

The Federation of  
Parents and Friends Associations  
of Catholic Schools in Queensland



## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS PARENT ASSOCIATIONS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



[www.pandf.org.au](http://www.pandf.org.au)

# STRUCTURE OF PARENT BODIES IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Parents are the first educators of their children and have a right and a responsibility to participate as partners in their formal education. Parents, educators and the Catholic Church recognise this and have established school parent associations, usually called the Parents and Friends Association (P&F) in all Catholic schools to give parents a means to support their engagement with their children's education. In addition to the school association, parents also have bodies to represent them at the diocesan level, the State level and the National level.

This multi-level structure has been approved by the Bishops of Queensland (for school, diocese and state P&F bodies) and by the Australian Bishops (for the National parent body) (CSPA).

## SCHOOL PARENT ASSOCIATIONS

The parents/carers of all students at the school are automatically members of the parent association at their school. The association provides a medium to inform and support parents in becoming better engaged with their children's education, it develops collaboration between parents and teachers, and works to build a positive Christian community based on the school. It is the centre of co-operative parent involvement in the life of the school. Every P&F association is also affiliated with the State P&F Federation.

## DIOCESAN P&F COUNCILS

The Diocesan Councils are the bodies representing the interests of all school parent associations in the diocese. Each of the five dioceses in Queensland has a Diocesan P&F Council and every school association in the diocese is eligible to have two delegates on their Diocesan Council. These Councils provides a means for the school parent associations to connect with others in the diocese and to learn from and support each other. They also collaborate with the Archbishop or Bishop, Catholic education authorities and schools.

# STRUCTURE OF PARENT BODIES IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

## STATE COUNCIL OF THE FEDERATION

The State Council is the governing body responsible for the policy and direction of the Federation. It consists of; two delegates elected from each of the five diocesan councils, an independent Chair, a nominee of the Queensland Bishops and the Executive Director of the Federation. The State Council, in conjunction with its secretariat, is the representative voice and advocate for families in Catholic schools in Queensland.

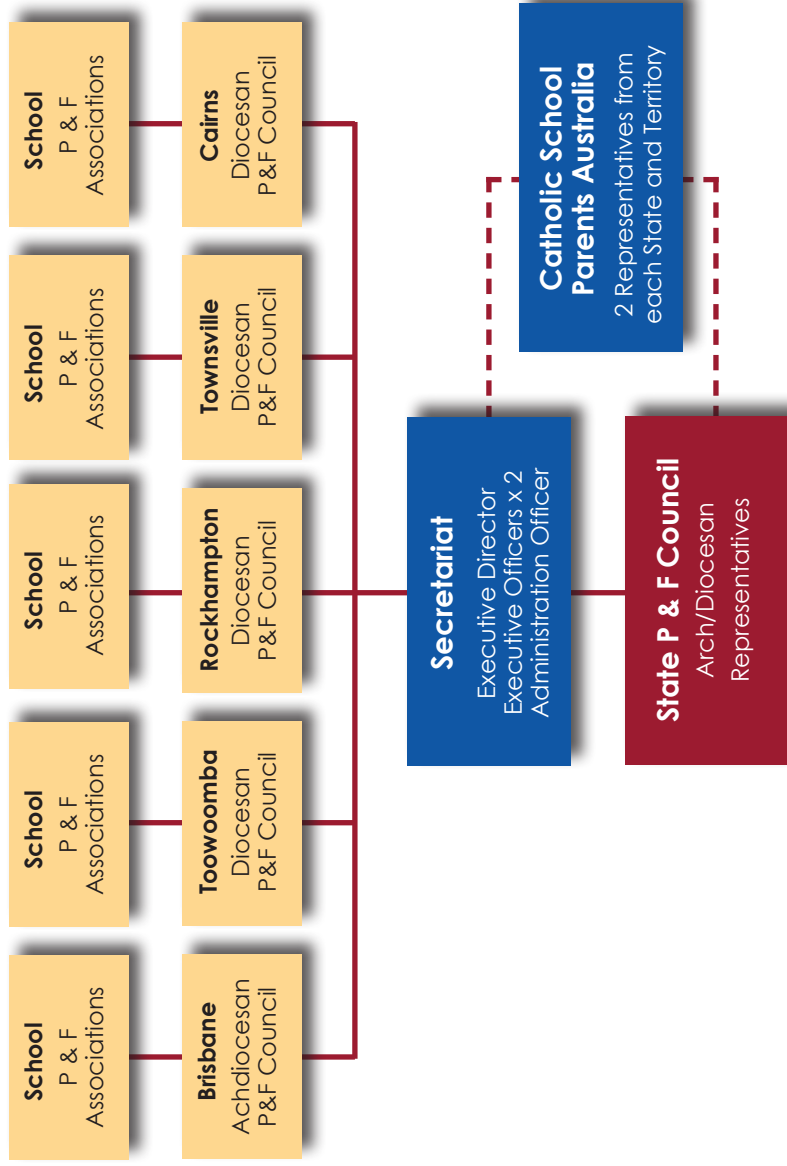
## CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS AUSTRALIA

