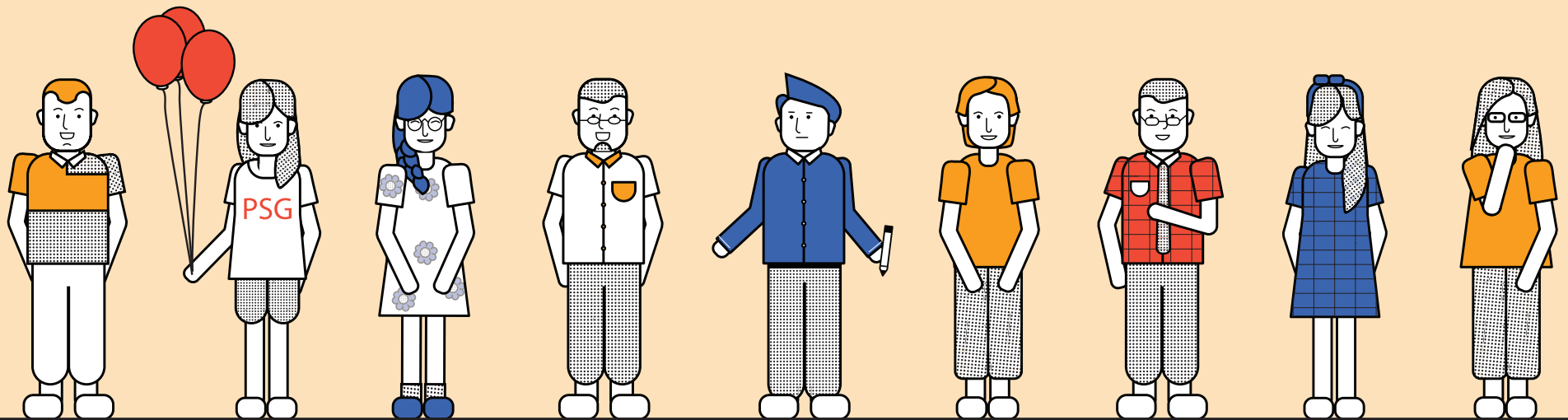


PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

A How-to Guide By Parents For Parents



Foreword

In my visits to schools, I have heard that many parents, like you, are coming forward to take a more active role in your child's education in school. With this increased interest in school-home partnerships, Parent Support Groups (PSGs) play a key role in inspiring and guiding parents who wish to contribute to the school's efforts, coordinating their time and effort effectively to give our children the best educational experience.

“Parent Support Groups – A How-to Guide By Parents For Parents” is an initiative created by parents, for parents. It has been developed in close collaboration with the “COMmunity and PArents in Support of Schools” (COMPASS)¹ parent representatives, and several current and ex-PSG leaders. With their wealth of experience in running their own PSGs, they hope to pass their wisdom on to help others set up, run and sustain their PSGs.

Recognising that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to running a PSG, this resource respects that each school and its PSG has different needs and goals, and provides a reference point for each to build, enhance or reinvent its own culture of school-home partnerships. I would like to encourage you and your PSG members to review the book together with your school.

Successful PSGs take time to nurture and sustain, and will benefit greatly with more purposeful planning and the establishment of sound processes. We hope that the guide will help you to rally more parents to work closely with your schools, and we wish you all the best in your PSG journey.

Assoc Prof. Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim

Parliamentary Secretary

Ministry of Education and Ministry of Social and Family Development

COMPASS Chairperson

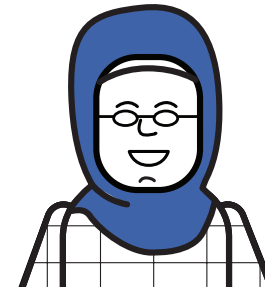
¹COMmunity and PArents in Support of Schools (COMPASS):
A National Advisory Council that advises the Ministry of
Education on ways in which school-home-community
collaboration could be strengthened and promoted.

Introduction

The Parent Support Group (PSG) is a great opportunity for us to be closer to our children, understand them better, and help them in their education journey. Our children also benefit when we are more active in their school environment.

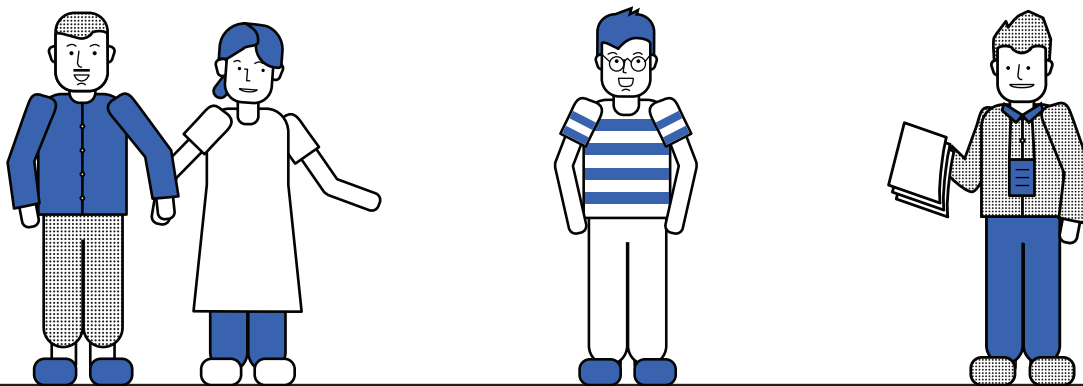
They tend to:

- show more positive attitudes
- have better school attendance and complete homework more consistently
- be able to bridge the cultural gap between school and home
- be less anti-social and less prone to behavioural issues²



“ Research has shown that children whose parents are involved in their educational journey have been found to have better self-esteem, are more self-disciplined, show positive attitudes, and exhibit higher aspirations and motivation towards school. ”

Mdm Nafisah Bte Md Ma'mun
COMPASS Parent Representative, PSG
leader, Tampines Primary School



² Olsen, Glenn W., and Fuller, Mary Lou. Home-School Relations: Working Successfully with Parents and Families. (Pearson: Allyn and Bacon, 2008), 129-130.

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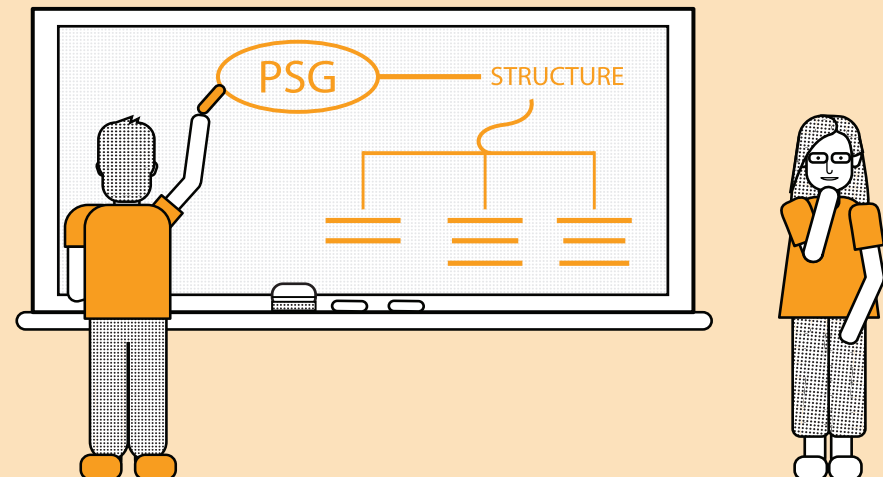
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Setting Up a PSG

The first step to setting up an effective PSG is to be clear about the role of a PSG, its structure, the ways a PSG can contribute to the school, and when to start planning and running PSG events.

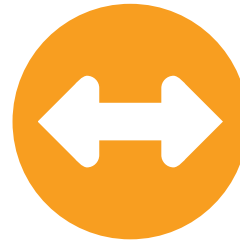


1.1 Roles of the PSG



Supportive Partner in Education

The PSG complements the school by aligning with the school's objectives, supporting and strengthening the school's programmes to improve our children's well-being and learning.



Bridge Between Parents and School

The PSG listens to parents' feedback on school operations, practices and programmes, and provides feedback to the school. The PSG also facilitates the school's communication to parents.



Magnet to Attract Other Parents

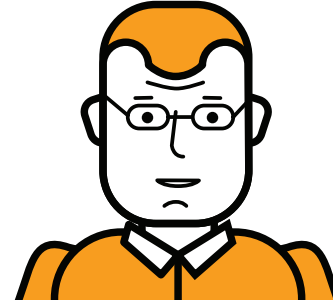
Parents who are actively involved in the PSG are better able to reach out to other parents and involve them. Over time, more parents can contribute to make the school environment more conducive for learning.

1.2 Contributing to the School

We partner and support the school by volunteering our 3 Ts:

a) Time

We can volunteer our time to design and conduct the school's programmes and events. Supportive PSG members can help to make the school a safe place for our children to learn in, making school life more vibrant and caring.



“ While I was volunteering regularly in school, my daughter would often approach me with her classmates. Over time, I became a familiar face to them, and they would greet me like an old acquaintance. Eight years on, I continue to volunteer as a traffic marshal. My familiar face and greeting continues to give students a sense of security each morning. ”

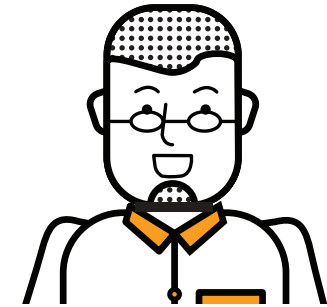
Mr Tan Moon Chong
COMPASS Parent Representative,
PSG leader, Ngee Ann Primary School



1.2 Contributing to the School

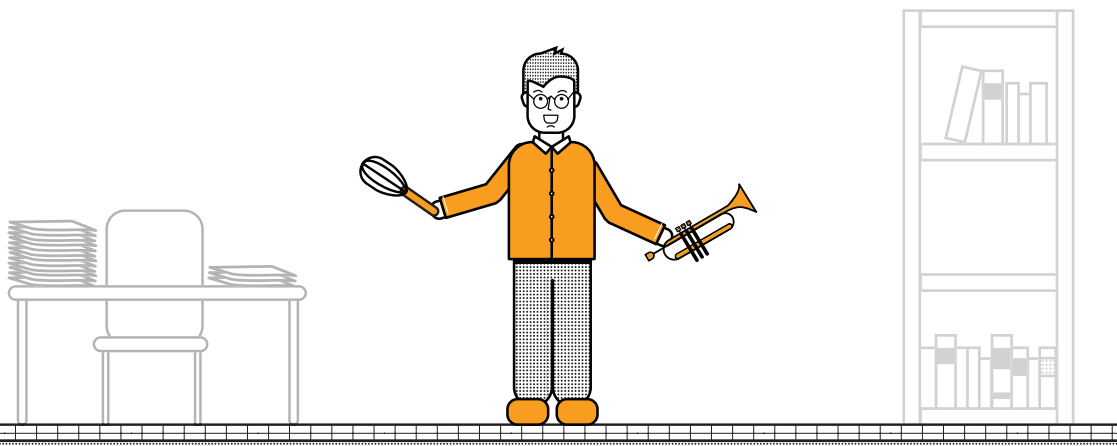
b) Talent

We can volunteer our expertise, talents, individual interests or personal networks. In this way, parents can significantly expand the pool of help available to the school and the PSG.



