

Diocese of Broken Bay
PARENT & FRIENDS CONSTITUTION



P&F Constitution	Explanatory Guidance Notes
<p>1. Name:</p> <p>This body shall be known as the P&F of _____, Parish of _____, Diocese of Broken Bay. This P&F is a consultative body and is subject in all respects to diocesan policy and directives.</p> <p>For secondary colleges the term <i>parish priest</i> wherever it appears in this document means the priest taking responsibility for the college.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P&Fs were previously known formally as Parent Associations. The name change is to align the title with common usage. • The P&F will work in conjunction with the existing school board or with any school board appointed after the adoption of this constitution, together with the school executive team, for the success of the whole school. • All activities of the P&F will be conducted in the light of Diocesan Schools System and specific school policies.
<p>2. Aim:</p> <p>2.1 What is the aim of the P&F?</p> <p>The P&F recognises and values the role that parents and carers play in the education of their children and aims to strengthen the partnership between family, school, parish and the wider community for the benefit of their children’s overall development and learning.</p> <p>2.2 How will the P&F do this?</p> <p>The P&F will endeavour to do this by:</p> <p>a) School staff in the development of school policies through consultation processes;</p>	<p>The P&F endeavours to build positive relationships between all members of the school and parish community.</p>

P&F Constitution	Explanatory Guidance Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Providing a parental perspective to assist the principal and the school board (if the school has a board) in decision making; c) Raising funds to provide resources and opportunities for enriching the learning environment of the school; d) Supporting parents and carers in their parental responsibilities and involvement in their children’s learning at home and school; e) Providing opportunities for parents and carers to gain insights into the life of the school, current developments in education and Catholic education in particular; f) Providing a means for parents and carers to affiliate with the Diocesan Parent Council and have a voice at diocesan level and with the Council of Catholic School Parents (NSW) at state level. <p>2.3 To fulfil these endeavours, the P&F may assist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) School staff in the development of school policies through consultation processes; b) In the provision of educational equipment and resources for the school; c) In activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The organisation of social activities to bring parents together to enhance the community of the school; and ii) Liaison with the parish community or communities to develop effective relationships to further support the faith development of students. 	<p>P&F teams support the school’s strategic plan. Consultation processes that include the P&F assist in setting priorities for educational equipment and resources as articulated in that strategic plan.</p>

P&F Constitution	Explanatory Guidance Notes
<p>3. Limitation</p>	
<p>Are there any restrictions on the P&F?</p> <p>The P&F is an unincorporated association and has no legal identity separate from its members. It is a consultative body established within the parish under the auspices of the principal of the school, who is responsible for carrying out the policies and directives of the Bishop and the Catholic Schools Office.</p> <p>The P&F has no authority in the day-to-day operation or management of the school.</p> <p>The P&F must seek the consent of the parish priest and the principal for activities which affect parish or school property and its use and has no capacity to enter into contracts that affect parish land or facilities.</p> <p>The Catholic Schools Office indemnifies each past and present member of the executive committee for the time being of the P&F to the full extent permitted by law against all liability arising as a result of that person acting as a member of the executive committee of the P&F unless either of the following applies:</p> <p>a) the liability arises out of conduct involving a lack of good faith on the part of the executive committee member; or</p> <p>b) the liability arises out of conduct of the executive committee member known to the executive committee member to be wrongful.</p>	<p>Diocesan systemic schools are not legal entities in their own right. Therefore parent bodies which are part of the school cannot take on a legal identity of their own. P&Fs must not be separately incorporated.</p> <p>The P&F recognises the need to act with respect for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the parish priest with regard to decisions involving school/parish property; • The authority and responsibility of the principal in making decisions relating to the school and / or any activity using the school's name; • The need for any matter affecting an individual person, student, parent or staff member to be directed immediately and without discussion to the principal or their delegate (assistant principal, year coordinator); • The role of the school board (if the school has a board) ; and • The established protocols of the school and parish.