Catholic School Parents Australia (CSPA) is recognised by the Australian Catholic Bishops and by the Federal Government as the national body representing and advocating for the parents and carers of students who attend the 1731 Catholic schools across Australia. CSPA works in collaboration and consultation with the National Catholic Education Commission. All State and Territory Catholic school parent bodies are members of CSPA except for the Northern Territory which does not currently have a formal Catholic parent body.

## JOINT PARENT COMMITTEE

The four Queensland parent organisations (representing state, Catholic, independent and isolated students) formed the Joint Parent Committee to collaboratively raise the status of education, and parental input to education, at both state and federal levels and to press for improved funding for all students.

# ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



# SCHOOL P&F ASSOCIATION

The P&F is the parent association in the school which helps parents to share the joy of educating their children in a positive Catholic community.

All P&Fs are obliged to abide by their constitution based on the model which has been approved by the Bishops.

The P&F objectives are found in section 3 of the constitution and these objectives spell out why P&Fs exist and what their purpose is.

## Objectives

In particular, the Association will participate in the optimum spiritual, intellectual, social and physical development of pupils in the School by:

- Providing a medium of support, information and involvement of parents/carers in their children's education and the School community
- Developing collaboration between parents/carers and School staff
- Promoting the principles of Catholic education
- Fostering a distinctive Christian environment in the School
- Providing a medium for parents/carers to participate at Diocesan, State and National levels



**Parents are major stakeholders in the school community**  
**PARTNERSHIP MEANS MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

## RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

- Develop a vibrant and nurturing community which encompasses the Christian ethos of the school
- Promote interaction between home and school, parents and teachers
- Support and work in partnership with the Principal and staff
- Create a forum for parent discussion
- Participate in decision making
- Assist parents to appreciate teaching and learning programs
- Promote parent engagement in their children's learning
- Plan and organising functions
- Promote the school in the wider community
- Give attention to faith education activities
- Assist in providing resources when necessary



# MEETINGS

Meetings have different forms and functions. They provide:

- A means for collaboration and partnership between parents, Principal and staff
- A democratic way of sharing ideas
- An avenue for P&F planning and decision making
- A medium to build support, group unity and commitment
- An opportunity for learning



BUT meetings are not the only avenue for parents to participate. And the attendance at meetings should not be the main success criteria for the P&F. Success is found in the number of parents who engage with their children in their education and who participate in school and P&F activities.

AND all meetings should be run in accord with your constitution.

