

**SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOL PARENTS CLUBS**

HANDBOOK

Copies of this Handbook are available
at a cost of \$5.50 each from
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or
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www.saaspc.org.au

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DEFINITIONS

This handbook has been prepared to assist parent groups in preschools and schools to run smoothly. As different terms are used at different times and in different places the following definitions have been included to clarify our meaning within this publication.

Centre or Preschool	A Children's Services Centre where children under the age of compulsion to attend school may attend to learn through play. Known by many different names, for example; Preschool, Kindergarten, Children's Centre or Child Parent Centre (CPC)
Chief Executive	The Chief Executive or Director General is the person responsible for managing the Department Education and Children's Services (DECS)
Children's Services	Formerly a Department responsible for preschool services, now a part of the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS)
Council	A Governing or School Council
Department	The government department responsible for managing education, currently the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS). Formerly this department has had other names
Director	The educational leader of a preschool
Governing Council	The Management Committee of a locally managed site (school or preschool)
Minister	The Minister for Education
Parent Group	A Club, an Auxiliary or similar title. In this handbook we are referring to all such groups that are: (a) an affiliated committee of a school council / governing council, or (b) a parents auxiliary of a preschool management committee
Preschool Management Committee	The committee responsible for the management of an Incorporated Children's Services Centre as defined in the Children's Services Act, 1985. The Management Committee is a body corporate, has perpetual succession and a common seal.
Parent	In this handbook the term 'parent' also includes carers/caregivers – referring to all people who have responsibility for the care of children attending preschool or school
Principal	The educational leader of a school
School	Any government site incorporating the year levels Reception-13, for example; Area School, Community School, Junior Primary School, Primary School, Middle School, High School, Secondary College, Special School
School Council	A School Council, by virtue of the Education Act, is a body corporate, has perpetual succession and a common seal. The school council is a separate legal entity and its members have limited liability just as in the case of an incorporated association

FOREWORD

The South Australian Association of School Parents Clubs (SAASPC) is the state body, which represents parent groups within South Australian public preschools and schools. These groups include parent clubs or other groups with a similar structure and purpose, or, where there is not an established group, school councils often affiliate with us to gain the benefits of that affiliation.

The Association's objects and purposes are to develop the interest of parents in education generally and in the schooling of their children by:

- promoting initiatives and opportunities for parents to participate in education
- encouraging parents to become involved in their children's learning
- providing information and support on educational matters
- consulting parents on issues relative to the education of their children and to their well-being at preschool and school.

SAASPC meets with the State Education Minister and Chief Executive of the Department on a regular basis. We represent parents on various boards, committees, reference groups and working parties, act as an advocate for parents' concerns and provide information sessions for parents. SAASPC is an affiliate of the national parent body, the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO), and has a representative on the ACSSO Executive. SAASPC is a voluntary organisation made up of affiliates from individual government preschool and school parents groups and is financed by affiliation fees and a Government grant. It has its own constitution and policies, which are developed in a democratic manner through wide consultation with its members.

The decision making body is the **State Executive**, which meets five times a year. Day to day administration is carried out by the committee as elected or appointed.

SAASPC holds an annual conference, which includes the annual general meeting, for all parents and other interested people. Affiliated preschool and school parent groups have voting rights and are able to make the decisions about any resolutions put forward, constitutional changes and so on. They also elect the SAASPC officers for the forthcoming year and can put forward nominations for these positions.

History

SAASPC's genesis can be attributed to the formation in 1920 of the then Infant Schools **Mothers' Clubs** by Miss Lydia Longmore. Miss Longmore was a pioneer early childhood educator who became the first female inspector in South Australian schools after the establishment of the first Infant (now Junior Primary) Schools. She was an innovator, and after studying new trends and the Montessori methods being introduced in other systems sought to introduce these into the South Australian system. This she did with the support of the Director of Education. She soon realised that these new ideas would work best if done in partnership with parents, and thus the Mothers' Clubs were born.

As the children of these mothers moved on into Primary School the idea followed them, and during the 1920s Welfare Clubs were set up in most schools. The name "Welfare Club" was chosen because the name "Mothers' Club" was considered to "belong" to the Infant Schools, and also probably to avoid confusion. The common aim of those early clubs remains as part of SAASPC's today - the welfare of the children, although in the early days the clubs had a strong social focus as well, being an avenue for mothers to meet others with a similar interest. During the depression years, the name "**Welfare Club**" became particularly apt. There is documentation about how clubs used to work to provide meals and often even clothing and shoes for children in need. These Welfare Clubs received official sanction with the passing of the Education Amendment Act which came into effect in 1942.

Over the years parent clubs made contact with other groups in their local area, which shared similar interests. These informal contacts were formalised by the establishment of **Area Associations**, which had a committee structure. Members met regularly to share information and ideas and generally support each other.

As this spontaneous movement towards area groups grew to become statewide it was recognised that closer contact between these Associations would be desirable. At the instigation of the River Districts Association, a state conference was held in August 1952. Another was held the following year, at which an executive committee was formed. More conferences followed, and in 1957 it was decided to form a **State Association**. The first annual conference of this Association, under the name of the South Australian State Association of School Welfare Clubs, was held in 1958, and the first State Officers were elected.

In 1976, the name of the Association was changed to South Australian Association of School Parents' Clubs, to move with the times and to be more inclusive of the now more varied groups which had evolved with the 1972 changes to the Education Regulations. These widened the roles of School Committees (renamed School Councils) and the parent groups which were now officially "**Affiliated Committees**" of the School Councils. Many parent groups now use a variety of names, which are selected to best reflect their unique circumstances eg mothers clubs, welfare clubs and parents and friends associations or bodies with a similar constitution, purpose and title. Section 86 of the Education Act empowers the Minister to authorise the establishment of committees to be affiliated with school councils and which operate under their own constitution approved by the Minister. Affiliated committees are not council committees.

In June 1992 the Junior Primary Schools Parents' Association disbanded, and SAASPC took over their responsibility through the provision of a special portfolio position for an officer to represent early childhood interests.

Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO)

SAASPC has been affiliated with the Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) since 1976. It is the national parent organisation representing the interests of parents and students enrolled in government schools throughout Australia. It was formed in 1947 and its office is located in Canberra.

The governing body of ACSSO is the Annual Conference to which each State and Territory is entitled to send four voting delegates from its affiliates.

Each affiliated member body of ACSSO provides a vice-president who is elected annually. The president and the vice-presidents form the ACSSO Executive which is responsible to the Annual Conference

A working budget for ACSSO is provided by the affiliation fees of member bodies supplemented by an annual government grant-in-aid

Further information about ACSSO, its policies and activities, may be obtained from the SAASPC ACSSO Vice President, or the ACSSO Executive Officer PO Box 323 Curtin ACT 2605 telephone 02 6282 5150 fax 02 6285 1351 email executive.officer@acssso.org.au

PARENT GROUPS

Preschool parent bodies

In this handbook, preschools will be referred to as centres, which include Preschools, Kindergartens, Childhood Services Centres, Child Parent Centres (CPCs), or similar government funded and regulated centres.

The nature of the parent group of a Children's Services Centre will depend on the management of the centre; whether it is an incorporated Children's Services Centre or a Child Parent Centre (CPC) managed by a school council/governing council.

Incorporated Children's Services Centre

Departmental regulations in South Australia require that there be a Preschool Centre Committee of Management (referred to as the Management Committee):

- the Management Committee is an incorporated body whose duties and membership are designated by regulation
- the constitution of a centre may include provision under which it may operate as a Governing Council
- parent auxiliaries (parent groups) may be formed to assist in furthering the objectives of the centre

Child Parent Centre (CPC)

The management of a Child Parent Centre is the responsibility of the Council, and is outlined in the Departmental publication titled "Preschools (Child Parent Centres) Guidelines for Administration". This can be found on the Department of Education & Children's Services (DECS) website www.decs.sa.gov.au

Preschool parents may wish to form a group separate from the Council, and are entitled to do so. This parent group can operate either as an affiliate of the Council or as a Council committee.

Playgroups in schools and CPCs

On page 10 of the Departmental publication "Preschools (Child Parent Centres) Guidelines for Administration" the following information is provided:

Playgroups that operate in child parent centres are to be run by parents and reflect the needs of the families involved. The Playgroup Association is committed to parents being fully involved and responsible for the program and provides fieldworkers to offer assistance.

