

PAC & DPAC SECRETARY HANDBOOK

A Guide for SD73 PACs and DPAC Secretaries. 2026.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Secretary Role

Welcome!

The Secretary is one of the most important executive positions within a Parent Advisory Council (PAC) or District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC). While the role is often associated primarily with taking meeting minutes, the responsibilities of the Secretary extend far beyond record-keeping.

The Secretary helps ensure the organization operates effectively by maintaining accurate records, supporting good governance practices, preserving organizational history, and facilitating clear communication among Executive members and the broader membership.

The Secretary is typically elected by the membership at the Annual General Meeting. Where permitted by the Bylaws, the Executive may appoint a Secretary to fill a vacancy between elections until the membership has an opportunity to elect or confirm a successor.

This handbook is intended to provide PAC and DPAC executives, prospective Secretaries, and current Secretaries with an overview of the role and practical guidance for carrying it out successfully.

A Key Leadership Role

The Secretary is more than a note-taker. The position is an essential leadership role that helps ensure the PAC or DPAC operates effectively, transparently, and in accordance with its bylaws.

By maintaining accurate records, supporting sound governance practices, and facilitating clear communication, the Secretary plays a vital role in preserving organizational knowledge and helping the Executive serve its members effectively.

Why the Secretary Matters

The Secretary helps ensure:

- Continuity between Executive teams
- Transparency and accountability
- Effective communication
- Compliance with bylaws and policies
- Preservation of organizational records

Chapter 2: Responsibilities of the Secretary

Governance Responsibilities

- Maintain official records
- Record decisions
- Track Executive terms
- Monitor deadlines

Meeting Responsibilities

- Assist with agendas
- Take minutes
- Distribute meeting materials
- Track action items

Administrative Responsibilities

- Maintain records
- Manage calendars
- Coordinate document storage

Communication Responsibilities

- Website updates
 - Social media updates
 - Member communications
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Chapter 3: Supporting a New Secretary

Recommended Transition Package

As a Secretary it is important to receive an orientation to the following:

- Constitution and Bylaws
- Policy manual
- Previous minutes
- Current agenda template
- Minutes template
- Annual calendar
- Website login information
- Social media access information
- Gaming grant information
- Executive contact list

Mentoring and Orientation

A strong orientation and mentoring process can make the difference between a Secretary who feels overwhelmed and one who feels confident and successful. Because PAC and DPAC positions often change hands annually, a good transition also helps preserve the organization's knowledge and records.

Why Orientation Matters

The Secretary is often responsible for maintaining the organization's records, ensuring continuity from year to year, and supporting effective governance. Without proper orientation, important information, documents, passwords, and procedures can easily be lost during Executive transitions.

A thoughtful orientation process helps a new Secretary:

- Understand the role and its responsibilities.
- Become familiar with the organization's bylaws and procedures.
- Learn how meetings are conducted.

- Understand record-keeping expectations.
- Gain confidence using the organization's systems and tools.
- Build relationships with other Executive members.

The goal is not to expect the new Secretary to know everything immediately, but to provide the information and support needed for success.

Essential Documents to Transfer to the Secretary's care:

Governance Documents

- Constitution and Bylaws
- Policies and procedures
- Code of Conduct or Code of Ethics (if applicable)
- Previous AGM minutes

Meeting Records

- Minutes from the past one to three years
- Recent agendas
- Minutes templates
- Agenda templates
- Committee reports

Administrative Records

- Annual calendar
- Executive contact list
- Committee contact lists
- Membership information (where appropriate and permitted)

Financial and Gaming Records

- Community Gaming Grant information
- Gaming event licence records (if applicable)

- Reporting deadlines
- Annual reports

Communication Resources

- Website login information
 - Social media account access
 - Shared email account information
 - File storage and cloud access credentials
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As Part of the Orientation Process, The Following Key Topics Should be Reviewed:

The Secretary's Responsibilities

Review:

- Agenda development (when to prepare, who will proof, how to circulate)
- Minute-taking (what should/should not be included)
- Record retention (how/where to save records)
- Website updates (basic understanding of website maintenance and how to get help)
- Social media management (when and what to post, and where)
- Meeting notices (requirements from bylaws, maintaining contact list for distribution)
- Tracking action items (and adding to agenda)
- Supporting Executive communications (Group chats, email lists)

PACs should discuss how responsibilities are shared within the executive, as practices may vary between PACs and DPACs based on Bylaws and Constitution documents.

Secretary: the Executive's Expert on Bylaws, Meeting Procedures, and Record-Keeping

Understanding the Bylaws

The Secretary should become familiar with:

- Quorum requirements
- Voting procedures
- Executive roles
- Election processes
- Meeting notice requirements
- Amendment procedures
- Membership rules

The bylaws are one of the Secretary's most important reference documents.

