



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Catholic School
Parents and Friends Group



Terms of Reference
Guidelines
V1.0 2022

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Guidelines Overview

The following guidelines have been developed to support Catholic School Parents and Friends Groups (P&Fs) to enact the Catholic School Parents and Friends Group Terms of Reference. The guidelines are not intended as a universal approach as each P&F will have variations based on their local school context. They have been developed in consultation with Catholic School Parents WA (CSPWA).

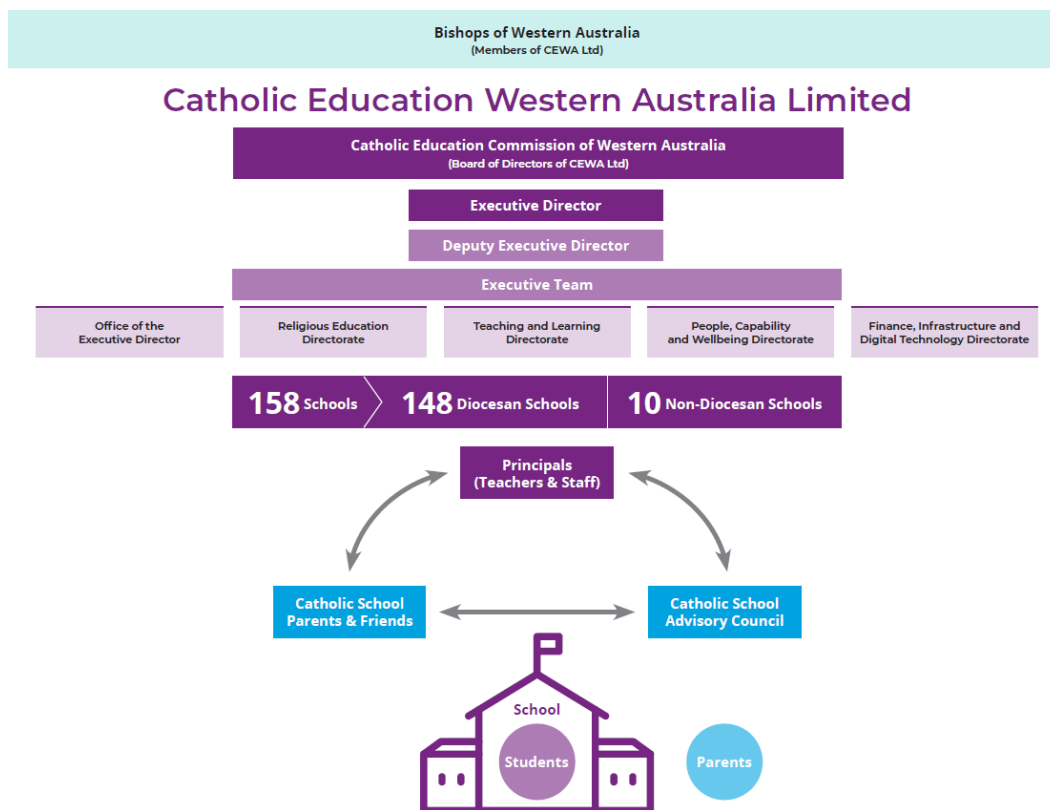
2.0 Authority

Catholic Education Western Australia Governance Structure

Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) has been established by the Bishops of Western Australia as the governing body for Catholic schools and offices in Western Australia. The Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) is the board of directors for CEWA. Appointed by the Bishops of Western Australia, the Commissioners ensure that CEWA is giving effect to the Bishops' Mandate for Catholic Education, the System Agreement with the State Minister for Education and all the relevant legislation/regulation

The Executive Director of CEWA is appointed by the Bishops of Western Australia.

The Executive Director has authority through CECWA Policies and CECWA's Delegations of Authority and is responsible for enabling each Principal to design and safely deliver the educational programme to each student in their community of faith.



3.0 Functions

Role of the Catholic School Parents and Friends Group

Parents and Friends Groups (P&Fs) have been established by the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia (CECWA) to support the Principal to fulfil their responsibilities in leading the Catholic Identity, Education, Community and Stewardship functions of the Catholic school in pursuit of Catholic Education Western Australia's (CEWA) vision to be Christ-centred and child-focused. P&Fs are essential in establishing the pre-conditions of Quality Catholic Education (QCE), as they support parents and caregivers as the first educators of their children (QCE Element 3.2) and ensure Catholic schools operate in a future-focused and strategic manner (QCE Element 4.3c).

A P&F collaborates with the Principal to coordinate activities that create opportunities for community engagement between parents, school staff, parish, and students. The P&F also supports the Principal to facilitate fundraising events for the benefit of students that complement the school budget.