The contact information for the Playgroup Association is: 91 Prospect Road Prospect SA 5082 tel 8344 2722 freecall 1800 171 882 fax 8344 9722 email info@playgroupsa.com.au

Parent groups running playgroups in schools must consult with the principal and Council.

School parent bodies

Departmental regulations in South Australia require that there must be a Council in each school, and they also provide for the establishment of affiliated committees (hereafter referred to as parent groups).

A parent group is:

- accessible to all parents and other interested members of the school community
- an affiliated body of the Council
- an independent body - **not a committee of the Council**
- required by its constitution to elect annually a member to represent it on the Council
- entitled to operate its own bank account
- may elect annually a member to represent it on the school finance advisory committee if it is part of a governing school council's consolidated account

Why have a parent group?

A preschool/school parent group can:

- provide an opportunity for parents and other persons of the community to meet regularly to express and develop their interest in education
- act as a forum for parents and others to gain and share information, ideas and skills, especially those relating to the education policies of South Australia and to the well-being of their children
- provide opportunities for gaining information and discussing openly issues and policies which affect education in both the preschool/school and the system
- recognise and represent the views of parents and convey these views to the director/principal and the preschool management committee/Council and, where appropriate, to other preschool/school bodies eg. finance, fundraising or grounds committees
- provide a regular link between parents, teachers and children of the preschool/school, area, regional and statewide associations
- assist the preschool/school in material and personal ways to benefit the children
- assist parents to develop skills to become involved in the life of the preschool/school and to participate in decision-making
- provide valuable assistance in many aspects of the education of children by working in cooperation with the director/principal staff and preschool management committee/Council
- provide an aura of care and concern that can assist and complement that of the professional educator

Always remember that the welfare of children should at all times be the main consideration of the parent group

In schools:

a parent group is able, as an affiliated body of the Council, to enjoy similar benefits in respect of incorporation, insurance etc provided that its activities are sanctioned by the school principal.

Composition and format

A parent group needs a planned structure if it is to remain viable and carry out its aims and objectives. It is suggested that:

- the group should decide on the number of office bearers (and their duties) that are needed for it to function efficiently
- a committee may be elected at the annual general meeting to assist office bearers in the general running of the group
- sub-committees may be formed at ordinary general meetings to carry out specific tasks eg a sports day catering committee. At the conclusion of the task, the sub-committee is disbanded unless instructed otherwise by a general meeting
- general meetings should at all times be open to anyone. However only members of the group are entitled to vote

Decision making

All decisions must be made by the group:

- committees and sub-committees carry out the decisions made by the group at a general meeting
- committees and sub-committees are expected to report and make recommendations to the group

Format

Parents may prefer an alternative style of participation to that of the parent group described above. This could take the form of class groups, subject groups, support groups, parent networks, friends of the school etc. Whichever style is chosen a constitution must be approved by the Minister (or his/her delegate) and experience indicates that a planned structure with demonstrable accountability i.e. defined aims, minuted records is necessary for long-term effective functioning.

Record keeping

Appropriate records of all activities should be kept and should be accessible to members of the group. It may also be useful to record details of events to assist future members.

Constitution

It is a legal requirement that a constitution is adopted as soon as possible after forming a group. Any group that operates without an approved constitution will not be covered by DECS insurance and MUST NOT undertake any activities, fundraising, events etc.

A copy of the constitution must be available at the school for public inspection during normal school hours.

The model constitution for parent groups may be found in Appendix 1 of this handbook.

OFFICE HOLDERS AND THEIR DUTIES

Office holders

- President – alternately known as Chairperson / Convener / Coordinator
- Vice President(s) / Deputy President(s)
- Secretary/Recorder
- Treasurer
- Committee members (if called for in constitution)
- a group can also appoint an assistant secretary and/or assistant treasurer, and sometimes the positions of secretary and treasurer may be combined

Delegates and representatives

- representative on Preschool management committee/Council as required by the constitution
- representative on finance advisory committee as allowed for by Departmental administrative instructions and guidelines
- where applicable, representatives on other preschool/school sub-committees
- delegates to represent the group at other meetings eg SAASPC conferences

Terms and conditions of office

- in the case of officer holders of a group, the terms of office must be stated in the group's constitution
- delegates or representatives may be appointed for terms as decided by the group at time of appointment, or election
- more than one position may be held by one person, for instance, the president may also be the representative of the group on the Preschool management committee/Council, the duties of secretary and treasurer may be combined, and so on
- a parent group may decide to elect a minute secretary as well as a secretary who carries out more general duties. This decision is made in accordance with the needs of the group and within its constitution

Duties of office holders

As a guide to those taking office for the first time, the following are suggested duties and procedures for office holders of a parent group.

President

- consult and liaise with the director/principal to maintain good communication and a good working relationship
- conduct meetings, maintaining order throughout and remaining impartial at all times
- consult with the secretary in preparation of agenda
- consult with office holders at all times and keep them informed of all new developments
- be aware of the rules of the group as stated in its constitution
- ensure that there is a quorum in accordance with the constitution
- ensure that the minority have their say and the majority have their way
- introduce guest speakers and arrange for votes of thanks
- call a special meeting of the group when circumstances warrant this action
- make a casting vote only OR a deliberative and a casting vote, in accordance with the constitution

It is the responsibility of the president to work in cooperation with the director/principal, other office holders, delegates, committee and general members, and to keep them informed at all times. To maintain a good relationship with the preschool/school staff the president should ensure that parent group activities do not impact too much on staff responsibilities.

Vice President

- chair meetings in absence of president, or if president decides to step down
- assist president at all times
- make votes of thanks, as required
- ensure that new members, guest speakers and invited guests are welcomed and introduced to the president and other members

Secretary

- prepare meeting agenda in consultation with president
- the secretary must record and maintain minutes of all group meetings (unless a minute secretary/assistant secretary has been elected by the group)
- arrange for the collection of parent group correspondence from preschool/school; this should be done regularly - at least once a week
- inform president of contents of correspondence prior to meeting so that relevant information can be sought and brought forward
- keep a record of all incoming correspondence
- attend to correspondence as directed by meeting. Copies must be kept of all outgoing correspondence. All relevant correspondence must be kept
- hold petty cash and keep a record of same in petty cash book (if appropriate)
- carry out, in collaboration with the president, the plans and wishes of the meeting, if no other member has been appointed by the meeting
- ensure that date, time and venue of each meeting are advertised appropriately
- assist president to count votes, usually done by a show of hands, at general meetings
- if required, prepare and present a report at the Annual General Meeting
- check at the first meeting of each calendar year that affiliation fees to SAASPC are approved and paid by the date due
- the Secretary may move, second or speak to a motion and vote.

It is the responsibility of the secretary to ensure that proper records are kept of meetings.

Minutes

Should accurately record the course of the meeting. Contents of the minutes should include:

- a record at the beginning of the minutes of who presided or chaired the meeting and the date ie day/month/year
- a record of people present - if an attendance book is not kept, it is helpful if the number of people present and, if possible, their names are recorded in the minutes
- apologies for non-attendance
- adoption of previous minutes
- business arising from previous minutes and any actions taken
- correspondence both in and out recorded in brief
- business arising from correspondence and any actions taken
- financial statements, accounts for payment and reports as presented
- motions and their outcomes, - these should include the names of mover and seconder and if requested the names of those voting for or against or abstaining
- motions related to ALL financial decisions - these must include the names of mover and seconder and the result of the vote
- all plans and decisions made by the group
- main issues raised by persons speaking at the meeting eg preschool director/school principal
- confidential information (eg relating to tenders etc) needs to be minuted as such, and members need to be aware of the nature of the confidentiality

Minutes, after being presented to, and accepted by, the subsequent meeting must be signed and dated by the chair of the meeting and kept in a minute book.

