



# Constitution

## Parents & Friends (P&F)

James Sheahan Catholic High School

### March 2018

Principal

President

Parish Priest

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# Constitution: Parents & Friends (P&F)

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# Constitution: Parents & Friends (P&F)

## 1. NAME

This Association shall be known as the Parents & Friends Association and shall be referred to in this document as the P&F.

## 2. AIM

### 2.1 What is the aim of the P&F?

The P&F recognises and values the role that parents/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.

### 2.2 How will the P&F do this?

The P&F will endeavour to do this by:

- (a) Reaching out to all associated with James Sheahan Catholic High School to build a friendly and welcoming community, which seeks to involve all its members;
- (b) Providing a parental perspective to assist the Principal in decision-making;
- (c) Acting as a mechanism for representing parents when it is appropriate to do so;
- (d) Raising funds to provide resources and opportunities for enriching the learning environment of the school;
- (e) Providing a forum where matters relating to the education and development of students can be discussed productively;
- (f) Providing opportunities for parents/carers to gain insights into the life of the school, current developments in education and Catholic education in particular.

## 3. LIMITATION

### Are there any restrictions on the P&F?

- 3.1 The P&F has no legal identity separate from James Sheahan Catholic High School. It is a consultative body established under the auspices of the Principal, who is responsible for carrying out the policies and directives of the Bishop and the Catholic Education Office, Bathurst.
- 3.2 The P&F has no authority in the day-to-day operation or management of the school.
- 3.3 The P&F shall seek the consent of the Principal and the Parish Priest for activities affecting the parish or school property and its use.

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- 3.4 The assets and income of the P&F shall be applied solely in furtherance of its above-mentioned aims and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the members of the P&F except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the P&F.

## 4. MEMBERSHIP

### Who can be a member of the P&F?

- 4.1 All parents/carers of pupils attending the school, school staff and friends of the school who are interested in furthering the aim of the P&F are members.
- 4.2 The Principal and the Parish Priest are ex-officio member of the P&F and its committees.

## 5. MANAGEMENT

### 5.1 What is the Executive Committee?

- (a) The Executive Committee is the group responsible for the management of the P&F;
- (b) The Executive Committee comprises the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer & Public Relations Coordinator together with the ex-officio members of the Executive Committee and other members as elected at a General Meeting;
- (c) The Principal and Parish Priest are ex-officio members of the Executive Committee;
- (d) The Executive Committee has the power to make decisions at the Executive Meetings on behalf of the P&F when appropriate and within the limits of clause 11.3 (c) (allocation of funds).

### 5.2 What are the responsibilities of the Executive Committee?

The Executive Committee is responsible for:

- (a) Organising an appropriate induction process for Executive Members;
- (b) Identifying and using opportunities that promote the aim of the Association;
- (c) Ensuring that the P&F works collaboratively and co-operatively with the Principal and the Parish Priest;
- (d) Ensuring the P&F's financial accountability (see clause 11 Funds);
- (e) Organising General Meetings (see clause 10 Meetings);
- (f) Setting up and supervising Subcommittees that assist with the work of the P&F (see clause 13 Subcommittees).

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## 5.3 How does the Executive Committee work?

- (a) The Executive Committee shall meet by arrangement with the Principal or Principal's nominee, or shall communicate via email with all members of the Executive and the Principal or Principal's nominee, for the effective planning and management of the P&F;
- (b) The Executive Committee shall organise an Executive Committee Meeting prior to each General Meeting, or shall communicate via email with all members of the Executive and the Principal or Principal's nominee, for the purpose of preparing the agenda and finalising arrangement for the General Meeting;
- (c) The Executive Committee Meeting must comprise half of the Executive Committee plus one. This should include the Principal or Principal's nominee.

## 6.0 DUTIES OF OFFICE

### 6.1 President

#### The President:

- (a) Provides leadership and direction for the P&F by working co-operatively and collaboratively with the Principal;
- (b) Promotes the aims of the P&F in dealings with its members;
- (c) Supports the Executive Committee Members;
- (d) Presides at all meetings or, if absent, nominates the Vice President or another member of the Executive Committee to preside;
- (e) Ensures the efficient running of meetings as Chairperson;
- (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.

### 6.2 Vice President

#### The Vice President:

- (a) The Vice President supports the role of President in achieving the aims of the P&F;
- (b) The Vice President performs the duties of the President in the absence of the President. (See President (6.1))

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## **6.3 Secretary**

### **The Secretary:**

- (a) Manages the day-to-day communication and records of the P&F;
- (b) Organises meetings, records accurate Draft Minutes in a style agreed upon by the Executive Committee and gets them formalised as agreed to by the Executive Committee;
- (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 as in 10.1 (c);
- (f) Passes on records, in good order to the incoming Secretary.