Meeting Procedures

The Secretary should understand:

- Typical meeting structure
- Agenda format
- Motion procedures
- Recording votes
- Approval of minutes
- Handling confidential matters

Many new Secretaries find it helpful to attend a meeting before assuming responsibility for recording minutes.

Record-Keeping Expectations

The Secretary is responsible for keeping the Records of the PAC/DPAC and should know:

- Where records are stored

- File naming conventions
- Document retention practices
- Backup procedures
- Archiving methods

Consistency helps future Executive teams locate information quickly.

The Secretary's Role in Technology

Technology Orientation

Many Secretaries are responsible for managing digital information.

This can include:

- Website platform
- Social media platforms
- Shared drives or cloud storage
- Email systems
- Meeting software (Zoom, Teams, Google Meet, etc.)
- Online voting tools (if used)

Whenever possible, the secretary should have written instructions for commonly used systems that can be handed down from outgoing to incoming secretaries.

Incoming Secretary - Mentoring Best Practices

Whenever possible, it is important to pair the New Secretary with an Experienced Volunteer

If possible, arrange for the outgoing Secretary or another experienced Executive member to act as a mentor during the first few months.

The mentor can:

- Answer questions.
- Review draft minutes.

- Explain procedures.
 - Help locate records.
 - Provide practical advice.
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Attend Meetings Together

If timing allows, the incoming Secretary can:

- Observe a meeting before taking over.
- Review agenda preparation.
- Practice taking notes.
- Learn how motions are recorded.

Hands-on experience is often the best training.

Onboarding a New Secretary? Encourage Questions

New Secretaries should feel comfortable asking questions.

Common questions include:

- "Should this discussion be recorded?"
- "How much detail belongs in the minutes?"
- "Where should this document be stored?"
- "What happens if quorum is not achieved?"

Seeking clarification helps ensure accurate records and good governance.

How to Create a Secretary Transition Binder

Many PACs and DPACs find it helpful to maintain a Secretary Transition Binder (electronic or physical) containing:

- ☐ Constitution and Bylaws
- ☐ Policies and procedures
- ☐ Secretary job description
- ☐ Agenda template
- ☐ Minutes template
- ☐ Annual calendar
- ☐ Executive contact list
- ☐ Website instructions
- ☐ Social media instructions
- ☐ Community Gaming Grant information
- ☐ File storage procedures
- ☐ Meeting procedures
- ☐ AGM procedures
- ☐ Previous AGM minutes
- ☐ Transition notes from the outgoing Secretary

This binder can become one of the most valuable tools for ensuring continuity from year to year.

No Secretary begins the role knowing everything. Most of the skills required—including agenda preparation, minute-taking, records management, website updates, and governance procedures—are learned through experience. With a good orientation, supportive mentoring, and access to the right resources, new Secretaries can quickly become confident and effective leaders within their PAC or DPAC.

Chapter 4: Governance and Meeting Procedures

Supporting Good Governance

The Secretary serves as a key advocate for transparency, accountability, and proper governance.

The Secretary helps ensure that:

- Decisions are accurately recorded.
- Motions and actions are clearly documented.
- Meetings are compliant with the organization's bylaws and procedures.
- Organizational records are maintained appropriately.
- Important correspondence and information are brought to the Executive's attention.

The Secretary should be familiar with:

- Quorum requirements
- Voting procedures
- Committee structures
- Bylaw amendment processes
- General meeting procedures

A current copy of the bylaws should always be available during meetings.

Secretary Participation

Although the Secretary is responsible for recording the meeting, they remain a full voting member of the Executive.

The Secretary may:

- Introduce motions.
- Participate in discussion.
- Vote on motions.
- Serve on committees.

Chapter 5: Parliamentary Procedure and Motions

What is Parliamentary Procedure?

Most PACs and DPACs use a simplified form of Robert's Rules of Order to help meetings run fairly and efficiently.

Understanding Motions

A motion is a formal proposal that asks the membership to make a decision.

Typical process:

1. A member is recognized by the Chair.
2. The member states, "I move that..."
3. Another member seconds the motion.
4. The Chair states the motion.
5. Members discuss the motion.
6. The Chair calls the vote.
7. The Chair announces the result.

Recording Motions

Minutes should record:

- Exact wording of the motion.
- Name of mover.
- Name of seconder (if required).
- Outcome of the vote.

Example:

Motion: To allocate \$500 toward playground equipment.

Moved by Jane Smith.

Seconded by John Doe.

Carried.

Amendments

Explanation:

Amendments are changes proposed to motions, bylaws, or other formal proposals during a meeting. They allow the group to refine or clarify the original motion before voting.

Key points about amendments:

- Only one primary motion is discussed at a time.
- Amendments must be relevant to the original motion.
- Amendments are voted on before the main motion.
- Multiple amendments can be made, but they are voted on in the order they were proposed.

