

P & F MEETING PROCEDURES GUIDELINES

These procedures are not part of the P & F Constitution and are guidelines only for the Chairperson who must retain full discretion and control over the conduct of meetings.

Conduct of Meetings

The regular Parents and Friends Association meeting is an opportunity for community Members to contribute to discussion on issues and to take decisions that will have a positive impact on the School community.

It is expected that those attending will:

- a. conduct activities in accordance with the Constitution of the P&F Association,
- b. participate in P&F Association meetings and other community activities in a constructive manner and respect the views of others,
- c. acknowledge that the decisions taken and actions proposed at the P&F Association meetings are representative of the majority of the School community,
- d. adhere to the processes available to have issues addressed and decisions reviewed,
- e. support the President and Members of the P&F Executive when they are required to make decisions on behalf of all parents in the School community, and
- f. use appropriate conduct when participating in meeting discussions and promote positive personal relationships among community Members.

The meeting should have a prepared agenda. All items should be submitted for the agenda with enough time to be published in the school newsletter. This allows all required to be prepared for the meeting by preparing replies/providing information required for an agenda item. This also allows members to be informed of any inappropriate items which they have submitted and saves any embarrassment in the meeting. It also allows an efficient meeting to be held.

The draft minutes of the previous meeting should be circulated at the next meeting and any suggested changes submitted to the secretary. They can also be forwarded by post or email to those who have requested same in the Attendance Book for a particular meeting. This will provide an opportunity for those who attended a meeting to review the draft minutes before the next meeting. A summary can also be published in the school newsletter or on the P & F homepage. This will ensure normal privacy protocols are followed.

Meeting agenda

P & F meetings should follow an agenda set out in the Constitution.

Sample agenda

1. Prayer & Welcome
2. Apologies
3. Confirmation of Minutes of previous meeting

4. Business arising from minutes
5. Correspondence
6. Treasurer's report
7. Principal's report and questions
8. President's Report
9. Special business
10. General business
11. Close

SUPPER!

Meeting procedure

(a) The President shall be Chairperson or in his/her absence the Vice President and in the absence of both, a Chairperson should be elected by resolution of a majority of the members present at the meeting.

(b) Every question, resolution or decision shall be decided by consensus but should a deadlock occur a vote of all members of the Association present will be taken and a majority decision shall apply.

(c) Should a vote be required every member present shall be entitled to one vote. If a vote is tied the motion lapses so the status quo is maintained.

(d) Voting shall be by show of hands or a division of members, unless a simple majority of members present move that a secret ballot be conducted. The Chairperson shall appoint two members to conduct the secret ballot in such a manner as he/she shall determine. The result of the ballot as declared by the Chairperson shall be deemed to be the resolution of the meeting at which the ballot was demanded.

Consensus implies:

- All agree to express views and express feelings - silence blocks good communication;
- All agree to listen to one another before pressing own point of view;
- Each person has an equal opportunity to participate and to influence the outcome;
- Time is available to consider options, opinions and consequences and does not become a coercive element;
- All are committed to discovering the "sense of group". This does not mean total agreement or unanimity. Consensus occurs when alternatives have been discussed thoroughly by the group and everyone is prepared to accept that, in the circumstances, one particular solution is the best way forward for the good of the whole, even though it might not be every person's preferred solution. Consensus means that all are prepared to act as though it is their preferred solution;
- The principles of "shared wisdom" are:
 - i) No one has all the wisdom;
 - ii) Everyone has a different piece of the wisdom;
 - iii) Everyone has some of the wisdom - with a responsibility to share same;
- Willingness of members to "live with" a particular decision at a particular time.
"My Spirit will be with you always To each the Lord gives a piece of wisdom; To no-one does He give all the wisdom of God; We all get different pieces."

Voting is a "bottom line option" when consensus cannot be achieved. Only members actually present at the meeting may vote;

The following Rules of Debate are set out for the guidance of the Chairperson and members. They are not intended as binding but indicative only. The Chairperson may choose to allow discussions outside these guidelines should he feel the meeting is best served in so doing.

