

GUIDELINES COURTESY OF THE PARENTS AND FRIENDS' FEDERATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA INC.

**THE ROLES OF OFFICE BEARERS
OF THE PARENTS AND FRIENDS' ASSOCIATION**

THE PRESIDENT

The President should take the Chair at all General and Executive Meetings of the Association. In addition to that responsibility the President should undertake a number of other tasks such as:-

- a) providing leadership for the Association
 - b) acting as the Association's representative
 - c) exercising some supervision of the functions of other office bearers
 - d) ensuring adequate and efficient communication exists between the Association and the Federation; between members of the Association; between the Association, the School Board and the Parish Council; and between the parents, Principal and staff of the school
 - e) encouraging parents and others to participate in the activities of the Association and the school.
- The President should always remember that she/he has a responsibility to all parents, teachers and children at the school.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT/S

The specific duty of a Vice-President is to take the Chair at those meetings from which the President is absent.

Every Vice-President should be seen as the President's understudy.

Vice-Presidents should become familiar with the operation of the Association and acquaint themselves with the duties of the President, including a working knowledge of meeting rules and procedure. In addition Vice-Presidents should offer to act as convenor for any sub-committees established by Executive and to undertake other tasks to reduce the burden of the President.

All Vice-Presidents should look on their role as an "internship", preparing for the day when they will become the President of the Association.

THE SECRETARY

Generally a Constitution states that the Secretary shall conduct the correspondence of the Association, shall have custody of its documents, and shall keep full and correct minutes of its proceedings. A Secretary also has a responsibility to ensure that all appropriate items are presented to members for discussion, and to act upon any decisions as directed by the meeting.

THE MINUTES

The record (minutes) of the meeting should be complete yet concise, expressing only facts (and not the writer's opinions). It is recommended that all decisions requiring action by the Secretary be dealt with as soon as possible after the meeting, and that duplicate copies of correspondence or notes of action taken (e.g., telephone calls) be retained in a file for future reference.

It is recommended that, regardless of the presence or absence of ex-officio representation from the Parish Council, a copy of the minutes of every P&F Association meeting should be forwarded promptly to the Parish Office.

THE AGENDA

During the meeting a Secretary's task can be made easier by following a well established plan. This plan, known as an agenda, should be prepared well in advance and, if possible, distributed along with the minutes of the previous meeting. If it is not possible to distribute the agenda then, make copies available at the meeting or, at the very least, pin a copy where it can be read by members as they arrive at the meeting. This will enable members sufficient time to consider the matters to be discussed at the meeting. An agenda should be prepared in collaboration with the Chair, which allows the resident of the Chair to become better acquainted with the topics to be discussed and reduces the possibility of items being overlooked.

The success of a meeting can be affected by the information given on the agenda. The quality of the discussions and the resultant considerations often are a reflection of the pre-meeting considerations.

INWARD CORRESPONDENCE

A Secretary is often required to decide which correspondence needs to be brought to the attention of members and which only needs to be 'tabled'. Commercial documents or pamphlets may be mentioned briefly and then 'tabled' or placed in a folder and passed around. Letters and documents of Authority from: the Government; Education Department; Catholic Education Office; Parents and Friends' Federation of Western Australia Inc. and/or any other relevant body or individual should be highlighted to the meeting, perhaps read out in full. Again, have the correspondence in a file for easy reference or perusal by members.

OUTWARD CORRESPONDENCE

List all letters which have been written since the last meeting, with a brief description of their contents.

REPORTS

Should be listed in order of presentation, e.g., Treasurer's Report, event reports, etc.

GENERAL BUSINESS

As the heading implies this section is set aside for items of a general nature which will not have been dealt with in the previous sections. Once again it is advisable that any item which needs to be discussed should be listed.

ATTENDANCE and APOLOGIES record

Keep a record of attendance at meetings of all members present. Apologies is a list of the names of members unable to attend the meeting.