Example:

Original motion: “The PAC will purchase 20 new library books.”

Amendment: “Change 20 to 25.”

- First, the amendment “Change 20 to 25” is voted on.
- If the amendment passes, the main motion becomes: “The PAC will purchase 25 new library books,” which is then voted on.

Voting

Voting is how decisions are formally made at PAC and DPAC meetings. Different methods are used depending on the type of decision and the bylaws.

1. Majority Vote

- A motion passes when more than half of the members present vote in favor.
- Example: If 12 members are present, at least 7 must vote “yes” for the motion to pass.

2. Show of Hands

- Members raise their hands to indicate their vote.
- Quick and effective for small groups.

3. Ballot Voting

- Members vote anonymously on paper or electronically.
- Often used for elections or sensitive matters.

4. Chair Voting

- Check your Bylaws. For many PACs/DPACs, the Chair does not vote.
- In other cases, the Chair may vote only in the event of a tie.

Key Parliamentary Rules

Parliamentary procedure ensures meetings are orderly and fair. Here are four key rules:

1. One Motion at a Time
 - Only one motion is discussed and voted on at a time to prevent confusion.
 2. Right to Speak
 - Members must wait their turn to speak and address the Chair.
 3. Debate Before Voting
 - Members may discuss the motion before a vote is taken, ensuring informed decisions.
 4. Majority Rules
 - Decisions are usually determined by a majority vote unless bylaws specify otherwise.
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Chapter 6: Elections and Annual General Meetings

The Secretary's Role in Elections

The Secretary should:

- Prepare AGM materials
- Distribute notice of AGM
- Provide previous AGM minutes
- Assist the Chair or Scrutineer
- Record election results
- Preserve election records

The Secretary's Role During AGMs

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is one of the most important meetings of the year. It provides members with an opportunity to review the organization's activities, receive reports, elect Executive officers, and conduct other business required by the Constitution and Bylaws.

The Secretary plays a critical role in ensuring the AGM is properly organized, documented, and conducted according to the organization's governing documents.

The Secretary's responsibilities may include:

- Preparing and distributing AGM notices.
- Preparing the AGM agenda.
- Providing copies of the previous AGM minutes.
- Confirming election procedures outlined in the bylaws.
- Preparing ballots, nomination forms, or voting materials if required.
- Assisting the Chair or Scrutineer during the election process.
- Recording nominations, election results, and motions.
- Maintaining election records as part of the organization's permanent files.

Preparing for the AGM

Several weeks before the AGM, the Secretary should:

Review the Bylaws

Ensure you understand:

- Which positions are being elected.
- Eligibility requirements for candidates.
- Nomination procedures.
- Voting methods.
- Quorum requirements.
- Term lengths.
- Any notice requirements for the AGM.

Prepare AGM Materials

Gather and distribute:

- AGM agenda
- Previous AGM minutes
- Annual reports
- Financial reports
- Proposed bylaw amendments (if any)
- Election information

Confirm Meeting Logistics

- Meeting date, time, and location
- Virtual meeting details if applicable
- Voting procedures
- Registration or sign-in process
- Ballots and voting supplies if required

Typical Election Process

Election procedures vary depending on the organization's bylaws, but the process often follows these steps:

1. Call for Elections

The Chair or Scrutineer announces that elections will begin and identifies the positions to be filled.

2. Declare Positions Vacant

Current Executive positions are declared vacant in accordance with the bylaws.

3. Review Election Procedures

The Scrutineer explains:

- Eligible voters
- Nomination procedures
- Voting method
- Vote counting process
- Tie-breaking procedures (if applicable)

4. Accept Nominations

Nominations are accepted for each position.

Nominations may:

- Be submitted in advance.
- Be accepted from the floor.
- Require consent from the nominee.

A seconder is generally not required unless specified in the bylaws.

5. Close Nominations

When no further nominations are received, nominations are declared closed.

6. Voting

If there is:

Only one nominee

- The candidate may be elected by acclamation if permitted by the bylaws.

More than one nominee

- A vote is conducted.

7. Announce Results

The Scrutineer announces the successful candidate.

8. Destroy Ballots (If Applicable)

If paper ballots are used, a motion may be made to destroy the ballots after the election results are confirmed.

Nominations

The Secretary should accurately record:

- The names of all nominees.
- Whether nominees accepted or declined nomination.
- The position being sought.
- Any withdrawals.

Example:

Position	Nominee	Accepted
Chair	Jane Smith	Yes
Chair	Sarah Brown	Yes
Treasurer	John Doe	Yes

Voting

Voting procedures should always follow the Constitution and Bylaws.

Common voting methods include:

Election by Acclamation

Used when there is only one nominee for a position.

Example:

Jane Smith was elected Chair by acclamation.

Show of Hands

Members indicate their vote by raising their hands.

