

Faulconbridge
Public School

2024 MEMBERS HANDBOOK

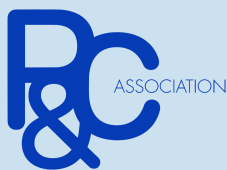
About Falconbridge Public School



Falconbridge Public School has an enrolment of over 320 students, ranging from Kindergarten to Year 6. Their primary objective is to ensure that every child receives a high-quality education while maximising their chances of success within a safe and supportive school environment.

To achieve this, Falconbridge Public School offers a diverse range of programs that not only promote foundational skills but also cater to the varied interests and abilities of our student body. The School takes pride in delivering personalised education tailored to each student's individual needs, with a strong emphasis on providing equal opportunities for all to reach their full potential. In addition, the music, sports, and dance programs offer extracurricular avenues for students to showcase their talents.

It is with vision and rigour, as a school, we 'Learn to Live'.



The Falconbridge Public School P&C Association

At Falconbridge Public School, we are more than just a community - we are a family. Our Parents and Citizens Association (P&C) is made up of passionate parents who are dedicated to providing our children with the best possible education.

We believe that education is more than just what happens in the classroom - it is a partnership between the school, parents, and the community. That's why we work tirelessly to bring together Falconbridge and its surrounding areas to create a vibrant and supportive community.

Our main focus is to communicate with parents and carers, and to advocate for the school within the community to encourage participation. We raise funds to help provide facilities and equipment for the school and to advocate for local educational improvements. Above all, we are proud to promote public education and its importance in shaping the future of our children.

At Falconbridge Public School, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life, and we are committed to making that a reality.



Volunteering at Faulconbridge Public



Volunteering at a Faulconbridge Public School as part of the P&C Association is both beneficial and rewarding. This involvement allows parents to directly enhance the educational environment by collaborating with teachers and staff, offering unique insights, and initiating valuable projects. Such engagement fosters a strong community spirit, where everyone feels connected and invested in the school's success, and sets a positive example for students about the importance of education and community involvement.

Furthermore, volunteering offers personal benefits, serving as a positive role model for children and providing a sense of achievement for the volunteers. It's an opportunity for personal growth, skill development, and forming supportive community networks. This mutual enrichment makes volunteering with the P&C a fulfilling and impactful experience for both the volunteers and the school community.



Volunteering Opportunities



Sub-committees

If you want to get involved but don't want to commit to a committee position, we have plenty of sub-committees that would love people to join their team. Have a certain skill set you think we can benefit from? Get in touch and let us know how you can help!

- Fundraising Committee
- Blackboard Cafe Committee
- Environment & Sustainability Committee
- Twilight Markets Committee
- Publicity & Promotions team
- Grants team

Blackboard Cafe

The Blackboard Cafe always loves some help! Friday mornings from 8am until 10am (part of the duration or the whole time).

Adhoc Opportunities

There are plenty of opportunities throughout the year to volunteer, from fundraising events, baking, garden maintenance and more! Email info@fpspandc.org.au to be put on the volunteer list and be notified up upcoming events.

Kitchen Garden Program

Are you able to help in the kitchen? Or perhaps you have more of a green thumb for the garden? Each Monday, the School runs the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program.

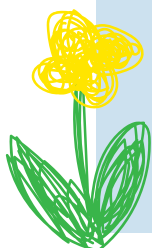
- Term 1: Stage 3
- Term 2: Stage 2
- Term 3: Stage 1
- Term 4: Kindergarten

Ethics Teaching

Volunteers needed for Primary Ethics Classes at the school on Thursdays 11:25am-12:05pm. Ethics encourages children to develop their opinions through ethical reasoning and respectful discussion. Ethics helps kids develop confidence and empathy. As a volunteer ethics teacher, you'll get a lot out of it too! If you have an hour a week and want to ensure children at our school can access this valuable program, go to: <https://primaryethics.com.au/volunteer/ethics-teacher/>

Primary Ethics, the approved provider, offers full free training, lesson scripts and ongoing support

Email info@fpspandc.org.au if you can help!