Treasurer

- receive all money collected on behalf of the group
- issue receipts for money as it is received and ensure money is banked promptly upon receipt
- present a financial statement at each general meeting. This statement must include all receipts and payments for the period since the last meeting and must reconcile with the bank statement for the same period. This financial statement must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting
- hold petty cash and keep a record of same in petty cash book (if appropriate)
- sign cheques and then obtain another signature from one of two other officers named as signatories at the group's annual general meeting or as stated in the constitution
- ensure the payment by cheques of all accounts once they have been presented to, and passed for payment by, a general meeting
- ensure that all accounts passed for payment have been noted in the minutes of that meeting
- prepare an annual financial statement which must be presented, duly audited, at the annual general meeting. An account may be audited at such other intervals as the body controlling the account determines and, in any event, shall be audited annually as soon as possible after the end of the financial year, or at such other times as determined by administrative instruction
- any accounts must be made available for inspection at any time by the Auditor-General, including all relevant records and papers connected with an account
- keep record of dates that affiliation fees are due to SAASPC
- the treasurer may move, second or speak to a motion and vote

When a parent group operates as part of a Council incorporated consolidated account, the treasurer of the group files receipts and reports financial matters to the meeting, including transactions that have taken place since the last meeting. Arrangements must be made with the School Services Officer/School Administrative Officer to obtain the financial record for presentation at each meeting.

Be aware of the contents of the Department's "Financial Management in Schools" available on the DECS website www.decs.sa.gov.au/goldbook

Committee members

Under the group's constitution an Executive committee may be appointed to carry out business delegated or referred by a general meeting of the members.

Many groups function well without a committee and it is the decision of the group as to whether or not it shall have a committee.

Minutes should be kept of committee meetings; and these minutes should be available at the request of any group member, but need not be read at a general meeting

The committee may make recommendations to the general meetings for discussion and decisions, if necessary. Reasons for the committee's recommendations should be given. The committee should not act upon any decisions that involve the group unless the general meeting has instructed it to do so. It is important that such directions are recorded in the minutes of the general meeting.

Committee members must abide by the decisions made by the committee

Delegates and representatives

- the delegate or representative has the responsibility of taking information, as directed by the group, to the group or committee to which he/she has been appointed even if the delegate's personal opinions conflict with those of the group
- information from the group or committee must be reported back for discussion or decision, as appropriate. Time on the agenda of the meeting must be allowed for this to occur although it may also be given in the form of a written report

Delegate to Council

- The parent group may nominate a representative to Council. This delegate is then a member of the Council and, as such, has full voting rights on council
- delegates are elected by the parent group and therefore must at all times be conscious of presenting the decisions and policies of the parent group
- the delegate should ensure he or she is aware of the legal responsibilities of the Management Committee/Council and that access is provided to copies of all relevant documents relating to the operation of the Management Committee/Council eg its constitution
- the delegate should be aware of confidentiality before reporting back on issues discussed and decisions made at a Council meeting and should seek clarification from the chair of the Council if unsure
- if for some reason the delegate is unable to continue for the full term of the appointment, for example if the group's Council delegate leaves the district, resigns or is elected onto Council at a school annual meeting, then the parent group may nominate a new delegate at a general meeting
- it is good practice for the delegate to Management Committee/Council to give a written report to the secretary of the council

GENERAL MEETING PROCEDURES

The following procedure is suggested for parent group meetings:

- 1 Welcome the president opens meeting and welcomes all present, in particular new members and visitors
- 2 Apologies president asks for apologies for non-attendance
- 3 Minutes if copies of the minutes have not been circulated the secretary is asked to read the minutes of the previous meeting. President asks members if minutes are a true record, any alterations or additions as agreed by the meeting are made and initialled by the president. The minutes are then confirmed by the meeting and signed by the president who also records the date
- 4 Business arising from the minutes if it is known that correspondence or the financial report will add to from information, an item from 'business arising' may be deferred and dealt with under the relevant section of the agenda
- 5 Correspondence and business arising is read by secretary and dealt with as appropriate. All correspondence is then formally received by a motion
- 6 Additions to general business president asks for any items of general business that members may wish to add to meeting agenda. This practice gives members the opportunity to state in advance items they wish to bring forward and assists the president with management of the meeting
- 7 Financial report treasurer reads the financial statement including receipts and payments since the previous meeting, and moves the adoption of the report. This is seconded and formally adopted by the meeting
- 8 Accounts treasurer presents accounts and moves that accounts be paid by cheque. This must be seconded and put to the vote before payment can be made, and must be recorded in the minutes
- 9 Other reports reports are made by delegates to preschool management/Council, finance committee, sub committees, and any other committees or organisations, taking into account the issues of confidentiality
- 10 Director/principal's report a report from school preschool director/principal
- 11 General business this includes all items of business not dealt with already, issues from director's/principal's report, items listed from members as in 6 above and any business that may arise from reports as in 9 above
- 12 Other business president calls for any other business - members may have items or concerns they would like clarified, or other business may have evolved during the meeting
- 13 Business pending president reminds members of future functions, date of next meeting and any other similar points to note
- 14 Meeting closed president thanks members and declares meeting closed

Chairing the meeting

- in the absence of the president, a meeting should be chaired by the vice president
- in the absence of both the president and the vice president, the meeting should be chaired by a member elected for that purpose by a majority of members present at that meeting

Addressing the chair

- when speaking to the meeting or other members, all remarks should be addressed through the chair

Membership

- there is no limit to the number of members a group may have
- it is up to each parent group to decide how membership will be determined and this will be reflected in its constitution

Resignations

- the matter of resignation by an officer of a group before the expiration of the term for which that officer was elected to serve, should be dealt with in the constitution of the group
- the constitution could provide that an election be held at the next general meeting of that group to fill the vacancy, or a special meeting may be called for the purpose of electing a person to fill that vacancy. It is usual that one month's notice be given before a special meeting is held
- in the case of the president or chairperson, the constitution may provide for the vacancy to be filled by the vice president or, if relevant, by the first or senior vice president
- irrespective of the provision made in the constitution for the filling of a vacancy caused by resignation, the newly elected person is elected only for the unexpired term of the relevant office

Quorum

- a quorum is the minimum number of members required by the constitution to be present for a properly constituted meeting
- this minimum number should be stated in the constitution of the parent group.
- if the president is unaware that there is no longer a quorum due to members having to leave while the meeting is in progress, it is the duty of the secretary, or any other member to make this known

Voting

- at parent group meetings, voting must be confined to members only
- membership of the group should be defined in the group's constitution which should make provision for either registered or financial membership
- voting may be by show of hands or by secret ballot, as defined by the group's constitution. If secret ballot is chosen impartial scrutineers must be elected before voting takes place at a general or annual general meeting

Abstaining from voting

- the convention is that if someone abstains from voting they are treated as though they are not at the meeting, and therefore they should have no effect on the outcome of a vote. However the president should ensure that a quorum of members have placed a vote.

Vote of thanks

- it is suggested that as a matter of courtesy, the proposer of a vote of thanks should go to the front of the meeting and address the remarks through the chair
- it is not usual to do so, but votes of thanks may be seconded, or supported, if desired
- the president should ensure beforehand that a member is prepared to make a vote of thanks

Vote of no confidence

- this occurs when the members feel that an office holder is incompetent, demonstrates prejudice or serious bias. If the President (as Chair of the meeting) is named in the motion then it is desirable that the chair be vacated during the debate; in any case the Chair should not take part in the debate
- a motion of no confidence can be moved for a particular meeting eg 'That the Chair does not possess the confidence of this meeting'; if the matter is serious enough and resignation of the office holder is desired then the motion could be 'That the President does not possess the confidence of the group' - in that case if the motion is carried the office holder should resign
- if the vote is only for one particular meeting and the Chair is the office holder concerned then a new Chair can be immediately appointed for the duration of the meeting
- if the vote is for the remainder of the an office holder's term then a process will need to be put in place to appoint a new office holder

Presentation of a motion

- books written on meeting procedure usually advise that a motion should be proposed and seconded before discussion on the topic. This can result in a limited and inadequate motion being passed. It has been found from experience that controlled discussion of a topic before a motion is proposed will result in a firmer, better informed and consequently more efficient course of action
- all members have equal rights to express their opinions; no person, or group of persons, should be allowed to monopolise the discussion;
- at any time during discussion of a topic, the president may ask for a motion to be proposed and seconded before further discussion is permitted
- positive and negative views, that is, speakers for and against the motion, should be sought, usually alternatively
- again, at any time during discussion after the motion has been proposed, the president may call for a vote on the motion, or a member can ask for the motion to be put, in which case the motion must be put
- the president must control the meeting at all times. If, after discussion of a topic no motion is forthcoming, the president formally closes discussion on the subject and proceeds with other business