Secret Ballot

Members vote anonymously using paper or electronic ballots.

Secret ballots are often used when:

- Multiple candidates are running.
- A position is contested.
- Confidentiality is preferred.

Electronic Voting

Some organizations permit electronic voting during virtual or hybrid meetings.

Recording Election Results

The Secretary should record only the final election results, not individual vote counts unless required by the bylaws.

Example:

Position	Elected Candidate
Chair	Jane Smith
Vice-Chair	Sarah Brown
Treasurer	John Doe
Secretary	Mary Johnson

DPAC Representative Chris Lee

The minutes should clearly indicate:

- The positions filled.
- The successful candidates.
- Whether elections occurred by ballot, show of hands, or acclamation.

Example Minute Entry:

Elections were conducted by secret ballot.

Jane Smith was elected Chair.

John Doe was elected Treasurer.

Mary Johnson was elected Secretary.

Secretary's Election Recording Checklist

During elections, remember to record:

- ☐ Name of the Scrutineer
- ☐ Positions being elected
- ☐ Names of nominees
- ☐ Whether nominations were accepted or declined
- ☐ Voting method used
- ☐ Election results
- ☐ Any motions related to elections
- ☐ Motion to destroy ballots (if applicable)

AGM Checklist

Before the AGM, confirm:

- ☐ AGM notice distributed according to the bylaws
- ☐ Meeting date, time, and location confirmed
- ☐ Agenda prepared and distributed
- ☐ Previous AGM minutes attached
- ☐ Annual reports collected

- ☐ Financial reports available
 - ☐ Proposed bylaw amendments distributed (if applicable)
 - ☐ Election procedures reviewed
 - ☐ Scrutineer identified
 - ☐ Nomination process confirmed
 - ☐ Ballots prepared (if required)
 - ☐ Sign-in sheet prepared
 - ☐ Quorum requirements reviewed
 - ☐ Voting supplies available
 - ☐ Technology tested for virtual or hybrid meetings
 - ☐ Election results form prepared
 - ☐ Secretary's minute-taking template prepared
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Secretary's Tip for AGMs:

The AGM is often the meeting that receives the highest attendance of the year and may include many members who do not regularly attend meetings. Preparation is key. Having agendas, reports, election materials, ballots, and minute templates ready in advance will help the meeting run smoothly.

Chapter 7: Agenda Planning and Meeting Preparation

The PAC Secretary's Role in Creating the Agenda

One of the most important responsibilities of a Parent Advisory Council (PAC) Secretary is helping to create the agenda. A well-prepared agenda ensures meetings run smoothly, all important topics are addressed, and attendees know what to expect.

The Secretary's role in agenda preparation involves collaborating with the **Chair** and **Principal** to draft a clear, organized timeline of discussion items, reports, and action points. Your goal is to make meetings efficient, inclusive, and productive.

Steps to Create a PAC Agenda

1. Consult Your Bylaws and Past Minutes

- Check your PAC's constitution and bylaws to ensure required items are included.
- Review previous minutes to track ongoing items, unresolved business, or recurring reports.

2. Collaborate with the Chair and Principal

- Ask the Chair and Principal if there are topics or reports that must be included.
- Confirm which items require discussion versus information-only updates.

3. Organize the Agenda in a Logical Order

A typical PAC meeting agenda might include:

- **Call to Order & Welcome**
Include the meeting's time, date, and location. Introduce new attendees.
- **Quorum & Approval of Agenda**
Confirm enough voting members are present according to the bylaws and vote to adopt the agenda.
- **Approval of Previous Minutes**
Review and accept the minutes from the last meeting.

- **Reports**
Keep updates brief. Include reports from the President, Treasurer (budget and grants), DPAC Representative, and committees.
- **Principal's Report**
A short update on school news, enrollment, staff changes, or upcoming initiatives.
- **Old Business**
Review unresolved items from previous meetings (e.g., ongoing fundraising campaigns).
- **New Business**
Introduce new topics requiring discussion or PAC votes, such as funding requests for class activities or planning events.
- **Question Period / Open Discussion**
Allow time for parents' questions or comments on school-wide matters.
- **Adjournment**
Note the meeting's conclusion time and announce the next meeting date.

4. **Set Realistic Timeframes**

- Assign approximate durations for each section to keep the meeting on track.
- Be mindful of parent schedules—long agendas can discourage participation.

5. **Distribute the Agenda in Advance**

- Send the agenda to members, school administration, and attendees at least several days before the meeting.
- Include attachments like reports or proposals that will be discussed, so everyone comes prepared.

6. **Maintain a Professional Tone**

- Keep the agenda focused on school-wide issues. Avoid including individual complaints about staff or students.
- Use neutral, concise language. The agenda is a working tool for everyone at the meeting.