“ When I joined the school, I offered my expertise in IT to host an online platform for the PSG to encourage parents to volunteer. Today, we have a web portal at <https://spice.kidzedu.com>, as well as a Twitter and Facebook account under SPICE@EUNOS. I feel extremely rewarded to be able to help establish our PSG’s identity, and be part of this close-knit group. ”

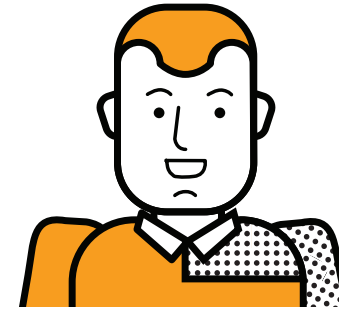
Mr Mohammed Nazzar Hamzah
PSG leader, Eunost Primary School



1.2 Contributing to the School

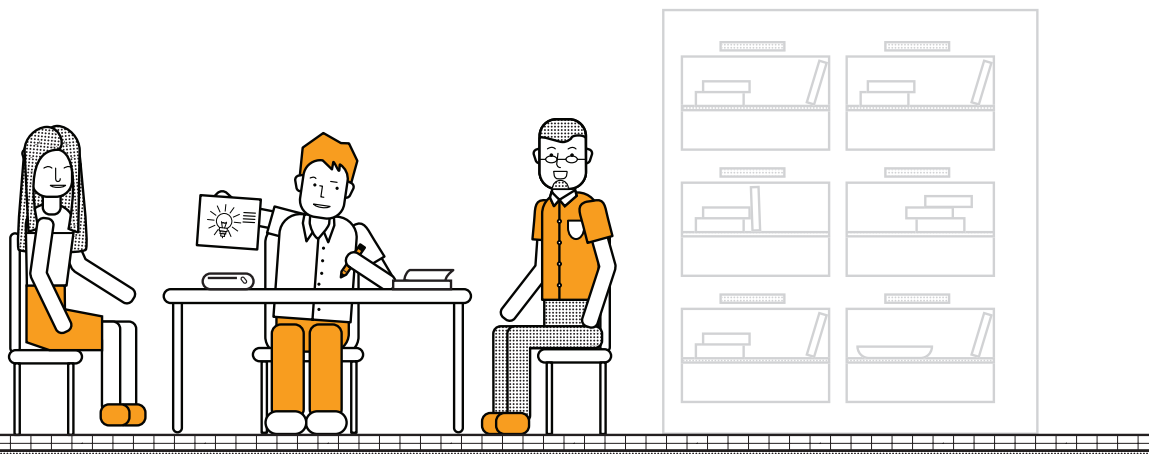
c) Thoughts

We can brainstorm and contribute constructive feedback and ideas to improve the school and PSG. Cluster-wide or zonal PSG forums are a great opportunity to learn and share ideas with other PSGs. More experienced parents can share experience and advice with younger parents too.



“ One of the most satisfying responsibilities as the Chairman of the PSG is being a bridge between parents and the school. Our PSG provides many feedback channels for its members, and we convey all their feedback to the school. When feedback given is acted upon, it gives me a sense of fulfilment knowing that this has benefitted the entire South View Primary School community. ”

Mr Khoo Kar Tiong
PSG leader, South View Primary School

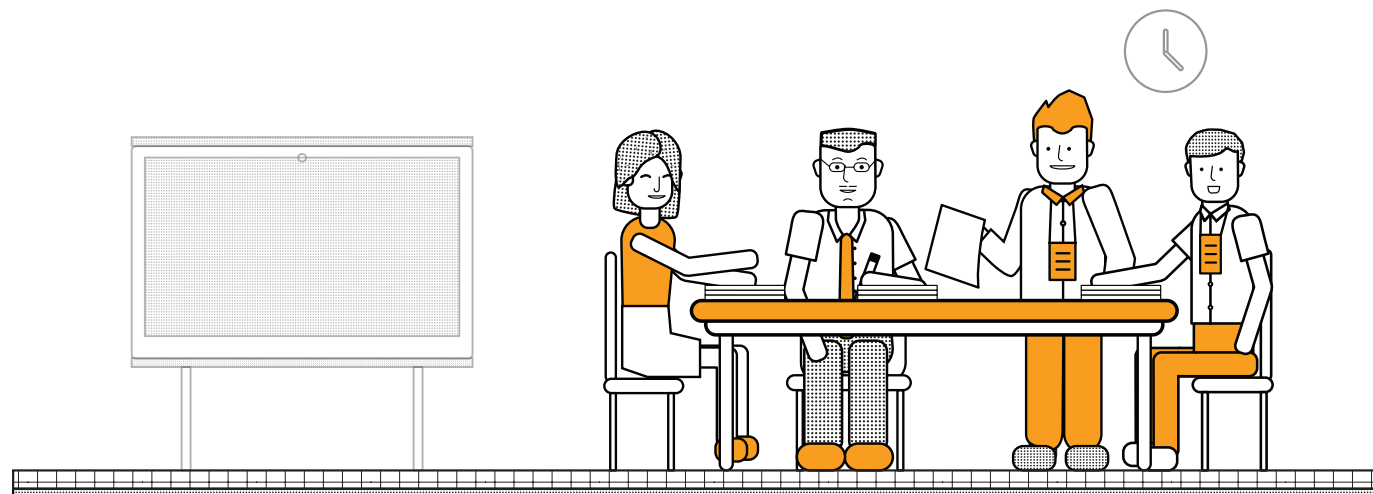


1.3 Dos and Don'ts of PSGs

When we come together in the PSG, we have to remember to balance our own needs and ideas with the needs of the school, other parents and all the students of the school.

Dos

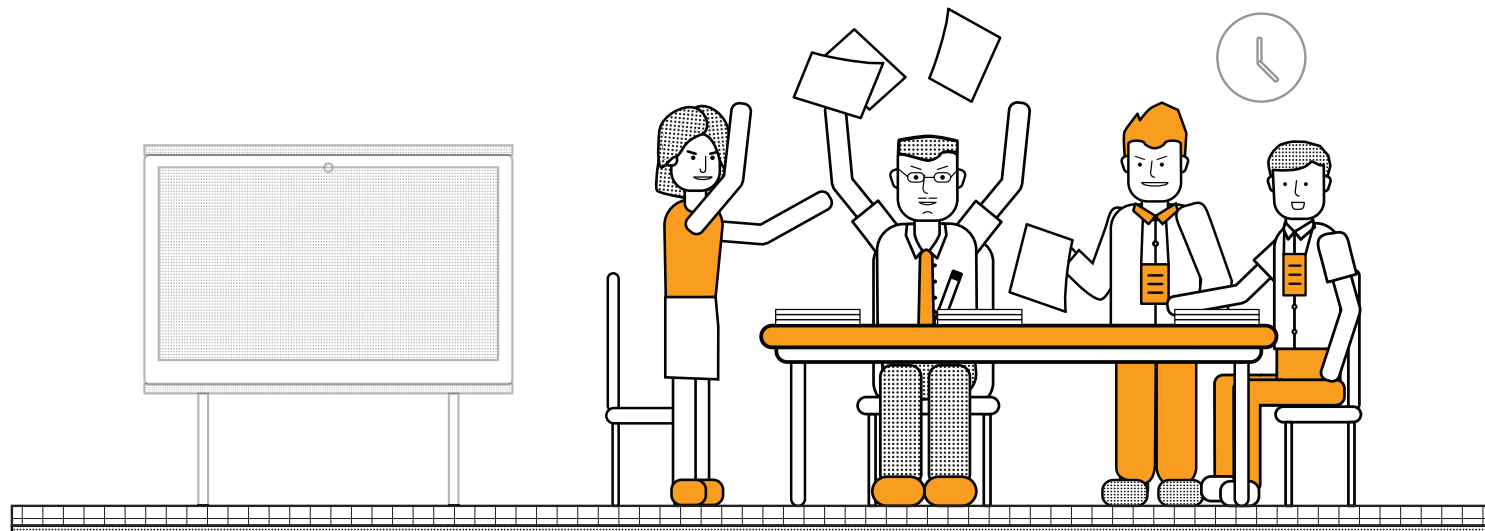
- Follow the school's rules and respect the authority of the school.
- Promote and participate actively in the school's programmes for the benefit of all children.
- Communicate with the school on specific needs of the child, if any.
- Provide constructive feedback to the school through official channels (e.g. dialogue sessions, PSG meetings).
- Respect the views and comments of fellow members.
- Project a positive image of the school when volunteering at school or PSG events.
- Dress modestly when volunteering at school events.
- Seek members' permission before adding members to any chat or social media group, and keep their personal contact details confidential.



1.3 Dos and Don'ts of PSGs

DON'Ts

- Overrule school policies for personal benefit or convenience.
- Engage in political games or favouritism within the PSG.
- Dictate teaching practices in the school. This may undermine the professionalism of teachers.
- Interfere with the administration of the school (e.g. attempt to discipline a school staff or vendor of the school).
- Criticise the school or PSG publicly. Any grievances should be brought to the attention of the Principal or PSG Chairperson.
- Represent the school at any external party, unless specifically authorised by the school leaders (e.g. speaking to the media).
- Wear revealing clothes.
- Use the PSG WhatsApp group chat to seek support for specific problems that your child is facing in school. Such feedback should be given to the school.
- Send messages that are irrelevant to the PSG's work through the PSG's communication channels.



1.4 Structuring the PSG

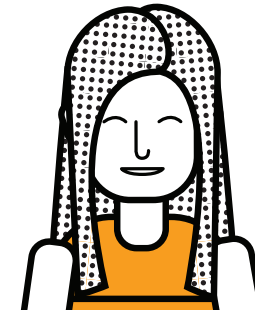
Forming an EXCO

It is useful to have an Executive Committee (EXCO), regardless of how big or small, young or mature our PSG is. The EXCO helps to oversee all PSG efforts and is the main point of contact with the school staff.

A Possible EXCO Comprises:

- a) Principal or Vice-Principal (as Advisor)
- b) Partnership Teacher-in-charge
- c) Chairperson
- d) Vice-Chairperson
- e) Honorary Secretary
- f) Honorary Treasurer
- e) Project Co-ordinators (optional)

Terms of Reference are useful in defining how the PSG works and its purpose. A sample Terms of Reference can be found in the in pages 47 – 49.



“ Our regular PSG meetings allow us to brainstorm many ideas for PSG activities with the Principal, Vice-Principal and teachers. One PSG activity that we managed to carry out was preparing and giving out chrysanthemum tea to the students and staff in the school, to show our care for their welfare and health during the haze period. ”

Mdm Winy Quek

PSG leader, Victoria Junior College

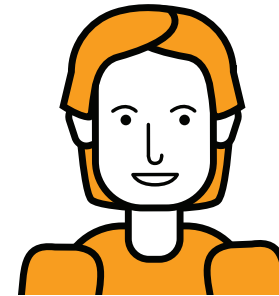
1.5 Drawing Up a Work Plan

It is good to draw up an annual work plan to ensure a good spread of activities throughout the year. An effective PSG work plan is aligned with the school's strategic thrusts and calendar. The PSG EXCO should also discuss the work plan with the PSG Advisor and school leaders.

The work plan should include:

- A brief description of events/programmes for the year
- The number of parents required for the events/programmes
- A timeline to brief parents on the various events planned for the year

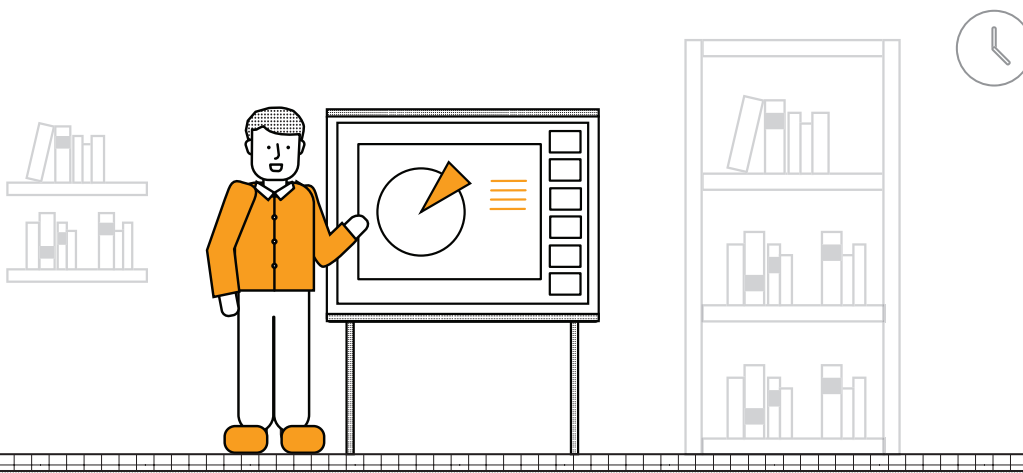
A sample PSG work plan can be found on pages 50-51.