Amendment to a motion

- an amendment is a change or an addition to the detail of the original motion. It must not alter the basic purpose of the motion
- an amendment must be moved and seconded, but not by the mover and seconder of the original motion. Any amendment must occur before the original motion is voted on
- the amendment is debated and voted on, and if carried becomes part of the original motion
- if further amendments are desired the process is repeated
- when there are no further amendments debate is resumed on the original motion in its latest form i.e. incorporating amendments which have been passed and the motion is put to the vote

Rescission of a motion

- if it is desired to remove a resolution, either later in the meeting which adopted it or at a subsequent meeting, this can be done by passing an appropriate motion of rescission
- a motion resolved at a general meeting cannot be rescinded by any meeting other than a general meeting, or at a special meeting called for that purpose
- notice of a proposed rescission at a general or special meeting must be given when sending out the meeting notices
- it is good practice, but not strictly necessary, to notify the mover and seconder of the motion in question of the proposal to rescind

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Each constituted parent group must hold an annual general meeting:

- it is the responsibility of the president to ensure that the group's constitution is adhered to, particularly in regard to the election of office holders, auditing of books, financial reports and presentation of the annual report
- the election of office holders may be conducted by the director/principal or nominee, a past president or patron of the group. SAASPC officers are also available to conduct elections
- voting rights at the annual general meeting are determined by the constitution and are normally for members only
- timing of the annual general meeting should take into consideration the financial year of the preschool/school
- a guest speaker may be invited to address the annual general meeting

Suggested format for annual general meeting

- 1 welcome and declare meeting open
- 2 ask for apologies for non-attendance
- 3 presentation of minutes of preceding annual general meeting and adoption of minutes (confirmation of the minutes of the annual general meeting may be made at the first general meeting following the AGM. This is suggested so that confirmation and corrections may be made while decisions are still in the minds of members)
- 4 presentation of annual report by the president or secretary and its adoption
- 5 treasurer presents audited financial report and moves its adoption
- 6 president thanks office holders and members
- 7 president declares all offices vacant and vacates chair
- 8 election of office holders, representatives on preschool management committee/Council, finance and other committees
- 9 election of committee members (if relevant)
- 10 other business: decisions re cheque signatories, auditor, membership
- 11 close of annual general meeting

Copies of the constitution should be available at the meeting (and in any case according to the group's constitution must be available at the school during school hours)

An ordinary general meeting may precede or follow the annual general meeting so that correspondence can be received, accounts passed for payment and other business discussed. These matters should not be brought into the annual meeting.

PRESCHOOL FINANCE

The financial management of a preschool centre will depend on the nature of that centre; whether it is an Incorporated Children's Services Centre or a Child Parent Centre (CPC) managed by a Council/governing council.

Incorporated Children's Services Centres

The financial management of an Incorporated Children's Services Centre is outlined in the constitution of each preschool. A model constitution can be downloaded from www.decs.sa.gov.au

Child Parent Centres

The financial management of a Child Parent Centre is outlined on page 25 of the Departmental publication titled "Preschools (Child Parent Centres) Guidelines for Administration". This can be found on the DECS website www.decs.sa.gov.au

The following information is an extract from these guidelines:

5.1 Financial

Child parent centre funds should be managed as part of the total financial administration of the school. All expenditure on behalf of the centre should be budgeted for in consultation with parents and relevant staff. Income and expenditure should be recorded.

5.1.1 Operating Grants

An annual operating grant is paid to the school to assist with the running costs of the child parent centre. Child parent centres receive operating grants in two payments, one in May and one in November. The grant is based on

- *base amount (the same for all centres)*
- *per capita amount (based on actual enrolments and approximately 50% of the schooling sector per capita grant)*
- *needs amount (based on the rating of the centre)*

As with other grants, this money is paid into the School Council (Consolidated) Account.

5.1.2 Parent Contributions (Materials and Services Charge)

Some child parent centres supplement the operating grant with income such as materials and services charges. It is suggested that any contribution per annum should be up to half the total junior primary contribution per child. This is a guide only, and schools are encouraged to calculate an amount, which adequately covers the running of a centre. No child is to be refused access to a preschool program based on parental inability to pay.

5.1.3 Fundraising

Fundraising activities can be conducted to provide funds for additional equipment, materials and improvements. As the centre is part of the school, fundraising should be coordinated where possible as part of the general school activities

SCHOOL FINANCE

Provisions are made in the SA Education Administrative Instructions and Guidelines (AIGs) section 5 for the handling of financial matters by parent groups. Extracts from these are reproduced in this section.

There are also other controls, which should be incorporated in a parent group's constitution; these and other financial matters are set out below.

Accounting provisions for school parent groups

- the AIGs clearly indicates that it is the affiliated (parent) group which may approach the council not vice-versa, if that group has made a decision that it wishes to be part of an existing Council (consolidated) account
- if the parent group changes its method of financial management its constitution must be checked to ensure that it reflects this decision

Administrative Instructions and Guidelines

The following information is extracted from the Administrative Instructions and Guidelines Section 5 School Councils, Affiliated Committees and Related Matters which can be found on the DECS website www.decs.sa.gov.au

Consolidated accounts

*In any school the school fund account and the school council account shall be consolidated into one account,
The consolidated account will be known as the (name of the school) Governing Council (or Council) Incorporated Consolidated Account. This is referred to in these administrative instructions as the council (consolidated) account.
All sums of money which are payable to a council must be paid into the council (consolidated) account or an account under the control of the council.
Moneys in the council consolidated account will be under the control of the council which will be responsible to the Minister for its proper care and use.
Any committee affiliated with the council may seek the agreement of the council to conduct its accounting through the council (consolidated) account. Affiliated committees are encouraged to participate in the council (consolidated) account, However it is not compulsory for them to do so. Where any affiliated committee has agreed to participate in the council (consolidated) account indicates that they no longer desire to operate under such an account, then that committee shall seek the approval of the Chief Executive to discontinue the arrangement. Upon receipt of advice from the Chief Executive of his or her approval to the withdrawal of the affiliated committee from operating under such an account, that affiliated committee shall no longer be required to so operate and shall revert to operating an account in accordance with its constitution.*

Affiliated Group's Own Account

*Money raised by an affiliated committee that is not handling its accounting through the council (consolidated) account must deposit it in an account in the name of the affiliated committee in accordance with its constitution.
If a school canteen or an organisation affiliated with the school council ceases to function as such, its books, records and property shall be forwarded to the school council.*

Payments

*All payments from council, school and affiliated committee accounts must be either by cheque, credit card or electronic funds transfer (direct debit).
Payments made by cheque from an account must be crossed and marked 'Not negotiable' and signed by any two authorised signatories.
At least three cheque signatories must be appointed in each case by: ... the controlling committee in respect of the accounts of affiliated committees, and the school canteen. The signatories so appointed must include the treasurer of the committee,*

Audit and reporting

Council and affiliated committees (and principals for the school fund account) must send a copy of the audited statement of accounts for the previous school financial year to the Chief Executive no later than 1st June each year.

School budget (in relation to the affiliated committees funds)

The council Finance Advisory Committee must seek the advice of affiliated committees in developing the budget and are advised to provide each affiliated committee with a range of proposed purchase options for the expenditure of their funds.

The AIGs make it quite clear that it is the decision of the affiliated organisation i.e. parent group, whether or not its finances are kept in the Council consolidated account

School Finance Advisory Committee

Affiliated committees of school councils are entitled to representation on the school finance advisory committee.

Affiliated committees of governing councils may nominate a member to be on the school finance advisory committee if the affiliated committee's account is a part of the consolidated account.