Note: These agendas are intended as a guide only and should be altered to suit requirements

The main items on the Agenda can then be used as headings when writing up the Minutes of the Meeting. This will assist in giving an orderly account of what happened at the meeting.

SAMPLE AGENDA FOR PARENTS & FRIENDS' ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

PARENTS AND FRIENDS' ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING Insert time and date Insert place of meeting

A G E N D A

1. OPENING PRAYER
2. APOLOGIES
3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING
4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES
5. REPORTS:-
 - 5.1 PRESIDENT
 - 5.2 TREASURER
 - 5.3 PRINCIPAL
 - 5.4 COMMITTEE REPORTS
6. CORRESPONDENCE
7. GENERAL BUSINESS
 - 7.1 Insert topics for discussion under General Business
 - 7.2 Other Business
8. CLOSE

SAMPLE AGENDA PARENTS AND FRIENDS' ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Time: Date: Venue:

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer
2. Apologies
3. Acceptance of Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting
4. Business arising from the minutes
5. President's Report
6. Treasurer's Report and Adoption of Financial Statements for year ended 31/12/ - (last financial year)
7. Other Reports:
 - Principal
 - Sub-Committees
8. Appointment of Auditor for year ended 31/12/ - (next financial year)
9. Announcement of P & F Association per capita fundraising levy for - (next financial year)
10. MOTIONS on notice
11. Other Motions
12. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS

13. General Business
14. Prayer and Close

THE TREASURER

These notes should be read and used together with any relevant sections of the Association's Constitution. The Treasurer is a person appointed by the members to be responsible for all funds received and expended by the Association.

There may be sub-committees and sub-groups, each with a treasurer, but the person elected or approached by the general membership of the Parents and Friends' Association as the Association's Honorary Treasurer is the person ultimately responsible for all funds. This isn't as frightening as it may sound but is nevertheless something that should be remembered by everyone in the Association.

What are a Treasurer's Duties?

1. To maintain adequate books of account.
2. To be responsible for the receipt of all moneys received by the Association.
3. To ensure that all monies received are paid into the bank.
4. To pay accounts due by the Association.
5. To ensure that the books of account are audited before the Annual General Meeting.
6. To present an Audited Statement of Receipts and Payments to the Annual General Meeting.
7. To present financial reports at other times as directed by the President.

Procedures

There are some comments on the correct procedures which should be made.

1. It is important that all books of account are kept right up to date and that entries are legible. If a mistake occurs write the correct entry above or below - auditors don't mind errors so long as they can see what happened.

2. All moneys must be banked. This is important and is for the Treasurer's protection.

3. Reimbursements require at least two (2) signatures - again this is for the Treasurer's protection.

Remember, the Honorary Treasurer is the steward and not the owner of the funds.

A decision by the Association to expend funds is a directive to the Treasurer.

4. Payments should only be made on the authority of the Executive or General Meeting and supported by voucher or invoice. It is also preferable to obtain receipts to cover all payments and these should be attached to appropriate documents.

A monthly reconciliation statement should be prepared.

5. STATEMENT - INTERIM

Duplicates should be retained by the Secretary for inclusion in Minute Book, and originals held by Treasurer for Audit purposes.

6. STATEMENT - ANNUAL - Summary of Monthly Statements sheet should be totalled and a Reconciliation Statement prepared.

THE P & F REPRESENTATIVE ON THE SCHOOL BOARD

The Western Australian Catholic School Board Constitution⁷ (a copy of which is included as part of the Federation's Handbook for Parents and Friend' Associations) lists the criteria for membership of the Board and the mix of people to be included. Under Section 8 (e), Membership of the Board, it includes, "one person nominated by the Parents and Friends' Association related to the School". This person is often, but not necessarily, also an Office Bearer of the P & F Association. School Board membership criteria (as per Clause 8.1 of the Catholic School Board Constitution):

- (a) possession of special skills that will be an asset to the Board;
- (b) a deep interest in the welfare of all students and staff;
- (c) a desire to give service to the Catholic School Community;
- (d) a keenness to promote Catholic schooling;
- (e) an ability to work cooperatively and constructively with all other members of the Board; and
- (f) a sufficiency of time to devote to Board duties

Also, there is now a prerequisite to acquire a police clearance validation for Board service.

