

So, you've joined the School Association Committee – what now?

First up: thank you. By joining the School Association Committee, you're helping make sure families have a voice in the life of the school.

You don't need to be an expert. You don't need governance experience. You do need to understand a few basics, and this guide walks you through them.

What is a School Association Committee?

A School Association is a formal body established under Tasmanian law. It exists to represent families and the school community and to work in partnership with the school.

At a high level, the committee's role is to:

- Help shape school policies
- Contribute to school improvement planning
- Support shared goals, priorities and values
- Strengthen connections between families, students and staff
- Oversee fundraising and how funds are used for the benefit of the school This is set out clearly in your constitution.

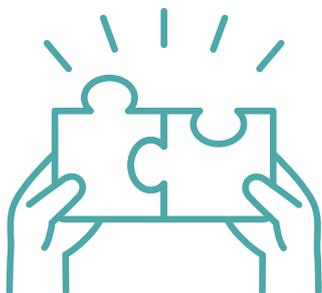
What the committee is not

This is just as important.

The committee does not:

- Manage the day-to-day running of the school
- Make decisions about individual students, staff or discipline matters
- Direct teachers or school staff in how they do their jobs

The Principal remains responsible for the daily operation of the school.



You have a constitution - why that matters

Every School Association operates under a constitution.

Think of the constitution as your rulebook and where to turn if things feel unclear.

The constitution explains:

- What the School Association exists to do
- How the committee is formed
- What roles exist (Chair, Deputy Chair, Secretary, Treasurer)
- How meetings and decisions work
- What powers the committee has, and the limits on those powers

You are not expected to memorise it, but you should know where to find it and refer back to it when needed.

Understanding roles

All committee members share responsibility for acting:

- In the best interests of the school
- Transparently and respectfully
- In line with the constitution and Department instructions

Some members take on specific roles:

Chair

- Leads meetings
- Helps keep discussions respectful and focused
- Is often the main point of contact

Deputy Chair

- Supports the Chair
- Steps in when the Chair is unavailable

Secretary

- Organises meetings and agendas
- Keeps minutes and records
- Helps ensure decisions are documented

Treasurer

- Oversees finances
- Keeps financial records
- Ensures spending is approved and transparent

These roles and responsibilities are set out in both the Constitution and the Secretary's Instruction No. 7.



First-meeting checklist for new committee members

Use this as a simple starting point.

- Have access to shared files (Microsoft Teams, Google Drive or similar)
- Have a copy of the School Association constitution
- Know when and how often meetings are held
- Understand that decisions are made collectively
- Know where minutes and financial records are stored
- Know who to ask if something feels unclear (it's okay to ask)

Check out our "Post AGM checklist"

Governance basics (the things every committee member should know)

Even if you never touch the bank account or write minutes, every committee member should understand the basics:

The committee is accountable

The School Association must comply with the Education Act, the constitution, and Ministerial and Secretary's Instructions

Money matters are regulated

- The School Association may have its own bank account
- The account must be in the official name of the School Association
- At least two committee members must be authorised signatories
- All spending must be approved by the committee and recorded in minutes
- Finances are audited annually and present to the association at the AGM
- Your School Association may have an ABN
- Your School Association may fundraise to support the school however it is not the core role of the committee – it is one way the committee can support shared goals, not the reason the committee exists
- Some activities, like employing someone, borrowing money, or entering contracts over \$5,000, require written approval from the Secretary of Education before they happen.

One final thing

You're not expected to get everything right immediately.

Good governance is not about perfection. It's about curiosity and transparency. It's about asking questions early and working together respectfully.

And if you're ever unsure, TASSO is here to support you.

