

Introductory Booklet

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



Representing parents
of
138,000 students
in
292 schools

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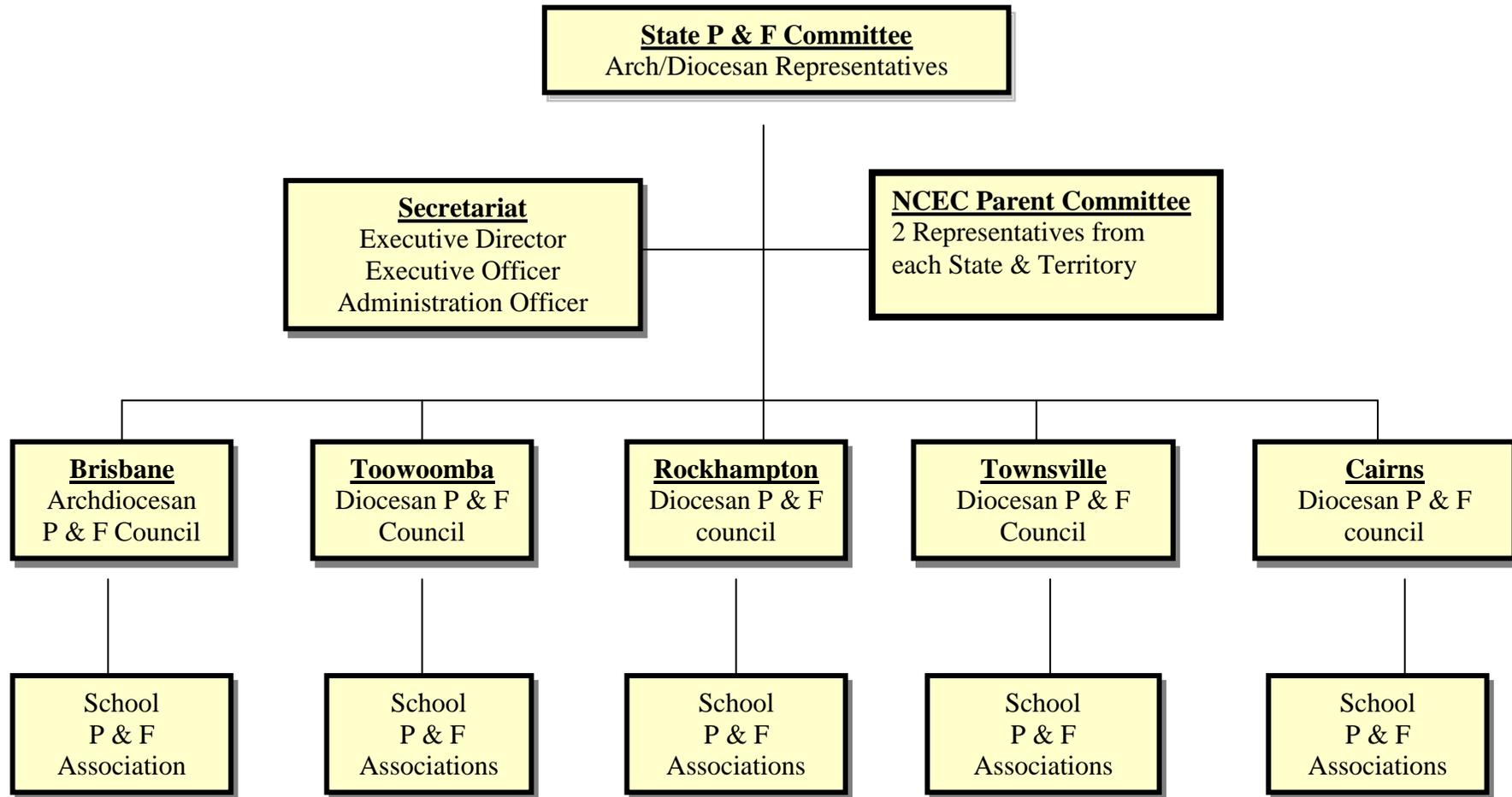
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STRONG VOICE FOR FAMILIES IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



Local Associations:

Each school has a local association with membership open to all parents/carers involved in the school and others who have an interest in its well being. The association acts for the school community in all matters of a local nature. It is the centre of the Federation's activities where policies have their impact on communities and where issues need to be dealt with in a positive and cooperative manner.

Arch/Diocesan Councils:

The local school association is eligible to send two delegates along with observers to the Arch/Diocesan Parents and Friends Council meetings. This body develops policy for the diocese from input from the local associations and collaborates and cooperates with the Arch/bishop, Catholic education authorities and schools. It provides support, information, guidance and encouragement to the local associations and education authorities, plans and organises seminars and conferences and supports the work of the Federation.

State Committee:

This is the management body responsible for policy and direction and consists of two representatives of each diocese, an independent Chair, a nominee of the Provincial Council of Bishops and the Executive Director and Executive Officer as ex-officio non-voting members. The present Chair of the committee is Mr Karl McKenzie from Townsville and the Queensland Bishops' representative is Rev Deacon Russ Nelson from the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC) Parent Committee

NCEC has a parent committee that has input into the Commission. This group will be the voice of parents in Catholic Schools in Australia. Every state and territory has 2 representatives.