Tips for Effective Agenda Management

- **Track Ongoing Items:** Use your minutes from previous meetings to ensure unresolved items are carried forward.
- **Be Flexible:** While the agenda sets the structure, allow some room for discussion or urgent items that may arise.
- **Collaborate Early:** Confirm agenda items with the Chair and Principal in advance to avoid last-minute changes.
- **Consistency Helps:** Using a standard agenda format each meeting builds familiarity and improves efficiency.

Before distributing the agenda, confirm:

- ☐ Meeting date, time, and location are correct.
- ☐ Quorum requirements have been reviewed.
- ☐ Previous minutes are attached or available.
- ☐ Chair, Treasurer, Principal, and DPAC Representative have submitted reports.
- ☐ Outstanding action items from previous meetings have been included under Old Business.
- ☐ Funding requests and motions are clearly identified.
- ☐ Any supporting documents are attached.
- ☐ Agenda has been reviewed by the Chair.
- ☐ Agenda has been distributed to members in advance according to the bylaws.

Secretary's Tip - Agendas

A good agenda helps keep meetings focused and respectful of everyone's time. As a general guideline, try to keep reports concise and reserve most of the meeting time for discussion, decision-making, and topics that directly support students, families, and the school community. The agenda should provide a roadmap for the meeting while remaining flexible enough to address emerging issues when needed.

Common Agenda Mistakes

Avoid:

- Too many discussion items
- No time estimates
- Missing reports

- Last-minute additions
- Including individual concerns

Sample Agenda:

Sample PAC Meeting Agenda Template	
[School Name] Parent Advisory Council (PAC) Regular General Meeting Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____ 1. Call to Order and Welcome • Welcome and introductions • Land Acknowledgement (if applicable) • Review meeting norms and procedures 2. Establish Quorum • Confirm quorum as required by the PAC Constitution and Bylaws 3. Adoption of Agenda Motion: To adopt the agenda as presented (or amended). Moved by: _____ Seconded by: _____ ☐ Carried ☐ Defeated 4. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes Review minutes from the meeting held on _____. Motion: To approve the minutes as presented (or amended). Moved by: _____ Seconded by: _____ ☐ Carried ☐ Defeated 5. Reports Chair's Report Treasurer's Report Motion: To accept the Treasurer's Report. Moved by: _____ Seconded by: _____ ☐ Carried ☐ Defeated Principal's Report: School updates, events, staffing, programs, and initiatives. DPAC Representative Report: District updates, advocacy initiatives, upcoming meetings, and events. Committee Reports (if applicable)	• Fundraising Committee • Hot Lunch Committee • Playground Committee • Events Committee • Other: _____ 6. Old Business Item: _____ Discussion: _____ Action Required: _____ 7. New Business Item: _____ Discussion: _____ Motion (if required): _____ 8. Funding Requests (if applicable) Request: _____ Amount Requested: \$ _____ Purpose: _____ Motion: _____ Moved by: _____ Seconded by: _____ ☐ Carried ☐ Defeated 9. Questions and Open Discussion: Questions, comments, and parent feedback regarding school-wide matters. 10. Announcements: Upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, deadlines, and reminders. 11. Next Meeting 12. Adjournment Time: _____ Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Chapter 8: Taking Effective Minutes

Why Minutes Matter

Meeting minutes are one of the most important records a Parent Advisory Council (PAC) or District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) creates. They serve as the official record of the organization's discussions, decisions, motions, and actions.

Well-written minutes help ensure continuity from year to year, especially as Executive members change. They provide a record of what was decided, who is responsible for follow-up actions, and what work remains to be completed.

Effective minutes support:

Efficiency

Minutes allow Executive members and the general membership to quickly review previous discussions and continue work from one meeting to the next.

Transparency and Accountability

Minutes provide members with a clear record of how decisions were made and how the PAC or DPAC is supporting students, families, and school communities.

Communication

Minutes create a shared understanding of discussions, decisions, and action items. Reviewing and approving minutes at subsequent meetings helps ensure accuracy and reduce misunderstandings.

Organizational Memory

Minutes preserve the history of the organization. They help future volunteers understand past decisions, initiatives, events, advocacy efforts, budgets, and priorities.

Preparing to Take Minutes

Good minutes begin before the meeting starts.

Use a Minutes Template

A standard minutes template helps ensure consistency from meeting to meeting and reduces the amount of work required after the meeting.

If your PAC or DPAC already has a template, review previous minutes and continue using the established format whenever possible.

A good template should include space for:

- Meeting date, time, and location
- Attendance
- Approval of previous minutes
- Reports
- Motions and voting results
- Action items
- New business
- Next meeting information
- Adjournment

Review the Agenda

The agenda provides the framework for your minutes.