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MEMBER INFORMATION

What is a P&C Association?

Parents and Citizens (P&C) Associations are vital not-for-profit organisations supporting public schools in New South Wales. They are a group consisting of parents and citizens in a school community, whose purpose is to assist the school and promote the interests of the entire school community.

The *Education Act 1990* lays out the objectives of a P&C Association:

1. to promote the interests of the school by bringing parents, citizens, students and teaching staff into close co-operation, and
2. to assist in providing facilities and equipment for the school and in promoting the recreation and welfare of the students at the school, and
3. to encourage parent and community participation in curriculum and other education issues in schools where there is no school council.

What does Faulconbridge Public School P&C Association do?

Faulconbridge Public School P&C Association (FPS P&C) works in close partnership with the school to achieve the best possible outcomes for students and other stakeholders in the school community. FPS consults with the parent community, students, and school staff to identify the main needs of the school, and plan accordingly how best to meet those needs.

Some common things the FPS P&C does to support the school includes:

- Operating the Blackboard Cafe and school uniform shop.
- Providing equipment, resources and facilities to the school.
- Consulting with the School on sustainability initiatives.
- Applying for grants or fundraising to cover the costs of a project at the school.
- Hosting events like the Twilight Markets, fun runs, discos, and many more.
- Supplying a parent representative on merit selection panels for vacant jobs at the school, or sitting on tender panels to select a provider or business to operate on school grounds.

Membership

All parents and carers of students at the school are eligible to be members of the school's P&C Association.

All citizens living within the boundaries of the school are eligible to be members of the school's P&C Association.

The Principal is an ex officio member of the P&C Association. That is, he/she is a member of the P&C Association by right of his/her position as Principal of the school and does not have to pay a membership fee. The Principal has the right to move motions and vote like any other member, except when acting as Returning Officer at the Annual General Meeting (see below).

Members of the school staff are eligible to be members of the P&C but are required to pay the membership fee.

Parents, carers and citizens must pay the membership fee to become a member of the P&C.

Payment of the membership fee must be made by the close of one meeting so that the member is eligible to exercise membership rights (eg, vote) at the next meeting. Payment can be made in person or online at fspanc.org.au

It is in the members' interest to obtain a receipt at the time of payment.

Due to the fact that the membership register is not updated until after each general meeting, new members are not eligible to vote at the meeting at which their membership has been paid.

If a new member pays his/her fee to the Treasurer in between meetings, he/she is still not deemed financial until the close of the next general meeting.

All financial members have the right to stand for office, move motions and vote.

The Principal, as a general rule, acts as Returning Officer for the election of officers and is therefore not entitled to nominate or vote at the election.



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How much is the membership fee?

The fee to become a financial member of the Faulconbridge Public School P&C Association is \$2, payable in person at any general meeting or AGM, or online at fpspandc.org.au.

All financial members have the right to stand for office, move motions and vote.

Committee positions at Faulconbridge Public School

The Faulconbridge Public School P&C Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held on the first Monday of term 1 each year, typically in February. During the AGM all committee positions are made vacant and nominations are open to form a new committee for that year.

Positions on the committee include:

Executive

- President
- Vice President x 2
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Executive Members (up to six)

Sub-Committees

- Fundraising Chair/s
- Blackboard Cafe Chair/s
- Uniform Shop Convenor
- Environment & Sustainability Chair/s
- Publicity & Promotions Officer
- Twilight Markets Chair/s
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Grants Officer

Office Bearers

Office bearers are elected at a P&C Association's annual general meeting. Only financial P&C members are eligible to stand for these positions.

A President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary and a Treasurer will be elected, as per the standard and prescribed constitutions.

No more than one officer position can be held by the same person.

Members of the same family can hold office-bearer positions at the same time.

