

Parents & Friends Manual
for the
SYDNEY MONTESSORI SCHOOL
Limited

Trading as
Sydney Montessori School

Policy Name	Manual of the SMS Parents & Friends
Related Policies and Legislation	SMS Parent Code of Conduct, SMS Parent Handbook
Policy Category	S3.9 Management & Operation of School
Relevant Audience	Parents & Friends Members
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Person/s Responsible for Review	SMS Board Policy Sub-Committee SMS Administration

Part 1: Introduction and Administration

1.1 Introduction: Parents & Friends Committee.

This committee oversees the maintenance and enhancement of Sydney Montessori Schools' (SMS) unique, positive, caring and encouraging energy; which is shared and appreciated by the wider community. It is responsible for arranging SMS events for the School community and wider community, fundraising and providing support services. It is also responsible for ensuring parental support of a broad, harmonious and thorough education by: encouraging good relationships and open communication throughout the School and by giving parents opportunities to participate in the education of their children in partnership with teachers and the broader School environment.

1.2 Parents and Friends Manual

This Parents & Friends (P&F) Manual contains the current standing policies as endorsed by the Board of the Sydney Montessori School.

1.2.1. Reasons for Adoption. The reasons for adopting this Manual include:

- The efficiency of having all operational practices in one place;
- The ability to quickly orient new Parents & Friends members to current policy or practice;
- The promotion of open communication and an efficient meeting practice
- The ease of reviewing current policy when considering new issues; and
- The ability to provide clear, proactive policies to guide the P&F and its members

1.2.2. Scope of manual. The manual contains all standing practices relating to the P&F.

1.2.3. Availability of information. The Secretary of the P&F will ensure that all information contained in the manual is available to P&F members on request.

Part 2: Parents and Friends: Structure and Processes

2.1 Governing Style

The P&F will approach its task with a style that emphasises outward communication and support and encouragement of diversity in viewpoints. In this spirit, the P&F will:

- Ensure that the P&F governs with excellence through conforming to:
 - Expectations relating to attendance;
 - Respect for clarified roles;
 - Speaking to management and the public with one voice; and
 - Self-policing of any tendency to stray from the governance structure and processes adopted in these policies.

2.2 P&F Members' Code of Conduct.

P&F members shall resist the temptation to focus on areas and activities outside of the main objectives of the P&F Committee; that is, support of School functions in a positive and proactive manner. No P&F member shall take any action in their capacity as a P&F member unless it is related to the P&F and approved by the executive team / administration of the School.

Part 3: Implementation Essentials

3.1 The SMS Parents & Friends (P&F) Committee

Involvement in the School

In a growing school such as ours, parent involvement in support of the School's goals is essential. The success and development of the School has been to a large extent due to the willingness of parents to give time and energy to work and contribute in a variety of ways.

The continuation of this success will depend heavily on our future families and it is for this reason that parents are actively encouraged to become involved. Whilst personal and business commitments may make it difficult to participate in many activities, all parents can contribute in some way.

Involvement within the school can mean:

- Volunteering.
- Becoming a member of the school parent committee group, the P&F, which meets twice a term.
- Becoming a Classroom Representative/Liaison to assist teachers and new parents (e.g. donating time, services, support etc) plus sharing school news and attending P&F meetings.
- Offering administrative, or organisational assistance as required to the school's Admin team.
- Nominating for the School Board when a position is available.

3.2 SMS P&F Committee

The Parents & Friends Committee is made up of all parents and guardians who are part of The Sydney Montessori School. The P&F normally has three office bearers, Chairperson, Co-chair and Secretary. These positions are open for election every twelve months with reelection to current positions available as desired.

The P&F reports directly to the Principal/delegate and through the Principal to the School Board.

The P&F normally meets at least twice each school term with meetings open to all members of the School Community. Upcoming P&F meetings are advertised in the School newsletter.

3.3 P&F Vision, Mission and main Objectives

VISION:

To foster and support a generous and welcoming community that participates in inspired, sustainable activities

MISSION:

We provide a base that supports and strengthens our School community. We do this through a variety of social activities, targeting all stages and levels of the school, to encourage growth, stability and engagement.

The P&F's main objective is to:

- Support and assist in the various activities run by the School (School disco, Sports carnival, Music nights etc.) Each family is encouraged to participate in school activities.
- Support and coordinate as needed extra School community events eg. Easter activities, Mother's/Father's Day stalls, Mango fundraiser, Graduation etc.
- Assist in busy bee coordination (there are several busy bees planned per year and a roster is drawn up to allow everyone to participate in the tasks needed to be done.)