Before the meeting:

- Review the agenda carefully.
- Review the previous meeting's minutes.
- Obtain copies of reports that will be presented.
- Confirm the names of guests, presenters, or speakers.
- Familiarize yourself with any anticipated motions or recommendations.

Working from the agenda allows you to organize your notes more effectively during the meeting.

What Should Be Included in Minutes?

The primary purpose of minutes is to record actions, decisions, and outcomes.

Minutes should generally include:

Meeting Information

- Name of the PAC or DPAC
- Date and time of the meeting
- Location or virtual platform
- Whether the meeting was a regular, special, or annual general meeting

Attendance

- Chair or presiding officer
- Executive members present
- General members present
- Guests and presenters
- Regrets or absences

Quorum

A statement confirming whether quorum was achieved according to the bylaws.

Approval of Previous Minutes

Record:

- Whether previous minutes were approved
- Any corrections or amendments

Reports

Record that reports were presented and received.

Examples may include:

- Chair's Report
- Principal's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- DPAC Representative Report
- Committee Reports

Whenever possible, attach written reports to the minutes rather than summarizing them in detail.

Motions and Voting Results

Record:

- The exact wording of the motion
- The mover
- The seconder (if required by bylaws)
- Whether the motion carried or was defeated

Example:

Motion: To allocate \$500 for playground equipment.

Moved by Jane Smith.

Seconded by John Doe.

Carried.

Action Items

Clearly record:

- What action is required
- Who is responsible
- Any deadlines or timelines

New Business

Provide a brief summary of new topics and any resulting decisions.

Open Discussion

Record significant topics discussed without documenting every comment.

Next Meeting

Record:

- Date
- Time

- Location

Adjournment

Record the time the meeting ended.

What Should Not Be Included In the Minutes?

Minutes are not a transcript of the meeting.

Avoid including:

- Personal opinions
- Emotional or judgmental language
- Side conversations
- Detailed debates
- Personal disagreements
- Political commentary
- Personal observations about members
- Confidential information
- Direct quotations unless specifically required
- Excessive detail that does not contribute to understanding decisions or actions

Remember that minutes may be reviewed years later by future Executive members, school administrators, auditors, grant funders, or other individuals with legitimate access to organizational records.

When in doubt, focus on decisions, actions, and outcomes.

Taking Notes During the Meeting

Many new Secretaries worry about recording every word spoken.

You do not need to capture every comment.

Instead, focus on recording:

- Main discussion topics
- Decisions made
- Motions introduced
- Voting outcomes
- Action items
- Follow-up requirements

Use a Method That Works for You

Choose a note-taking method that is comfortable and effective.

Options include:

- Handwritten notes
- Laptop or tablet
- Pre-formatted minutes templates
- Shorthand notes
- Audio recordings (only if permitted and with the knowledge of participants)

Many Secretaries find it easiest to type directly into a minutes template during the meeting and edit afterward.

Ask for Clarification

As a member of the Executive, the Secretary should feel comfortable seeking clarification when:

- A motion is unclear
- A decision is confusing
- An action item has not been assigned
- Voting results are uncertain

It is much easier to clarify information during the meeting than after it has concluded.

Writing the Minutes After the Meeting

Minutes should be drafted as soon as possible after the meeting while details are still fresh.

A recommended process is:

1. Review your notes.
2. Compare your notes against the agenda.
3. Clarify any incomplete sections.
4. Confirm motions and voting outcomes.
5. Identify action items and responsibilities.
6. Edit for clarity and consistency.
7. Attach supporting reports and documents where appropriate.

Minutes should be concise, objective, and easy to read.

Filing and Sharing Minutes

Once drafted:

- Review the minutes for accuracy.
- Share draft minutes according to your organization's procedures.
- Present the minutes for approval at the next meeting.
- Store approved minutes in the organization's permanent records.
- Ensure electronic records are backed up and accessible to future Executive members.

Consistent record-keeping helps ensure continuity and supports future volunteers.

Common Mistakes in Minute-taking

Even experienced Secretaries occasionally make mistakes.

Common issues include:

- Failing to confirm quorum.

- Recording discussions instead of decisions.
- Including too much detail.
- Delaying preparation of minutes.
- Omitting motions or voting outcomes.
- Failing to document action items.
- Using inconsistent formats.
- Misplacing records or failing to maintain backups.

Remember that perfection is not the goal. Consistency, clarity, and accuracy are what matter most.

Best Practices for Minute-Taking for PAC and DPAC Secretaries

- ✓ Use a consistent minutes template.
 - ✓ Review the agenda before the meeting.
 - ✓ Focus on actions, decisions, and outcomes.
 - ✓ Keep language objective and professional.
 - ✓ Ask questions when clarification is needed.
 - ✓ Draft minutes as soon as possible after the meeting.
 - ✓ Maintain secure electronic and paper records.
 - ✓ Follow your bylaws and organizational procedures.
 - ✓ Ensure action items are clearly identified.
 - ✓ Remember that minutes are the official record of your organization.
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Final Thoughts – Meeting Minutes

Taking minutes may seem intimidating at first, but it is a skill that improves with experience.