P&F Constitution	Explanatory Guidance Notes
<p>4. Membership</p>	
<p>Who can be a member?</p> <p>Membership is open to all parents or carers of students attending the school and to members of the parish community.</p> <p>The parish priest and principal shall be members, ex-officio, of the P&F and of all its committees.</p> <p>Members of the school staff may also become members of the P&F.</p> <p>The parish priest may choose to appoint another priest, deacon or pastoral associate to represent him.</p>	<p>Because the P&F is a vehicle for community involvement in the school it tries to find ways to include all. A member of the P&F does not have to be the parent of a student at the school. Members of the parish may also join.</p> <p><i>Ex-officio</i> means these individuals are members by right of the position they hold. Ex-officio members have the same rights as ordinary members, including voting, however, they do not always choose to exercise these rights. Although the priest's responsibilities often preclude active involvement in P&F meetings an invitation should be extended once dates have been finalised for the year.</p>
<p>5. Management</p>	
<p>5.1 What is the executive committee?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The executive committee is the group responsible for the management of the P&F. b) The executive committee comprises the president, secretary, treasurer and the Diocesan Parent Council representative together with the ex-officio members and other members elected at a general meeting. c) The parish priest (or priest representing feeder schools) and principal are ex-officio members of the executive committee. d) The executive committee has the power to make decisions at executive meetings on behalf of the P&F when appropriate and within the limits of clause 13.3 (allocation of funds). 	

P&F Constitution	Explanatory Guidance Notes
<p>5.2 What are the responsibilities of the executive committee?</p> <p>The executive committee is responsible for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Organising an appropriate induction process for executive members; b) Identifying and using opportunities that promote the aims of the P&F; c) Ensuring the P&F works collaboratively and co-operatively with the principal, the school board (if the school has a board) and the parish priest(s); d) Ensuring the P&F's ongoing financial accountability (clause 13 Funds); e) Organising general meetings (clause 10 general meetings); f) Establishing and supervising committees that assist with the work of the P&F (clause 14 subcommittees); and g) Appointing delegates to the Diocesan Parent Council. 	<p>The executive committee meets with the principal prior to general meetings to plan the activities of the P&F, to look at issues that have been identified (preferably in writing), to plan the agenda for the general meeting and consider the most suitable way of dealing with issues raised.</p> <p>There is scope in the election process for an executive team to decide amongst themselves which roles they will fulfil.</p> <p>Some schools find the position of vice-president useful because it serves both as support for the president and as preparation for presidency. Other roles can be considered in order to spread responsibilities and make the workload more manageable such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class parent coordinator • Social events coordinator • Parent education coordinator • Public relations coordinator • Fund-raising coordinator • Family care coordinator • Road safety coordinator • Political action coordinator • School board liaison • Parish liaison
<p>5.3 How does the executive committee work?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The executive committee is to meet by arrangement with the principal (or nominee) for the effective planning and management of the P&F. b) The executive committee must organise an executive committee meeting prior to each general meeting for the purpose of preparing the agenda and finalising arrangements for the general meeting. 	<p>General meetings function more efficiently when the executive team has a clear purpose and common goal.</p>

P&F Constitution	Explanatory Guidance Notes
<p>c) The executive committee meeting must comprise half of the executive committee plus one. The principal or nominee must be invited to every executive committee meeting.</p>	
<p>6. Duties of Office</p>	
<p>6.1 What is the role of the president?</p> <p>The president:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Provides leadership and direction for the P&F by working co-operatively and collaboratively with the principal. b) Promotes the aim of the P&F in dealings with its members. c) Supports the executive committee members. d) Presides at all meetings. In the absence of the president and vice president, the executive committee will elect a person to preside at the meeting. e) Ensures the efficient running of meetings. f) Prepares the agenda in consultation with the executive committee. g) Ensures that minutes of the previous meeting are endorsed as being an accurate record of what took place. h) Prepares and presents the annual president's report of the P&F. <p>6.2 What is the role of the secretary?</p> <p>The secretary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Manages the day-to-day communications and records of the P&F. b) Organises meetings, records accurate draft minutes and gets them formalised at the subsequent meeting. 	<p>The president communicates with the principal prior to each general meeting to discuss the agenda to ensure clarity of issues to be raised.</p> <p>To help the flow of information from the secretary to the broader school community, the minutes of each meeting can be attached to the school newsletter; as well as displayed on the school website.</p>

