

# HELPING SHAPE SCHOOLS

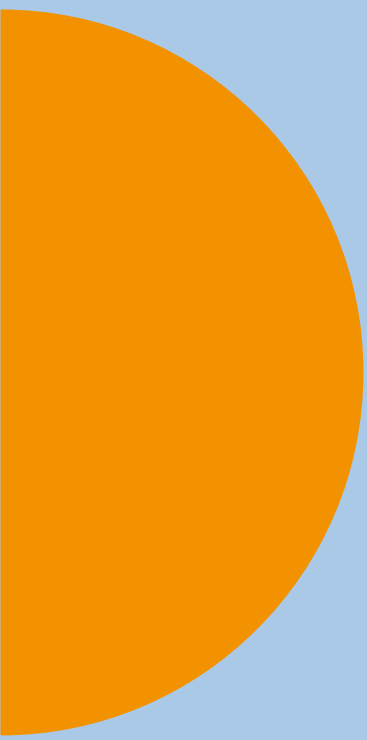
Guide for parent representatives at  
general education schools



Senatsverwaltung  
für Bildung, Jugend  
und Familie

**BERLIN**







Katharina Günther-Wünsch  
Senator for Education, Youth and Family

## Dear parents,

My many years' experience in the Berlin school system have consistently shown me just how valuable parental involvement is in securing good schools. Your active participation, your critiques and your constructive feedback help make Berlin's schools better. This is why, as Senator for Education, I support the involvement of parents in schools.

The first amendment to the School Act during my time in office made digital body meetings possible. This makes it significantly easier to balance family, work and voluntary duties. But what rules are still applicable when it comes to getting involved in matters relating to your child's school? What tasks, duties and, above all, rights do you have when it comes to parental involvement? Education is a social process. It is governed by a large number of laws, ordinances, framework curricula and directives. The aim of this guide is to provide you with a solid introduction and to give you a simple overview of these regulations.

In close cooperation with the Senate Department for Education, experts specialising in the field of parental education have summarised for you the key points concerning parental involvement in schools.

Helping to shape your child's school through involvement as a parent is your democratic right. As with any form of social participation, the more energy that can be invested in exchange and discussion, the better. When everyone understands what rights and roles they have within the school community, participation becomes both constructive and effective – as well as being more enjoyable too.

This is exactly what this guide hopes to achieve. Its purpose is to interest, inform, educate and enable parents to exercise their rights relating to all forms of parental involvement. Together with school staff, you can help improve the environment, operation and development of your child's school. And I would strongly encourage you to do so, both in the interests of your child and in the interest of Berlin's schools.

I hope you find this guide informative and I wish you great success in your involvement as a parent.

Best wishes,

*Katharina Günther-Wünsch*



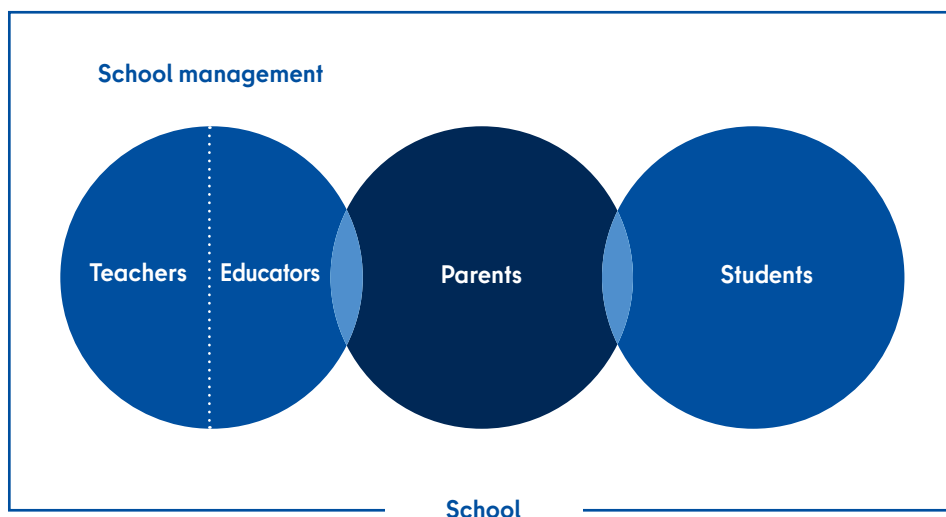


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# PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AT SCHOOL

A good school depends on committed and informed parents. As key educational partners, elected representatives can play an active role in school life, help to shape it and contribute to children's success at school.