Office-bearers can be elected regardless of their place or type of employment.

Employees of the P&C Association are not permitted to hold an office-bearer or executive position within the association.

If an office-bearer position becomes vacant between annual general meetings, the position is to be filled through an election at any general meeting.

Signatories to all P&C financial accounts, including sub-committees, are the officers of the P&C Association (President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer).



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Role of the President

Election

The President is elected at the FPS P&C's AGM

Duties

The President is responsible for:

- The successful functioning of the P&C Association
- The attainment of the P&C Association's objectives
- Ensuring that the P&C Association takes part in decision-making processes in the school
- Fostering fair participation of all members and ensuring that all new members are made to feel welcome
- Supporting volunteers
- Consistent adherence to the constitution
- Acting as the P&C Association's spokesperson when public statements or actions are needed
- Setting up lines of communication with the Principal
- Being a signatory on the Association's bank accounts
- Chairing meetings but, in the absence of the President, one of the Vice-Presidents will chair the meeting.

Voting

The President is entitled to the same voting rights as any member. However, a President, when in the chair, often abstains from voting in order to preserve the impartiality of the position.

The person chairing a meeting does not have a casting vote in the event of a tied vote. In the event of a tied vote, the motion should be lost.

Sub-Committees

The President is automatically a member of all P&C sub-committees.

The President should be informed of all sub-committee meetings and decisions.

An experienced President gives opportunities to the vice-presidents to develop their skills in chairing meetings. Federation recommends that a vice-president be delegated to chair part of a meeting. The training process could also include delegating the responsibility of sub-committee leadership to vice-presidents.

The President also has important responsibilities outside of meetings and is looked to as a leader of the parent community.

The President should not make unilateral decisions and should be mindful that all public statements accurately represent the views of the association.

Role of the Secretary

The secretary is responsible for carrying out the administrative tasks related to the decisions of the meetings as resolved. The Secretary prepares, in consultation with the President, all meetings agendas.

- The Secretary is required to attend P&C Association meetings and take notes of the discussions in order to produce a set of Minutes for subsequent distribution to members and for receipt, possible amendment and adoption at the following meeting.
- In the absence of the Secretary the meeting should elect a person to take the Minutes, this person should be identified in the minutes.
- The Secretary must receive and table all correspondence as well as writing and dispatching outgoing correspondence as resolved/appropriate.
- The Secretary issues notice of all meetings and maintains official records of the P&C Association such as the constitution, by-laws, rules of sub-committees, Incorporation Certificate, ABN details, list of financial (voting) members, Minutes, Attendance book.



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Notice of Meeting

P&C Constitution by-laws state that P&C Associations meet on a regular day each month 'during term time' at the school. Secretaries may use the P&C newsletter, school newsletter/website, school sign, or other means to promote meetings. Motions on Notice, issues and events to be discussed should be advertised along with the names of guest speakers.

Agenda

An agenda is a list of items of business to be considered at a meeting. An Agenda should include the name of the organisation, the type of meeting (e.g., Annual General Meeting, General or special meeting); where the meeting will be held; the date the meeting will be held and the time the meeting will commence.

Role of the Treasurer

While all P&C members must be mindful of complying with financial accountability requirements, this is the Treasurer's primary responsibility.

- The Treasurer receives and deposits monies, maintains records, draws cheques* and presents accounts.
- The Treasurer also ensures that all funds held and handled by the P&C are properly and openly accounted for as the Treasurer is responsible for all funds held in the name of the P&C Association. This included all P&C Association committees. This does not mean that the Treasurer must undertake the actual bookkeeping themselves but they must ensure that the various sub-committee financial records have been kept to the Treasurer's satisfaction.
- The Treasurer is a signatory on the P&C accounts and should not delegate this responsibility.
- The Treasurer should encourage members to understand the state of the P&C Association finances. The Treasurer must ensure a case book or books are kept, recording all financial transactions of the P&C Association.