P&F Constitution	Explanatory Guidance Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Receives and deals with correspondence in a manner agreed upon by the executive committee. d) Maintains copies of minutes and such correspondence as is appropriate. e) Receives agenda items. f) Passes on records, in good order, to the incoming secretary. 	
<p>6.3 What is the role of the treasurer?</p> <p>The treasurer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Is responsible for ensuring that all the financial dealings of the P&F are carried out in accordance with clauses 6.3 and 13. b) Receives all monies and keeps appropriate financial records. c) Presents, at each general meeting, a statement of accounts showing current receipts and expenditure and a bank reconciliation since the last meeting, together with the outstanding balance, and shall present a bank statement for notation by the president and secretary. d) Organises the annual audit of accounts in accordance with 13.4 and presents the annual financial report of the P&F. e) Passes on records, in good order, to the incoming treasurer. f) The treasurer shall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) receive all monies and keep accurate records of all such monies received; ii) issue a receipt for all monies received; iii) obtain and keep receipts for all monies paid from the P&F; and iv) without delay bank all monies received intact. No money shall be withdrawn from the said account unless authorised by the P&F. 	<p>The treasurer should have the appropriate skills, qualification and experience to perform this role.</p> <p>Appropriately externally audited accounts should be produced.</p> <p>The financial year runs from 1 January to 31 December.</p>

P&F Constitution	Explanatory Guidance Notes
<p>g) Prepares each payment, attaches relevant invoice with the approval for payment and presents it to a co-signatory for endorsement.</p> <p>h) All books, receipts, vouchers and monthly statements of account shall be made available to the auditors prior to the annual general meeting.</p> <p>6.4 What is the role of the Diocesan Parent Council representative?</p> <p>The Diocesan Parent Council representative:</p> <p>a) Keeps parents informed about Diocesan Parent Council issues.</p> <p>b) Provides written and oral reports to the parents at parent meetings, and arranges for the distribution of newsletters and other communications to parents.</p> <p>c) Informs the Diocesan Parent Council about parent concerns and issues.</p> <p>d) Attends Diocesan Parent Council meetings.</p>	
<p>7. Election of officers and executive committee</p>	
<p>The members of the P&F shall at the annual general meeting elect the executive officers listed in Clause 5.1 (b). Any candidate for the executive committee is to be nominated and seconded. If there are a greater number of candidates than required, an election is to be held by secret ballot, decided by a simple majority. An independent person such as the parish priest or principal is to conduct the election.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note that under Clause 5.1(b), in addition to the officers (president, treasurer & secretary), any other executive committee members need to be also elected. • Each parent/carer or member has one vote. • There are no provisions for proxy or postal votes. • Electing executive officers at the last general meeting of the year has the advantage of providing a sense of continuity for the P&F and allows for the efficient handing over of all records as well as necessary forward planning. Positions on committees can still be made available to new parents in the new year.

P&F Constitution	Explanatory Guidance Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the president plays a key role, it is advantageous for the incoming president to be willing to serve two years in office and for there to be a mixture of new and experienced officers on the executive committee. • It is advantageous if candidates for president have previous service on the executive committee or active participation on other P&F committees. • To make sure that the P&F committee continues to have fresh people, the elected officers and members may only serve for three consecutive years in any one position.
<p>8. Re-election</p>	
<p>At each annual general meeting of the P&F, officers and members of the executive committee shall retire from office but shall be eligible for re-election. The officers of the P&F shall not hold any one office for more than three consecutive years.</p> <p>In calling for nominations the P & F must, no later than three weeks prior to the annual general meeting, advise the school community of any officers currently in their third consecutive year of office who therefore will not be eligible for re-election. In the circumstance that no one else nominates for such a position, the retiring officer may continue in the role for a period not exceeding 12 months. No further extension is permissible.</p>	<p>After a one year break a person could be re-elected to serve for up to another three years.</p>
<p>9. Termination of office</p>	
<p>Can positions be terminated?</p> <p>The position of any officer absent from any three consecutive general meetings without reasonable cause may be declared vacant.</p>	