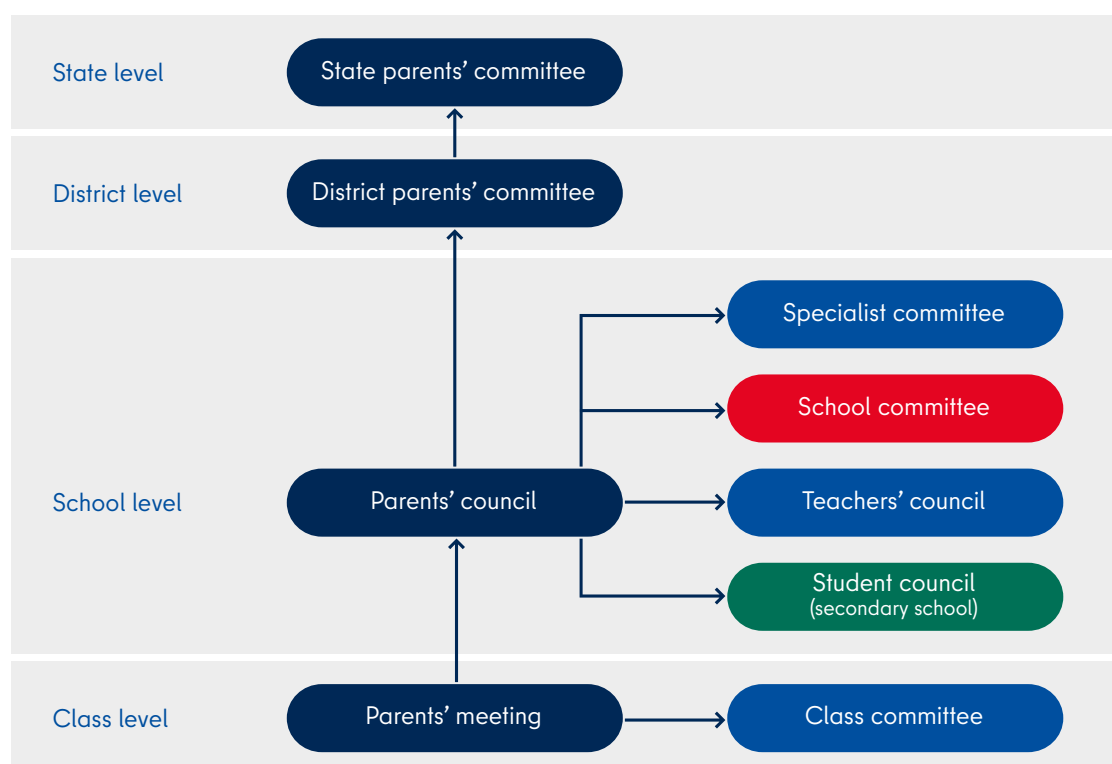


**The following pages answer some of parents' frequently asked questions:**

- What are the tasks involved in leading a parents' evening?
- What tasks do the various school bodies have and how can parents participate in these?
- What is the role of the respective representatives and how are they elected?

In this guide, the term "parent" is used to refer to all individuals who have parental or custodial responsibility for their child. This includes both biological parents, single parents, step-parents, foster parents and adoptive parents.

## Election of parents within the school and to higher-level bodies



## Standard rules of procedure for all school bodies

Standard rules of procedure (SchulG-MGO) have been in place since August 2022 and are binding for all bodies, unless serving as the basis for their own rules of procedure. Previously adopted rules of procedure no longer apply.

The standard rules of procedure do not apply to class parents' meetings since these do not constitute a body within the meaning of the School Act (1, Sentence 3 SchulG-MGO).

In order for a body to establish its own rules of procedure or to reinstate previous ones, an absolute majority of voting members must vote in favour. In this case, abstentions are counted as votes against.



Download the standard rules of procedure:  
 ← [www.berlin.de/sen/bildung/schule/rechtsvorschriften/mustergeschaeftsordnung-schulgremien.pdf](http://www.berlin.de/sen/bildung/schule/rechtsvorschriften/mustergeschaeftsordnung-schulgremien.pdf)



More information:  
 ← [www.berliner-elternvideos.de](http://www.berliner-elternvideos.de)



# CLASS PARENTS' MEETING

The class parents' meeting (Section 89, Paragraph 1 SchulG) is the most direct form of active parental involvement. It consists of all the parents of the students within a specific class, who are under 18 at the beginning of a school year. Parents of students who are aged 18 or over may attend the meeting in an advisory capacity.



## Tasks and objectives

### Exchanging information and opinions

The class parents' meeting is held in the interests of the students. It gives parents the opportunity to exchange information and opinions with other parents, the class teacher as well as other teachers, and to cooperate with each other (cf. Section 89, Paragraph 2, Sentence 1 SchulG).

### Discussing important decisions in advance

If important decisions are due to be reached at the class committee or at other school bodies, the two elected representatives and their deputies may wish to obtain information about the opinion of the parents in the class in advance of this decision. However, these representatives are not bound by any proposals or instructions, but instead have a so-called "free mandate" (Section 120, Paragraph 1 SchulG).

