be presented to the next P&C General Meeting for confirmation.

For Executive Committee meetings, 48 hours' notice is required and the quorum is 5 members (>200 students) or 3 members (<=200 students) of the Executive Committee.

### ***Sub Committee Meetings***

These meetings are often more informal than General Meetings and should remain short and productive. The Sub-Committee minutes or a report to the P&C General Meeting should outline any decisions/requests made. These decisions may be overturned by a motion of the P&C. Sub-Committees are governed according to their Terms of Reference, which must be adopted.

### ***Annual General Meetings (AGM)***

As the name suggests, the AGM is held once per year and must occur within 4 months of the end of the P&C Association's financial year. For most P&Cs, this means the AGM must be held by April 30. The school community must be given 7 days' notice of the AGM and as P&Cs are usually trying to attract new members, it's recommended to advertise the meeting widely on all school communications platforms.

The AGM is a General Meeting but with two extra annual functions:

- the election of the P&C Office Bearers and Executive Members; and,
- the presentation of the annual financial statements, audit or review.

It is also customary for the President and the Sub-Committee Conveners to present a report of their activities for the past year at the AGM. General Business can be dealt with at an AGM, but it's recommended that items already listed on the agenda be the only items discussed.

The Minutes of the AGM should be confirmed at the next General Meeting of the P&C Association, thus confirming all resolutions passed at the AGM including the election of Office Bearers.

### ***Special General Meetings***

These meetings are called in exceptional circumstances. They differ from General Meetings in that only the business of which notice has been given can be discussed. For a Special General Meeting, 7 days' notice must be given and it may be convened by the President, Honorary Secretary or 20% of the financial members of the P&C (requisition).

If the meeting has been called by means of a requisition, then the Chairperson should invite one of the requisitioners to be the 'mover of the motion'.

Minutes of the Special General Meeting are adopted at the next General Meeting and the rules for quorum are the same as for General Meetings.







# Standing Orders & Rules of Debate

Most P&C Associations have a discussion and then formulate a motion to be voted on. This process is normally acceptable, provided a formal motion is then put and voted on. Using the formal rules, this should be done in reverse, with a motion being put to the meeting first (Substantive Motion\*) followed by debate and then a vote.

A motion is just a formal proposal that an action be taken, that something previously done is approved or that the meeting expresses an idea or opinion about something. 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 always begin with the word 'that' and should be:

- clearly worded, so that everyone can understand them and
- therefore, cannot be misinterpreted;
- expressed in positive terms; and,
- recorded in such a way that it is clear "who" is to do "what" and by "when".

Where money is involved it is a good idea to specify a maximum cost. For example:

That the Canteen Convenor purchase one apple slinky machine to the value of \$50.00 before 3rd July 2024 for use in the Anytown Primary School canteen.

\*motions for the spending of P&C funds (financial motions) require 7 days' notice for a General Meeting and 48 hours' notice for an Executive Committee Meeting. Financial motions should be included in the Agenda.

The person who formally presents the idea to the meeting (i.e., moves the motion) is the “mover”. Before a motion can be discussed, it also requires a “seconded” (i.e. another person who agrees that the idea should be discussed). If the motion is not 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 mover has a 4-minute time limit to speak. The meeting then debates the motion, and members can speak for or against the motion, with each speaker having a 2-minute limit.

Speakers may only speak once, and the Chairperson will normally ensure speakers take turns speaking for or against the motion, with no more than 2 ‘for’ or 2 ‘against’ in succession. When the debate is closed the mover has the ‘right of reply’ (2 minutes), giving them an opportunity to answer arguments brought up in the debate but the Chairperson must not allow them to introduce new arguments. The motion is read to the meeting again, and members vote by a show of hands or by secret ballot. A simple majority of votes determines if the motion is carried, and if carried the motion then becomes a resolution. All motions that are moved and seconded should appear in the minutes and shown as carried, lost or laying on the table.

When the rules of debate are observed debate is faster, fairer and more effective. You can see formal rules of debate in operation when you attend WACSSO’s Annual Conference. Details regarding Conference are available by phoning WACSSO, visiting the website or subscribing to WACSSO’s communications.

For more information or to book a FREE training session  
please phone WACSSO on 9264 4000  
[wacssso.wa.edu.au](http://wacssso.wa.edu.au)

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