Within a Catholic school, the Principal is responsible for the day-to-day operations and management of their school. The Principal of the school is an employee of CEWA and is accountable to the Executive Director of Catholic Education. The Principal (or their representative) is an ex-officio member of the P&F.

Types of activities

The P&F may undertake a variety of social, cultural, educational, or fundraising activities designed to build a sense of community. Such activities may include:

- participating in discussion, plans and activities for events such as:
 - welcoming new families to the school;
 - social opportunities (e.g., Father's Day breakfast, Mother's Day high tea);
 - comedy or movie nights;
 - twilight markets;
 - bush dances;
 - barbeques; and
 - parent information sessions;
- promoting cultural and social diversity by encouraging membership and participation of all parents in the P&F; and
- raising funds for the school for the benefit of students that complement the school budget.

Variations to the Terms of Reference

The Principal may request a variation to the Executive Director on the Committee's behalf in the following circumstances:

- a change to the functions of the P&F Committee to suit local context;
- an appointment to the P&F Committee of a person, or spouse of a person, employed by the school; or
- altering membership conditions, e.g., extend membership beyond six consecutive years, or the number of committee members.

All variations must be sent in writing to the Executive Director for approval. The Executive Director's decision must be communicated to the P&F Committee and recorded in the minutes of a Committee meeting.

4.0 Insurance

Events

When planning an event, you must liaise with your Principal to ensure a risk assessment is completed and all the appropriate approvals are in place including insurance.

If you are running a lottery, raffle or providing alcohol, you may need to obtain a licence from the Department for Racing, Gaming and Liquor – it is recommended that you contact the Department prior to your event to confirm what licences may be required.

5.0 Membership

Types of Membership

Membership of the P&F consists of general, associate, committee, and ex-officio members.

General Members

All parents of enrolled students at the school are considered General Members. They are automatically members of the P&F when their child commences schooling, and the membership ends when their child leaves the school:

- General members can nominate to be a member of the P&F Committee.
- General members can vote at General meetings and the Annual Community Meeting (ACM).

Associate Members (Friends)

Associate Members (Friends) are persons affiliated with the school community who do not have children enrolled at the school, e.g., staff member, parishioner, grandparent.

Friends of the P&F must register their membership with P&F Committee, identifying their connection with the school and their contact details. This register should be reviewed and updated annually.

Please note: Friends cannot hold an office bearer position or be a Committee member.

Committee Members

Membership of the P&F Committee should reflect the diversity of the school community. The inclusion of different voices, experiences and perspectives that support the Catholic ethos of the school will enable all in the school community to be represented on the Committee.

Committee members are elected general members and the Principal (or their representative) as an ex-officio member.

The committee will consist of four to six general members, and will consist of the following office bearers:

- Chair
- Deputy Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer

The term of appointment is for a period of two (2) years. The maximum term is six (6) consecutive years.

Committee decisions must be supported by a quorum (one half plus one of all Committee members, including the Principal).

Ex-Officio Members

Ex-officio members are those required to be members of the P&F Committee by right of their position within the Catholic school community. The Principal is an ex-officio member. Ex-officio members have voting rights.

Co-opted Members

Should a position within the P&F Committee become vacant, the P&F Committee can co-opt a replacement until the next election. The co-opted member has the same voting rights and responsibilities as an elected member.

Committee Member Roles and Responsibilities

Committee members must comply with the P&F Group Terms of Reference, the school's Code of Conduct and complete the required pre-appointment screening for regular volunteers, training, and faith formation activities.

Committee members must act and be seen to act in the best interests of the P&F and its operations, and the school.

Committee members must work collaboratively and constructively with the Principal. Should potential or current members not have the ability to work in support of the Principal, their nomination and/or election to the P&F Committee may not be accepted.

Chair

The Chair of the P&F Group is required to:

- work with the Principal in supporting the vision of the school within CEWA's vision to be Christ-centred and child-focused;
- liaise with the Principal to understand how the P&F can support the school: and promote active involvement of parents/guardians with the P&F
- conduct all meetings in accordance with standard meeting protocols;
- ensure all decisions are communicated to P&F members in clearly understood terms;
- ensure the minutes of the previous meeting are accepted and signed;
- monitor tasks undertaken by the P&F Group;
- abide by the P&F Terms of Reference;
- be a spokesperson for the P&F Group;
- ensure the P&F Committee understands the financial status of the P&F in liaison with the Treasurer of the P&F Committee;
- report to the Catholic school community as appropriate and in consultation with the Principal; and
- prepare the P&F Annual Action Plan in consultation with other committee members, the Principal, the school leadership team, and Catholic School Advisory Council, as appropriate;
- prepare an Annual Report that is presented at the [Annual Community Meeting](#).