“ A work plan helps the PSG set and achieve goals, and understand the purpose of the activities planned. When PSG members receive information on activities in advance, they are able to apply for leave to participate in the activities. With greater participation, more parents will be motivated to join and contribute their special talents and skills for their children's benefit. ”

Mrs Jane Koe

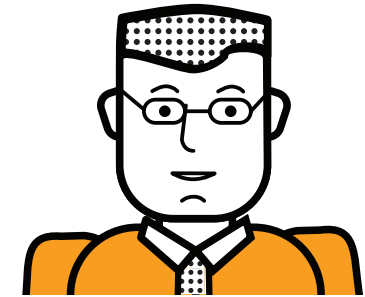
PSG leader, Ngee Ann Primary School



1.5 Drawing Up a Work Plan

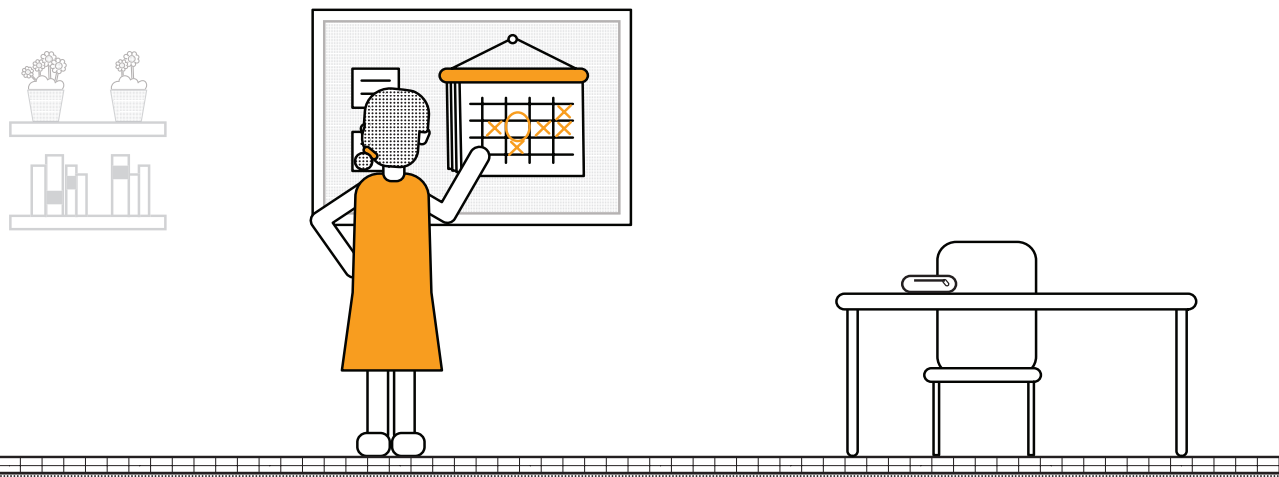
As you draw up a work plan, here are some suggestions to ensure that the year's events run smoothly:

- Draw up a PSG calendar of events at the beginning of the year, checking against the school's calendar to avoid a clash with school events.
- Assign at least two volunteers to organise each activity. This reduces the likelihood of insufficient volunteers, as each pair can share the workload and brainstorm for ideas.
- Allow parents to sign up early for events they would like to volunteer for. This allows parents ample time to apply for leave.
- Ensure that every event/programme has a teacher-in-charge and a key parent coordinator to ensure communication between the school and the PSG.



“ Understand the perspectives of other school staff, such as the Operations Manager, audio-video setup team, security team or cleaners, and get their support. If they understand your objectives and know that they are contributing to the benefit of the school and students, they will have greater ownership over your activities and be more willing to help! ”

Mr Tio Chong Heng
COMPASS Parent Representative,
PSG member, St Hilda's Primary School



1.6 Managing PSG Finances

Schools are guided by clear financial guidelines from MOE. It is important for the PSG to check with the school on the financial processes and requirements when planning and organising any parent engagement activities.

- All PSG expenses should be billed to the school and paid directly by the school to the vendors. If it is necessary to pay for the expense first, check with the PSG teacher in-charge before payment to ensure that reimbursement can be done.
- When collecting fees for programmes (e.g. workshops/classes), the money must be immediately handed to the school personnel. Avoid holding on to cash to ensure that there is clear accountability for all monies collected. Such collection should only off-set the cost of the programme, and should not be done for fund raising or profit.



1.6 Managing PSG Finances

Here are some examples of how some PSGs handle the budget.

Example 1

Before each academic year starts, the PSG EXCO should establish a plan of activities in conjunction with the school. The EXCO can then come up with the budget plan for the entire academic year. Parent I/Cs for each event should be appointed to ensure that expenditure for each event stays within the allocated budget.

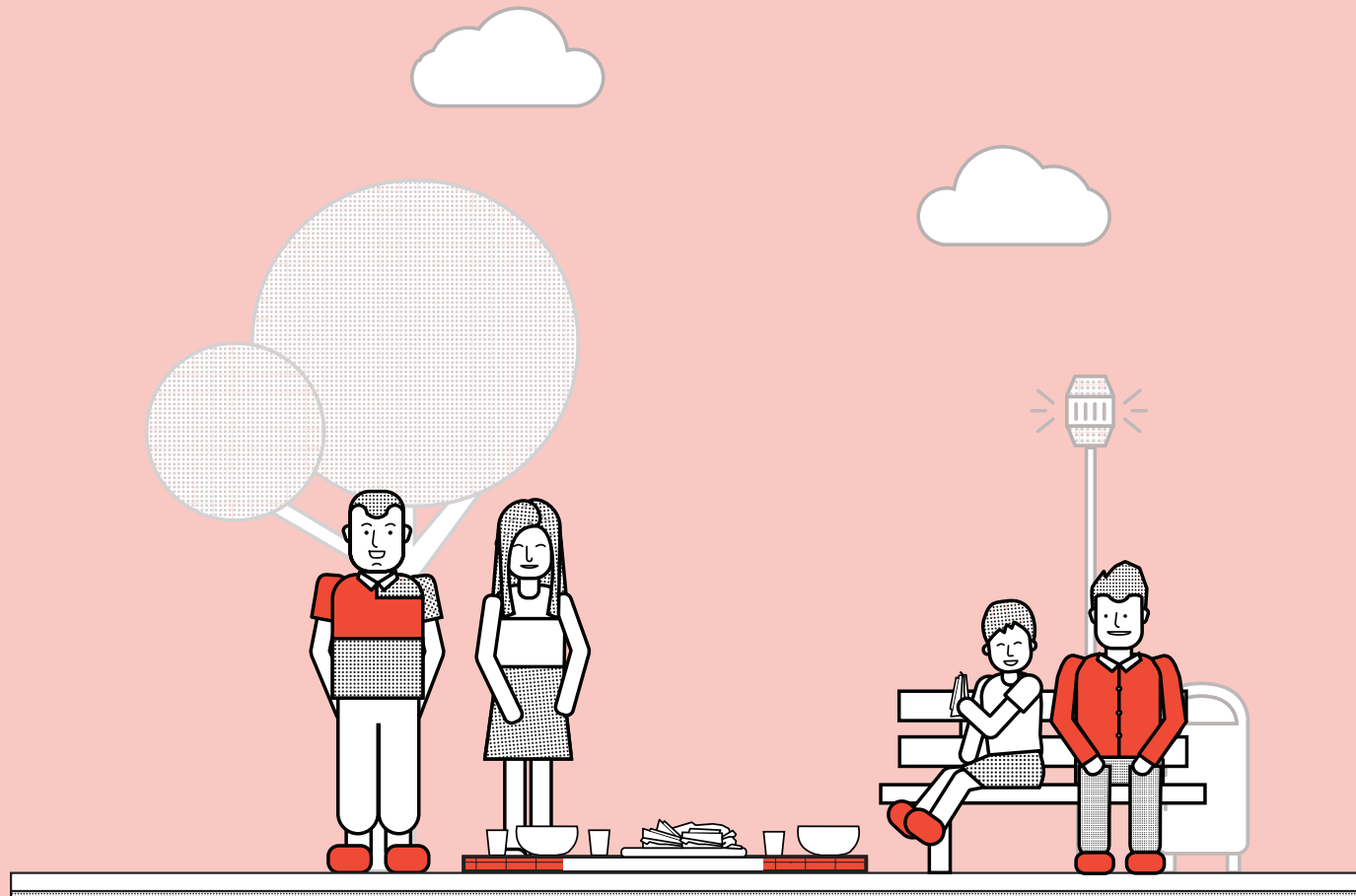
Example 2

PSG EXCO members meet the teacher-in-charge of the event and come to a common consensus on the objective, theme and the overall budget. The PSG team will then work with the budget given by the school to plan the event. Some creativity is needed from the PSG team in order to ensure that the event maximises the budget given in the interests of the students.



Sustaining Involvement

Once the PSG has been started, we can focus on sustaining the PSG by increasing the membership and building the relationships within the PSG.



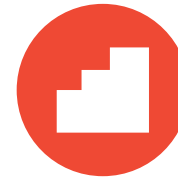
2.1 Recruitment and Outreach

Every PSG needs to grow their membership. New parents who join the school each year can be part of the PSG community. Here are some tips to guide your efforts in reaching out to parents and recruiting them:



Reach Out Personally

The most common reply parents give when asked why they do not volunteer is that “nobody asked”. Invite parents personally to join the PSG, and keep interactions with parents positive and hospitable to make them feel welcomed and included.



Involve them Progressively

Begin with activities that require low involvement, like family events, and engage parents through social media, emails, and other different ways, bearing in mind that not all parents are tech-savvy. Over time, they will be more open to volunteer and join the PSG.



Understand their Needs and Interests

This allows you to meet their needs and match them to opportunities to contribute to the school. For example, new parents need information, so the PSG can provide them with facts about the school, the school calendar, class schedules, and PSG activities.



Be Visible

The PSG has to be visible in school, especially during events. Visibility allows the PSG to share about their work with other parents, raises awareness of the PSG, and provides PSGs with the opportunity to understand parents better.

2.1 Recruitment and Outreach - Ideas to Try

• Name Tags

Give out name tags at PSG events! You can then refer to parents by their name and invite them to join events and conversations, and this helps them feel welcome and included.

• Collage

Make a collage symbolising members' aspirations and what they hope for in the PSG. It could be in the form of notes, drawings, a photo collage or even a wall mural.

• Sharing Sessions

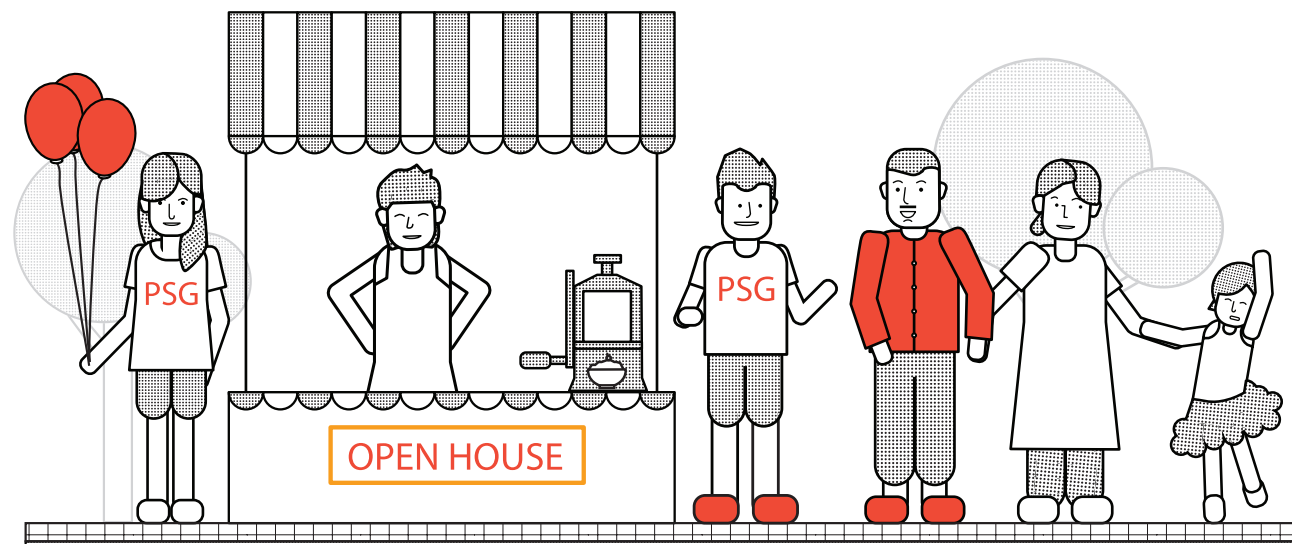
Members can write their reasons for joining the PSG, and share them with their fellow parents during the PSG Orientation or Networking Day.

• PSG T-Shirts

Encourage members to wear a PSG T-shirt during school events, like Open House and Orientation Day. The T-shirts are an effective conversation starter and opportunity to share with other parents about the PSG.

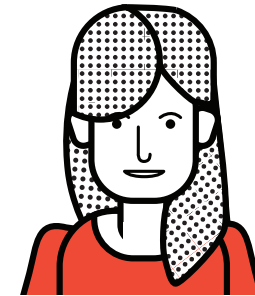
• Surveys

Utilise surveys to find out about each parent's talents and interests, and ask them to list what they value in a PSG.