Planning, budgeting and cash flow

A budget is a planning document to estimate the income and expenditure of the organisation for a given period (usually the financial year of the P&C Association). The budget is a statement of intention rather than of fact and can be altered at any time, with due notice given by way of the Agenda, by majority vote, after its initial ratification at a general or special meeting.

Surplus funds

The Treasurer makes recommendations about surplus funds. Surplus funds may be lodged as term deposits with any financial institute that has the full trustee status.

Audit

The financial accounts of the P&C Association must be submitted to an independent audit each year.

The Treasurer produces a full statement of financial position declaring all funds held in the name of the P&C Association, including those sub-committees, along with the Secretary who presents the Minute book of the same period to the Auditor. After completion of the audit of financial statements, with all signed certificates appended, are to be presented at the Annual General Meeting for approval and adoption.

Reporting

The Treasurer must present a report in the form of an income and expenditure statement together with a reconciled bank statement for each and every P&C meeting. Where a Treasurer is not able to attend a meeting, the Treasurer's Report should be provided to the President prior to the meeting for tabling to the members.

**Note that references to cheque also include electronic banking*

P&C Executive Committee

The P&C Executive Committee (Executive) consists of the association's office-bearers (President, Vice Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer) and may include up to six financial members elected at the annual general meeting. (The constitution calls for only one Secretary – the meeting may delegate others to assist the Secretary.)

- The Executive is convened by the President or one other officer.
- The Executive is responsible for ensuring that the decisions of the P&C meeting are acted upon.
- The Executive must be mindful not to make decisions that should be debated at a general meeting.
- Ordinary members have the right to question Executive decisions or, in fact, overturn them (by majority vote) at a general meeting.
- It is prudent for the Executive to only deal with matters that are urgent or of a sensitive nature.
- The Executive can call special, or extraordinary, meetings of the association. Minutes are kept of Executive meetings and confirmed at the next general meeting.
- If a general P&C meeting decides that the Executive has acted irresponsibly or inappropriately, the meeting can formally censure the Executive or any member of the Executive.

P&C Sub-Committees

Sub-committees are formed by a P&C Association to undertake specific planning and/or management tasks on behalf of the association. You do not need to be a financial member to be a part of a sub-committee.

Sub-committees are categorised as:

- Ad Hoc Committees - which are formed to carry out specific tasks and cease to exist after these tasks have been completed (eg, Centenary Committee).
- Standing Committees - those which have an ongoing role and are elected annually at, or confirmed by, the P&C Annual General Meeting (eg, Canteen Committee).

Sub-committees have delegated authority and are fully accountable to the P&C Association. Each sub-committee must operate within the terms of reference or rules set for it by the P&C. Sometimes a sub-committee may write its own rules but these must be properly endorsed by the P&C before the sub-committee begins its work.

A proper sub-committee must:

- be elected by the P&C Association
- conform to the rules of operation endorsed by the P&C Association
- report regularly to the P&C Association
- hand over any profits which may have resulted from the sub-committee's activities, after all operational costs have been met, though some sub-committees may require a working budget (eg, Canteen Committee).

A sub-committee does not have a constitution separate from the P&C, nor a separate set of office-bearers. The head of the sub-committee is known as the convenor or chairperson.

A sub-committee may operate a separate bank account; however, each sub-committee's books are the responsibility of the P&C Association's Treasurer although the sub-committee may elect a book-keeper to work with the Treasurer. The sub-committee's books must be submitted for audit when the association itself undergoes its annual audit.

Further, a sub-committee has no discretion to commit funds, beyond meeting operational costs, for the purchase of school resources.

Role of the Fundraising Sub-Committee

The role of the Fundraising Chairperson in the FPS P&C Association is a dynamic and crucial position, vital for generating resources and support for various school initiatives.

The Fundraising Chairperson plays a pivotal role in mobilising resources for the school, requiring a mix of creativity, organisational skills, financial acumen, and the ability to engage and inspire a community towards a common goal.

