

Activities

Possible activities for parents could be:

- organising information and welcome events for new students and parents at the school
- helping with other school events and functions, such as a quiz night or a book fair
- organising second hand book and uniform schemes
- organising fundraising activities
- helping to cater or work at fundraising and social activities
- assisting in the preparation of school newsletters, handbooks and calendars
- running, or helping in, the canteen or with special school lunch days
- providing parent views to school leadership about school policies such as codes of behaviour, anti-bullying, homework or uniform that have been identified by the school for review.

Always remember that the education, learning and wellbeing 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

South Australian Association of School Parent Communities (SAASPC)

- promotes and develops the interest of parents in the education and general wellbeing of children at preschool and school
- develops and maintains contact with parent groups throughout the state
- acts as an advocate for parents on educational matters
- supports parents with information on parent group organisation and meeting procedure; the rights and responsibilities of parents in preschools and schools; the regulations, policies and programs of the SA Department for Education
- offers free information sessions to parents on *Reporting abuse and neglect* and *Principal/Director selection panel*



More information can be found at
www.saaspc.org.au



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Affiliated committees and Parent groups



What is an affiliated committee?

Legislation in South Australia requires that there must be a Council (usually a Governing Council) in each school, and they also provide for the establishment of affiliated committees – which for our purposes are 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.

Parent groups may take many different forms depending on the needs and wishes of its parents. They can be parents and friends groups, class groups, subject groups, support groups, parent networks, friends of the school.

Whichever form of group is chosen, a constitution must be forwarded to the preschool/school's Education Director who will send it to the Minister (or his/her delegate) for approval.

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 wellbeing 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 e.g. finance, fundraising or grounds committees
- provide a regular link between parents, teachers and children of the preschool/school
- 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 environment of care and concern that can assist and complement that of the professional educator.

Composition and format

A parent group needs a planned structure to 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
- general meetings should at all times be open to anyone from the school community. However only members of the group are entitled to vote.

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 DE 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 on the SAASPC website.

It is good practice for the parent group to review its operations every 2-3 years and to update its constitution if required.