Motions

A motion is any proposal introduced for the purpose of arriving at a decision in the meeting.

A chairperson may allow some general informative discussion before a motion is asked for, but it is wise to limit this preliminary talk.

The motion should be expressed in the affirmative, beginning with the word "that".

The motion requires a seconder before it can be discussed otherwise it lapses. In seconding a motion a member may do so only to permit discussion and may speak or even vote against the motion. After the motion has been moved and seconded, the Chairperson opens the matter for discussion.

Once a motion is seconded, then in due course, it may be

- carried
- replaced by an amendment
- defeated or
- deferred.

No person has the right to speak twice on the same motion except the mover who has the right of reply thus ending the discussion.

Questions and explanations are permitted.

Where discussion is prolonged unnecessarily, any member may rise and move "that the question be now put". If that motion is seconded, it is put to the meeting without further discussion. If it is carried, there is no further discussion allowed and the original motion is also put to the vote. In this situation, the mover of the motion loses the right of reply, unless standing orders of the association state otherwise.

The mover of a motion may withdraw a motion with the permission of the seconder and the consent of the meeting.

When and if the motion is carried it becomes a resolution, i.e. the meeting has resolved a particular matter.

Points of Order

Points of order deal with the conduct of procedure of the debate and should be put in the form of questions. The member raising the point of order should rise and say "Mr/Madam Chairperson, is it in order that....."

Without making a speech, the member must prove

- that the offending speaker is going beyond the scope of the question
- that he is using 'unparliamentary' language
- that he is breaking some rule of society
- that he is infringing standing orders or the accepted procedure of debate.

It is permissible to ask a question on procedure at any time, but other points of order must be made immediately the breach occurs. Similarly, a chairperson may rule a member out of order if they commit any of these breaches or even wander from the subject. However the speaker should first be warned that there is danger of censure.

Chairperson's Ruling

Most organizations agree that the chairperson's ruling should be **final** on points of order and procedure and no chairperson should allow his or her authority to be challenged.

Having said that, there are accepted procedures to follow if necessary.

"That the Chairperson's ruling be disagreed with" is an acceptable motion to allow the meeting to decide the matter. The Chairperson may in fact encourage such a motion to be moved.

The mover should explain his reasons. The Chairperson should reply and, unless standing orders state otherwise, no general discussion should be allowed.

No Confidence Motion

A vote of no confidence in the Chair is a motion moved against the Chair when the organization feels the Chairperson no longer has the confidence of the members.

This motion requires a notice of motion to all members. The Vice-Chairperson presides and if the motion is carried the Chairperson should resign.

Guidelines for Debate

- Time limit for the mover of a motion shall be 2 minutes, and for the seconder 2 minutes.
- Each subsequent speaker may have 2 minutes and the mover 2 minutes for a final speech prior to the vote.
- Not more than three (3) consecutive speakers in the affirmative or negative shall be allowed.
- No speaker may speak twice to the same motion other than the mover, who shall have (see the second point) the right to reply. The use of this right shall close the immediate debate.
- All speakers shall address the Chair and confine their comments to the subject under debate.
- The mover of an amendment may not have a reply right unless/until the amendment is voted in to replace the motion of reference. The mover shall then own rights of reply until the new motion is replaced by another amendment.
- Statement of a point of order, a question or a formal motion across the motion of reference or an answer to a question asked, through the Chair, shall not be taken as speech rights.
- Speakers rising to state a point of order or ask for a ruling shall confine themselves to a simple statement of the point.
- When the Chairperson is called upon to make a ruling, that ruling may be final or may be subject to a motion of dissent. This, if seconded, shall be put to the meeting without discussion.
- Motions shall be decided upon the voices unless a show of hands or a division is granted by the Chairperson.
- The Chairperson may move or second a motion.
- A delegate acting contrary to the standing orders shall obey a call to order by the Chairperson or may be required to leave the meeting.