Deputy Chair

The Deputy Chair supports the Chair in the leadership of the P&F Committee and represents the Chair if they are unavailable.

Treasurer

The Treasurer is required to:

- prepare and present a finance report at each P&F meeting;
- prepare and present the Annual Financial Report at the Annual Community Meeting;
- prepare the annual budget to support the P&F Annual Event Plan;
- collect and bank monies from fundraising events;
- collate P&F reimbursement forms, petty cash receipts and supplier invoices and ensure they are correctly authorised before providing to school finance staff for payment;
- ensure grant acquittal requirements are met (if applicable); and
- ensure motions relating to finance decisions, including approval of donations to the school, are presented to P&F Committee (where applicable).

The Treasurer must follow the P&F Financial Practices Guide to ensure compliance to CEWA's Policies and Executive Directives.

Secretary

The Secretary is required to:

- take minutes of meetings;
- prepare and distribute the meeting papers and agenda;
- keep records of the P&F, including vacancies, reports, minutes, and correspondence; and
- provide a list of the P&F Committee members and contact details to the Principal following the Annual Community Meeting.

Principal

The Principal, as an ex-officio member of the P&F, is required to:

- attend and participate in General and Committee meetings, as required;
- advise the P&F of directions and information from CECWA and CEWA;
- liaise with the P&F Committee to develop the P&F Annual Plan to support school priorities;
- act as a spokesperson for the school;
- advise on the school's performance and student improvement targets, where appropriate; and
- coordinate training for P&F Committee members.

The Principal is the school leader and is responsible for all school operations. As such, they have final approval for all activities held in the school's name.

6.0 Catholic Ethos and Faith Formation

"Faith formation of Catholic school community members is *Christ-centred*. It is an intentional, ongoing, and reflective process that focuses on the growth of individuals and communities from their lived experiences, in spiritual awareness, theological understanding, vocational motivation and capabilities for mission and service in the Church and the world." [*A framework for Formation for Mission in Catholic Education*](#)

7.0 P&F Committee Member Training and Development

Faith Formation

All P&F Committee members must be invited to participate in *Faith Story and Witness* at their school as part of their induction.

The P&F Committee should participate in a CEWA-approved information session in their first year of membership, presented by CSPWA. This session is essential, as it provides relevant background on the principles that underpin Catholic education in Western Australia. Contact CSPWA regarding session dates and booking information.

Child Safety

P&F Committee members are regular volunteers and must participate in learning opportunities, at least annually, in the CEWA Code of Conduct, CEWA's Child Protection Procedures training and child safe practices within their Catholic school community. The Principal is responsible for coordinating and delivering this training.

8.0 Annual Community Meeting (ACM) and Election of P&F Committee

Annual Community Meeting

Who attends?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All P&F Members (Committee/General/Associate/Ex-Officio) are invited to attend.
How often do they occur?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually, between 1 November in one year and 28 February of the following year.
Notification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notification of the ACM must be communicated to the school community 21 days prior to the meeting.
What is discussed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Report from P&F Committee Chair Annual Financial Report from P&F Committee Treasurer Election of P&F Committee members
What is recorded?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendees Election nominees, votes, and successful candidates Minutes

Elections

When are elections held?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elections for membership to the P&F Committee members usually occur every year as part of the Annual Community Meeting (ACM).
Who is eligible for election?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only General members are eligible to be nominated for the P&F Committee.
Timeframe	
Three weeks (21 days) prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notification of the ACM must be communicated to the school community 21 days prior to the meeting. Call for nominations from the community advising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> when nominations are due; number of vacant positions; and the process for nomination. Advise retiring P&F committee members whether they are eligible to stand.
One week prior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ACM nominations are due and must be counted. An election will need to be held if there are more nominees than vacant positions.
On the day of the ACM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there are an equal number of nominees to vacant positions, all nominees will be appointed, and a vote will not be required. If there are more nominees than vacant positions, the election process must take place.

Who is eligible to vote?

All members of the P&F Group attending the ACM have equal voting rights. A register of attendees must be taken as part of the ACM.

What is the election process?

The Principal must outline the election process to the meeting attendees:

- Introduction of nominees, opportunity to speak if applicable
- votes cast via a ballot
- votes counted by two independents (one x staff, one x community)
- successful candidates are announced at the ACM
- record of nominees and votes received to be recorded in the minutes within the ACM.

Election to the office bearer roles must occur within two weeks of the ACM nomination. The date of this election must be communicated to the community. All general and associate members in attendance at the meeting are eligible to vote.

Quorum

A quorum is the minimum number of attendees required at a meeting for decisions to be made. For P&Fs, a quorum means one half plus one of all P&F Committee members.