Please see the P&C Secretary for the complete role and responsibility of the Fundraising Chairperson.

Role of the Uniform Shop Sub-Committee

This role of the Uniform Chairperson is crucial in ensuring that the process of obtaining school uniforms is smooth and efficient for both parents and the school, and it often requires a blend of organisational, financial, and interpersonal skills.

Please see the P&C Secretary for the complete role and responsibility of the Uniform Chairperson.

Role of the Blackboard Cafe Sub-Committee

The role of the Blackboard Café Sub-Committee in the FPS P&C Association involves overseeing the operations and management of the Blackboard Café, a school volunteer-run café that serves as a social and fundraising hub.

The Blackboard Café Chairperson plays a pivotal role in creating a welcoming and functional space that not only serves as a social hub for the school community but also contributes to the P&C's fundraising efforts. The role requires a mix of management skills, financial acumen, a flair for customer service, and a passion for community building.

Please see the P&C Secretary for the complete role and responsibility of the Blackboard Cafe Chairperson.

Role of the Environment & Sustainability Sub-Committee

The role of the Environment and Sustainability Sub-Committee in FPS P&C Association is increasingly significant in today's context, where environmental awareness and sustainable practices are vital.

The Environment and Sustainability Chairperson not only contributes to creating a more sustainable school environment but also plays a crucial role in educating and inspiring the next generation to be conscious and responsible stewards of the environment.

Please see the P&C Secretary for the complete role and responsibility of the Blackboard Cafe Chairperson.

Role of the Twilight Markets Sub-Committee

The role of the Twilight Markets Sub-Committee in the FPS P&C Association involves overseeing the planning, organisation, and execution of Twilight Market event. These markets are held in the evening on the first Friday of November and feature a variety of stalls, food, entertainment, and activities for the school community and the public.

The Twilight Markets Chairperson plays a central role in creating a successful, enjoyable, and profitable event that brings together the school community and the public, fostering a sense of community and raising funds for the school. This role requires strong organisational, leadership, and communication skills, as well as creativity and a passion for community engagement.

Please see the P&C Secretary for the complete role and responsibility of the Twilight Markets Chairperson.

Role of the Publicity & Promotions Officer

The role of the Publicity and Promotions Officer in the FPS P&C Association is pivotal in communicating the association's activities and initiatives to the broader school community and beyond.

The Publicity and Promotions Officer plays a crucial role in shaping the public image of the P&C, driving engagement and support for its activities, and ensuring effective communication within the school community. This role requires strong communication skills, creativity, and a good understanding of marketing and promotional strategies.

Please see the P&C Secretary for the complete role and responsibility of the Publicity & Promotions Officer.

Role of the Volunteer Coordinator

The role of the Volunteer Coordinator in the FPS P&C Association is integral for the smooth operation and success of various school events and activities. This role requires excellent organisational, communication, and interpersonal skills, as the Volunteer Coordinator is often the key person who ensures that volunteer-driven activities and events in the school are successful and beneficial for all involved.

Please see the P&C Secretary for the complete role and responsibility of the Volunteer Coordinator.

The Principal's role on Sub-Committees

The Principal is automatically a member of the P&C Association and its sub-committees. The Principal does not have the right of veto or the right to gag association or sub-committee discussions. However, the Principal is expected to highlight disparities between association/sub-committee discussions and Department of Education and Training (DET) policies. The Principal must be given notice of every association and sub-committee meeting but his/her inability to attend is not adequate grounds to postpone or cancel any association/sub-committee meeting. The Principal may delegate another member of staff to attend.

It is a requirement of the DET that all P&C Association monies be expended with the endorsement of a majority vote at a general or special meeting of the P&C Association itself. It is reasonable for a fundraising sub-committee, when handing over its profits to the P&C, to suggest how part or all of these profits may be spent. The P&C, of course, is not obliged to adopt these suggestions but continued disregard from the P&C could discourage active fundraisers.