P&F Constitution	Explanatory Guidance Notes
<p>A member of the executive committee may be removed from office by resolution of the P&F carried out at a general or special general meeting, providing that due notice of a motion to remove the member specifying the grounds has first been given.</p>	
<p>10. General meetings</p>	
<p>The executive committee is to organise a general meeting at least once every school term.</p> <p>Notice of the meeting is to be given in a prior school newsletter indicating the need for members to send agenda items, in writing or by email, to the secretary before the date of the next executive committee meeting.</p> <p>A quorum for a general meeting shall be eight members including the principal (or nominee) and three executive committee members. A period of fifteen minutes is to be allowed before a general meeting is cancelled.</p> <p>No meeting is to continue beyond two hours unless a two-thirds majority of those present agree to an extension.</p> <p>All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with standard meeting procedures. In the case of a tied vote the chairperson shall exercise a casting vote.</p> <p>The order of business is as follows, unless the majority of those present agree to change it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer and welcome • Record of attendance and apologies • Confirmation and acceptance of the minutes of the previous meeting • Business arising from those minutes • Correspondence : incoming and outgoing • Reports 	<p>General meetings provide a regular opportunity for the involvement of the wider school community in the business of the P&F.</p> <p>It is advantageous for the dates of meetings for the year to be published as early as possible in the new school year.</p> <p>The size of the quorum needs to take into account the size of the school community and adjusted accordingly.</p> <p>A pre-organised and publicised agenda is required. People appreciate meetings being planned and structured so they can achieve their purposes. Some prepared input and some discussion time around an already identified topic can improve peoples' understanding of a subject and help them feel included.</p> <p>Guiding principles for discussions and decision making at meetings include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a warm, welcoming atmosphere. • Start on time. Tardy commencements generate poor attendance. • Use processes which encourage everyone to participate in reflecting about and making decisions. <p>Consult whenever practicable with those stakeholders likely to be affected by a P&F decision.</p> <p>Where practicable seek first to make consensual decisions and vote only when necessary, while conforming to the outlined constitutional procedures.</p>

P&F Constitution	Explanatory Guidance Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matters arising from executive meeting (includes motions proposed) • Guest speaker and / or discussion session on nominated topic • Matters for future consideration • Confirmation of next meeting date • Conclusion 	<p>Encourage two minute reporting process. If discussion continues past 15 minutes consider establishing a subcommittee to further explore the issue with a report back date.</p> <p>General meetings should receive reports for endorsement or comment. The detailed organisation of fetes and social events are best done at committee level.</p> <p>The president, treasurer and principal normally give reports. Committee coordinators, the school board liaison person and the Diocesan Parent Council representative may also give reports.</p> <p>Matters for future consideration replaces 'General Business' in an attempt to deal more productively with matters of concern raised at the last minute. People should not expect that issues, without notice, can be dealt with at the meeting at which they were raised. As always the president decides if and how the matter might best be addressed.</p>
<p>11. Annual general meeting</p>	
<p>There shall be an annual general meeting of the P&F when the annual reports and financial statements are presented.</p>	<p>The executive committee should normally meet in the month following the AGM to handover between the committees.</p> <p>Committee co-ordinators should provide a written summary of key duties to incoming members.</p>
<p>12. Special general meetings</p>	
<p>12.1 What is a special general meeting?</p> <p>A special general meeting is a mechanism for supporting the continued operation of the P&F in unusual circumstances.</p>	<p>A special general meeting could be called in circumstances such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a general meeting is not scheduled but P&F business needs to be dealt with; • When two general meetings have been cancelled due to lack of a quorum;