## **What should be discussed**

- Items which have been listed on published agenda
- General issues of concern
- General questions of Principal (may need time to reply but a prepared agenda will cover this)

## **What shouldn't be discussed**

- Specific issues relating to particular staff or a particular student
- Personal grievances



# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

## PRESIDENT

### Role

As the leader and main spokesperson for the P&F the President ensures that all members have the chance to play an active part and to feel informed and included. The President also strives for an effective and inclusive P&F by:



- Establishing good relationships – respect rights and responsibilities
- Ensuring P&F has purpose and direction being guided by the school strategic plan
- Developing a P&F plan for the year
- Encouraging wide participation
- Developing a strong collaborative relationship with the school principal
- Planning meetings in consultation with the Principal and Secretary
- Ensures the good governance of the P&F (constitution, decision making and accountability, full reporting and transparency, records, ACNC)
- Being impartial, firm, tactful, respectful, inclusive and using common-sense

### Duties and Responsibilities

- Convene and chair meetings using the agenda as the meeting tool
- Ensure meetings run according to constitution
- Follow up action from the previous meeting
- Give all an opportunity to contribute
- Liaise with principal
- Ensure activities are sanctioned by principal
- Ensure financial accountability
- Provide opportunities for parent education
- Maintain relationships with Principal, Staff & other members
- Ensure all community members are informed
- Set a good personal example



# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

## Be aware...some important tips

- Greet all parents on arrival at meetings
- Tune in to and respond to all parents' comments
- Note unusual attendance
- Manage attempts to dominate
- Restrict one on one issues – open up to the group
- Redirect personal issues
- Don't allow a "Get the principal" attitude – the agenda should ensure no surprises



## VICE-PRESIDENT

### Role

The Vice President will support the President by:

- Chairing the meeting in President's absence
- Sharing duties and responsibilities as agreed e.g. being responsible for coordinating the activities of sub-committees or diocesan delegate or constitution 'expert'
- Being supportive and attending meetings
- Ensure the Vice-President has a role to play – not just an understudy

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

## SECRETARY

### Role

- Helps prepares the agenda for meetings
- Collects, reads and reports P&F correspondence to meetings
- Prepares correspondence to be sent
- Takes minutes
- Keeps and maintains records
- Participates in the good governance of the P&F
- Is often the point of contact between meetings
- Is the link with the school office staff



### Duties and Responsibilities

- Be informed and alert to guide and advise the president
- Be prepared in advance of a meeting by:-
  - Notifying date/time/venue of the meeting;
  - Preparing and publishing an agenda in cooperation with the President and Principal;
  - Obtaining reports from sub-committees;
  - Sorting correspondence;
  - Noting apologies;
  - Checking minutes of previous meeting;
- Is organised – files and necessary papers should be readily available;
- After the meeting, complete minutes promptly
- Write letters in accordance with the instructions of the meeting

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Prepare brief report for school newsletter
- Confirm attendance of Executive and other appropriate people
- Keep all records and files for the Association
- Clear the mail regularly and keep the President informed on all issues
- Ensure a close communication and cooperation between the parent Association, office staff, school staff and parents
- Maintain a collaborative approach at all times

## TREASURER

### Role

- Manage the P&F's finances
- Maintain processes and standards for money handling and recording
- Reporting and maintaining transparency
- Treasurer is a position of trust and responsibility. It requires patience and time

### Duties and Responsibilities

- Keep accurate financial records of all receipts and expenditure
- Set up procedures for managing cash and financial records
- Issue receipts for all money received
- Pay accounts as authorized
- Bank all money regularly – no cash at home
- Get a monthly Bank Statement - reconcile deposits and payments with the statements.
- Present a monthly financial report
- Arrange audited financial report for the Annual General Meeting
- Ensure all payments are signed only when relevant information is recorded
- Arrange change of signatories when needed
- If your P&F has an ABN and is registered as a charity, you are required to report each year to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). If in doubt please contact the Federation secretariat for assistance.

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

## SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- All members of the P&F executive and of any sub-committees have a responsibility to ensure that the best possible outcome is achieved
- Be prepared for the meeting
- Attend meetings regularly
- Send apologies if unable to attend
- Be cooperative at all times
- Responsibility for what has been agreed should be shared by all group members
- Attend to business of particular sub-committee to obtain outcome

## DIOCESAN COUNCIL DELEGATES/REPRESENTATIVES

- Attend local association meetings
- Attend Diocesan cluster/ diocesan council meetings
- Ensure correspondence from diocesan council is read and dealt with appropriately
- Report on Diocesan council meetings
- Take issues to Diocesan council meetings
- Highlight wider education issues
- May also be responsible for Federation/State Council correspondence

