

# Parents and Citizens (P&C)

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## Questions & Answers for parents about our P&C

**Question:** What are the restrictions on matters that can be discussed at a P&C meeting?

**Answer:** It would be inappropriate for a general meeting to discuss individual parent/student, teacher/student issues. These should be a matter for discussions between the parents and the teacher/principal. In addition it should be remembered that under the provisions of the Education Act the P&C is precluded from exercising authority over the teaching staff. These are the only restrictions, which leaves the field wide open to discuss general education, safety, health issues, matters that affect the staffing of schools, matters that have a bearing on the welfare of students as well as a whole range of local, state or national issues that arise.

Remember, the P&C is a forum for parents to discuss the education of their children, and members should be encouraged to embark on wide issue discussions.

**Question:** Can the P&C insist that the Principal and teachers attend meetings and give reports?

**Answer:** No. The Principal and teaching staff have the right to attend meetings but there is no requirement for them to attend just as there is no requirement for parents to attend.

**Question:** When is someone a financial member of a P&C Association?

**Answer:** Someone is a member of the P&C once they pay the subscription, which is to be no more than \$1 per member. Membership of a P&C is required to be renewed at the Annual General Meeting of the Association. Payment of P&C voluntary contributions that are levied with school charges does not mean that someone automatically becomes a member. A subscription fee must be paid to be a member.

**Question:** Can a fund-raising committee of the P&C hold events without prior approval of the P&C?

**Answer:** No. In order for the activities of any fund-raising committee to be protected by the Public Liability Insurance of the P&C, any event has to be an approved activity of the P&C. It is recommended that the fund-raising committee compile a calendar of events and get it approved by the P&C at the start of the year. The South Fremantle Senior High School P&C does not engage in fund-raising events as income is provided from the running of the Growers Green Farmers Market, which has a sub-committee.

**Question:** The P&C want to purchase an item of equipment for the school but would like to avoid paying the GST on this item, how can this be achieved?

**Answer:** All schools are registered for the GST and hence can claim back any GST paid for equipment used within the school. It is recommended that the P&C provide a tied donation/gift to the school and get the school to purchase the equipment.

**Question:** The P&C Association has considerable reserves in the bank account. What should be done with the money?

**Answer:** Having lots of money sitting in a bank account does little to promote the interests of the students and the school. WACSSO therefore recommends to Associations that the money is spent in the year that it is raised. Unless the P&C is saving for a particular purchase, the school community would have a reasonable expectation that money raised throughout the year will be spent to benefit the current students in the school, not 'saved for a rainy day'.

**Question:** How long do we keep P&C records eg: correspondence, financial information, minutes and employment records?

**Answer:** This varies. Written correspondence does not need to be kept longer than a year unless it is of an ongoing nature or may need to be referred to. Books of financial accounts should be retained for 5 years. Minutes of meetings are to be retained permanently as these are the historical record of the P&C Association. You are required to keep employment records for a minimum of seven years. P&C records should be kept at the school, preferably in a locked cabinet and the principal should be advised of the location.

**Question:** Is there a maximum number of years someone can serve as a P&C office bearer or executive member?

**Answer:** No. All office bearer positions and executive committee memberships come up for election every year at the Annual General Meeting however there is nothing stopping a person continuing to nominate and seek election.

**Question:** Do you have to be present at a meeting to vote?

**Answer:** Yes, The P&C Constitution states that voting shall be by a show of hands of financial and ex-officio members. People have to be present to vote. There is no proxy voting at a P&C meeting.

**Question:** Does the schools insurance cover money, uniforms and canteen stock owned by the P&C?

**Answer:** No, the P&C is an independent autonomous body and therefore is required to take out its own insurance cover for these items. If your P&C is affiliated with WACSSO it has \$10m public liability cover and a voluntary workers personal accident insurance policy that covers voluntary workers who are actively engaged in a P&C organized activity.

**Question:** What powers do the office bearers (President, Secretary, Treasurer and Vice-President) of a P&C have?

**Answer:** None, by themselves. The Executive Committee which consists of the office bearers, the Principal and not less than 3 other members (2 other members for a school with less than 100 students) has the power whilst a general meeting of the P&C is not in session to control and manage the affairs

and finances of the P&C (refer to P&C Constitution Rule 9). The Executive Committee must provide minutes of its meetings to the next general meeting of the P&C for adoption/ratification of any decisions made. A quorum for an Executive Committee meeting is 5 of its members. In small schools (less than 100 students) the quorum for an Executive Committee meeting is 3 members.

**Question:** Should we use the term P&C 'Levy' or 'P&C 'Donation'?

**Answer:** Many P&C Associations raise funds by requesting a donation to the P&C at the beginning of the year. This is often worded as a "P&C levy" on the list of fees and charges issued by the school. Why should you use the word "donation" rather than "levy"?

This question is best answered by looking at the definitions of these words in the Macquarie Dictionary.

LEVY: "a raising or collecting, as of money or troops, by authority or force".

DONATION: "a gift, as to a fund".

The use of the word "levy" implies a compulsion to pay. Neither the P&C nor the school has the authority to impose this payment on the parents of children enrolled at the school.

Note: This does not apply to the P&C membership subscription. People wishing to be a member of the P&C must pay a subscription not exceeding \$1 (Regulation 124(2)(a), School Education Regulations 2000). Payment of a donation to the P&C does not confer membership on that person.

**Question:** Is there a quorum for a general meeting of the P&C Association?

**Answer:** Yes, at a general meeting you must have ten financial members present to hold the meeting. If you have a small school (100 students or less) the quorum is 5. This does not include the Principal unless he/she has paid the membership fee to the P&C.

**Question:** Are canteen workers entitled to long service leave?

**Answer:** Yes. Under the Long Service Leave Act canteen employees are entitled to long service leave after 15 years continuous service. A formula to calculate long service leave for canteen workers is available from the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection (DOCEP). Call 1300 655 266.

**Question:** Do P&C Associations need to have their books audited?

**Answer:** Yes. The School Education Act 1999 Section 147 requires that the principal of the school be given a copy of the audited annual financial statements of the P&C. Also the P&C Constitution also requires a copy of this audited statement to be sent to WACSSO. The P&C Treasurer should ensure that the books of account of the P&C, including those where a committee of the P&C has a separate account, ie Canteen Committee, Uniform shop, pre-primary etc, should be audited at the same time by the same person.

**Question:** What is the correct use of P&C funds?

**Answer:** The School Education Act 1999 Section 143 (3) states that an association is not to expend its funds that are in excess of administrative cost otherwise than for the benefit of students at a government school. This is also reflected in the constitution adopted by P&Cs. WACSSO does not recommend P&C funds being used to purchase gifts and/or entertainment (dinners etc) for teachers, workers or P&C members.

**Question:** Do you have to be present at a P&C meeting to nominate for a position on the P&C?

**Answer:** No, however it is important that a person nominating for a position on the P&C is present at the meeting. This will enable you to vote should there be a vote taken for the position you are nominating for. If it is impossible for you to attend the meeting but wish to nominate then it is preferable that you indicate in writing to the President prior to the meeting that you are willing to accept a position should you be nominated and elected.

#### **P&C Executive Officers 2016**

President	Simon O'Connor
Vice-President	
Secretary	
Treasurer	

(Acknowledgements Shenton College web-site).