P&F Constitution	Explanatory Guidance Notes
<p>12.2 What is involved in calling a special general meeting?</p> <p>a) A special general meeting can be called on the authority of the executive committee or on written request to the executive committee by members of ten individual families.</p> <p>b) A special general meeting must be held within 28 days of the request being appropriately registered or, if that 28 day period expires on a date which is not within a school term, within 14 days of the commencement of the next school term.</p> <p>c) At least seven days' notice of the special general meeting shall be given in a prior school newsletter. The object of the meeting is to be clearly stated.</p> <p>d) A quorum for a special general meeting is fifteen members and must include the principal (or nominee) and three members of the executive committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the P&F is not fulfilling its aim; or • If at the annual general meeting no one has accepted positions on the executive committee and the P&F is unable to function.
<p>13. Funds</p>	
<p>13.1 How are funds raised?</p> <p>a) The executive committee is to develop a strategy for fundraising that considers the community's ability to raise funds. The proposals should then be presented to the general meeting for discussion and approval.</p> <p>b) With major fundraising events the protocols in the P&F Operational Handbook must be followed strictly.</p>	<p>This fundraising strategy must be developed in partnership with the principal and is to focus on directions and activities articulated in the school's strategic plan.</p>

P&F Constitution	Explanatory Guidance Notes
<p>13.2 How are funds managed?</p> <p>a) Funds are to be used solely for the aim of the P&F in its role of providing benefit for the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All funds raised by or on behalf of the P&F must be banked promptly and fully intact into an account in the name of the P&F and all expenses paid by cheque or EFT. • Funds of the P&F are to be deposited into an interest bearing account in a reputable financial institution in the name of the P&F. <p>b) The president, treasurer, secretary and principal shall be authorised signatories to the account. In any particular instance, the principal and any one of the P&F officers can sign cheques or authorise EFTs. At the end of their term of office, the payment authorities of P&F officers must be removed and replaced by the payment authorities of the incoming officers.</p> <p>c) Funds are transferred to the school as a donation to support and contribute to the resourcing of the school's strategic plan. All donations are to be transferred expeditiously, in full and without restriction.</p> <p>d) Small expenditures necessary to support community building activities are to be paid in accordance with paragraph b) above.</p> <p>e) All accounts must be paid promptly after submission to a general meeting and if passed must be signed by the chair.</p> <p>f) Accounts must be audited as at 31 December.</p> <p>g) All items of equipment purchased from funds raised by the P&F, whether intended for school use or for use by the P&F in connection with its own administration, shall become the property of the school. The P&F owns no property, plant or equipment.</p>	<p>Cash received should not be used to pay bills – there needs to be a paper trail of all incomings and outgoings.</p> <p>The principal's signature is included for convenience and emergency situations that may occur.</p>

P&F Constitution	Explanatory Guidance Notes
<p>h) Funds allocated to school projects, after consultation with the principal, parish priest and school board (if the school has a board), are to be included in the school's annual budget.</p>	
<p>13.3 How are decisions made about allocation of funds raised?</p>	
<p>a) Either late in Term 4 or early in Term 1 the principal meets with the executive committee and the school board (if the school has a board) to articulate strategic resourcing priorities for the school year and agrees with the committee a list of items linked to the school's strategic plan for which the P&F will fundraise. They will also agree on a timetable for fundraising and transferring funds to the school. This plan will be presented to the first general meeting of the year for ratification.</p>	<p>A consultation at the beginning of the year is essential. The principal and the school board are in the best position to suggest areas that meet the school's identified strategic priorities. However, enthusiasm about fundraising can only be sustained through knowledge of and a sense of ownership of how the funds are spent. The consultation needs to be realistic about the level of funding that the P&F can provide.</p>
<p>b) The P&F then develops a fundraising strategy for the year including an annual budget for donations to the school and community building activities. The strategy is also presented to the first general meeting of the year for ratification.</p>	<p>The amount in petty cash should be agreed to at the first general meeting and a cheque drawn. A cash float can also be made available for major one-off activities. Approval of floats should be formally agreed to and minuted at a general meeting prior to the money being needed.</p>
<p>c) With the exception of petty cash all expenditure of P&F funds must be approved or ratified by the P&F at a general meeting.</p>	
<p>d) At the AGM the principal will give a short presentation about how the funds donated by the P&F have been used during the year.</p>	
<p>13.4 What are the annual audit requirements of the P&F?</p>	
<p>a) Financial records must be audited as at 31 December each year to comply with the Federal Government Financial Questionnaire Reporting.</p>	<p>Auditing as at 31 December is a CSO and Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) requirement. The auditor must:</p>
<p>b) The auditor must be a qualified, independent accountant.</p>	<p>a) Be a member of one of the following professional bodies: The Institute of Chartered Accountants, The Australian Society of CPAs or the National Institute of Accountants.</p>