Financial statement

- a financial statement must be presented at each general meeting
- this should be presented by the treasurer who usually moves its adoption
- the statement must include all receipts and payments and must reconcile with the bank statement
- the current bank balance must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting

Parent group's own accounts

- a parent group can only have one general cheque account
- with the general bank account, a group is permitted to operate a petty cash account
- no 'social' or similar account may be operated
- no other account may be opened or maintained without the approval of the Chief Executive

Petty cash

- payment for minor purchases may be made by petty cash
- when petty cash is needed, it must be resolved at a general meeting of the group that a cheque be drawn
- a record of expenditure of this amount must be kept in a petty cash book which also must be presented for audit

Fund raising

- the treasurer should ensure that all funds received are banked daily (or if the bank is closed - on the next business day) unless the amount received, together with amounts received on previous days and not deposited, does not exceed \$500
- where banking services are remote from the school and daily banking is not practicable, exemption from the above provision should be sought in writing from the Chief Executive.
- the treasurer should prepare and submit to the president a statement of receipts and expenses of the function as soon as possible after the event

Expenditure

- money raised by parent groups must be used for school purposes only; this does not mean that any activity can be conducted simply because it is profitable. The activity must have as its dominant purpose the raising of funds which would usually be the traditional type or modern variants eg fetes, raffles, competitions, quiz nights
- moneys raised must be paid into a bank account in the name of the organisation (if the parent group has its own bank account), or into the consolidated account of the school
- group funds must not be spent, under any circumstances, without the formal authorisation of the group. This means that no one person can authorise that money be spent
- for the protection of officers and members of the group, financial transactions should be recorded correctly and specifically in the minutes
- at a general meeting of the group, a motion for the spending of funds must be proposed, seconded and carried by a majority. This applies to the payment of accounts, to the proposed buying of equipment, to the handing over of funds to another organisation within the school, either as a loan or as assistance in the purchase of equipment, to financing a school excursion, or to the transfer of funds to a similar organisation in a newly established school.
- all accounts must be paid by cheques with no less than 2 signatories, and cheques **MUST NOT** be made to "cash"

Affiliation fees

- payment of affiliation fees to recognised regional, state and national parent bodies (such as SAASPC) is allowed

At a school where no parent group or similar organisation exists, the affiliation fees may be paid by the Council so that parents of children at that school may participate as members of those bodies

Donations and presentations

- no funds from any school parent group, or similar organisation, may be used for gifts for teachers and other persons
- if a group desires to make presentations either within the group or to others working in the school, these must be made as a result of a privately conducted fund-raising effort for that purpose eg trading table, or from a collection taken up privately, with all members being fully aware of the reason for raising the money

Cessation of an affiliated committee or closure of a school

The Administrative Instructions and Guidelines state:

If a school canteen or an organisation affiliated with a school council ceases to function as such, its books, records and property shall be forwarded to the school council.

If a school is closed the Education Regulations state:

A head teacher, school council or affiliated committee of a school must comply with any direction of the Director-General as to the forwarding of property (including books and records) on the closure of the school

Auditors

Auditors are primarily engaged at the end of the financial year to determine whether the financial statements are properly drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of the transactions, that proper accounting records have been kept and that all information and explanations have been obtained.

- the audit of a parent group account should be performed by a person or persons appointed by that group
- appointment of auditors is provided for in "Financial Management in Schools" Manual Section 13 This can be found on the DECS website www.decs.sa.gov.au/goldbook

SUGGESTED GOOD PRACTICE

Although not generally part of the Education Department's regulations or AIGs, the suggestions made in this section are based on practices, which have been found to contribute to effective and efficient work by groups on behalf of children in preschools and schools.

Preschool director/school principal at parent group meetings

- the parent group president and/or secretary should arrange a time to meet regularly with the preschool director/school principal to ensure good open communication is maintained
- close liaison with the preschool director/school principal and staff contributes to a positive working environment
- it is good practice to invite the director/principal to attend during the meeting at a time that is mutually convenient
- the preschool director/school principal is not expected nor required to stay for the whole meeting unless especially invited by the parent group

Attendance records

- it is good practice to record attendance at each meeting. This may be done by circulating an attendance book during the meeting
- as minutes record the names of apologies for non-attendance, movers and seconders of motions, and sometimes those speaking to motions, a record of attendance is often a useful adjunct as a historical record or for reunions

New members and visitors

- it is good practice to ensure that all members attending a meeting feel welcome, comfortable and needed, and that there is a role for them in the parent group
- it is especially important that new members and visitors are welcomed and introduced, either by the president when opening the meeting, or by a vice president or some other person who has been assigned to this duty
- it is good practice for all members to assume responsibility for making the parent group meeting a pleasant occasion

Correspondence

- correspondence includes all communications including publications, circulars, faxes, email and a record of all telephone calls
- arrangements made by telephone should be recorded and later confirmed by letter
- it is the responsibility of the secretary to ensure the collection of parent group correspondence from the preschool/school. This must be done regularly, and it is good practice to make arrangements to have a parent group pigeon hole, wire basket, etc for correspondence and messages
- it is desirable to request that all correspondence be addressed to the parent group c/- the preschool/school, and not to private addresses of office holders. This eliminates delays and the possibility of mail going astray
- all correspondence received by the group must be presented to the following general meeting
- all correspondence is the property of the parent group and must be dealt with as outlined in this handbook under the section titled Meeting Procedure

Recording communications

- it is efficient practice if, when contacts are made by parents to officers of the group, these are noted in writing, dated and reported to the president at the first opportunity. This applies to telephone calls particularly

Planning functions

- no function should be arranged without the approval of the director/principal (refer page 22 re indemnity)
- after the parent group has received the approval of the principal, the parent group delegate to the Council should provide a report of details of the function at the Preschool management committee/Council meeting, so that these will appear in the minutes of the management committee/council
- no function, or activity, for which a charge for admission is made, and no function which offers for sale goods or materials as a means of raising funds in the preschool/school should be held if any person, body or institution other than the group, has any interest in or is to receive any portion of the gross proceeds from the function or sale

Parent group minutes

Minutes are the official record of the business of a meeting. Statements should be accurate and concise:

- minutes should record apologies, numbers present, correspondence received and sent, financial statement, decisions relating to all financial matters, any other decisions made (either by motion or consensus), reports from delegates, and other information which may be needed for future reference
- it assists the person taking the minutes if brief written reports are handed in by the delegates
- decisions made by resolution must be accurately recorded. The secretary should read the motion, as proposed, before it is put to the vote. The names of both the mover and seconder, and the result of the vote, must be recorded
- it is good practice to include in minutes the important points of discussions

Controversial issues and complaints

- at group meetings, it is important that the president distinguish between personal and general concerns which may be raised. It is good practice to ask "Is this of general concern?"
- if a controversial issue, or complaint, of general concern is raised at a meeting, the president should then refer it as an item of business in the general business section of the meeting
- if the issue is personal it can be dealt with after the meeting. The president may deem it appropriate to arrange a meeting with the parent, director/principal etc
- confidentiality must be a prime consideration in handling controversial personal situations
- it may be necessary for the president to seek ways of ensuring that issues do not escalate out of proportion and cause unnecessary ill-feeling between group members and/or other persons
- members at parent group meetings are not permitted to discuss complaints against staff. The Departmental Administrative Instructions and Guidelines state:

Occasionally the council or an affiliated committee may receive a complaint against the Principal or another member of the school staff.

In the case of a complaint against the principal it must be referred without comment to the Chief Executive. In the case of a complaint against another member of staff (Including council employees) it must be referred without comment to the principal. In either case the complaint must not be debated.

- parent groups are not permitted to give directions to staff. The Administrative Instructions and Guidelines state:

A council or an affiliated committee must not give directions to a teacher (or the principal) in relation) in relation to the manner in which he/she carries out his/her duties as a teacher (or principal).

A council or affiliated committee must not interfere, or take any action that interferes with the provision, or the day-to-day management of the provision, of instruction in the school in accordance with the curriculum determined by the Chief Executive, on in the administration of discipline in the school.

MAINTAINING A PARENT GROUP

Reviewing your goals

In order to remain an effective and relevant part of the preschool/school, a parent group needs from time to time to review its aims and functions. The following suggestions may be of assistance:

- it is recommended that all parents be given the opportunity to say what they believe to be important in a preschool/school. Parent opinion can be canvassed by using a combination of methods such as 'telephone trees', series of small meetings both day and night, questionnaires, personal visits etc
- if changes to the aims of the group are seen to be worthwhile, it will be necessary to check the group's current constitution. Changes to the constitution may be made by following the procedure as stated by the group's constitution
- a parent group may request that an officer from SAASPC work with it on ideas to increase the effectiveness of its operation

Closure

- should a parent group find it necessary to close, it must be done only after seeking the views of the whole preschool/school community
- all efforts must be made to seek the views of the majority of parents in the preschool/school before making a decision
- to assist with this decision parents should be informed of the implications of such a move
- opportunities should be made for groups of parents to discuss all possible options with persons who work in parent groups which are functioning successfully
- the decision to close needs to be made at an annual general meeting or a special meeting, where all parents and members of the school community have the opportunity to vote. Written notice is usually given before a special meeting is held as required by the group's constitution
- If the Parent Group has its own bank account a decision should be made at this meeting about how the money shall be used e.g. may be used to purchase school related items, transferred to the Schools consolidated account as allowed for by its constitution
- the books kept by parent groups are valuable records and should not be lost. If a parent group closes all records should go to the Preschool management committee or the Council

Forming or reforming a parent group

- a parent group may be formed, or re-established after closure, by seeking the cooperation of the preschool director/school principal to call an open meeting of parents and interested community members to discuss the issue
- SAASPC is able to offer advice and give assistance, and Officers may be invited to attend a meeting
- at this meeting it is desirable to elect an interim convener (president) and a committee
- the committee should draw up suggested aims for the group, following the advice received from the open meeting, and be responsible for calling the next meeting
- the group may take the responsibility for its own name eg parent club, parents and friends, welfare club, parent association, parent auxiliary, parent involvement committee, parent community group, or any other appropriate name decided upon by the group
- the group makes decisions with regard to how often the group meets, dates, times and venues
- a constitution should be adopted as soon as possible. **Any group that operates without an approved constitution will not be covered by DECS insurance and MUST NOT undertake any activities eg fundraising, events, etc.** A model constitution may be found at Appendix 1.