## **6.4 Treasurer**

### **The Treasurer:**

- (a) Is responsible for ensuring that all the financial dealings of the P&F are carried out in accordance with 11.2 and 11.3;
- (b) Presents, at each General Meeting, a statement of accounts showing current receipts and expenditure together with the outstanding balance;
- (c) Organises the Annual Audit of accounts in accordance with 11.4 and presents the Annual Financial Report of the P&F;
- (d) Passes on records, in good order, to the incoming Treasurer.

## **6.5 Public Relations Coordinator**

### **The Public Relations Coordinator:**

- (a) Organises information for media publicity for upcoming events as advised by the Executive Committee and represents the P&F in media communications;
- (b) Prepares promotional materials for events as decided at Executive Committee Meetings;
- (c) Provides promotional material to James Sheahan newsletter coordinator as required by the Executive or other Committees;
- (d) SRC Liaison as required by the Executive Committee/Principal;
- (e) Maintain a list of media contacts for hand over to incoming Public Relations Coordinator.

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## 7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

### How will elections be conducted?

- 7.1 The members of the P&F, at the Annual General Meeting each year, shall elect all Executive Officers mentioned in 5.1(b).
- 7.2 Candidates for the Executive Committee are to be nominated and seconded. If there is a greater number of candidates than required, an election is to be held by secret ballot and shall be decided by simple majority.
- 7.3 Candidates for President should have previous service on the Executive Committee or active participation on other Association Committees.
- 7.4 The returning officer for any election is the Principal (or nominee).
- 7.5 Any vacancy on the Executive shall be filled by election by the members of the P&F at any General Meeting.
- 7.6 A person absent from the meeting may be nominated provided they have indicated a willingness to stand in writing or by email to a member of the Executive prior to the meeting.

## 8. RE-ELECTION

### Can Officers be re-elected?

- 8.1 At the Annual General Meeting all of the officers of the Executive Committee shall retire but may be eligible for re-election.
- 8.2 The President should not hold office for a period exceeding four consecutive years.
- 8.3 Other Officers should not serve in the same position for a consecutive period not exceeding three years.

## 9. TERMINATION OF OFFICE

### Can positions be terminated?

- 9.1 The position of any officer absent from any two consecutive General Meetings without reasonable cause may be declared vacant;
- 9.2 Providing due notice of a motion specifying the grounds for removal has first been given, 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.

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## 10. MEETINGS

### How will the P&F Meet?

#### 10.1 General Meetings

- (a) The Executive Committee will organise a General Meeting at least once every school term;
- (b) The First General Meeting is to be held by the end of March and the Last General Meeting before the beginning of December;
- (c) Notice of the meeting shall be given in a prior school newsletter or by email and shall indicate the need for members to send agenda items, in writing, to the Secretary before the date of the next Executive Committee Meeting;
- (d) A quorum for a General Meeting shall be two (2) members including the Principal (or nominee) and three (3) Executive Committee Members;
- (e) A period of fifteen minutes is to be allowed before a General Meeting is cancelled;
- (f) No meeting is to continue beyond two hours unless a two-thirds majority of those present agree to an extension;
- (g) All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with standard meeting procedures. In the case of a tied vote the President or nominee of the President shall exercise a casting vote.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS (all meetings)

- (h) The order of business is as follows unless the majority of those present agree to change it:

Prayer and Welcome

Record of Attendance and Apologies

Confirmation and acceptance of the Minutes of previous meeting

Business arising from those minutes

Correspondence : Incoming and outgoing

Reports : Presidents Report ,Treasurers Report & Principals Report.

Matters arising from Executive Meeting (including motions proposed)

Discussion session on nominated topics / Guest Speaker

Matters for future consideration

Confirmation of next meeting date

Conclusion - Time Recorded.

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## 10.2 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

**The AGM for the presentation of the Annual Reports of the President and Treasurer will be held by or in November each year.**

- (a) The AGM will be the occasion for the formal presentation of the Annual Reports, accounts balance sheet (pending audited accounts as at 31 December) and the election of office bearers (whose term commences at this meeting). The reports may be presented by other Office Bearers in the absence of either the President or Treasurer;
- (b) The AGM can be followed immediately by a general meeting at the discretion of the Executive Committee of the P&F and provided due notice is given ;
- (c) At least seven (7) days notice of the AGM shall be given in a prior school newsletter.

## 10.3 Special General Meeting (SGM)

A SGM is a mechanism for supporting the continued operation of the Association in unusual circumstances.

