P.E.I. Home and School Federation
Guidelines for Forming a
Home and School Association at a New School

A Home and School Association provides a way for parents, guardians, school staff, and the school community to work together to support students and strengthen the connection between the home and the school. The following steps are recommended for establishing a Home and School Association in a new school.

1. Begin with the School Community

The school principal and interested parents/guardians should work together to introduce the idea of forming a Home and School Association.

- Explain the purpose and benefits of Home and School.
- Encourage participation from across the school community.
- Identify several people willing to help lead and organize the first meeting.

The goal is to build an organization that welcomes participation and strengthens relationships between families and the school, consistent with themes the Federation is already promoting among local associations.

2. Hold an Organizational Meeting

Invite all parents/guardians and interested school staff to an initial organizational meeting.
A suggested agenda:

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Overview of the purpose of Home and School
3. Introduction to the PEI Home and School Federation
4. Discussion of priorities for the new school community
5. Review of proposed association structure
6. Election of officers
7. Establishment of regular meeting dates
8. Identify first activities or priorities
9. Questions and discussion
10. Adjourn

Keep the first meeting welcoming and practical, 45 minutes to one hour in length. The emphasis should be on **participation, communication and building a strong home and school partnership**.

3. Elect an Executive

At the organizational meeting, elect the officers needed to provide leadership for the new association. A basic executive could include:

- President
- Vice-President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

Additional positions or committees can be added at this meeting or established as the association grows and identifies its needs. The principal and other school representatives are important partners in the association while allowing the Home and School executive and membership to provide parent leadership.

4. Establish the Association

Once an executive is elected, the new association should put basic organizational practices in place, including:

- a name for the association; usually the name of the new school is best
- regular meeting dates (e.g., monthly or bi-monthly)
- a process for preparing agendas and recording minutes
- clear financial procedures and signing authorities for a bank account with any two of three signers (or two of four signers)
- procedures for reporting financial activity to members
- a clear process for making and recording decisions
- refer to the PEI Home and School Federation's Handbook for guidelines

The emphasis should be on **transparency, accountability and simple procedures that volunteers can easily follow**.

5. Identify Priorities

The new Home and School should ask families and school staff:
"What can we work on together that will make a positive difference for students and our school community?"
Early priorities might center on:

- parent and family engagement
- communication between home and school
- welcoming families to the new school
- positive school culture
- student well-being
- volunteer involvement
- educational or community-building activities
- other needs identified by the school community

Federation programming currently encourages local Home and Schools to connect, learn, share ideas and discuss effective practices and challenges.

6. Keep Meetings Simple and Welcoming

Regular meetings should give parents, guardians and school representatives an opportunity to:

- receive updates
- discuss matters affecting the school community
- share ideas and concerns
- plan activities
- review finances
- make decisions
- assign follow-up responsibilities

Decisions (not discussions) should be clearly recorded in the minutes.

7. Connect with the PEI Home and School Federation

Establish contact with the Federation so volunteers can take part in meetings, training, networking and information-sharing opportunities. The Federation connects local Home and School Associations across PEI to **learn, share ideas, discuss challenges and strengthen school communities**. A block membership includes all families and school staff as members of their school's Home and School Association.

8. Focus on Partnership

A successful Home and School Association is more than a fundraising organization. It brings families, educators, and students together to **strengthen the school community** and **support the education, health, and well-being of every student**. Start small, set realistic priorities, and build momentum over time**. Give people different ways to get involved**, communicate regularly, and let the Association grow as the new school community takes shape.

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