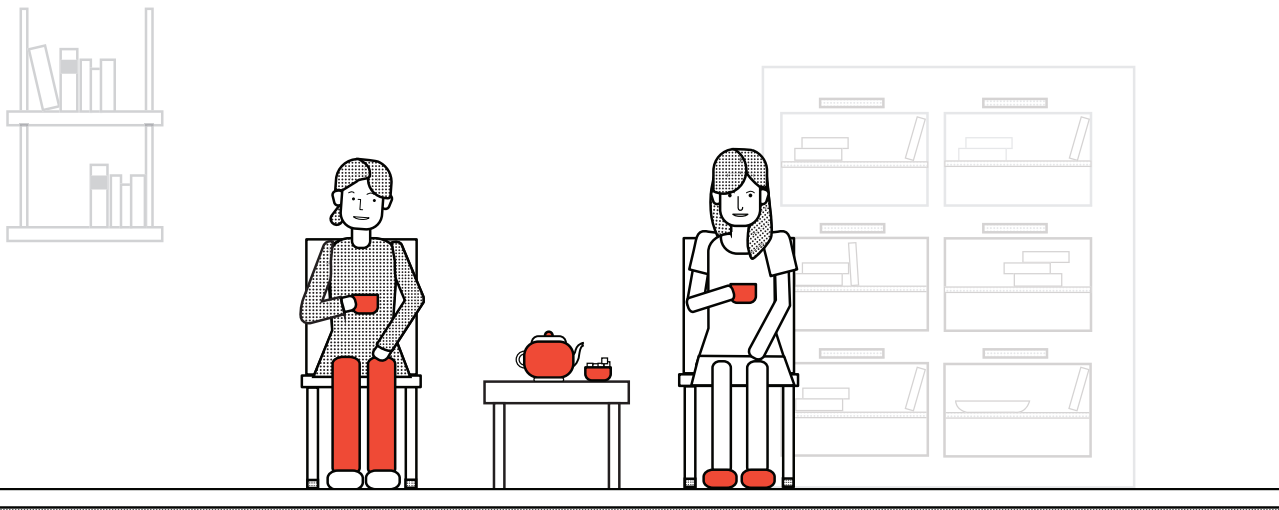
2.2 Building Bonds Among Parents

The PSG, like any volunteer group, is built on relationships. Parents are encouraged when they feel that they belong and that what they do matters. We need to sustain the relationships by paying attention to bonding and communication within the PSG, and between the PSG and the school.



“Casuarina Primary School’s PSG actively organises many school activities that help build friendships among parents. One example is the father-child bowling game we held after school hours. Fathers who were usually busy joined this activity and they enjoyed themselves. School excursion trips are useful to foster friendships, not just among parents, but with the teachers and students as well.”

Mrs Rosalind Cai
PSG leader, Casuarina Primary School



2.2 Building Bonds Among Parents - Ideas to Try

•PSG Networking Day

Set aside a day for existing and new members to interact and mingle. Show members the upcoming PSG activities for the year, so that members can understand the work the PSG does and the areas where they can contribute.

•Social Networks

PSGs with a large membership can make use of social networking and technology to reach out to members. Some examples include:

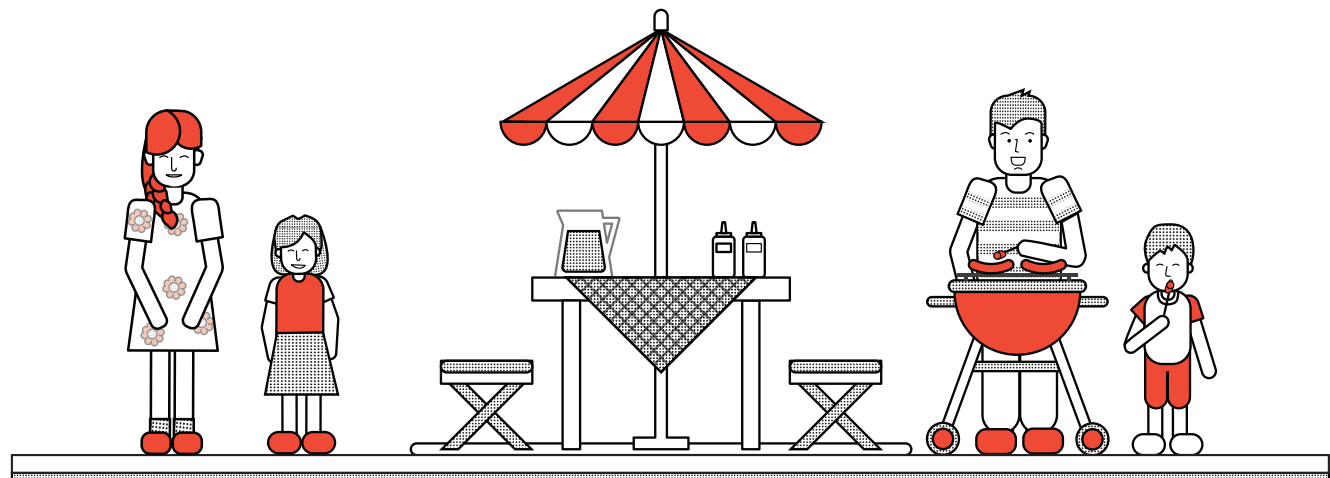
- Online volunteer registration forms.
- Emails to publicise events.
- Facebook and Whatsapp groups.
- SMSes for parents without email.

•PSG Family Day

At the end of the year, invite members and their families for a day out to places of interest. This creates our own social network and forms a larger PSG family.

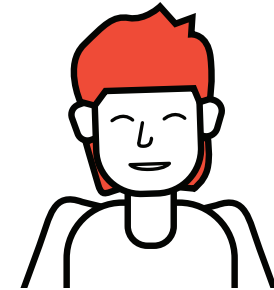
•Informal Breakfast Meetings

Making friends and establishing friendships is the first step in helping other parents feel that they are part of the PSG family. Gather parents over food to discuss the PSG's activities prior to implementation.



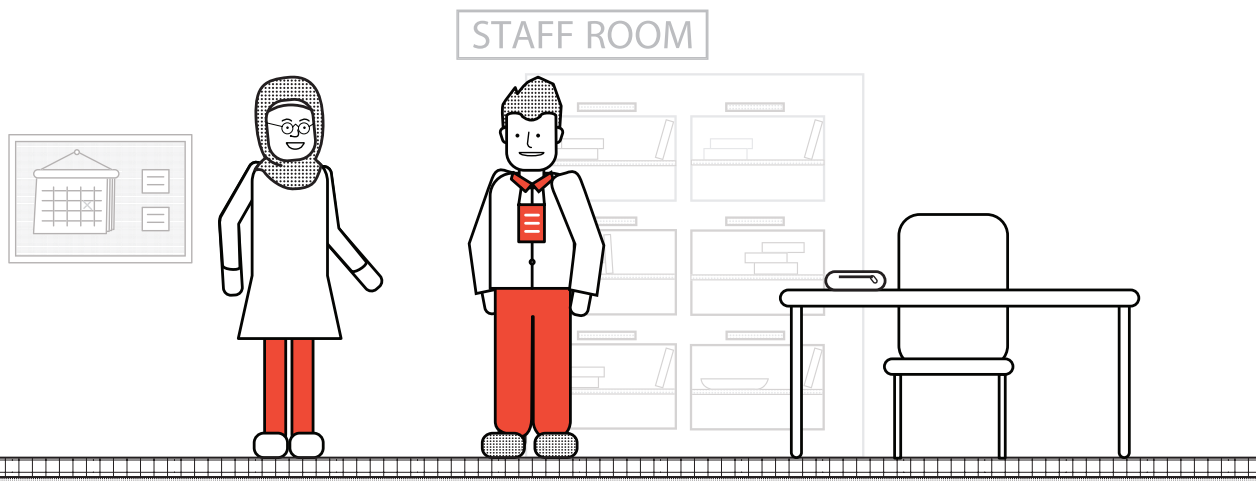
2.3 Communicating with Schools

Regular communication with the school helps to build the mind-set that the PSG is part of the school, and enhances the contributions that PSGs can make.



“ I like to think of PSG-School partnerships as getting hitched, where the relationship will go through certain phases. To move from courtship to marriage, you need to nurture the right environment, and that is when both the PSG and school leaders play important roles in building their relationship. And just like any relationship worth investing in, it takes time and effort. ”

Mdm Sophia Kan
PSG leader, Singapore Chinese Girl's School



2.3 Communicating with Schools - Ideas to Try

• Regular Meetings with School Staff

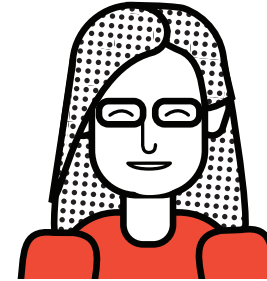
Communicate regularly with teachers in charge of programmes or events. Activities planned for students can be consistently monitored, reviewed and discussed, with guidance and advice from the school staff, to enhance the partnership and processes.

• Frequent Dialogues with School Leaders

School leaders help the PSG members understand the rationale behind school policies and the school's operational structure. PSG members can then support the school by sharing this important information with other parents.

• Invite School Leaders and Staff to PSG Activities

Their presence, even in just a short welcome session, shows PSG members that the school supports the PSG's activities, fostering a collaborative environment. The appreciation shown will motivate parents to participate in future activities.



“ Cooperation and open communication between school and parents help to make the school a better place for our children. Parents feel included and are better informed about the school happenings. They also have a chance to be closer to their children. For our children, it is very important for them to feel that their parents do care about what they do. It is a win-win situation! ”

Mdm Christine Sim

COMPASS Parent Representative, PSG leader, Loyang Primary School

2.4 Managing Conflict

In a PSG, we have to work closely with the school and other parents. At times, we may have to manage difficult situations. Below are some examples of real-life situations we may face, and how we can understand and manage the different types of parents better.



Members with a Personal Agenda

The focus of the PSG should be on all the children in the school. Although we may be more concerned about our own child or our own area of work, we need to remind one another that we need to benefit all students in the school.



Overly Enthusiastic Members

We may sometimes be too enthusiastic and will expect swift changes. However we must always remember that the PSG is supporting the school. We need to be considerate and practical in our requests and expectations.



Schools with Differing Perspectives

Involve the school staff at the start of the year to endorse our work plan, and meet regularly to clarify how our plans align with the school's goals and available support. As the PSG operates within the school, we should respect the school's authority and work closely with them.

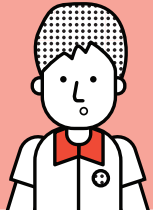


Inactive Members

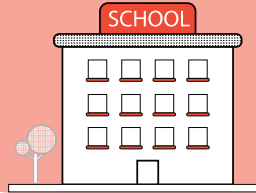
Respect that parents have different backgrounds, preferences, and levels of commitment when inviting them to participate in the PSG. We should continuously encourage and motivate one another by highlighting the positive impact of our work on the school and the students.

2.5 Running Events and Activities

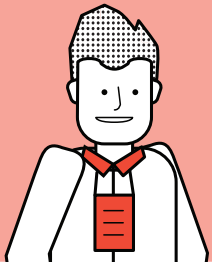
We have a big part to play in enriching our children's school life, whether we collaborate with the school for key school programmes, or organise parent-centric activities. The activities and programmes that we plan should aim to:



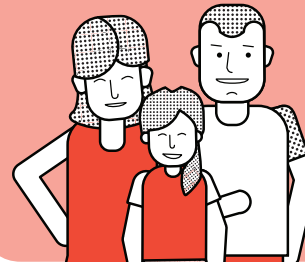
Support the child to
enrich his/her learning
in school



Support the school
to strengthen
school-based activities



Support the teachers
to bring out the best
in our children



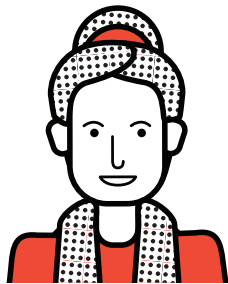
Support other
parents in the
parenting journey

2.5 Running Events and Activities

Here are some examples of the activities that PSGs all over Singapore have been busy with. We hope you find some ideas here!

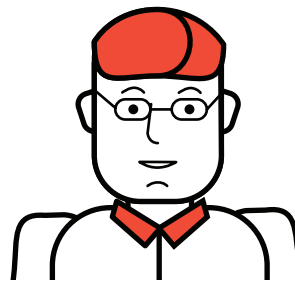
a) Major School Events

- Participate in performance items or collaborate with the school to run the **festival celebrations**.
- Organise **career talks** with students to share your career experiences or demonstrate a certain career-related skill, e.g. sewing, hairdressing.
- Gather parents together to show support for **school teams**.