Life membership

- the honour of life membership is not lightly or often bestowed
- a life member is literally a member of the group for life and is entitled to vote at all general meetings
- before life membership is awarded, it must be proposed, seconded and discussed at a group meeting. It must then be agreed to by vote carried by a majority of those present
- a parent group may decide the number of life memberships that it will bestow, bearing in mind the significance of the honour
- it is suggested that criteria for making the award include long and/or committed service to the group preschool/school and children, holding office in the group over a long period, providing valuable assistance in a specific capacity or a combination of these
- after a decision is made to award life membership to a member, or former member, the parent group may honour the occasion in any way it sees fit
- as an alternative a group may consider arranging with the principal for the awarding of a Departmental certificate for 10 years of service
- SAASPC will, if notified, acknowledge the award in its magazine the *Parents Say*.

Accountability

An effective parent group must keep in mind its accountability. It has responsibilities to:

- the preschool/school and its children who are the main reason for its existence
- the director/principal
- the Preschool management committee/Council, as an affiliated body
- its own members
- all parents and other members of the preschool/school community

A parent group must operate within the Education Act and Children's Services Acts and their Regulations, the Administrative Instructions and Guidelines and the "Financial Management in Schools" manual.

Efficient, well-run meetings demonstrate accountability through reports from officers and delegates to other committees, through proper financial management and through commitment to the well being of children at all times.

Annual evaluation of a parent group's own functions and directions is an indication of accountability.

MISCELLANEOUS

Insurance of voluntary workers in schools

These guidelines can be found in the Administrative Instructions and Guidelines, Section 5 School Councils, Affiliated Committees and Related Matters

Under the Government's self-insurance arrangements uniform cover is available to volunteers who assist departments and approved statutory agencies. In schools the cover extends to persons who carry out voluntary duties at the direction of the principal or Council.

This includes members of affiliated committees provided that the activities in which they engage are approved by the principal and undertaken under his/her direction

Public liability in schools

These guidelines can be found in the Administrative Instructions and Guidelines, Section 5 School Councils, Affiliated Committees and Related Matters

Indemnity

The Minister for Education indemnifies school councils against personal injury and property damage claims arising from the conduct of their affairs provided that the activity is not excluded from cover. Successful claims are funded through the Department in accordance with Government policy on self-insurance.

The indemnity is conditional on the strict observances by councils of the terms and conditions outlined below.

Exclusions

Claims arising from the following are not covered:

- *operation by the school or council of mechanical amusement devices eg a bouncy castle*
- *gaming devices*
- *the activities of private stall holders at any event conducted by the council*
- *use of aircraft*
- *motor vehicle and motor cycle competition sport*
- *serious and wilful misconduct by the school council, its servants or agents*
- *vehicles that normally require registration or statutory motor insurance under South Australian road traffic laws*
- *death, bodily injury or property damage to employees of the council*

In addition, the Minister reserves the right to exclude other activities from the terms of the indemnity in the light of claims experience.

Equipment which is borrowed, hired or leased by the council from outside organisations or individuals should be insured by the organisation or individual.

The use of mechanical amusement activities as part of a council event where the operator hires a portion of the school grounds must be adequately covered by the operator's public liability insurance.

Not to admit liability

The school council, its members, servants and agents must not without the written consent of the Minister, or his delegate, make any admission as to liability, promise or make any payment to a claimant or compromise a claim in any way.

Action to be taken following an incident that could result in a claim

A council's legal representative in any matter involving a liability claim will be the Crown Solicitor or his/her delegate. The council should contact the Manager, Legislation and Legal Services Unit, DECS in the first instance. If any member of a council is approached by a solicitor or lawyer about

any incident the member must not answer any questions but refer them to the Crown Solicitor through the Crown Solicitor, or his/her delegate. The Council should contact the Manager, Legislation and Legal Services Unit.

Following an incident that could result in a claim, the council's chairperson or delegate must:

- ensure that a full written report is prepared and forwarded to the Manager Legislation and Legal Services Unit DECS. The names and addresses of eye witnesses (if any) must be noted;
- provide officers of the department or the Crown Solicitor with any information about the claim that they might request and ensure that any correspondence sent to the council by the claimant, his/her solicitor, or his/her insurer is promptly redirected;
- assist the Crown Solicitor or Legislation and Legal Services Unit in every way possible to negotiate, defend or settle any liability claim including the exercising of the council's legal right of recovery against any other party.

Risk and safety management

Councils must at all times comply with all statutory obligations, by-laws or regulations relevant to their sphere of activity. This includes the Education Act and Regulations, the Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act and the Health Act.

Affiliated committees

Similar liability cover to that available to school councils is extended to affiliated committees except in this instance the activity or the club or association must be approved, in advance, by the principal.

Affiliated committees must not engage in activities which are excluded under the school council's indemnity

Property cover

Council owned property such as canteen fittings and stock are not covered by the government's 'self-insurance' arrangements. School council should consider acquiring insurance cover for these purposes.

The department does not fund the repair or replacement of school property in the event of accidental damage or loss should be taken either through insurance or local budgeting arrangements according to the school's resources and priorities.

SAASPC publications

- All government schools and preschools receive copies of the official association magazine the **Parents Say** which is published four times a year and the SAASPC **Annual Report**. Private subscriptions are welcomed and may be obtained by contacting the SAASPC Secretary (refer to address below)
- Affiliated groups receive the SAASPC newsletters **Net Working** and other occasional publications
- Copies of this **Handbook** are sent free to affiliated groups, extra copies may also be purchased from the South Australian Association of School Parents Club Inc, GPO Box 2126, Adelaide 5001, Free call 1800 724 640 or can be downloaded from our website www.saaspc.org.au

APPENDIX 1

Suggested Constitution
for a

SCHOOL PARENT GROUP

based on the Model Constitution for Affiliated Committees provided by DECS

[INSERT NAME OF PARENT GROUP]

CONSTITUTION

[insert date]

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Insert name of Parent group
eg Blackwood High School
Parents and Friends Association

[INSERT NAME OF PARENT GROUP] CONSTITUTION

1 NAME

Insert name

The name of the Affiliated Committee is [insert name of parent group]

2 INTERPRETATION

These clauses must be included

In this constitution, unless the contrary intention appears:

'the Act' means the *Education Act 1972* as amended.

'administrative instructions' means administrative instructions issued pursuant to section 86 of the Act.

Insert names

'Affiliated Committee' means the [insert name of parent group], affiliated with [insert name of governing/school] Council Inc, and the constitution of which is approved by the Minister in accordance with section 86 of the Act.

Insert name

'Council' means the [insert name of governing/school] Council Inc

'financial year' means the year ending 31 October or as varied by administrative instruction.

'Government school' means a school established under section 5 of the Act, for the purpose of providing courses of instruction in pre-school, primary or secondary education.

'majority' means more than half of the total number.

Insert name

'member' means any person who is for the time being registered as a member of the [insert name of parent group]

'membership' means all persons who comprise the Affiliated Committee in accordance with this constitution.

'Minister' means the person to whom the administration of the Act is committed pursuant to the *Administrative Arrangements Act, 1994*.

Regulations means regulations made under the Act.

'register of members' means the register of members of the Affiliated Committee.