The families of the School provide the energy that will contribute to ensuring our children can receive the highest-quality Montessori education.

Parent commitment means acknowledging the need for all families to help the School run smoothly and are people available when help is needed. Along the way, you will learn more about your child's exciting life at school and the wonderful influences of a Montessori education.

3.4 SMS P&F Meeting Protocols

SMS P&F Committee Chair

The roles and responsibilities of a SMS P&F Committee Chair can be summarised as follows:

- Chair the committee in the interests of the School and the P&F.
- In conjunction with the School, ensure timely advice is provided to P&F members regarding meeting times, dates and venues.
- Actively contribute to the agenda and/or background information and projects.
- Reject late agenda items where there is insufficient time for the P&F members to adequately review the items prior to the meeting (note them and carry them forward).
- In conjunction with the P&F Executive, ensure timely provision of agenda and papers to P&F members (3-5 working days prior to meetings).
- In conjunction with the P&F Executive, control the volume of agenda items submitted to the members.
- Ensure that the P&F members are working within its objectives and in accordance with SMS Parent Code of Conduct.
- Conduct meetings in a timely manner (i.e. meetings to commence and end on time).
- Maintain order and focus on meeting priorities.
- Lead and encourage relevant discussion on item.
- Ensure that all members' voices are included and actively support participants to engage in discussions and decisions of the P&F.
- Ensure discussion is conducted in a relevant and timely manner.
- Ensure there is agreement on future actions to be taken. This may take the form of a vote where deemed necessary.
- Manage and appropriately deal with any grievances and complaints arising from or between members.
- Always behave professionally and respectfully.
- Request that members confirm the minutes from the previous meeting.
- Close the meeting and note when the next meeting is scheduled.
- After each meeting the draft minutes provided by the P&F Executive should be cleared by the Principal in a timely manner to facilitate the distribution of action correspondence.

Committee Members

The roles and responsibilities of the P&F Members can be summarised as follows:

- RSVP in a timely fashion for upcoming meetings.
- Provide apologies, verbally or in writing, to the P&F Chair, prior to the meeting.
- Actively contribute to the agenda and/or background agenda items.
- Ensure that they are prepared for the meeting by thoroughly reviewing the agenda and agenda items.
- When speaking to an item, ensure that they address the issue/agenda item under discussion.
- Express opinions, but listen to and value others when they have the floor.
- Provide full attention to discussion and refrain from using mobile phones and other technologies (which should be set to silent mode) for non-meeting purposes.
- Adhere to a professional and respectful behaviour during meetings and not use inflammatory language or engage in bullying, inappropriate or intimidating behaviour.
- Respect the role of the Chair as leader of the meeting and abide by their rulings in relation to meeting procedure.
- Respect the confidential nature of the business of the P&F Committee and the school Principal.
- Members should not make improper use of their position to gain an advantage for themselves or another person
- Always act in the best interests of the SMS P&F and the School.

Standing Orders for P&F Meetings:

Procedural Matters

- At the commencement of each meeting the Chair will declare the meeting open in person (and via Zoom as needed)
- The Agenda will commence with: -
 - a welcome to any new members
 - call for apologies
 - a request that P&F members approve the previous Meetings Minutes (only if they were in attendance)

Proposals and Motions

- All proposals made to the meeting shall be in the form of motions.
- All motions and amendments must be moved and seconded.
- If no seconder is found, the motion or amendment lapses.
- Discussion regarding the motion should be allowed from the floor and addressed to the Chair.
- If the motion is verbal, the Chair should restate the motion to ensure that all members understand what they are being asked to vote on.

Amendments

- Amendments to motions can only be put once the substantive motion is moved.
- Amendments must be debated prior to the mover of the motion taking their right of reply.
- If an amendment is not seconded, then it will lapse.
- An amendment that is acceptable to the mover of the motion may, with leave of the meeting, be incorporated into the substantive motion without debate.

Voting

- Once the debate on a motion is concluded, the Chair then calls each option: “All in favour?”; “Opposed?” or “Abstaining?”
- Once a clear majority has been ascertained, the motion is declared, and the meeting can move onto the next item of business
- All members present at a meeting are entitled to have one deliberative vote
- The Chair of the meeting may have a casting as well as a deliberative vote but only where this is stated in the composition of the Code of Conduct

Closing the meeting

The Chair will formally close the meeting and identify the date and time for the next scheduled meeting of the committee.