

Parents and Citizens' (P&C) Associations and Schools – Managing Conflict

All members of a school community have the right to be treated with respect.

If conflict arises – within the P&C, between a P&C member and a member of the school community, or between a P&C and a school – all parties have an obligation to try to resolve the situation in a respectful way for the benefit of the school and its students.

The [Parent and Community Code of Conduct](#) aims to communicate the conduct expected of parents, carers and visitors while they're on state school grounds, at school activities, and interacting with others in the school community.

P&C conflict – meetings

The chair of a meeting (P&C president or someone appointed to preside under clause 21.1 Presiding at Meetings of the [model constitution](#)) is responsible for managing conflict that arises at P&C meetings.

The chair must:

- remind members of protocols prior to and during the meeting
- allow each member an opportunity to have their grievances heard and treated legitimately
- maintain an objective view at all times and not take sides
- ensure that each member's comments and contributions are treated with respect.

If a member continually speaks out of turn or intentionally dominates the meeting, the chair may wish to establish and/or use clearly understood protocols to ensure each member has an opportunity to express their views.

If matters escalate, it is important for the chair to bring the discussion back to the P&C's main objectives – to promote the interests of, and facilitate the development and further improvement of, the school. The chair should also remind P&C members of their code of conduct (Schedule 2 of the [model constitution](#)).

Sometimes it may be appropriate to defer discussion to a future meeting of the P&C.

P&C executive officers and the P&C

The P&C executive committee should maintain transparent operations at all times.

Matters discussed or decisions made by the executive committee under clause 16.3 Authority of Executive Committee in Matters of Urgency of the [model constitution](#) should be tabled at the next scheduled P&C general meeting.

Where there is conflict within the executive committee, the committee must make every effort to work together. This can be assisted by refining the goals and the objectives of the P&C to ensure everyone's focus is on achieving a shared vision.

If the executive committee cannot come to an agreement on a matter, it should be referred to a P&C general meeting.

Serious incidents

If matters escalate and a P&C member acts inappropriately on state school grounds, it is important to remain calm and professional and advise the principal as soon as possible.

Principals may choose to use their legislative powers to direct how a person is to behave while on school grounds, or prohibit them from entering the premises for a certain period of time.

The Department of Education's (DoE) [Hostile People on School Premises, Wilful Disturbance and Trespass procedure](#) supports principals to make these directions if necessary.

The [Online incident management guidelines for school leaders](#) (for DoE employees only) also provides guiding information for principals and school leaders when dealing with online incidents.

Removal of a member and/or officer from a P&C

In exceptional circumstances, a situation may arise where there are ground/s for removal of a person as a P&C member or an officer of the P&C executive.

Legislation prohibits the executive from unilaterally removing a member and/or officer. Rather, the P&C can consider the removal.

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Such a course of action should only be considered as a last resort as it is not conducive to good school community relationships.

Before commencing a removal process, advice should be sought from P&Cs Qld.

The school and the P&C

To achieve the best outcomes for students, schools and P&Cs must establish positive working relationships.

If there are issues of contention between the school and the P&C, the matter should be tabled and discussed at a P&C general meeting to determine an outcome. The matters tabled are to be factual, impartial, and not contain emotive statements. Where possible, options for a way forward should be included.

If the issue cannot be resolved, the P&C may wish to put its concerns in writing to the principal, including a proposed outcome.

Likewise, if the school has concerns about the P&C, these concerns should initially be discussed with the P&C and/or with the P&C's executive committee.

If a more formal approach is required, the school should put the concerns in writing to the P&C president and/or executive committee, including a proposed outcome or options for a way forward. The document should be factual, impartial and free of emotive statements. A mutually convenient time should be scheduled to further discuss the matter.

If the matter cannot be resolved through this process, the principal may seek support or assistance from their supervisor. The principal's supervisor may arrange mediation if the issues are persistent and affect P&C functions.

P&Cs may seek further support from [P&Cs Qld](#) or an external organisation if necessary.