P&F Constitution	Explanatory Guidance Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) The annual audit must be completed in time to be accepted at the first general meeting and a copy given to the principal by 31 March each year. d) The auditor should provide a management letter on completion of the audit to the P&F president. e) A copy of the audited accounts must be provided to the President of the Diocesan Parent Council by 31 March each year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Not be a member (or relative of a member) of the executive committee.
14. Subcommittees	
<p>The P&F may establish committees to carry out particular functions on its behalf. These committees are to have specific terms of reference and are to report their operations to general meetings of the P&F. Where possible, they should include at least one member of the executive committee.</p> <p>After paying receipted expenses of their operations, the balance of funds of committees are to be remitted to the funds of the P&F as soon as it is practical to do so.</p>	<p>Committees are recommended as a means of encouraging the inclusion of as many parents and community members as possible. Volunteers are much more likely to make themselves available for specific time-limited tasks than for open-ended roles.</p>
15. Dissolution	
<p>15.1 How might the P&F be dissolved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The P&F is automatically dissolved if the school closes down or is amalgamated. b) The P&F can be dissolved following a special general meeting. This can be called in accordance with clause 12 specifically for the purpose of providing an opportunity for the school community to discuss the issue to dissolve the P&F. At least three-quarters of the members present must vote in favour of the resolution to dissolve the P&F for the motion to be carried. 	

P&F Constitution	Explanatory Guidance Notes
<p>c) In certain serious circumstances where it is judged that the functions of the P&F are at variance with the vision and mission of Catholic education, the Director of Schools may intervene and dissolve the P&F after consultation with the parish priest, principal and the president of the Diocesan Parent Council.</p> <p>15.2 What happens to assets, records and funds on dissolution?</p> <p>After all expenses and liabilities are paid:</p> <p>a) Where a school is closed under clause 15.1(a), the remaining assets, records and funds shall be handed over to the parish priest in the case of a primary school and the Catholic Schools Office in the case of a secondary school.</p> <p>b) Where a school is amalgamated under clause 15.1(a), the remaining assets, records and funds shall be handed over to the principal of the amalgamated school for the purpose of the amalgamated school.</p> <p>c) Where a P&F is dissolved under clause 15.1(b) or (c), the remaining assets, records and funds shall be handed over to the school principal for the purposes of the school.</p>	
<p>16. Amendment of constitution</p>	
<p>How can changes be made to this constitution?</p> <p>This constitution may only be changed by resolution at a general meeting or a special general meeting and only after due notice, in writing, has been given at a previous general meeting. Any proposed change to the Constitution will not be effective unless consented to in writing by the Director of Schools and the president of the Diocesan Parent Council.</p> <p>All amendments must be accepted by at least three quarters of those present and must be in accordance with the aims of the constitution.</p>	

The president of the Diocesan Parent Council and the Director of Schools may jointly amend the constitution by notice in writing to the P&F in circumstances which they consider to be extraordinary.

Copies of any amendment to the P&F's constitution must be provided to the CSO and Diocesan Parent Council.

We the undersigned, hereby certify that these rules were adopted at a general meeting of the P&F held on:

Names	Signatures
Chair of Meeting	
Elected President Ex officio (parish priest) Ex officio (principal)	
Date:	