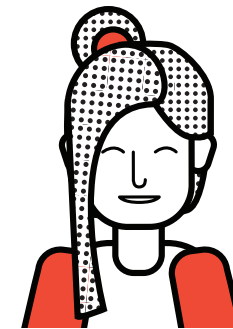
“ Since 2011, we have invited children from different countries to showcase their different talents on stage. The different international parent groups were also invited to set up booths showcasing their history, culture and food. It was a fun and great learning experience for both the parents and the students! ”

Mrs Joanna Ong-Balinghasay
Former PSG leader, Eunus Primary School



“ I wanted to share my career experiences as an emergency doctor with the students, to offer a glimpse into the challenges and fascinating conditions that I come across in my work. I hope that they may be better informed about what a doctor's work entails, and to consider it as a future career. ”

Dr Steven Lim Hoon Chin
PSG leader, Anglican High School



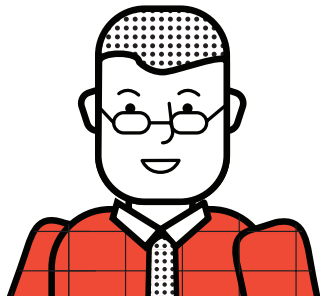
“ I contribute my time to the Water Polo team to show my appreciation to the school. I find joy in planning and organising activities, such as a barbeque party. These activities gather and motivate other parents to support their children's well-being in the team, and spur our children to do their best. ”

Mrs Angela Toh
PSG member, Outram Secondary School

2.5 Running Events and Activities

b) Parent-Child Bonding

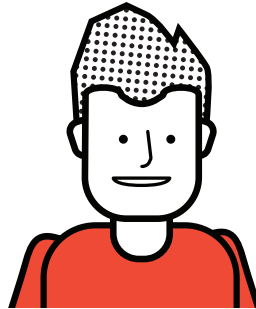
- Organise and participate in **community outreach** activities, such as visiting hospices or cleaning up parks and beaches.
- Organise **campus**, e.g. Dads for Life camps, for quality bonding time with children.
- Organise **cook-outs** where parent and child can bond over a recipe.



“ My son and I had the chance to volunteer at the Apex Harmony Lodge together with other families in Pasir Ris Secondary. These volunteering experiences gave me and my son, Raunak, the opportunity to build camaraderie. These cherished moments gave me a chance to spend quality time with my child in a hectic world. ”

Mr Priyam Bose

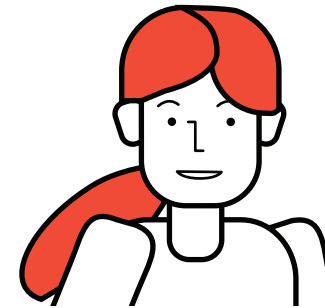
PSG member, Pasir Ris Secondary School



“ My son, Donovan, was very excited when he asked me if we could both attend the Dads for Life camp in school. The activities were a good bonding opportunity, and I would especially recommend this to fathers who travel very often. A father’s influence on his son’s personal development is often unseen, but nonetheless real. ”

Mr Christopher Low

PSG member, Maris Stella High School



“ Isaac suggested to enter the cooking competition because he loves to bake. I also felt that it was a good opportunity to bond with him. Together, we brainstormed, experimented and came up with our own creations. The most memorable moments were seeing the tasters’ satisfied expressions as they tasted our sandwich! ”

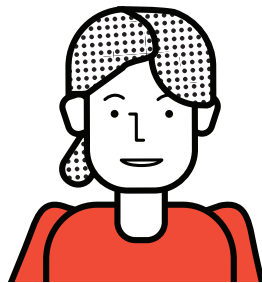
Ms Jacqueline Aw-Yong

PSG member, Radin Mas Primary School

2.5 Running Events and Activities

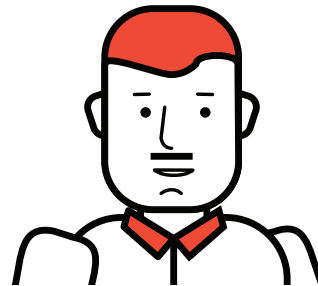
c) PSG Bonding Activities

- Plan **parenting talks** to support other parents in our parenting journey.
 - Organise **inter-school PSG networking sessions** to learn from other parents.
 - Organise **Learning Journeys** for parents to discover new experiences.
- These could also be aligned to the school's programmes.



“ Not all of us have family or elders living with us who can guide us through the various transitions in our child's development. The PSG gives us a chance to discuss the parenting issues we are having, helping us to realize and understand that many children in the same age group are going through the same changes and teaching us to be more patient. ”

Mdm Mrinalini Thathu
PSG leader, Park View Primary School



“ I met Chong Heng and his Fathers' Group at St. Hilda's Primary during the 2015 East Zone PSG Networking Session. With their mentoring, I started a Fathers' Group with several fathers in Chongzheng Primary. We referenced some of their programmes and adapted them for our school. Thanks to their guidance, we were able to avoid pitfalls. ”

Mr Suryanarayanan Sriram
PSG leader, Chongzheng Primary School

2.6 Reviewing Events

After each event, it is important to hold a review with all parents involved. The feedback we gather from such reviews will be very helpful for the PSG and the school when we plan our next event.

Who leads the review?

Typically, a review is best led by the parent(s) who is/are in charge of the event.

Who should be involved?

Parents who have helped out or participated can give valuable feedback. School staff can also provide comments from a different perspective.

When do you do a review?

Do a quick review immediately after the event, as the experience will be fresh in everyone's mind.

What do you need to do a review?

A framework to guide the review discussion can be very helpful. The **Keep, Improve, Start, Stop (KISS)** framework prompts us to think about both the effective and less effective parts of a programme.

KEEP – Which parts are working well and should continue?

IMPROVE – Which parts can be done better?

START – What initiatives can we start to enhance school-home partnership?

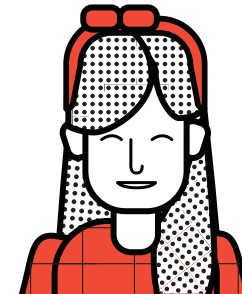
STOP – Which parts are ineffective and do not benefit anyone?

2.7 Showing Appreciation and Acknowledgement

The PSG can start a culture of appreciation to acknowledge the time, talent and thoughts that parents have contributed to each event. Acknowledgment and appreciation keeps parents active in the PSG and the school!

IDEAS TO TRY OUT:

- Give 'thank you' cards to individual members upon successful completion of any event or programme.
- Organise a "Partners Appreciation Day" to recognise members' contributions.
- Give Certificates of Appreciation to active members.
- Acknowledge long-serving members' contributions at major school events, e.g. Speech Day.



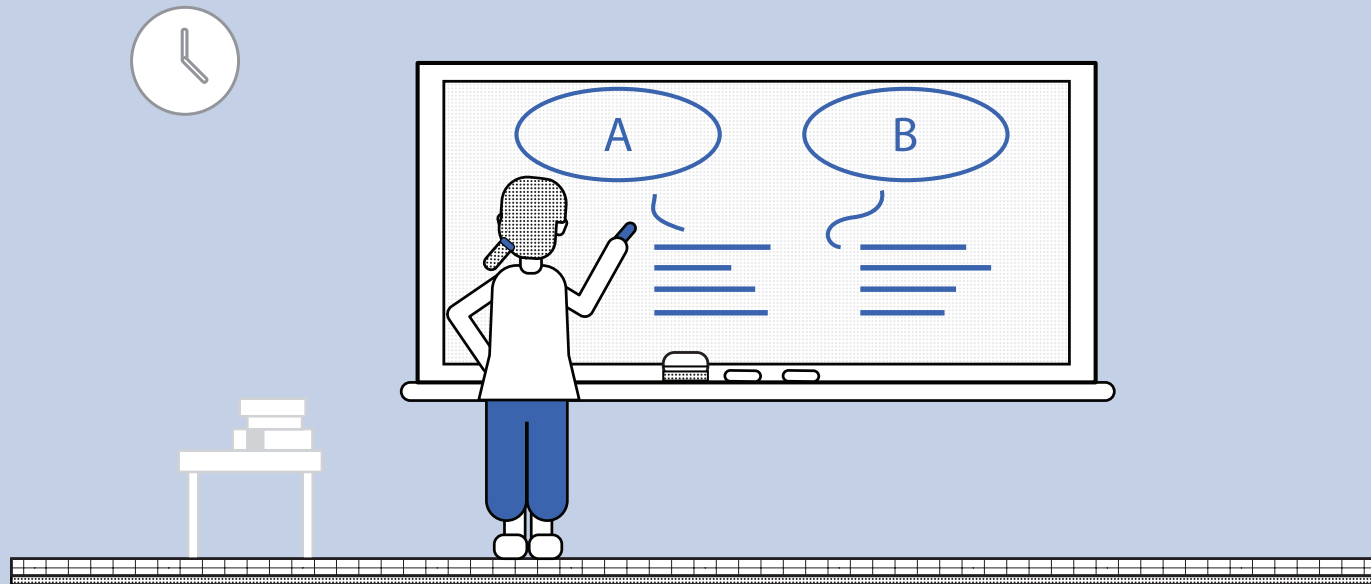
“ At the end of the year, we have a Partners In Education (PIE) Thanksgiving Day. We have a wonderful time bonding together amid laughter, games, photos and yummy food. We also have regular lunches as a committee to foster good working relations. Appreciation activities reinforce parents' commitment, and encourage deeper and varied involvement with the school. ”

Mdm Linda Boo

PSG leader, Fairfield Methodist School
(Secondary)

Planning for the Future

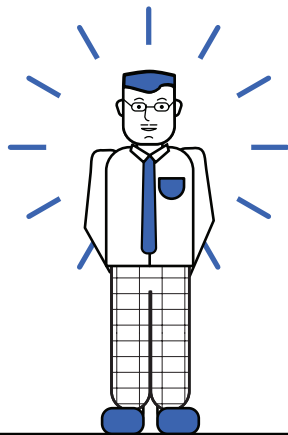
As the PSG stabilises and matures, we encourage members to aspire towards a shared vision, organise themselves to make collective decisions, and take action to achieve their vision.



3.1 Succession

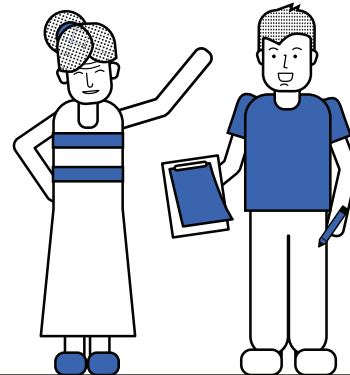
A succession plan ensures that new leaders are ready to take over when an experienced team graduates from the PSG. A succession plan consists of three stages:

1.



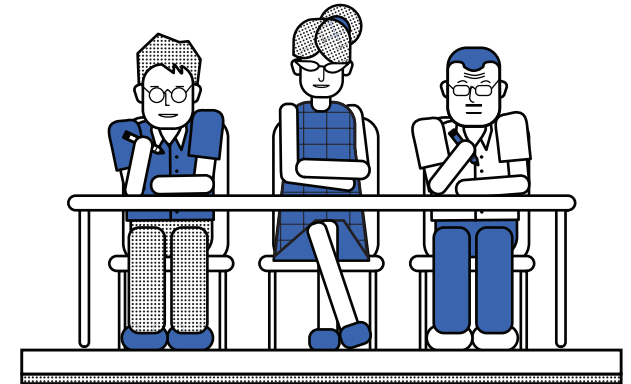
With the school leaders, identify potential members who are ready to succeed the present PSG leaders.

2.



Keep experienced members in the EXCO to groom newer PSG leaders. Pair them up to lead a programme or event.

3.

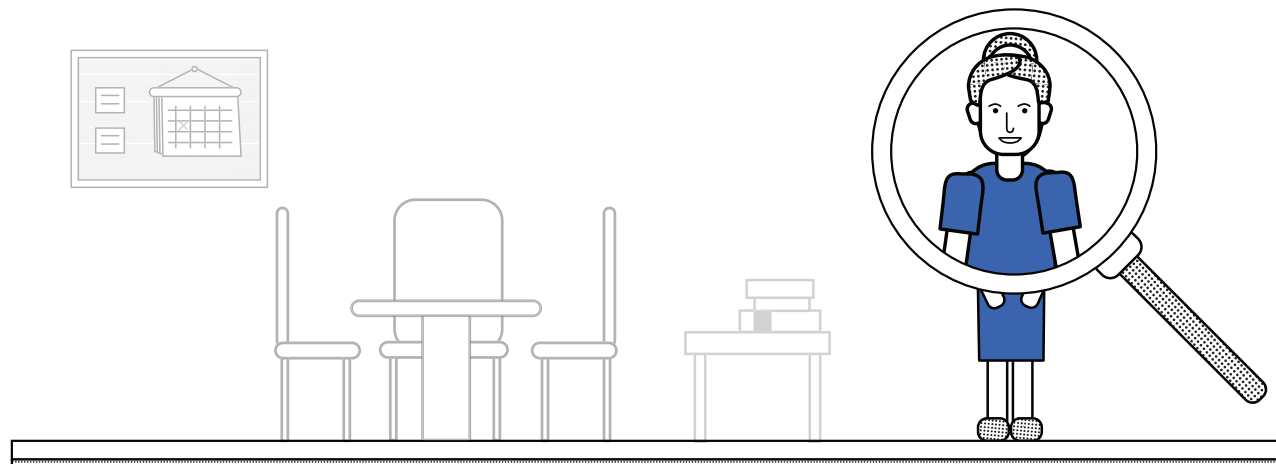


Set up sub-committees and recruit new members. Observe and identify members who have leadership potential.

