



TASMANIAN STATE SCHOOL PARENTS AND FRIENDS

Is the peak parent body in Tasmania and is an active member of the national parent organisation - ACSSO.

Represents you on Departmental committees and working groups.

Is committed to the promotion and protection of student and parent interests in State schools and colleges in Tasmania.

Keeps you informed through our newsletter, "Parent Contact", our website, regular regional forums and an annual conference.

Makes regular comment on education and related issues through the media.

Provides guidance and resource material for running parent groups and participating in School Associations.

Is an independent community based organisation actively supporting parent participation in our state school system since 1947.

Always welcomes new volunteers!

ABOUT US:

Tasmanian State School Parents and Friends Inc is an independent community based organisation, which was founded in 1947 to provide a key support network and independent voice for parents of students in our state schools.

One of our key objectives is to provide accurate information, useful guidance and resources to parents.

More in formation can be found online at: www.parentsandfriendstasmania.asn.au

or contact our State Office: 202 Liverpool Street Hobart 7000

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*"parents
- the essential element!"*

A Guide to the Duties of Office Bearers



TASMANIAN
STATE SCHOOL
PARENTS & FRIENDS
INCORPORATED

CHAIR PERSON

It can be very daunting for parents stepping into the role of Chairperson for their School Association. The following Tips for the Chair are adapted from the resources found on the Our Community Website www.ourcommunity.com and may help to ensure that your meetings run smoothly, and you, as Chairperson, remain firmly in control

Good chairing can be learned. For those about to embark on the learning curve, here are some tips to set you on the right path.

Define the purpose

The key to successfully chairing a meeting is to be absolutely clear about the purpose of the meeting. Once the meeting task is understood, it becomes easier to make the other decisions that may arise. Knowing the purpose of a meeting requires some thinking to be made about priorities and clarification of what decisions need to be made, and by when – so the Chair needs to know the meeting agenda inside out well before the meeting starts.

Clarify the rules

Ensure that everyone knows the rules of the meeting. Is it a formal or an informal meeting? Will decisions be made through consensus or will a formal voting procedure be followed? Whichever style of meeting is chosen and agreed upon, it is the Chair's job to maintain consistency throughout the meeting.

Switch into neutral

As a Chair you must remain neutral at all times. If there is an item on the agenda about which you feel strongly, ask someone else to take the Chair for that agenda item so that you are able to participate more freely in the debate. Introduce each agenda item with a brief summary of the background to the item and then quickly pass on to someone else.

Deal with diversity

Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak, including people from non-English-speaking backgrounds or who may have some disability that prevents them from jumping in and speaking quickly. Deal with diversity with patience and the meeting will reap the benefits.

Keep your hands firmly on the reins

Be democratic but stay in control. If someone else wants to dominate or divert the agenda and is derailing a meeting it is up to the Chair to bring them to order. This scenario has less chance of becoming personal and destructive if you can keep the meeting focused on the task at hand

No matter how rattled you may feel inside, keep the purpose at the forefront of your mind. Drop your shoulders, breathe evenly and speak in a calm, low voice.

Try using the following:

"I appreciate your concerns, Lee. Time is short for this agenda item, let's return to the issue for discussion which is ..."

Or

"I'm afraid, David, your issues are not able to be covered by this meeting. We have to move on to the next item/come to some resolution on this item. I will call you later this week to work out the most appropriate ways to deal with your concerns."

Acknowledge the interjector by name, be polite and show that you are listening, do not put them down.

The art of communication

As mentioned above, the Chair should acknowledge all members by name. A good Chair practices active listening and is able to acknowledge speakers with appropriate facial gestures and clarify or summarise their points when necessary.

Breaking a deadlock

When a topic has been fully discussed, the Chair should summarise the main points and put the item to the meeting for a decision or a vote. If as the Chair you feel that an item is far more complex than previously thought do not just let it run over time. You have three possible ways to go here. You can:

- Extend the time for this item,
- Refer the item to a working group for a report at the next meeting, or
- Set up an extraordinary meeting of the entire School Association to deal with the item.

Whichever option you decide to take you will need to stop the discussion on the agenda item, summarise what has happened and ask approval from the meeting to carry out your option. If the item is causing too much "heat" without progressing, it is probably wise to choose one of the last two options to give people enough time to gather their thoughts.

A good Chair facilitates discussion without taking over the meeting. This means creating an atmosphere where members can debate, struggle with issues, reach compromise and at times, agree to disagree.

SECRETARY

The role of Secretary is to support the Chair in ensuring the smooth running of the meeting. The Secretary is an important role, keeping the lines of communication open between meetings.

The Secretary is required to;

- Receive items to be added to the Agenda
- Prepare the Agenda in consultation with the Chair
- Handle communication and correspondence
- Be the point of contact between meetings
- Circulate the agenda and any supporting papers in a timely manner
- Advertise meeting dates and times
- Take the minutes of the meeting
- Circulate the minutes
- Check that the agreed actions are carried out



TREASURER

The role of Treasurer is to oversee the financial administration of the association.

The Treasurer is required to;

- Ensure true and proper records and accounts of receipts and expenditure connected with the operations and business of the association are kept.
- Provide regular reports to the association on its financial business.
- The Treasurer's Report should include:
 - Bank Statement
 - Balance Sheet
 - Profit & Loss Statement
 - Bank Reconciliation
- Be a signatory to all cheques written for disbursement by the Association.
- Ensure all payments are approved by the Association.
- Comply with limits set by the Association on amounts withdrawn from association accounts.
- Where the association is incorporated, together with the Public Officer, comply with all state and/or federal legislation relating to the management and reporting of accounts of incorporated associations. ie- organising an audit if required.

For further information online head to http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/boards/boards_article.jsp?articleId=70 or <http://www.education.tas.gov.au/school/parents/involved/schoolassociations/instructions>.

For more information on the roles of office bearers, conducting a meeting or setting up your parent group contact our office by phone, email or call into the office.