The P & F Association representative on the Board is usually nominated and elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Association (or appointed by a subsequent meeting of the P & F Committee, if they are empowered to do so) and, as a member of the School Board, that person is then bound by the Catholic School Board Constitution. Clause 8.4 of that document refers to Term of Office, i.e., "Membership of the Board shall be for a period of two years, except for ex-officio members".

At the monthly general meetings of the P & F Association, the School Board Representative should report on any matters discussed at the School Board meeting which are relevant to parents or the P & F but are

not of a confidential nature. Naturally, all members must respect the Board's confidentiality requirements, which means that some sensitive matters should not be reported on at all and others may only be referred to in a general way (if in any doubt about what would be an appropriate level of reporting on any matter, the P & F Representative on the Board should seek advice from the Board Chairperson or Secretary or the School Principal).

The School Board Representative should also direct the Board's attention to any appropriate matters that the Parents and Friends' Association seeks to have raised at School Board level.

Hopefully, the P & F Representative's membership of, and loyal service to, the Board will help to facilitate a healthy level of communication between parents and the School Board, and this will further enhance the valuable on-going contribution by the P & F Association to the school community as a whole.

THE P & F REPRESENTATIVE ON THE PARISH COUNCIL

This position is by invitation from the Parish Council and Parish Priest. Perhaps you might invite likewise representation on the P&F Association Committee by a nominee from the Parish Council.

Perhaps a common nominee might agree to report to both Committees.

According to the Constitution for Parish Pastoral Councils in the Perth Archdiocese, Parish Council membership criteria are: (a copy of which is included as part of the Federation's P&F Association Handbook)

1. The council shall consist of:

i) the parish priest and his assistant clergy;

ii) a representative of other pastoral workers specifically serving the parish;

iii) elected parishioners of sufficient numbers to adequately represent the parish;

iv) such parishioners as may be co-opted by the parish priest and council provided that the number co-opted shall not exceed the number of elected members.

2. People who are active members of the Church community and have reached the age of 18 years are eligible for election.

3. i) Membership of the council shall be for a period of two years. Any retiring member maybe re-elected provided he/she has not served for more that six consecutive years.

ii) On completion of six years' service, a retiring member may again be eligible after a lapse of one year.

iii) Should the position of an elected member become vacant, the council shall have the power to appoint a replacement until the next election.

4. i) Any member of the council may resign by giving written notice of intention to the secretary and the resignation shall operate from its acceptance by the council.

ii) Any member of the council who, without giving adequate reason is absent from three successive meetings, is automatically excluded from the council.

The P & F Association representative on the Parish Council may be nominated and elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Association (or appointed by a subsequent meeting of the P & F Committee, if they are empowered to do so) and, as a member of the Parish Council, that person is then bound by the Constitution for Parish Pastoral Councils in the Perth Archdiocese, or as applies to other diocese.

As previously stated in Clause 3 i) of the aforesaid Constitution, the Term of Office for the position shall be two years.

At the monthly general meetings of the P & F Association, the Parish Council Representative should report on any matters discussed at the Parish Council meeting which are relevant to parents or the P & F but are not of a confidential nature. Naturally, all members must respect the Parish Council's confidentiality requirements, which means that some sensitive matters should not be reported on at all and others may only be referred to in a general way (if in any doubt about what would be an appropriate level of reporting on any matter, the P & F Representative on the Parish Council should seek advice from the Chair of the Parish Council or the Parish Priest).

The Parish Council Representative should also direct the Council's attention to any appropriate matters that the Parents and Friends' Association seeks to have discussed at Parish Council.

Hopefully, the P & F Representative's membership of, and loyal service to, the Council will help to facilitate a healthy level of communication between parents and the Parish Council, and this will further enhance the valuable on-going contribution by the P & F Association to the school/parish community as a whole.