You do not need to be a professional writer to be an effective Secretary. Your role is to create a clear, accurate, and concise record of the organization's work so that future

volunteers can understand what decisions were made and what actions need to happen next.

Well-prepared minutes help strengthen communication, preserve organizational knowledge, and support effective parent leadership within school communities.

DRAFT

Chapter 9: Records Management and Administrative Responsibilities

Records Retention

What to Maintain:

- Approved minutes
- Agendas
- Annual reports
- Financial reports
- Gaming records
- Constitution and Bylaws
- Policies
- Executive lists
- Committee reports

Recommended Secretary File Folders

Governance Files

- Constitution
- Bylaws
- Policies

Meeting Files

- Agendas
- Minutes
- Reports

Administrative Files

- Membership lists
- Calendars

- Contact lists

Financial and Gaming Files

- Grant documents
- Reporting records

Records Storage Best Practices

- ✓ Cloud storage
 - ✓ Shared Executive access
 - ✓ Password protection
 - ✓ Annual archives
 - ✓ Backup copies
-

Chapter 10: Website Management Responsibilities

Overview – Website Management

In many Parent Advisory Councils (PACs) and District Parent Advisory Councils (DPACs), the Secretary plays a key role in maintaining the organization's website. The website serves as the public face of the organization and is often the primary source of information for parents, caregivers, school staff, community partners, and prospective volunteers.

A well-maintained website promotes transparency, accountability, communication, and parent engagement by providing easy access to important documents, meeting information, news, events, and resources.

The Secretary helps ensure that information posted on the website is current, accurate, accessible, and organized in a way that is easy for members to navigate.

Why Website Management Matters

An effective PAC or DPAC website:

- Provides parents with easy access to information.
- Supports transparency by making agendas, minutes, and governing documents publicly available.
- Preserves organizational history and records.
- Encourages parent engagement and participation.
- Promotes upcoming events, volunteer opportunities, and initiatives.
- Serves as a central hub for communication throughout the school year.
- Helps ensure smooth transitions between Executive teams.

For many parents, the website may be their first introduction to the PAC or DPAC and can significantly influence their willingness to become involved.

Core Website Responsibilities

The Secretary may be responsible for maintaining or coordinating updates to the following sections of the website:

Agendas and Meeting Minutes

One of the most important functions of the PAC or DPAC website is providing access to meeting materials.

The Secretary should:

- Post meeting agendas prior to meetings.
- Upload approved meeting minutes promptly after approval.
- Organize agendas and minutes in a logical archive by school year.
- Ensure files are clearly named and easy to locate.
- Maintain historical records whenever possible.

Example file naming conventions:

- PAC Agenda – September 2026
 - PAC Minutes – September 2026
 - DPAC AGM Minutes – May 2026
-

Constitution, Bylaws, and Policies

The website should provide members with easy access to governing documents.

The Secretary should ensure that:

- Current Constitution and Bylaws are available.
 - Amendments are incorporated following member approval.
 - Policies and procedures are updated as required.
 - Superseded documents are archived appropriately.
-

News and Announcements

The website can be used to share information about PAC or DPAC activities throughout the year.

Examples include:

- Executive updates
-

- Grant announcements
- Advocacy initiatives
- Volunteer opportunities
- Event recaps
- School and district news relevant to parents

Information should be factual, timely, and aligned with the PAC or DPAC's purpose.

Events and Calendar Information

The Secretary may assist in maintaining:

- PAC meeting schedules
- DPAC meeting schedules
- Fundraisers
- Family engagement events
- Volunteer opportunities
- School community events

Whenever possible, include:

- Date
- Time
- Location
- Registration information
- Contact information

A current events calendar helps parents stay informed and involved.

Resources and Helpful Links Section

Many PACs and DPACs maintain a resources section for parents.

Examples may include links to:

- School websites
- School district websites
- DPAC websites
- Ministry of Education resources
- Parent education resources
- Community organizations
- Grant opportunities

Resources should be reviewed periodically to ensure links remain active and information remains current.

Executive Contact Information

The website should provide a method for parents to contact the PAC or DPAC.

The Secretary may be responsible for maintaining:

- Executive position listings
- Generic PAC email addresses
- Contact forms
- Social media links

Whenever possible, organizations should use role-based or generic email addresses rather than personal email accounts to support continuity and privacy.

Website Accessibility and Inclusion

PAC and DPAC websites should be welcoming and accessible to all families.

When posting information, consider:

- Clear and readable fonts.
 - Plain language whenever possible.
 - Descriptive headings and page titles.
 - Accessible PDF documents.
-

- Alternative text for images where possible.
- Mobile-friendly formatting.