## 10.4 What is involved in calling a Special General Meeting?

- (a) A SGM can be called on the authority of the Executive Committee or on written request to the Executive Committee by a member/s. The request will be assessed by the Executive Committee to determine if a SGM is warranted;
- (b) A SGM 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 school term;
- (c) At least seven (7) days notice of the SGM shall be given in a prior school newsletter. The object of the meeting must be clearly stated;
- (d) A quorum for a SGM shall be two (2) members and must include the Principal or Principal's nominee and three (3) members of the Executive Committee;
- (e) A SGM can also be called on the authority of the Principal in the event of there not being an appropriately constituted Executive Committee or if, in the opinion of the Principal, the P&F is not fulfilling its aims.

## 11. FUNDS

### 11.1 How are Funds raised?

The Executive Committee develops a strategy for fundraising that considers the community's ability to raise funds. The proposals are presented to the Annual General Meeting for discussion and approval.

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## **11.2 Management of Funds**

- (a) Funds are to be used solely for the Aim of the P&F;
- (b) All funds raised by for 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;
- (c) Funds of the P&F are to be deposited in a reputable financial institution in the name of the P&F. The preferred fund is the Catholic Development Fund (CDF);
- (d) Authorised signatories to the account are any two of the following: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary or Principal. At the end of their term of office, their signatures must be removed and replaced by the signature of the incoming officers;
- (e) Funds are transferred to the school for the agreed upon purchase of goods and services to ensure that GST input tax credits are obtained;
- (f) All accounts must be paid promptly;
- (g) Funds must be audited as at 31<sup>st</sup> December;
- (h) If the Association resolves at an annual general meeting to have a petty cash fund, the amount of the petty cash fund of the Association will be an amount as determined by resolution of the Association at the Annual General Meeting of the Association;
- (i) The Treasurer will maintain a record of expenditure from the petty cash fund together with receipts. The Treasurer will submit a report of expenditure from the petty cash fund to each general meeting of the Association.

## **11.3 How are decisions made about allocation of funds raised?**

- (a) The Executive Committee consults with the school Principal to agree on a list of needs and suggest some priorities for ratification at the final General Meeting of the year, immediately following the AGM;
- (b) The P&F may only allocate and disburse funds for school purposes after consulting with the School Principal about school priorities. Agreed funds should be presented as soon as practicable;
- (c) With the exception of petty cash, all expenditure of the P&F's funds must be approved either at a P&F General Meeting or by email sent to the Executive, with a majority responding with an approval, then ratified at the following General Meeting.

## **11.4 Annual Audit requirements of the P&F**

- (a) Financial records must be audited as at 31<sup>st</sup> December each year to comply with Federal Government Financial Questionnaire reporting;
- (b): The Financial Year of the P&F is the period of twelve months starting on 1 January in a year and ending on 31 December in that year;

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- (c) The Auditor must, as far as is possible, be a local person aware of the activities of the P&F and be either:
  - (i) a qualified and independent Accountant; or
  - (ii) an employee of a public sector entity who has the maturity, commercial skills and experience to examine the books and accounts of the P&F, or
  - (iii) a person who possesses appropriate skills and experience in auditing and financial record management together with an appreciation of issues of probity as they relate to the role of P&F auditor, who has the maturity, commercial skills and experience to examine the books and accounts of the P&F.
- (d): A member of the P&F may be the Auditor only with the approval of the Principal;
- (e): Where possible, the Auditor is to be appointed in an honorary capacity. However, where this is not possible, the Auditor's fees will be negotiated and confirmed by the Treasurer in consultation with the Executive Committee and Principal prior to appointment;
- (f) The Annual Audit must be completed in time to be accepted at the First General Meeting and a copy given to the School Principal by 31 March each year.

## 12. INSURANCE

- 12.1 The Secretary or Treasurer must, prior to the AGM, ensure that the P&F remains covered by the school insurer for any event or function organised by the P&F. If there has been a change of insurer or policy the Secretary or Treasurer must inform the Executive immediately.
- 12.2 The P&F Executive must be aware of the conditions of the Insurance and comply with those conditions.

## 13. SUBCOMMITTEES

### 13.1 How do Subcommittees operate?

- (a) The P&F may set up Subcommittees to carry out particular functions on its behalf. These Committees may have Terms of Reference and are to report their operations to the General Meetings of the P&F. Where possible, they should include at least one member of the Executive Committee;
- (b) Any funds raised by a subcommittee are the P&F's funds and under the P&F's control;
- (c) After paying expenses (receipted) of their operations, the balance of funds of above Subcommittees are remitted to the funds of the P&F as soon as it is practical to do so.

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## 14. AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

### How can changes be made to this Constitution?

- 14.1 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.
- 14.2 All amendments must be accepted by at least three quarters of those present and must be in accordance with the aims of the Constitution.

## 15. DISSOLUTION

### 15.1 How might the P&F be dissolved?

- (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 Clauses 10.3 and 10.4 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;
- (c) Where the P&F is dissolved under clause 15.1 (b), the remaining assets, records and funds shall be handed over to the school Principal for the purposes of the school.