

Parent Information Package

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Contains important information! Please keep for reference!

What is Parent Association?

You may have heard parents and teachers talk about our school's Parent Association, or DPA (Dickinsfield Parent Association) or PAC (Parent Association Council) and wondered what they were talking about. These are all just terms for the same group, The École Dickinsfield Parent Association.

Parent Association is a registered society that provides support to students and teachers through fundraising and volunteer activities. The Parent Association is composed of all parents or guardians of École Dickinsfield students. All members in attendance at a meeting may vote on issues before the Association.

What do they do?

The Parent Association raises funds through weekly hot lunch sales, casinos, and special fundraising campaigns throughout the school year. These funds are used to provide financial support to the school in the form of capital purchases, special programs, and activities as approved by the membership.

In the past, Parent Association has been able to provide, amongst many other things:

- Gymnasium projector and sound system
- Playground and gym equipment
- Promethean boards
- Mobile iPad lab
- Furniture
- Emergency meal supply
- Literacy supplies and student awards
- Funding for school clubs and teams

The Parent Association also oversees the planning and operation of the hot lunch program, the welcome back BBQ, the charity bazaar, and the staff appreciation luncheon.

Why does this matter to me?

The Parent Association has a tremendous impact on our school and its students. Last year we raised over \$130 000 and decided how that money would be spent! It provides a wonderful opportunity to get involved and know what's happening within the school and with other parents, and a way to really have your opinion count.

What about School Council?

School Council is another group that operates within our school composed of the parents and staff of Ecole Dickinsfield. School Council advises the administration, school board and government on issues, policies, and practices that affect our school, and works towards the schools goals and missions.

So how's that different than Parent Association?

Although the School Council operates together with the Parent Association, they are a separate group. Where the Parent Association is a hands on group, volunteering and fundraising within our school, School Council is an advisory council, looking at the big picture, and working to support student success and positively influence the future of education in our school, district, and province.

Which meeting should I attend?

You are always welcome to attend both! Both groups provide terrific ways to be involved and to make an impact on our school and your child's education. If you are interested in discussing topics such as improving student success, the revised report card, upcoming changes in the curriculum, or ways to improve student safety, you may wish to participate in School Council. If you'd like to be a presence inside our school, helping out at events and activities, and having a say in the things we purchase and fund for the school this year you might prefer Parent Association.

How do I get involved?

The easiest way is to simply come to a meeting! All parents are automatically members of our Parent Association and School Council simply by having a child attend Ecole Dickinsfield, there is no need to sign up or register. You can come to any meeting at any time, and contribute as much or as little as you'd like.

You can put your name forward to be elected to an executive position of either organization, sign up for a sub-committee, volunteer to be a classroom rep parent, volunteer to help with one of our fundraisers or events, or simply come to find out what's happening in the school.

Parent Association Elected Positions:

The Parent Association includes nine elected executive members. All parents are encouraged to put their names forward for these important roles. Executive members are elected at the Annual General Meeting in September for the following positions:

- President: plans and facilitates meetings; oversees all Parent Association activities and has co-signing authority for all association bank accounts.
- Vice Chair: assumes the responsibilities of the President in his/her absence and oversees certain subcommittees and activities.
- Treasurer: oversees all financial activities; prepares monthly and yearly financial reports.
- Secretary: keeps accurate records and minutes of association activities and distribute as necessary.
- Volunteer Coordinator: recruits volunteers as required for school and Parent Association activities, maintains an updated potential volunteer contact listing.
- Raffle and Fundraising Chairperson: assesses and recommends potential fundraising activities; plans the logistics of school fundraisers and creates subcommittees as needed.
- Casino Chairperson: receives AGLC training; ensures casino is licensed and staffed with volunteers. The next casino will be Spring 2015.
- Communications Coordinator: creates a monthly Parent Association update for the school newsletter; coordinates communication through school website and

social media; liaises with office admin for printing and distribution of Parent Association notices.

- Hot Lunch Coordinator: oversees the operation of the hot lunch program; plans menus, orders supplies, communicates with local restaurants, coordinates volunteers, and maintains the ordering website.

Parent Association Sub Committees:

Sub-Committees are formed throughout the year as needed to plan special activities, fundraisers and events. We currently need volunteers for the following sub-committees:

- Magic Show Committee: Responsible to plan and organize our Magic Show fundraiser, scheduled to take place on Thursday, October 9, 2014.
- Charity Bazaar committee: plans, organizes, and executes our annual charity bazaar in early December.
- Teacher Appreciation Luncheon Committee: plans, organizes, and executes our annual teacher appreciation event in the spring.

Classroom Parent Reps

We need one parent volunteer for each homeroom in the school. This parent will act as a liaison between the Parent Association and teacher and parents in that class. They will need to attend a class rep meeting in September to go over their role and responsibilities and attend monthly Parent Association meetings throughout the year. Their primary responsibilities in addition to passing along information, will be to recruit volunteers from their classroom as needed through the year, especially for events like the teachers appreciation luncheon, and to assist the teacher as the teacher requests.

Other Volunteer Opportunities

- Lunch Program volunteers: The school lunch program needs parent volunteers though out the year to shop for lunch groceries and deliver to the school kitchen, pick up orders from local restaurants and deliver to the school lobby, prepare and package fresh fruits and vegetables, sort lunch orders, and clean lunch bins. All lunch volunteer jobs take less than one hour and only require a one time commitment.