Joint Parent Committee (QJPC)

The four parent organisations in Queensland representing state, Catholic, independent and isolated students and parents formed the committee to attempt to raise the status of education in the political arenas at both state and federal level, and to press for improved funding for all students.

School P&F Association

292 P&F Associations 138,000 Children

ROLE OF THE P & F

Operate within constitution and obliged to adhere to aims, objectives and general principles as pronounced in the constitution

In particular participate in the optimum spiritual, intellectual, social and physical growth of pupils in catholic schools by:

- providing support, information & involvement of parents/carers in children's learning and the school community - i.e. building community
- developing collaboration between parents/carers and school staff
- promote the principles of Catholic education
- foster a distinctive Christian environment in the school
- provide a medium for parents/carers to participate at Diocesan, State & National levels.

Parents are major stakeholders in the school community

PARTNERSHIP MEANS MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

- Develop a community - inclusive with a Christian ethos
- Support and work in partnership with Principal and staff
- Participate in decision making
- Promote interaction between home and school, parents and teachers
- Encourage parent participation in teaching and learning activities and school life
- Assist parents to appreciate teaching and learning programs
- Promote the School / College in the wider community
- Attention to faith education activities
- Create a forum for discussion
- Assist in providing resources to the school when necessary
- Planning and organising of functions
- Work with parish and school board in pursuit of common goals - harmony

PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION

MEETINGS

These may take many forms

- The focus of parent activity in the school – but not only avenue for parents to participate
- Means of collaboration and partnership with the principal and staff
- Democratic way of sharing ideas
- Avenue for decision-making
- Taking action
- Building support, group unity and commitment
- A learning opportunity

WHAT SHOULD BE DISCUSSED

General issues of concern

General questions of Principal (may need time to reply but a prepared agenda will cover this)

Items which have been listed on published agenda

WHAT SHOULDN'T BE DISCUSSED

Specific issues relating to particular staff or a particular student

Personal grievances

The P&F

Introducing :

President

Vice-President

Secretary

Treasurer

Sub-Committees

Principal

Parish Priest

Diocesan Council Delegates

Members

President

Role

A President ensures an efficient and well-run organization by:-

- Establishing good relationships - respect rights & responsibilities
- Vision of where heading and how it will succeed
- Developing a collaborative relationship with the school principal;
- Planning meetings in consultation with the Secretary & Principal;
- Following up on action from the previous meeting.
- Impartiality, Firmness, Tact, Commonsense, Confidence, Respect, Inclusiveness

Duties and Responsibilities

- Convene meetings
- Ensure meetings run according to constitution
- Give all an opportunity to speak
- Liaise with principal
- Ensure activities are sanctioned by principal
- Ensure financial accountability
- Provide opportunity for parent education
- Maintain relationships with Principal & Staff & other members
- Ensure all community members are informed

Be Aware

- Tune in to parents' comments
- Respond to comments / correspondence
- Meet parents on arrival
- Note unusual attendance
- Attempts to dominate
- One on one issues
- Personal issues
- "Get the principal" attitude

Vice-President

The Vice President will support the President by:-

- Chairing the meeting in his/her absence;
- Sharing duties and responsibilities as agreed e.g. being responsible for coordinating the activities of sub-committees.
- Being supportive and attending meetings.

Ensure the Vice-President has a role to play – not just an understudy

Secretary

Role

The Secretary is very important to the efficient operation of any organization. A secretary needs enthusiasm, initiative and an ability to work with the President.

The Secretary is:-

- Very important to the efficient operation of the organisation
- The point of contact between meetings
- Conversant with all issues
- The link with the school office staff
- Enthusiastic and invaluable\able to work with (and at time around) the President.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Must be alert to guide and advise the president;
- Should 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;
- Give the impression of orderliness – files and necessary papers should be readily available;

There is more!

- After the meeting, Minutes should be written up promptly and actions taken on any decisions;
- Write letters in accordance with the instructions of the meeting or the President;
- Prepare minutes 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

The Treasurer is a person of trust and responsibility. Management of the organization's finances requires patience and time.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Must keep accurate financial records of all receipts and expenditure;
- Must issue receipts for all money received;
- Pay all accounts as authorized;
- Bank all money regularly;
- Present a monthly financial report;
- Arrange for an audited financial report for the Annual General Meeting;
- Arrange for the monthly Bank Statement and reconcile deposits and cheque books with the statements.

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

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 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
- Answers questions
- Develops the school profile - enrolment trends, demographics, mission statement, priorities, facilities, resources, parish links

The Principal has the final decision making role. Decisions made at the meeting must have the approval of the Principal as he/she has ultimate responsibility for the school. Activities of the P & F must be, under the constitution, carried out as agents of the school thereby needing approval of the Principal. The association is considered to be under the umbrella of the church entities act for legal and insurance reasons and the Principal is charged with responsibility for the school.

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

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 Committee correspondence and deal with appropriately

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 and a register should be kept.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Supportive
- Respectful
 - decisions
 - others
 - protocols
- Tactful & diplomatic
- Inclusive
- Prepared
 - submit agenda items
 - relevant reading
- Pay attention

MOST IMPORTANT
BE SOCIAL – IT BUILDS COMMUNITY
CHILDREN FIRST AND FOREMOST