'school community' means all parents, students and staff of the school and all other persons who have a legitimate interest or connection with the school.

'special resolution' of the Affiliated Committee means a resolution, for the purposes of amending the constitution passed by a duly convened meeting of the members of the Affiliated Committee if-

- (1) at least 21 days written notice has been given to all members specifying the intention to propose the resolution as a special resolution; and
- (2) it is passed, at the meeting, by a majority of not

These clauses are optional; others can be included if required

less than three quarters of members as vote in person at that meeting.

'*Chief Executive*' means the Chief Executive of the Department of Education, Training and Employment in accordance with section 11 of the Act.

'*Department*' means the Department of Education, Training and Employment established pursuant to the *Public Sector Management Act 1995*.

'*student*' is a person attending the school, or enrolled but not yet attending the school.

'*parent*' in relation to the school means the parent of a child attending the school and the parent of a child enrolled, but not yet attending, at the school.

'*parent of a child*' includes -

- (a) a person who has legal custody or guardianship of the child; and
- (b) a person standing *in loco parentis* to the child but does not include a parent of the child where another parent or person has legal custody or guardianship of the child to the exclusion of that parent.

'*Principal*' means the head teacher of the school within the meaning of the Act.

These clauses must be included
Insert names

3 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COUNCIL

- 3.1 The [*insert name of parent group*] is affiliated with the [*insert name of governing/school*] Council, in accordance with section 86 of the Act.
- 3.2 The Affiliated Committee may nominate a member to the Council.
- 3.3 The Affiliated Committee will maintain effective communication about its activities with the Council.

This clause must be included
Insert name

4 OBJECT

The object of the [*insert name of parent group*] is to support the involvement of the school community in the school.

This section must be included and made specific to the parent group

Examples given in 5.1.1-5.1.7 can be changed to suit the needs of the parent group

5 FUNCTIONS OF THE AFFILIATED COMMITTEE

- 5.1 The [*insert name of parent group*] will perform the following functions:
 - 5.1.1 Provide a means of contact between home and school.
 - 5.1.2 Form a liaison between parents, students and teachers.
 - 5.1.3 Assist parents to gain skills to participate in the decision making of the school.
 - 5.1.4 To develop and maintain an interest in the

These clauses must be included

- welfare of children at school.
- 5.1.5 Support the Principal and the school staff to enhance student learning.
- 5.1.6 To advise and assist the Governing/ School Council on appropriate ways to consult with the parents of the school.
- 5.1.7 To encourage parents to become involved in the school in various ways.

- 5.2 The Affiliated Committee must be responsible for the proper care and maintenance of any property owned by the Affiliated Committee.
- 5.3 The Affiliated Committee may raise funds for school related purposes.
- 5.4 The Affiliated Committee's functions must be exercised in accordance with legislation, administrative instructions and this constitution.
- 5.5 The Affiliated Committee may do all those acts and things incidental to the exercise of these functions.

6 MEMBERSHIP

6.1 Eligibility

A person is eligible for membership if that person:

- 6.1.1 is prepared and able to support the activities of the parent group.
- 6.1.2 is a parent of a student atschool
- 6.1.3 is a member of the school community and interested in the welfare of students at the school.

6.2 Membership register

Membership will be determined as those members whose names are recorded in the membership register for the current year.

6.3 Membership rights

Each member has the right to attend and vote at general meetings of the members.

6.4 Cessation

A member ceases to be a member, if the member:-

- 6.4.1 dies;
- 6.4.2 resigns by written notice to the Secretary;
- 6.4.3 is removed as a member in accordance with section 97 of the Act;

7 OFFICE HOLDERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

7.1 Office holders

The office holders are the President, Secretary and Treasurer who will be elected by the members at the Annual General Meeting.

Membership must be prescribed but can be made specific to the parent group

Examples given in 6.1.1 - 6.1.3 can be changed to suit the needs of the parent group

These clauses must be included

Must include a section outlining office holders and, if required an executive committee, and made specific to the parent group

Examples are given which can be changed to suit the needs of the parent group

It is not mandatory to have an Executive Committee

7.2 Executive Committee

The members may appoint an Executive Committee comprising the office holders and [insert number] other members, which is to:

- 7.2.1 meet to carry out business delegated or referred by a general meeting of the members; and
- 7.2.2 report to subsequent general meetings of members

7.3 The President

- 7.3.1 The President must call and preside at the general meetings of the members and the Executive Committee.
- 7.3.2 The President must facilitate full and balanced participation by members present at a meeting and decide upon the manner in which meetings are conducted and matters of order.
- 7.3.3 The President must report the proceedings and operations of the Affiliated Committee at the Annual General Meeting, for the period since the previous Annual General Meeting.
- 7.3.4 If the President is absent or unable to preside at a meeting, a member appointed by the members present at the meeting must preside.

7.4 The Secretary

- 7.4.1 The Secretary must give notice of meetings in accordance with the provisions of this constitution.
- 7.4.2 The Secretary must ensure that the minutes of meetings are recorded and available to members.
- 7.4.3 The Secretary is responsible for the maintenance and safekeeping of:-
 - (i) official records of the business of the Affiliated Committee and a register of minutes of meetings;
 - (ii) copies of notices, a file of correspondence and records of other documents and reports made by or on behalf of the Affiliated Committee;
 - (iii) the register of members;
 - (iv) the constitution and providing copies as requested.
- 7.4.4 The Secretary must ensure that a copy of this constitution is available for public inspection at the school during normal school hours.

7.5 The Treasurer

- 7.5.1 The Treasurer must:
 - (i) ensure that financial budgets and statements are prepared;
 - (ii) submit a report on the finances to each meeting of members;

- (iii) present audited accounts to the Annual General Meeting.

8 MEETINGS

Must include minimum requirements for general meetings, the AGM and if in place, the Executive Committee

Examples provided which can be changed to suit the needs of the parent group

8.1 General meetings

- 8.1.1 General meetings of members will be held [insert required times eg at least 4 times a year or monthly] or as determined by the members.
- 8.1.2 All members are eligible to attend general meetings and vote on any matters proposed for resolution.
- 8.1.3 The President must call and preside at general meetings of the members.
- 8.1.4 At least [insert time eg one month, seven days] written notice of the meeting must be given to members. The notice must give the date, time and place of the meeting.

8.2 Annual General Meeting

- 8.2.1 An Annual General Meeting must be held in each calendar year to:-
 - (i) present reports;
 - (ii) to elect and/or declare election results for office holders;
 - (iii) and for any other reason relating to the affairs, functions or membership of the Affiliated Committee

8.3 Executive Committee Meetings

- 8.3.1 The Executive Committee must meet [insert time eg at least twice in each school term]
- 8.3.2 Notice of the meeting must be given [insert time eg at the previous meeting or by a least 7 days written notice]

8.4 Voting

- 8.4.1 Voting will be by [insert method eg show of hands or ballot]

*Only need to include 8.3 if an Executive Committee is in place
Insert time*

Insert time

Insert method

9 PROCEEDINGS

9.1 Meetings

- 9.1.1 The quorum for a general meeting shall be [insert number eg % of the members or half plus 1]
- 9.1.2 If at the expiration of 30 minutes after the appointed time for the meeting there is no quorum present, the meeting must stand adjourned to such time and place as those members present determine.
- 9.1.3 Except in the case of a special resolution, a decision of the majority of those members present and eligible to vote is the decision of the Affiliated Committee.

Must include minimum requirements for proceedings of meetings, including quorum

Examples given can be changed to suit the needs of the parent group

- 9.1.4 The President has a deliberative vote only. In the event of an equality of votes, the President does not have a second or casting vote and the motion will be taken to be defeated.
- 9.1.5 The Affiliated Committee may, at its discretion, allow non-members who have special interests or knowledge to attend its meetings as observers and, if it agrees, take part in discussions on particular issues. Non-members cannot vote.
- 9.1.6 The Affiliated Committee may from time to time determine procedures to facilitate and expedite its business.

9.2 Conflict of interest

- 9.2.1 A member who has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in a contract or proposed contract with the Affiliated Committee:
 - (i) must, as soon as the member becomes aware of the interest, disclose the nature of the interest to the Affiliated Committee; and
 - (ii) must not take part in deliberations or decisions of the Affiliated Committee with respect to that contract.
- 9.2.2 A disclosure must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the Affiliated Committee.
- 9.2.3 If a member discloses an interest in a contract or proposed contract the member is not liable to account for the profits derived from the contract.