Accessibility helps ensure all members of the school community can access important information.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The Secretary should ensure website content respects privacy and confidentiality requirements.

Do not post:

- Student names without appropriate consent.
- Student photographs without appropriate consent.
- Personal contact information without permission.
- Confidential meeting information.
- Sensitive matters relating to individual students, families, or staff.

When in doubt, consult the Chair, Principal, or school district privacy guidelines before posting information.

Website Maintenance Schedule

A regular maintenance schedule can help keep information current.

Before Each Meeting

- Post agenda.
- Upload supporting documents if applicable.
- Update meeting calendar.

After Each Meeting

- Post approved minutes once adopted.
 - Update action items or announcements as directed by the Executive.
 - Add upcoming event information.
-

Monthly

- Review website content for accuracy.
- Check links and downloadable files.
- Update news and event information.
- Remove outdated notices.

Annually

- Update Executive contact information.
- Upload AGM materials and annual reports.
- Review Constitution and Bylaws.
- Archive documents from the previous school year.
- Review website structure and organization.

Recommended Website Content Checklist

A PAC or DPAC website should ideally include:

- ☐ Home Page
- ☐ About the PAC/DPAC
- ☐ Executive Contact Information
- ☐ Constitution and Bylaws
- ☐ Meeting Agendas
- ☐ Meeting Minutes
- ☐ Annual Reports
- ☐ Financial Information (where appropriate)
- ☐ Events Calendar
- ☐ Volunteer Opportunities
- ☐ Parent Resources
- ☐ School and District Links

- ☐ News and Announcements
 - ☐ Contact Form or Generic Email Address
-

Website Best Practices

- ✓ Keep information current and accurate.
 - ✓ Post agendas and approved minutes promptly.
 - ✓ Archive documents rather than deleting them.
 - ✓ Use consistent naming conventions for files.
 - ✓ Maintain a professional and welcoming appearance.
 - ✓ Protect privacy and confidentiality.
 - ✓ Back up website files regularly.
 - ✓ Ensure information is easy to find and navigate.
 - ✓ Work collaboratively with the Chair and Executive when posting information.
 - ✓ Remember that the website serves as the public record and communication hub of the organization.
-

Websites to Supporting Parent Engagement

A well-maintained website can significantly increase parent engagement and participation. By ensuring that information is easy to access, up to date, and relevant, the Secretary helps create a welcoming and informed school community.

Website management is not simply an administrative task—it is an important communication and engagement tool that supports transparency, strengthens relationships with families, and helps the PAC or DPAC fulfill its mission of supporting students and school communities.

Website Content Review Checklist

Monthly review:

- ☐ Agendas current

- ☐ Minutes posted
 - ☐ Calendar updated
 - ☐ Contacts accurate
 - ☐ Links working
 - ☐ Documents accessible
 - ☐ Outdated content removed
-

Chapter 11: Social Media Management Responsibilities

Creating Engaging Content

A good guideline is:

- 50% information
- 25% events
- 15% volunteer recruitment
- 10% celebration and recognition

Sample Monthly Content Plan

Week 1:

Meeting reminder

Week 2:

Volunteer opportunity

Week 3:

School event promotion

Week 4:

Parent resource or community update

This gives volunteers practical guidance.

Chapter 12: Tips for Success

Top Ten Habits of Effective Secretaries

- ✓ Stay organized
 - ✓ Use templates
 - ✓ Draft minutes promptly
 - ✓ Back up records
 - ✓ Ask questions
 - ✓ Read the bylaws
 - ✓ Track action items
 - ✓ Maintain continuity
 - ✓ Communicate clearly
 - ✓ Plan ahead
-

Chapter 13: Secretary's Annual Checklist

Beginning of School Year

- ☐ Update Executive contacts
- ☐ Update website
- ☐ Review calendar
- ☐ Review bylaws

Monthly

- ☐ Prepare agenda
- ☐ Record minutes
- ☐ Post approved minutes
- ☐ Update website
- ☐ Update social media

Before AGM

- ☐ Prepare AGM agenda
- ☐ Prepare election materials
- ☐ Assemble annual reports

End of School Year

- ☐ Archive records
 - ☐ Transfer files
 - ☐ Transfer website access
 - ☐ Transfer social media access
 - ☐ Prepare transition package
-

Chapter 14: Final Thoughts

The Secretary is often the organizational memory of a PAC or DPAC. Through accurate records, clear communication, thoughtful planning, and effective information management, the Secretary helps ensure that future volunteers can build upon the work of those who came before them. While the role carries important responsibilities, it also provides a unique opportunity to support students, families, schools, and parent engagement in meaningful ways. With organization, consistency, and a willingness to learn, any volunteer can become an effective and successful Secretary.

Wishing you success and happiness as you begin your journey!