## MEMBERS

- Every parent/carer of a child who attends the school is a member of the P & F. Community members (friends) can also be members (if approved at a meeting) and a register must be kept

## Duties and Responsibilities

- Join in. Take an active part in your school community
- Meet and communicate with your children's teachers
- Support and respect P&F and school decisions and protocols
- Listen to the views of others
- Prepare for meetings – read agenda and newsletter
- Be tactful, diplomatic and inclusive
- Be positive about your school and school community

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

## PRINCIPAL

- The Principal is the person who oversees the activities of the school community. He/she is an ex-officio member of the Parents and Friends Association AND the P&F Executive. So no decisions can be made without the participation of the Principal

## Duties and Responsibilities

- Guidance and support, leadership
- Collaborative and cooperative approach
- Works with President and executive (as well as all parents)
- Provides information to the community
- Accessible to parents
- Develops the school profile - enrolment trends, demographics, mission statement, priorities, facilities, resources, parish links
- The Principal has ultimate responsibility for the school and therefore all P&F decisions and activities must have the support of the Principal to ensure insurance protection
- Parents and Friends Associations in parish primary schools and diocesan schools have insurance protection conveyed by the Bishop of the Diocese to each parish, school and Parents and Friends Association as the model constitution provides. Voluntary Workers, Personal Accident and Public Liability Insurance are therefore in place for P&F Associations at all parish or diocesan Catholic schools
- Congregational schools are incorporated separately to the Dioceses and therefore would have their own insurance cover so P&Fs should consult with the Principal to ensure that suitable cover exists

## PARISH PRIEST

- In the case of the Parish School the Parish Priest has overall responsibility under Canon Law for the whole parish community including the school
- *He is an ex-officio member of the P & F Executive*

**MOST IMPORTANTLY, BE SOCIAL – IT BUILDS COMMUNITY.  
CHILDREN FIRST AND FOREMOST**

## THE FEDERATION - WHO ARE WE?



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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION [www.pandf.org.au](http://www.pandf.org.au)

Subscribe to 'Parent Chatter' our monthly newsletter

<http://www.pandf.org.au/newsletter-sign-up>

# WHAT DO WE DO?

## OUR VISION

Strong voice for families in catholic schools

## OUR MISSION

To provide strong leadership, advocacy and support for all families in catholic schools at local, diocesan, state and national levels

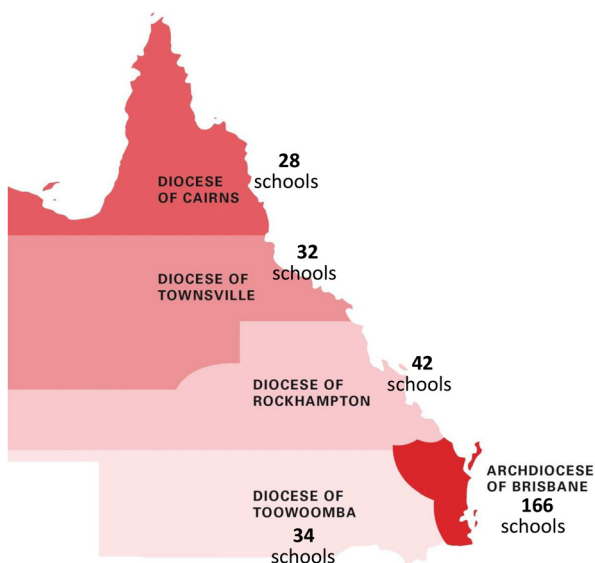


- **We advocate for Catholic education...**because we want Catholic education to survive and thrive
- **We represent and advocate for parents to education authorities and governments...**because we want the parent view to be heard and respected
- **We support parents and friends associations in schools...**because we want our schools to thrive
- **We promote parents as partners in the education of their children...**because we want our students to achieve their best



# The Federation of Parents and Friends Associations of Catholic Schools in Queensland

**STRONG VOICE FOR FAMILIES IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**



**REPRESENTING PARENTS OF 150,000 STUDENTS IN OVER 300 SCHOOLS**

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