Example:

Total number of elected or co-opted members	Quorum required
4	3
5	4
6	4
7	5
8	5

9.0 Meetings and proceedings of the P&F Committee

Meetings are an essential function of the P&F Committee; therefore, each P&F must hold meetings.

Each meeting of the P&F Committee must commence with an Acknowledgement of Country and prayer.

P&F Committee meeting dates must be communicated to all in the school community and are open to all members of the P&F (i.e. all parents/caregivers as well as associate, ex-officio, and committee members).

There are three types of meetings for P&F Committees:

- General Meeting
- Annual Community Meeting
- Special Meeting

P&F Committee meetings can be held online through CEWA's approved communication platform Microsoft Teams.

General meeting is the regular meeting of the P&F Committee.

Who attends?	All P&F Members (Committee/General/Associate/Ex-Officio) are invited to attend.
How often do they occur?	A minimum of once per term but as determined by P&F Committee. This excludes the Annual Community Meeting.
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda should be distributed seven days prior to meeting. • Agenda to include items for decision. • P&F Committee members unable to attend should communicate with the P&F Chair.
What is discussed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agenda items • the year-to-date finance reports • progress on annual plan • Upcoming fundraising & friend raising activities
Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quorum must be present for decision making.
What is recorded?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • details of the meeting • attendees • minutes • actions arising.

Special Meeting

Who attends?	All P&F Members (Committee/General/Associate/Ex-Officio) are invited to attend.
How often do they occur?	As required – for example – to discuss a specific event/fundraising opportunity/how to support specific need of school
Informed	No less than three days' notice via approved school community communication channels i.e., newsletter, Facebook, SEQTA
What is discussed?	A chance to discuss a specific challenge/issue and how to deal with it.
What is recorded?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the meeting • attendees • minutes, and • actions arising.

10.0 Sub-Committees of the P&F Committee

The P&F Committee can establish sub-committees if deemed necessary., Sub-committees can help manage a specific service, project, or event of the Committee.

How to set up a sub-committee

- Every sub-committee must consist of at least three people.
- The Principal or their delegate must be invited to be a member of a sub-committee.
- The Chair of the sub-committee must report regularly to the P&F Committee.
- Prior to the establishment of a sub-committee, a brief should be established to identify the purpose, membership, meeting structure and a timeline for the sub-committee's work.
- The P&F Chair must communicate the establishment of the sub-committee in the P&F minutes and school newsletter through the Principal, if applicable.
- All finances must be managed by the Treasurer and be managed in accordance with the P&F Financial Practices Guidelines.

How to dissolve a sub-committee

Once the sub-committee has completed the relevant work, it will need to be dissolved.

It must be recorded on the P&F Committee minutes that the sub-committee has been dissolved. All records must be returned to the P&F Committee.

The P&F Committee Chair must announce the dissolution of the sub-committee in the school newsletter.

11.0 Financial Management

Catholic Education Commission Western Australia Policy and Executive Directives can be located at <https://policy.cewa.edu.au/>.

The effective management of the P&F funds is achieved through consistent financial practices, please refer to the P&F Group Guide to Finance Practices.

P&F Annual Plan and budget

The P&F Annual Action Plan and budget should be developed at the beginning of each year. The plan outlines the Committee's goals for the year and how these will be achieved. The plan should be developed by the P&F Committee in consultation with members, the Principal, the school leadership, and Catholic School Advisory Council, as applicable.

The plan must be presented to the P&F members for endorsement. Following this, the plan must be endorsed by the Principal and noted in the minutes of the P&F Committee meeting.

The plan is to be used as a guide for the planning and budgeting of activities throughout the year. If there are significant changes to the plan or the budget, it needs to be agreed at a P&F Committee meeting and endorsed by the Principal.

Audits

The P&F Committee will not be required to complete an independent audit of their finances. The audit of the P&F Finances will occur within the annual school financial audit process.

12.0 Communications

The P&F Committee, in consultation with the Principal, should disseminate information about P&F meetings and decisions to the wider school community. This should occur through the approved communication channels with the knowledge and approval of the Principal or their delegate.

The use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram must comply with CEWA's Information Stewardship Executive Directive.

Other Information

Record Keeping

Minutes from the P&F Committee meeting and sub-committees must be stored securely and be made available if requested by the Executive Director. It is recommended that each school creates a Microsoft Teams group for their P&F Committee.

- The Microsoft team should be identified by the school number, school name e.g., *8445 – Our Lady of the Rosary – P&F Committee*.
- It should be created with the document sensitivity level – Confidential.
- There should be at least two team owners from the school: the Principal and business manager/finance officer.
- P&F Committee members are invited as guests; they do not require and are not eligible to have CEWA credentials.
- It is the responsibility of the team owners to manage the P&F Teams membership, e.g., invite new guests and remove old members when their appointment to the P&F Committee ends.