- Magic Show volunteers: We need parent volunteers to help set up and take down our magic show on October 9, 2014. We also need volunteer ushers, ticket takers, and concession stand workers. This is a one time commitment.
- Welcome back BBQ: We need parent volunteers to help set up, cook and clean up, as well as to man information tables at our welcome back event on September 17, 2014. This is a one time commitment.

School Council Executive Members:

The School Council has executive members who are voted into their position at the School Council AGM in June. Any vacant positions can be filled as willing volunteers step forward.

- Chairperson (2 year term): Sets the agenda, chairs the meetings, provides the parent voice to the administration, district, Alberta School Council Association (ASCA), and Alberta Education.
- Vice Chairperson: assumes the responsibilities of the chair in his/her absence, and attends Networks meetings alongside the Network reps.
- Secretary: keeps accurate records and minutes of the School Council's meeting and activities and distributes these as necessary.
- Networks Rep: Attends the district's Networks meetings and reports back on issues discussed, relays our school's comments, issues, or concerns to the Networks Committee.
- Parent Association Liaison: Attends the Parent Association meetings and helps to maintain open communication between the two organizations.
- Members at Large (2 positions): Assist with sub-committees or projects as directed by the chair. Help to ensure quorum at meetings, and contribute to discussions.
- Teacher Rep: Elected from the teaching staff to work with parents at meeting our common goals.

School Lunch Program

Ecole Dickinsfield's School's Parent Association operates an optional hot lunch program within our school. We work with local Alberta Health nutritionists to offer a variety of healthy option lunch items available for parents to order for their children each month. Parents can sign up on our school lunch website, dickinsfield.hotlunches.net, to gain access to our menus and prices. Once you have signed up, you are able to browse through our monthly menus. You can then decide whether you would like to order for your child or not. We offer a selection of menu items you can select from, chosen from local restaurants or prepped in our school kitchen. We currently offer lunches on Wednesdays and Thursdays throughout the school year. You are free to order as many or as few items as you would like, and are free to order on any, all, or none of our lunch days each month. Any food you order for your child will be delivered to him or her, in time for lunch on that day.

In addition, and maybe most importantly, all of the menu options available to order are healthy choices for our children. We worked together with Alberta Health Services and local restaurants to create menu choices that fit Canada's food guide for healthy eating, as well as comply with the "APPLE Schools" program. Many of these are special menu choices created for schools, in a "healthy options menu," not what you would normally get ordering at these restaurants. To see where each food fits, simply scroll over the information button (*i*), and you will be able to see if that food is a "choose most often food" (high nutrient food), a "choose sometimes food" (moderate nutrient food), or a "choose least often food" (low nutrient food). These categories are a simple way to see how nutritious that menu item is. They take into account total fat, as well as saturated and trans fats, protein, fibre, sugar, and sodium.

Our school lunch program is a great fundraiser for our Parents Association, with all funds raised going right back into our school. In the four years we have been running this program we have raised a tremendous amount of money to support many programs and activities within the school.

Our lunch program is organized and run completely by parent volunteers from our school, and we are always in need of more fantastic people to help us out. If you are interested in committing even a few hours this school year to volunteering, or if you'd just like to find out what's involved, check out our volunteer sign up website:

www.SignUpGenius.com/go/4090D4FAAAA2FA57-lunch or simply send us an e-mail at dickinsfieldparents@gmail.com or dickinsfieldlunches@shaw.ca

For any questions or concerns regarding the lunch program please feel free to e-mail dickinsfieldlunches@shaw.ca

Using our website is very easy, just follow these simple steps!

Registering

The first time you use our system this year you will have to register as a user. Afterwards, you will simply have to log in using the username and password you created.

Please note that ALL parents will have to register, regardless of whether you had an account last year, this helps to keep our database current.

To register:

1. Go to **dickinsfield.hotlunches.net**
2. Click on “register” on the right hand side.
3. Enter your information (not your child’s) and the school access code **ED2014HL**. You will need this access code to register. Then click “register now”. This will create your username and password.
4. Re-enter your username and password on the next screen
5. Go to the heading “Profile” at the top of the page and click “Add a student.” Enter your child’s name and select their teacher. Hit “Add a new student”
6. If you have more than one student hit “Add new student” and continue as above.

Ordering

Every month, from the 1st to the 25th, you will be able to order lunches for the following month. There will be menu choices available for every Wednesday and Thursday that we have school. Lunch orders must be completed and paid for on-line. If you do not have access to a computer at home, please feel free to come to the school and use the one in the library. There are also computers available for public use at the public library, located at MacDonald Island.

To Order:

1. Go to **dickinsfield.hotlunches.net**
2. Login using the username and password you created.
3. Click on “students,” then click on “order,” for the person you wish to order for.
4. Select the items you would like to order for each menu date.
5. Proceed to “Place order”
6. You are then able to pay using PAYPAL, which is a very secure online service allowing you to pay directly from any bank account or by using a credit card (simply follow a few easy steps to set up your paypal account if you don’t already have one)

Please note that our lunch program will begin on October 1st, with ordering beginning on September 15th

How can I get in touch?

Getting in touch with our Parent Association is easy!

For keeping up to date with our school events and activities we suggest the following:

- For smartphone users, download our app, simply search “Ecole Dickinsfield” in the app store
- Follow École Dickinsfield School on Facebook
- Follow @dickinsfield on Twitter
- Subscribe to emails with the school office and on our Lunch Program website, diskinsfield.hotlunches.net

To contact us directly:

- For all Parent Association and volunteering matters e-mail dickinsfieldparents@gmail.com
- For Lunch program concerns e-mail dickinsfieldlunches@shaw.ca