Role of the Principal in P&C Associations

The Principal is an ex officio member of the P&C Association. That is, the Principal is automatically a member of the P&C Association because he/she is the school's principal.

The Principal is not required to pay a membership fee to the P&C Association.

The rights of the Principal in the P&C Association are the same as for any other member – the Principal is entitled to vote and to move motions at a meeting, except when acting as Returning Officer at the Annual General Meeting.

As an ex-officio member the Principal cannot stand for election to an officer-bearer position. Consequently, the Principal is often asked to act as an association's Returning Officer at the Annual General Meeting.

The Principal has no power of veto over a P&C Association, ie the Principal cannot allow or disallow any discussion or decision made by the association.

The Principal's role in a P&C meeting is to report to the meeting, respond to questions and give advice where necessary. The Principal cannot be a signatory to a P&C bank account.

The Principal is also an ex officio member of the P&C Executive and all P&C sub-committees.

The role of the principal is addressed in the Department of Education and Training's February 1998 Memorandum to Principals, the Partnership Between Schools and Established Parent Bodies.

Annual General Meeting

Each P&C Association is required, by its constitution, to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM).

- The AGM is held in accordance with the association's by-laws (eg, time).
- The AGM is advertised to the school community at least 14 days prior to being held. The notice should include the list of representative positions to be elected at the meeting.
- All office-bearer positions are open for election at each AGM.
- The association's by-laws will indicate if there is a limited tenure on any officer or representative position.
- The minutes of the previous AGM are to be distributed prior to the AGM and endorsed at the AGM.
- Prior to the AGM, the Treasurer must present to the auditor the records of the P&C for auditing. These records consist of minute book, cash book, deposit book, cheque book, receipt book, invoices and bank statements of the P&C Association and all its sub-committees. The audited financial statement will be presented to the AGM as the Treasurer's Report.
- Incorporated P&C Associations must send a copy of their audited financial statements to the Federation within one month of their AGM.
- The AGM consists of the President's Annual Report, the Treasurer's Annual Report and any other annual reports required as well as the election of office bearers and representatives.

Reports must be strictly relevant to the AGM as opposed to the general meeting which immediately follows the AGM. Any matters that come up in the minutes cannot be endorsed or followed up until the next meeting. In the case of the AGM, such matters would have to wait for a year.

The officer positions determined at the AGM, according to both the Standard and Prescribed Constitution, are:

- President
- Two Vice-Presidents
- Secretary
- Treasurer

No more than one officer position can be held by the same person.

Two people from the same family can hold office-bearer positions at the same time.

Office-bearers can be elected regardless of their place or type of employment.

Any other representative positions held by P&C members are elected at the AGM. These positions include:

- Blackboard Cafe sub-committee
- Uniform sub-committee
- Fundraising officer/sub-committee
- Environment and Sustainability sub-committee
- Twilight Markets sub-committee
- Publicity & Promotions Officer
- Volunteer Coordinator

The auditor for the following year is determined at the AGM.

Only financial P&C members are eligible to stand for a position.

The AGM is chaired by the outgoing President until the ballot is held. The ballot is conducted by the Returning Officer. This position is determined by the meeting and is someone who plays no part in the election (ie, does not stand for a position). The Principal often takes this role.

On completion of the AGM the new office bearers take over and conduct a general meeting.

The minutes of the AGM are presented for acceptance at the next AGM, not the next general meeting.



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Voting Rights

There is often confusion and misinterpretation of the rules governing voting rights. Any attempt to ignore or tamper with the set rules will, inevitably, lead to dissent and division among the “old” and “new” members. Below are a few commonly asked questions.

Who is eligible to vote at a P&C Association meeting?

All members of an association are entitled to vote. Membership eligibility is prescribed in the association’s constitution.

Membership involves the payment of an annual membership fee, which is \$2.

All associations should maintain a current list of members. Life Members (unless they have paid the membership fee) and observers do not vote.