3.2 Identifying The Next Generation of Leaders

How can we identify members who have the potential to be the next generation of PSG leaders?

- Having the **right attitude and the right intention** is important. When potential leaders have the intention to support the school in enriching the students' learning environment, our collaborative spirit will drive the PSG towards achieving its goals.
- Potential leaders are those who invest **time, energy and effort** to serve the students and school. When we do not 'find' the time but 'make' time to serve, we show that serving alongside the PSG is an important aspect in our lives.
- Potential leaders know the importance of **mutual respect** and strive to understand, acknowledge, appreciate and accept viewpoints that are different from their own.



3.2 Identifying The Next Generation of Leaders

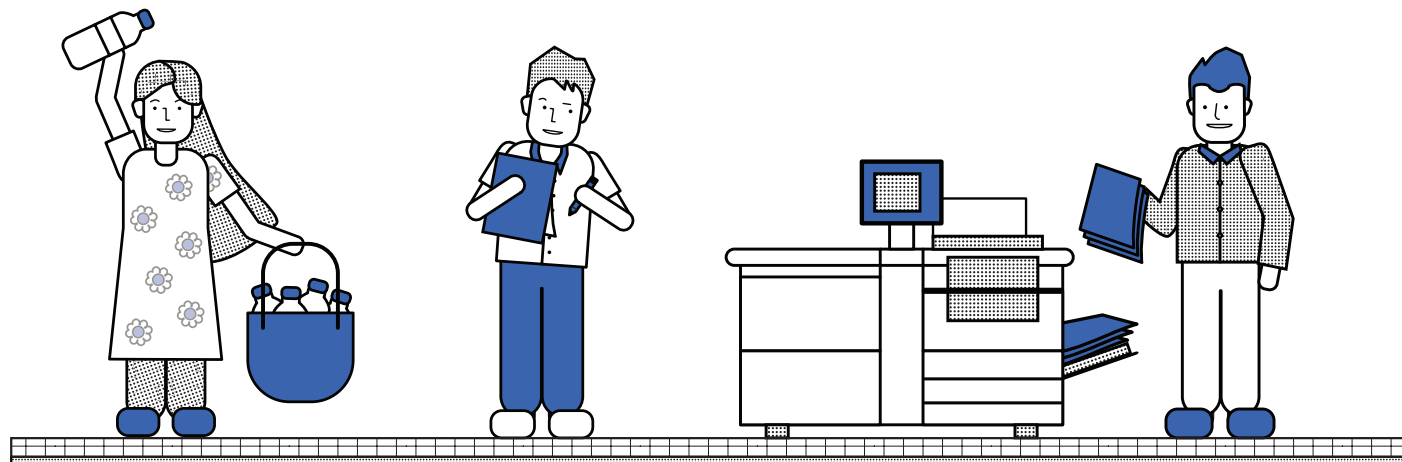
Identifying the next generation of EXCO members is easier than it seems!
Below are some practical tips on how to further engage the potential leaders and guide them into the EXCO.

STEP 1

Assign **simple tasks** to new volunteers such as:

- Buying bottled water
- Taking attendance at events
- Printing registration forms
- Ushering at events

These tasks, although simple, **create a sense of ownership and team spirit** for the members. It helps them feel a sense of belonging to the activity and to the PSG.

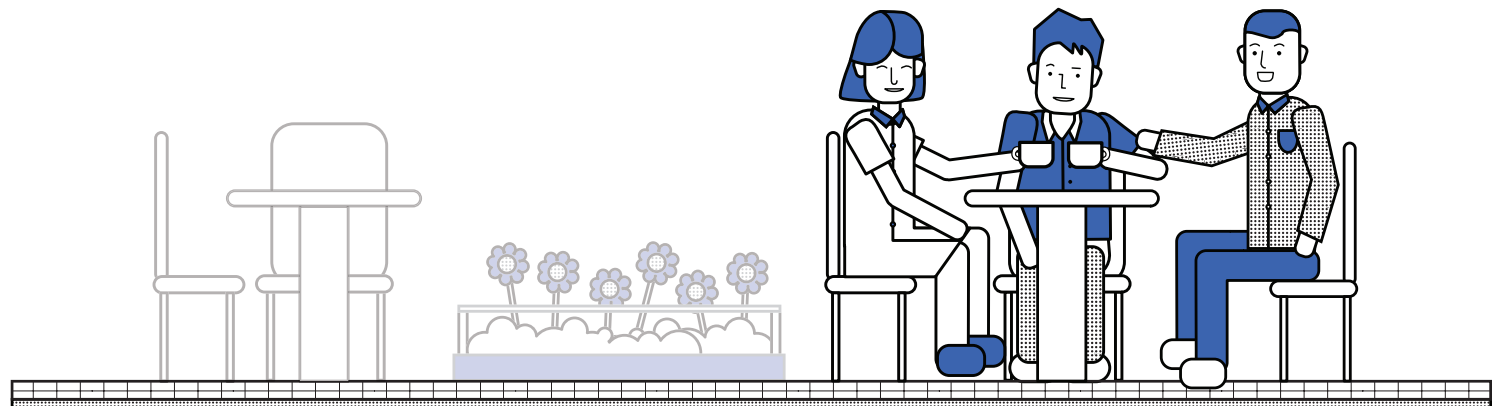


3.2 Identifying The Next Generation of Leaders

STEP 2

Get to know the parents who have offered their help. Say hi to those who frequently participate in our activities. **Make time to chat** with them individually during the activity. During the conversation, we could:

- Ask about their lives and get to know them better
- Ask what motivates them to come for our activities
- Ask for their thoughts on our team and the activities organised
- Invite them to be part of the core team

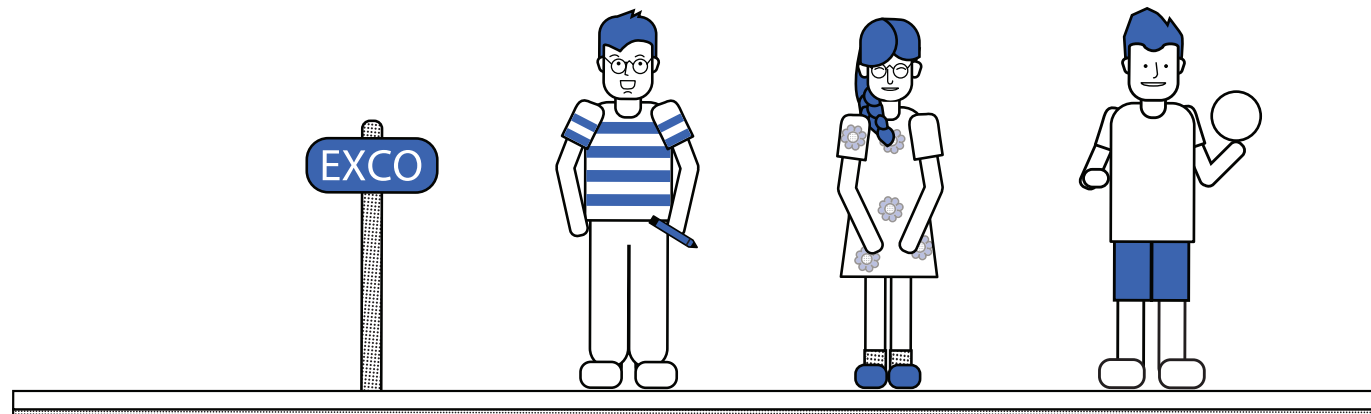


3.2 Identifying The Next Generation of Leaders

STEP 3

With their permission, include them into a social media chat group of “active members”. Use this chat group to **continuously engage** them by inviting them to help out at or co-organise upcoming activities which are led by current team members.

From this pool of active members, identify a few who could be potential EXCO members with School Leaders and current EXCO. Once a decision has been made, find the right opportunity to invite these members to be part of the EXCO.



3.2 Identifying The Next Generation of Leaders

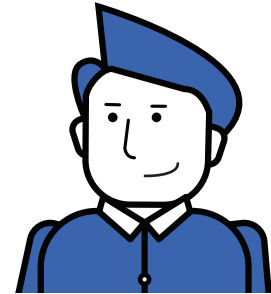
SELECTING THE PSG CHAIRMAN

- It is highly recommended for the Chairperson to have at least two years of experience in the PSG before taking on the role. The Chairman should be someone who can relate and manage the parents in the PSG.
- PSG leaders should be chosen based on factors such as the ability to lead and manage, their passion and commitment to serve, the ability to influence and inspire members and their interpersonal skills.
- PSG leaders should be positive and focus on building relationships with the school and PSG members.
- It is possible for a person who has not served for a long time in the school to be recommended by the school leaders if he/she demonstrates exceptional qualities that are needed in a PSG leader.



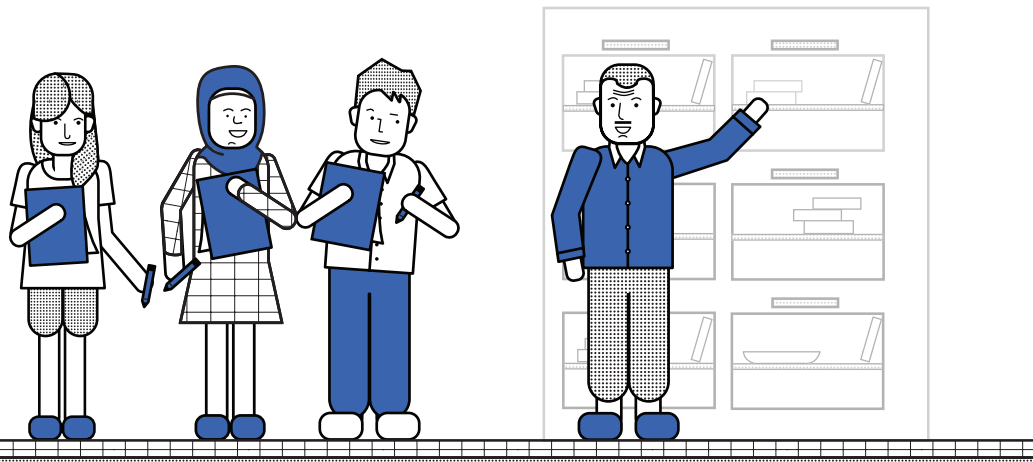
3.3 Pay It Forward

Through our network of friends or participants, we might have heard of other schools who are less experienced in running a PSG, or may not even have one. Just like how we may have benefited and learnt from experienced parent volunteers, we can benefit others by mentoring newly established PSGs of other schools. More experienced members of our core team can volunteer to conduct sharing sessions with these schools and pay it forward!



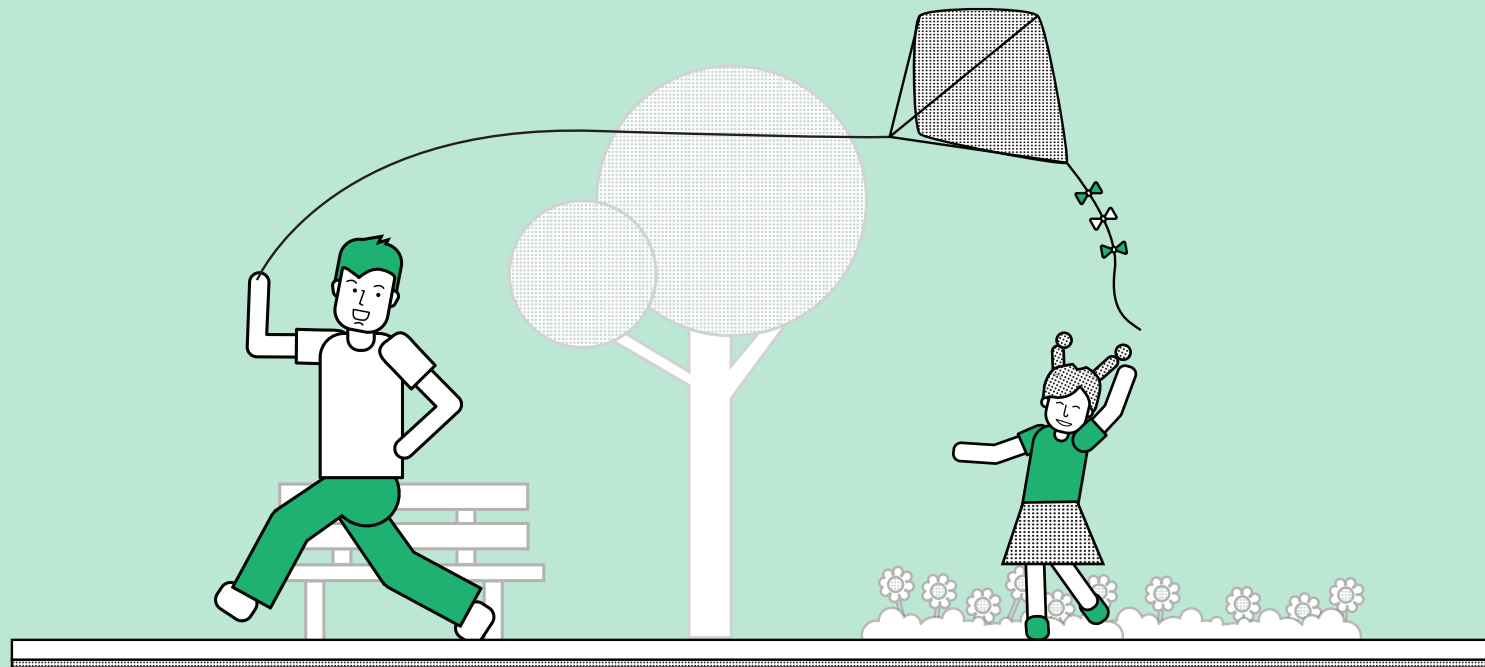
“ As each school is unique, so are PSGs. When we share and understand the problems and challenging issues we face, we are broadening our horizons to look beyond what we can imagine. This enlarges our perspective on issues within our own PSG, and enhances the partnership between the PSG and the school. ”

Mr Dennis Chan
COMPASS Parent Representative, PSG leader,
Gan Eng Seng School



Specific Interest Groups

The stages of running a PSG can also be applied to a specific interest group, e.g. graduated parents' group, fathers' group, reading mothers' group, working mothers' group. In this section, we will look at how interest groups, like Fathers' Groups, can work with PSGs and the schools.