10 ELECTIONS

- 10.1 Elections of office bearers, and the nominee to the governing/school Council, will occur at the Annual General Meeting.
- 10.2 Nominations for positions of office bearers will be called from the floor of the Annual General Meeting.
- 10.3 Any member is eligible to hold a position on the committee and to vote.
- 10.4 The office bearers, who shall not hold the same position for longer than two consecutive years, will be President, Secretary and Treasurer.
- 10.5 Committee members automatically retire if three consecutive meetings are not attended without apologies.
- 10.6 Any vacancy which occurs on the committee may be filled by election held at a general meeting.

11 MINUTES

- 11.1 Proper minutes of the Annual General Meeting, general meetings and the Executive Committee meetings must be entered into books kept for that purpose.

Must include provisions relating to the procedures for electing office holders and, if in place, an executive committee

*Examples given can be changed to suit the needs of the parent group. Could include:
 Conduct of elections
 Eligibility to nominate and vote
 Notice of elections
 Nominations for elections
 Eligibility for nomination
 Election without ballot
 Contested elections
 Counting of votes
 Scrutineers
 Declaration of election*

Must include minimum requirements for keeping proper records of the AGM and general meetings and meetings of the Executive Committee

Clauses 11.1 and 11.3 are mandatory

11.2 The minutes must be confirmed at the next respective meeting and signed by the chairperson of the meeting at which the proceedings took place or by the chairperson of the subsequent meeting.

11.3 Upon reasonable request, the books containing the minutes of any meetings must be made available for inspection by any member.

12 TERM OF OFFICE

*Must include provisions relating to the term of office holders and Executive Committee
Example given can be changed to suit the needs of the parent group*

12.1 Elected office holders will be appointed for [*insert a term eg not exceeding one year*] and may stand for subsequent re-election but [*insert conditions eg may serve no more than two consecutive years in one position*].

13 DELEGATES

This section is optional

Examples can be changed/deleted to suit the needs of the parent group

13.1 Nominees to the Council of the school, and delegates to any other advisory and area association committees will be elected at the Annual General Meeting and will report to each meeting of the members.

13.2 Delegates or nominees who do not fulfil their obligations or who are no longer members of the Affiliated Committee, may have their delegate/nominee status revoked by the resolution of the members at a general meeting.

13.3 The revocation must be made in writing to the other body.

14 VACANCIES

*Must include provisions relating to how casual vacancies will be handled.
Example can be changed to suit the needs of the parent group*

A casual vacancy among the officers, representatives or delegates may be filled by election at a general meeting of the group. Any member so elected will hold office until the next Annual General Meeting.

15 ACCOUNTS TO BE KEPT AND OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

*These clauses must be included.
Others can be added*

15.1 The Affiliated Committee must ensure that proper accounts are kept of its financial affairs, and in controlling any account must ensure proper books and accounts are kept of all funds paid to that account, together with details of any dealings involving those funds.

15.2 All accounts must be operated on the basis of the designated financial year.

15.3 The accounts must be kept in accordance with provisions of the Act, Regulations, administrative instructions and this constitution.

15.4 The funds of the Affiliated Committee must only be expended for school related purposes.

15.5 The Affiliated Committee may transfer funds as it thinks fit to:

- (i) the Council;
- (ii) another existing or proposed Government school.

16 AUDIT

*These clauses must be included.
Others can be added*

- 16.1 The Affiliated Committee must arrange for any accounts under its control to be audited at least once in every year, as soon as possible after the end of the financial year, or at such other time as determined by administrative instruction.
- 16.2 The Affiliated Committee may arrange for accounts to be audited at such other intervals as the Affiliated Committee determines, by a person appointed by the Affiliated Committee.
- 16.3 The Affiliated Committee must make available for inspection at any time, by the Auditor-General, any accounts under its control, including all relevant records and papers connected with an account.
- 16.4 The audit of any accounts under the control of the Affiliated Committee will be in accordance with the provisions of the Act, Regulations, administrative instructions and this constitution.

17 REPORTING

Reporting must be prescribed. Examples can be changed to suit the needs of the parent group

- 17.1 The President and Treasurer must report to members at the Annual General Meeting.
- 17.2 Reports presented at the Annual General Meeting must describe the operations, activities and finances of the Affiliated Committee.

18 RECORDS

*These clauses must be included.
Others can be added*

- 18.1 The Affiliated Committee is responsible for the safe and proper storage of its records.
- 18.2 The Affiliated Committee must make the records available at any time to the Minister or to any person authorised by the Minister in that behalf and allow those records to be removed by any such person.

19 AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION

*These clauses must be included.
Others can be added*

- 19.1 This constitution may be altered, modified or substituted at the direction of the Minister, in accordance with section 88 of the Act.
- 19.2 This constitution may also be amended, altered, modified or substituted by the Affiliated Committee by special resolution, and approval in writing by the Minister.
- 19.3 An amendment to the constitution has no effect until submitted to and approved by the Minister.

20 PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE CONSTITUTION

*This clause must be included.
Others can be added*

The Affiliated Committee must keep available for public inspection a copy of its constitution (as in force from time to time) at the school, during normal school hours.

21 DISSOLUTION

*These clauses must be included.
Others can be added*

- 21.1 The Affiliated Committee must resolve by special resolution to cease its operations and dissolve.
- 21.2 The Affiliated Committee will cease if the school is closed and must follow any directions issued by the Chief Executive regarding the forwarding of the books, records and property of the Affiliated Committee.
- 21.3 Upon cessation its books, records and property must be forwarded to the Council.

22 PROHIBITION AGAINST SECURING PROFITS FOR MEMBERS

*This clause must be included.
Others can be added*

The assets and income of the Affiliated Committee must be applied exclusively to the promotion of its objects and no portion will be paid or distributed directly or indirectly to members except for expenses incurred on behalf of the Affiliated Committee.

APPENDIX 2

DEPARTMENTAL PUBLICATIONS AND REGULATIONS

For accurate information refer to the DECS website www.decs.sa.gov.au. The following provide a summary of items that may be of interest to parents.

Information for preschools and schools

- Administrative Instructions and Guidelines
- Awards and Industrial Agreements
- Circulars to Principals
- Various Acts and regulations relevant to schools and preschools
- Occupational Health Safety and Welfare materials
- DECS Policy Statements and Instructions
- School Context Statements

DECS policies and instructions for schools

Policies and Instructions are statements of authority and, where necessary, they are supported by a commitment of resources. For example Parent Initiatives in Education Grants (PIE Grants) can be applied for to update the Parents and Schools Policy at your local site. These statements are binding on schools by virtue of the authority of the Chief Executive. Schools are expected to adopt and implement them. Below is a list of some of the DECS policy statements and instructions that may be of interest to parents:

- Sexual Harassment and Antiracism Policy
- Foundations for the Future - a Declaration
- Racist Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedures
- Grievance Resolution Policy for Employees
- Merit Selection Policy and Procedures
- Panellist Handbook - Merit Selection (Schools and Preschools versions)
- Managing Significant Underperformance
- Camps and Excursion Guidelines
- Information Privacy Statement
- Managing Complaints and Challenging Situations
- Child Abuse and Neglect Policy (Children's Services and Schools versions)

DECS policies and instructions for schools

- Policy Statement 01 - Child Protection Policy
- Policy Statement 02 - Antiracism Policy
- Policy Statement 03 - Student Participation
- Policy Statement 04 - Educating For the 21st Century
- Policy Statement 05a - School Sports Policy Guidelines
- Policy Statement 05b - The Sporting Needs of Children
- Policy Statement 05e - Sun Protection Policy
- Policy Statement 06 - Parents and Schools
- Policy Statement 07 - Students with Disabilities
- Policy Statement 08 - Performance Management
- Policy Statement 09 - Gifted Children and Students
- Policy Statement 10 - Multiculturalism
- Policy Statement 11 - Assessment and Reporting for Schools
- Policy Statement 12 - School Discipline

Administrative instructions and guidelines

A number of things that parents need to know about are written in the Administrative Instructions and Guidelines (AIGs) - Section 1 General School Procedures; Section 2 The Teaching Service; Section 3 Student Matters; Section 4 Conditional of employment - ancillary staff Matters; Section 5 School Council and other committees.