Can new members vote?

The voting rights of new members are sometimes vexatious because ongoing members feel that it is unfair for “first-timers” to come to a meeting, pay the association’s annual membership fee, and enjoy full and immediate voting rights on all matters, including highly controversial issues. P&C Associations often assert that such an arrangement allows a meeting to be easily and unfairly stacked by single-issue one-night stand members.

Faulconbridge Public School P&C Association constitution insists that the register of members “shall be updated after each general meeting by the Secretary or the Secretary’s nominee.” New members are then eligible to vote at the next meeting. This constitutional clause was calculated to stop first-timers from enjoying the benefits of full voting rights immediately.

What about new parents? Shouldn’t they be encouraged to participate?

The membership register should be updated at the end of the Annual General Meeting which is the last meeting in the association’s calendar. Usually the first general meeting of the year will follow the AGM on the same night. The general meeting is a separate meeting from the AGM and new parents may participate and vote at the general meeting providing they paid their membership before the close of the AGM.

Can the Chairperson vote?

A Chairperson possesses normal voting rights. Typically, however, a Chairperson often abstains from voting in order to preserve the impartiality of his/her position. The current prescribed and standard constitutions make no provision for the chair to exercise a casting vote in the event of an equality of voting. Consequently, in the event of an equality of voting the motion should be lost.

Are proxy votes or absentee votes acceptable?

No. Under common law special provision must be made in an association’s constitution to provide for proxies. No provision exists in the prescribed or standard constitutions for proxy votes.

Absentee votes are proxy votes by another name and are similarly unacceptable

What does ex officio member mean?

“Ex officio” is simply a Latin term which means “by virtue of his or her office” and refers to the fact that a school principal is *automatically* a member of an association because he/she is the school’s principal. He or she is not required to pay the normal annual membership fee or to meet other constitutional membership requirements.

Can a principal as an ex officio member vote?

Ex officio members have full voting rights. An ex officio member is not eligible to stand for election.

Consequently, an ex officio member is often asked to act as an Association’s Returning Officer.

Can students vote?

No. *The Education Act 1990* defines a P&C Association as “an association consisting of parents of the children attending any government school together with other residents of the district served by the school who are interested in the welfare of the school.



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Additional Information

Can the membership of the P&C Association be incorporated in the school "fees"

Federation advised against this practice. So called "school fees" or "voluntary contributions" are not compulsory in government schools and those who choose not to pay the fee or contribution or are unable to do so may still wish to become members of the P&C association. It may mean that an organisation has problems, at times, getting a quorum at meetings given the prescribed and standard constitutions' requirements which states that, "Where the association has a current membership of 50 or more, the quorum at all meetings of that association shall be 11 members."

Voluntary school contributions and subject fees

NSW Government policy enables all schools to request contributions from parents to enhance their educational and sporting programs.

Towards the end of each school year Principals review their budgetary requirements for the following year. The level of voluntary contributions and subject contributions is made by the Principal in consultation with the school community through structures such as the Finance Committee, P&C Association and School Council.

Ken Dixon, Department of Education and Training, 28 March 2008 writes:

"School contribution levels will be capped in 2008. Those schools which, in 2007, set their voluntary contributions at or below the earlier assessed state-wide averages of \$80 for secondary schools and \$37 for primary schools are permitted to increase contribution levels to \$82 and \$38 respectively. All other schools are permitted to increase their voluntary contributions by a maximum of 2.7% on 2007 levels."

P&C Federation is committed to a free public education system which is open to all irrespective of socio-economic status. It is therefore fundamental that parents are advised by the Principal that school contributions and subject fees are entirely voluntary and payment is a matter for decision by parents.

The collection of parental contributions is governed by the Department's Code of Practice which was issued to schools in 1995 which states that Principals must ensure that no student or family suffers any discrimination or embarrassment over failure to make a contribution.