4.1 Starting and Growing Interest Groups

Starting a specific interest group should be done after the PSG is well established. First, determine if there is a need for such interest groups by asking the following questions:

Why should we pay attention to this particular group of parents?

What resources do we need?

How do we start and sustain the group in the school?

How can they be more involved in their children's education?

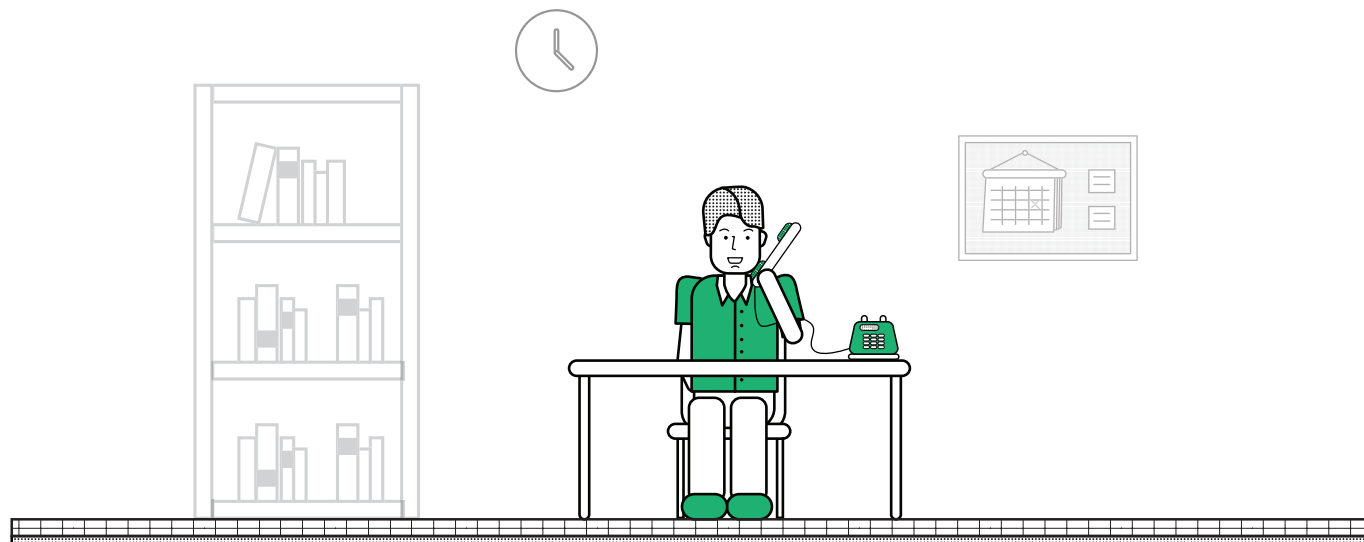
Are there organisations out there that can support our special interest group?



4.1 Starting and Growing Interest Groups

Before deciding on the different work areas of the interest group, we should seek endorsement from our school leaders. This ensures that the group will align with the school's goals.

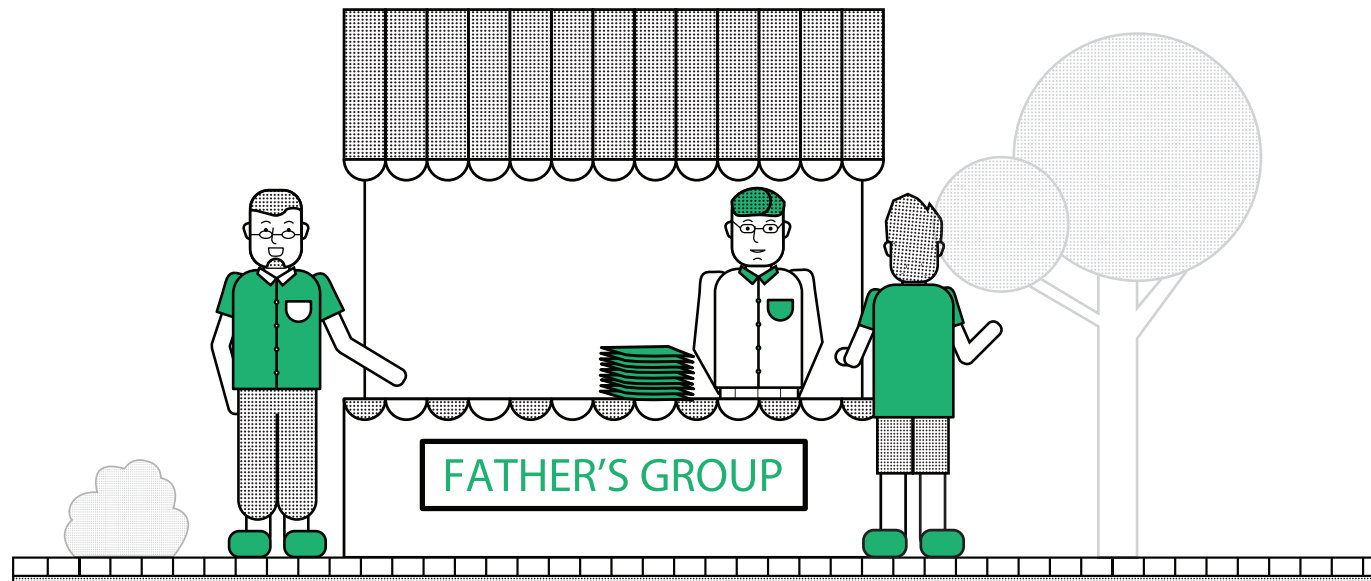
For example, in the case of a Fathers' Group, it could be that the PSG and the school feel that greater involvement of fathers in school activities will be more beneficial for the child and their family. With the school's approval, you may then wish to contact the Centre For Fathering for resources, and enquire if they have contacts from other schools that can share their experience in their journey in setting up a Fathers' Group.



4.2 Working with the PSG and the School

Interest groups should address an identified need that is aligned with the overall direction of the PSG, and should always be a part of the PSG. There should not be competition between the PSG and the interest group(s) for resources, such as volunteers or facilities. One way to ensure this is for the interest groups to create their work plan together with the PSG and the school, to ensure all activities are aligned with all stakeholders.

As membership of the interest group grows, it is suggested that the more experienced members of the group mentor the newer volunteers.



4.2 Role and Structure of Interest Groups

As we plan for the special interest group's involvement with the school and the PSG, here are some areas that we should consider:



Registration of Members

- Do we personally distribute registration forms, or through form teachers?
- If via email, should the school or PSG send it?
- If via online signups, should the school or PSG organise and collate?



Possible Activities

- Who should be the target audience of each activity?
- What should the nature of activities be?
- Should we encourage creativity and other interests such as sports, culinary, outings, workshops?



Aligning with School Leaders

- Is the school available for regular meetings with the Interest Group? If yes, how often?
- If not, how do we ensure engagement and alignment with them?
- What should the agenda of these meetings be?



Publicity of Events

- Do we use hardcopy or softcopy for publicity?
- Should communication be via email or social media, or a combination of platforms?



Maintaining Communications

- What are our primary means of communication? Social Media or Email?
- Should we use the Interest Group's email address or our personal email address?

4.3 Recruitment and Outreach

Here are some tips on how to use existing platforms to recruit members for an interest group:

School Orientation

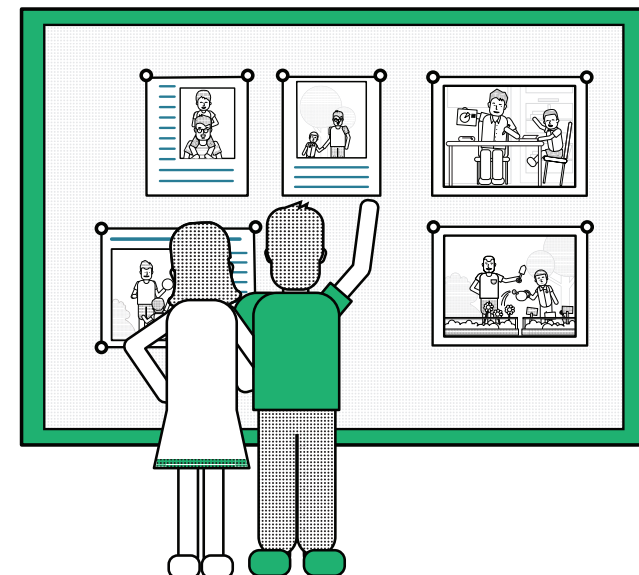
Parents are generally enthusiastic and open to new information during orientation. Set up a booth for enquiries and registration, and check with the School Leaders if we could introduce the group during the PSG's presentation. Consider creating an online registration form or Google forms instead of a hard copy one for their convenience.

First Day of School

Identify a few volunteers to welcome other parents at the school gate as they bring their children to school, and distribute hardcopy flyers about the interest group and our activities. We could also offer to take photos and upload them on the PSG (or interest group's) website for downloading. This also increases traffic to our site!

School Publications

If the school has regular publications (e.g. periodic newsletter, school year-book, school website), seek permission from the school to publish articles on recent activities. This also helps children remember the times they spent with their parents.



4.4 Types of Activities

It is important that the special interest group plans activities that serve the objective it was created for. For instance, the Fathers' Group is meant to encourage fathers to be actively involved in their child's life, promote father-child bonding and strengthen father's role in families.

Here are some examples of activities that Fathers' Groups use to achieve their objectives.

a) Build in Father-Child Elements Into Usual PSG Activities

With ice-breaking activities, fathers can bond with their children, and reinforce better fathering skills. One activity can be for a father-child pair to step on a piece of newspaper that is folded in half with each successive round until the newspaper is so small that the father will have to carry his child. Highlight the importance of better fathering by telling fathers that spending time with their children is important.

b) Consider the One-Father-One-Child Policy

In order to make the father-child event effective, consider allowing only one child per father for each event so the child may enjoy undivided attention from the father. You can also organise events that involve the whole family. Do make sure the father knows that he should be actively interacting with his child during the event and not leave him or her solely to the mother.

c) Develop Signature Activities for the Fathers' Group

Brand a few special activities as the school's or Fathers' Groups' signature activities, e.g. annual Father-Child Orientation Camp for new students. Having signature activities raises the profile of the Fathers' Group while benefitting the children by helping them to settle in a new environment.

4.4 Types of Activities

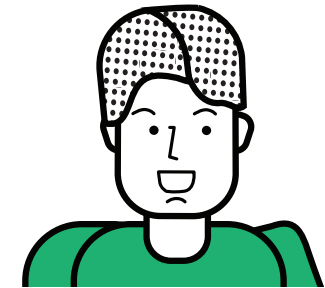
d) "Back to School with Dad"

The Centre for Fathering (CFF)⁵ started an annual event named "Back to School with Dad" where fathers are encouraged to accompany their child to school on the first day of the academic year. Some fathers have been doing it yearly. This sends a strong message to their child that their father cares for him or her.

To find out more about such activities, visit CFF's website and click on "Back to School with Dad".

e) Fathering Workshops

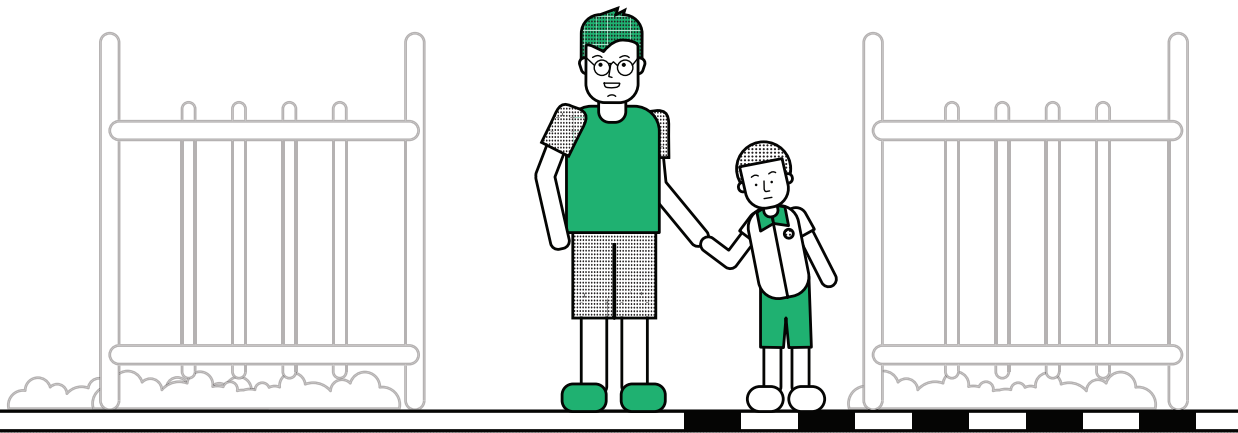
CFF also organises an "I-CAN" fathers' workshop that focuses on inspiring, equipping and supporting men in their role as fathers, thereby strengthening families. This workshop is only for fathers and it aims to help men become better fathers.



“Shift work meant that I had very little time with Xavier as he was growing up, but joining the activities organised by the Fathers' Group in Queenstown Primary gave both of us opportunities to have father-son bonding. The one activity that stands out is kayaking at MacRitchie Reservoir. The excitement and 'danger' of the expedition left us sunburnt and tired, but closer than before!”

Mr Mike Ang

PSG leader, Queenstown Primary School



⁵ A non-profit organisation registered in Singapore, focusing on empowering fathers to be better role models and an enduring inspiration to their children (<http://fathers.com.sg/>).

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- Mdm Winy Quek
- Mrs Joanna Ong-Balinghasay
- Dr Steven Lim Hoon Chin
- Mrs Angela Toh
- Mr Priyam Bose
- Mr Christopher Low
- Ms Jacqueline Aw-Yong
- Mdm Mrinalini Thathu
- Mr Suryanarayanan Sriram
- Mdm Linda Boo
- Mrs Rosalind Cai
- Mdm Sophia Kan
- Mr Mike Ang

Sample Terms of Reference

PSG EXCO Terms of Reference (Sample¹)

TERMS OF REFERENCE [Name of School] PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

Purpose:

- 1 The [Name of School] Parent Support Group (PSG) is a volunteer organisation made up of parents who are dedicated to supporting [Name of School] in the holistic development of our children. The PSG is managed by an Executive Committee (EXCO).
- 2 The functions of the EXCO shall be to:
 - (a) promote a collaborative relationship between parents and the principal, teachers and students in the school;
 - (b) provide opportunities for the parents to volunteer their services using their time and talent in student programmes and co-curricular activities;
 - (c) provide constructive input (and/or be available for consultation) on school policies and goals, practices and programmes;
 - (d) support parents in their parenting journey via suitable avenues.

Limitations of Functions:

- 3 The EXCO shall not be involved with the administration or the curriculum of the school, unless requested to as per clause 2(c) above.

Organisation of EXCO:

- 4 (a) Members of the EXCO shall consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Hon Secretary, Hon Treasurer and not more than [number] other members.
(b) School Advisor (P/VP) and Teacher Co-ordinator will be invited to the PSG EXCO meetings as and when required.
- 5 The EXCO shall comprise of no more than [number] members whose children have graduated from the school.
- 6 (a) Nomination into the EXCO shall meet all requirements as follows:
 - Minimum of [number] year(s) of active PSG service
 - Dedication to serving the community
 - Demonstrates initiatives and selflessness
 - Team player and open to collaborations
 - Proposed by one EXCO member and seconded by a different EXCO member
 - Majority vote by EXCO to bring the new member into EXCO
(b) Nomination of new /additional Committee members may be effected and approved at EXCO meetings.
- 7 (a) The Principal shall appoint the Chairperson from among the EXCO members. This is after due consultation with the outgoing Chairperson and/or other EXCO members.
(b) The EXCO shall elect its other office-bearers.

¹ Adapted from Ngee Ann Primary School's PSG EXCO Terms of Reference.

Sub-Committees:

8 The EXCO may from time to time appoint sub-committees from its PSG members to carry out specific programmes or projects.

Period of Appointment:

- 9 (a) Appointments to the EXCO shall be for a period of *[number]* years per term. Members may serve in the EXCO for up to *[number]* consecutive terms or a continuous period of *[number]* years.
- (b) The term of office shall start on January 1 of the 1st year and end on December 31 of the *[number]* year.
- (c) In case of resignation of an office-bearer, the Chairperson, in consultation with the Advisor, shall appoint committee member to serve out the affected role in an acting capacity for the remaining duration of the term.

EXCO Meetings

- 10 (a) The EXCO may meet as often as it deems necessary. In any case, the EXCO must meet at least *[number]* times a year.
- (b) A meeting shall be convened before the expiry of the term of office of the EXCO. At such a meeting, a count of the committee members who wish to continue service into the next *[number]*-year term of office shall be formalised.
- (c) Meetings of the EXCO shall be convened by the Hon Secretary in consultation with the Chairperson.
- (d) The Hon Secretary shall give all EXCO members seven days' notice of any meeting. The date, time and place of the meeting and the agenda shall be included in the notice.
- (e) For any special matters requiring immediate attention, the Hon Secretary shall convene a special meeting by giving three days' notice to members.
- (f) Meetings of the EXCO shall be presided over by the Chairperson or, in the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson. Meetings of any Sub-committee shall be presided over by the Chairperson of the Sub-committee or, in his absence, the Vice-Chairperson of the Sub-committee.
- (g) All issues arising at an EXCO Meeting or at a Sub-committee meeting shall be decided by a majority of members. Voting can either be by a show of hands or by secret ballot if requested by any member of the EXCO. In case of a tie in the number of votes, the person presiding at the meeting shall have a deciding vote.

Duties of Office-Bearers

- 11 The Chairperson shall:
- (a) preside at all meetings of the EXCO;
 - (b) be responsible for the proper conduct of business at all the EXCO meetings;
 - (c) sign the minutes of each meeting after the minutes have been approved;
 - (d) endorse the Committee Budget proposed by the Hon Secretary and approved by the EXCO;
 - (e) appoint / assign project co-ordinator (s) and or sub-committee members.
- 12 The Vice-Chairperson shall assist the Chairperson in the performance of his duties and perform the duties of the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.
- 13 The Secretary shall:
- (a) keep minutes of meetings, maintain custody of all documents and records of the EXCO and generally perform all duties relating to his office;

- (b) keep members of the EXCO informed of the various activities of the school carried out in accordance with the general policy of the Government (e.g. Racial Harmony Day, National Day celebrations);
 - (c) act as Secretary at all EXCO meetings.
- 14 The Treasurer shall:
 - (a) review the Financial Statements to be presented at meetings by the Hon Secretary;
 - (b) be responsible for the financial management of the EXCO in accordance with School Fund procurement, receipt and payment procedures;
 - (c) maintain an up-to-date ledger that reflects the latest financial position of the PSG's cash account balance.
- 15 EXCO Committee Members shall:
 - (a) serve as Project Coordinators to plan, coordinate, implement and evaluate programmes / projects;
 - (b) serve in sub-committees and ensure the PSG Chairperson and Vice Chairperson are updated on the outcomes and actions decided at the sub-committees.

Sample Workplan

Work Plan of PSG Activities (Sample²)

No.	Activities/ Events	KP/ Teacher IC & email	Date(s)	No of Parents Required	Time	Venue	Level(s) Involved	Briefing for PSG
TERM 1								
1	Parade Square Duties		2 – 9 Jan		7.00am	Parade Square	P1 & all	TBC
1	P2 Swimming Programme		13,20 & 27 Jan 3,10,17,24 Feb 3 March	8	2.00-5.00 pm	Parade Square/ Bedok Swim Complex	P2 (94 pupils)	Yes, during 1 st session
2	Chinese New Year Celebrations		18 Feb	10 to 20 (1 song item)	7.15am	School Hall	All	TBC
3	PSG Lou Hei Outreach		18 Feb	6	1.30pm	Resource Room	PSG	TBC
4	Parent-child bonding camp		11 Mar 12 Mar	8 8	8.30am to 12.30pm	School Hall	6U, 6R, 6T, 6C 6H, 6L, 6J	11 & 12 Mar 8.00am, Hall
5	Mass PE/Walk		Every Friday	min. 22	7.30am – 8 am	ECP	P1-P3	Yes, during 1 st session
6	P4 Project Work		10 Mar	8 8	4T: 8.30am – 11.30am 4J & 4H: 8.30am to 12.30pm	East Coast Photography Trail Mural Painting @ Blk 4	4T 4J & 4H	10 Mar, 8 am outside GO
			11 Mar	8 8	4L: 8.30am – 11.30am 4J & 4H: 8.30am to 12.30pm	East Coast Photography Trail Mural Painting @ Blk 4	4L 4J & 4H	11 Mar, 8 am outside GO
			12 Mar	8	4J & 4H: 8.30am to 12.30pm	Mural Painting @ Blk 4	4J & 4H	11 Mar, 8 am outside GO
TERM 2								
No.	Activities/ Events	KP/ Teacher IC	Date(s)	No of Parents Required	Time	Venue	Level(s) Involved	Briefing for PSG
1	Mass PE/Walk		Every Friday	min. 22.	7.30am – 8 am	ECP	P1-P3	Yes, during 1 st session
2	Parenting workshops – learning to		9 May 16 May	15 15	10am – 11.30am	AVA Room	PSG members & other parents	TBC TBC

² This sample was adapted from Ngee Ann Primary's PSG Work Plan.

	communicate effectively with kids		23 May	15				TBC
3	International Friendship Day		8 – 9 April	TBC	8am to 1pm	Parade Square	All	TBC
4	P4 Learning Journey to Singapore River		25 May	6	8.30am to 12.30pm	Singapore River	P4	25 May 8am @ Parade Square
TERM 3								
No.	Activities/ Events	KP/ Teacher IC	Date(s)	No of Parents Required	Time	Venue	Level(s) Involved	Briefing for PSG
1	Racial Harmony Day Commemoration		14 – 15 July	46	7.30am to 1.30pm	Parade Square	All	* 2 planning sessions in May
2	P3 Learning Journey “Chinese Drama” “Treasure Island”		21 July	6	9am to 12pm	SOTA Theatre	P3 CL students	Briefing on 21 Jul at 8.30am at hall
3	Open House (recruitment booth)		8 July	2 for sharing, 8 for helping	1pm to 4pm	AVA Theatre	Potential P1 pupils & parents	8 July at AVA Theatre at 1pm
4	Teachers’ Day		Sept (TBC)	TBC	TBC	TBC	All	TBC
5	Health Week 2015		17 - 19 Aug	6	During recess time for both recess	Parade Square	P3,P4,P5,P6	14 Aug 8.15-8.45am Meeting Room
TERM 4								
No.	Activities/ Events	KP/ Teacher IC	Date(s)	No of Parents Required	Time	Venue	Level(s) Involved	Briefing for PSG
1	Children’s Day Sports Arena		8 Oct	16	7.30am to 1.30pm (TBC)	Parade Square	All	TBC
3	P6 Career Awareness Talk (TBC)		13 Oct	6-8 parents	8am to 11am	P6 classrooms	P6	13 Oct, 8am @ Conf Rm
4	Project Hope/Jumble Sale		5 Nov	Depending on the booth set up by PSGs	8am to 12.30pm	Parade Square	All	-
5	Semester 2 Talent Showcase		9 Nov 11 Nov to 13 Nov	3 per day	10am to 11am	Parade Square	P1 to 6	9.45am on the actual day
6	End-of-year PSG Family Day		14 Nov	12	9am to 12pm	School Hall	All	8am on the actual day

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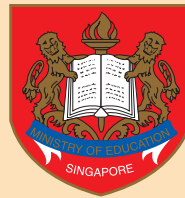
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