Fees that may exist in schools are:

- Voluntary contributions – a contribution paid to the school by parents.
- Subject fees – a fee covering the costs of a particular subject, usually an elective subject in secondary schools.
- Educational Support – a fee covering resources such as books and other equipment.

Schools may request from parents a payment to cover the purchase of materials used in particular elective subjects that go beyond the minimum requirements of the curriculum. These payments are also voluntary. However, parents who are unable to pay these fees because of financial hardship may be eligible for assistance from the Student Assistance Scheme or other appropriate sources and are able to speak to the Principal about this.

Voluntary School Contributions should not be confused with membership fees or voluntary contributions made to a P&C Association. The School Voluntary Contribution payment goes to the school, not to the P&C Association.

Appointing an auditor

You must appoint an auditor at the P&C Association's Annual General Meeting.

The auditor does not need to be a qualified professional. The auditor must possess appropriate skills and experience in auditing and financial record management together with an appreciation of the issues of probity as they relate to the role of association auditor. The auditor must not have or appear to have any conflict of interest arising, for example, from a personal or business relationship with an Officer of the association and must be prepared to swear that the records are a true and correct statement of the information provided by the Treasurer.



Faulconbridge
Public School

MEMBER INFORMATION

To meet reporting requirements under their Prescribed Constitution, the Treasurer of incorporated associations should ensure that copies of the audited account, signed by the President and Treasurer, are forwarded to the Federation of the P&C Associations of NSW within one month of the AGM at which they are presented. By undertaking to send the records to P&C Federation the need for incorporated P&C Associations to publicly record their financial statements is fulfilled.

The Treasurer is responsible for the handing over of all financial records to the incoming Treasurer should the Annual General Meeting result in a new Treasurer being elected.

There are many useful conventions which should be followed when dealing in financial matters and the role of the Treasurer will be made easier if all P&C members appreciate and understand the rules and protocols are to be complied with.

Proper accounting procedures have two purposes:

(i) They prevent loss and fraud. You might trust everyone in your association, but accounting procedures will tell you if the wrong thing is happening and where.

(ii) To protect the P&C Association Executive. Good accounting of P&C funds ensures financial propriety.

Cheques

Never sign blank cheques.

Ensure the P&C Association has resolved to expend the monies before drawing a cheque. No motion, no payment.

Do not make cheques out to cash.

Ensure all cheques are marked 'Not Negotiable'.

Cheque signatories should sight all supporting documents; ensure they are correctly drawn to the payee and there is agreement between the amount on the invoice and the amount on the cheque before signing cheques.

Monitor that payment are approved for appropriate purposes.

Two members of the same family should not, as a general rule, act as signatories.

Where possible, cheque signatories should not counter-sign a cheque drawn in their favour.

The school Principal should not be a signatory to P&C bank accounts.

Employees of the association should not be a signatory to the association of sub-committee bank accounts.

Payments

All accounts should be paid by cheque, except for small payments from petty cash.

Support all payments with invoices, receipts or docketts.

Mark all paid invoices with a "paid" stamp and cheque number.

Receipts

The Treasurer issues receipts in sequential order as per takings.

Ensure two independent P&C members are responsible for collecting and counting money. Likewise, at the end of the collection period, counting should occur in the company of at least two members and the amount verified, in writing, by each member involved in the count.

The Treasurer issues receipts to P&C members responsible for collecting and counting money.

Banking

The Treasurer checks that the amount banked corresponds with receipt totals.

Bank money daily or secured in a fireproof safe if you are not able to bank on that day. (Your cash may not be insured if you do not make an effort to secure it adequately)

The Treasurer and Sub-committees must keep cash books up to date. The cash book should be totalled and balanced at the end of each month.

Match the sequence of entries in the cash book with the sequence of receipts and cheque payments.

Figures must never be erased with white-out. If you make an error in your cash book, receipt book or cheque butts, rule a line through the incorrect figure and write the correct figure next to it.