The various topics to be discussed at the class parents' meeting range from questions relating to teaching, grading and homework through to information regarding and the approval of class trips and the results of comparative assessments as well as how to deal with learners with behavioural challenges, challenging teachers and conflicts that impact the entire class.

### Class-specific resolutions

Parents at the class parents' meeting may also reach resolutions relating to the class, concerning, for example, setting up a class fund, participating in specific projects or organising events.

### Performance evaluation by means of marks or a written evaluation

Parents of children in Grades 3 and 4 may decide, during the first class parents' meeting of the respective school year and with a majority of voting members, whether students' performance will be evaluated by means of written evaluation of the students learning and performance development (Section 58, Paragraph 4, Sentence 2 SchulG). To ensure this decision is based on facts, the different forms of evaluation should be presented and discussed prior to the vote.

In addition, during the same meeting, members can also decide with a two-thirds majority whether, for Grades 3 and 4, the half-year marks with verbal evaluation should be replaced by a discussion with the teacher, documented in writing (Section 19, Paragraph 3 Primary School Ordinance [Grundschulverordnung]). This shall apply to the school year in which the decision was made.



#### MARKS

At the end of the school year, students receive marks for or other written information on their accomplishments and the development of specific skills (Section 58, Paragraph 2 SchulG).

During the early years stage of primary school (Grades 1 and 2 or Grades 1 to 3) and in all classes at schools with a special educational focus on "cognitive development", learning development is not evaluated by means of marks but rather through written information.

#### PARENTS' RIGHTS OF PARTICIPATION

In accordance with the School Act, parents are considered the legal guardians of a child. In general, this refers to both parents. Parents may transfer their right of participation in the school to another adult (jointly) responsible for the care of the child by means of written authorisation (Section 88, Paragraph 4, Sentence 2 SchulG). This may be a parent's new partner, the child's grandmother, or any other adult.

### WHY DO PARENTS CHOOSE TO GET INVOLVED IN THE CLASS PARENTS' MEETING?

- To get to know and build relationships with other parents as well as with the pedagogical staff at the school
- To reach an understanding about common aspects of child supervision and responsibility, with regard to performance and social interaction
- To exchange information and insights on their child's experience at the school (teaching and supervision) and at home, the various evaluation criteria for performance and behaviour and the ways in which a child may be influenced
- To be part of decisions on joint tasks and educational agreements relating to problem and conflict resolution

## Class parents' spokespersons

During the first class parents' meeting, a vote will take place to elect two class parents' spokespersons with equal rights, two representatives to the class committee and up to four deputies (Section 89, Paragraph 3, Sentence 1 (1) and (2); Section 117, Paragraph 2 SchulG).

The two elected spokespersons not only have equal rights but also automatically become voting members of the parents' council (Section 90, Paragraph 1 SchulG).

The class parents' spokespersons are the first point of contact for the parents in the class vis-à-vis the class teacher, other teachers and the school management. They decide independently on how they will distribute their tasks amongst themselves.

### Communication with parents

So that the class parents' spokespersons are able to contact all parents in the class by email or phone, it is recommended that a discussion be held during the first class parents' meeting regarding how contact information is to be obtained and the best method for contacting parents. There are several options here:

- One of the elected parent representatives provides their email address to all parents so that they are able to send a short email with their name to this email address. This means that one person receives all the names and email addresses for the parents in the class and can then set up a mailing list.
- Alternatively, the contact details for all parents (email address and phone number, if relevant) can be collected via a list or individual forms. However, submitting these details in hand-written form can often lead to errors.
- In any case, the voluntary basis of providing this information and the confidentiality of it must be pointed out. It should also be determined whether email communication is to take place via an open mailing list or using "Bcc". For data protection reasons, the school is unable to provide any addresses it holds.

## Tasks and duties

- Scheduling, convening and chairing at least three class parents' meetings per school year
  - Sending a written invitation – either by post or via email – and where possible with the agenda, ideally one to two weeks before the meeting
  - Agreeing the time, place and agenda for the meeting together with the class teacher (Section 89, Paragraph 4, Sentence 1 SchulG)
  - Convening a class parents' meeting if this is requested by a fifth of all parents in the class (Section 89, Paragraph 4, Sentence 2 SchulG)
  - Inviting the class teacher to the parents' evening, unless the class parents' meeting has exceptionally expressed an explicit desire for this not to happen
  - Inviting other teachers, if applicable (if these teachers have been specifically invited they are obliged to participate)
  - Inviting other pedagogical members of staff who are involved with the class, the school management, the class student spokesperson or the school parents' spokesperson, if applicable
  - Inviting guests if requested/decided upon by the class parents' meeting
  - Informing the class parents' meeting about new committee resolutions and regulations that legally impact the class
  - Implementing any resolutions reached
- Maintaining contact with class parents' spokespersons from other classes and parent representatives within the school bodies, in particular the school committee and the teachers' committee
- Organising parent get-togethers if there is demand for this
- Preparing and organising events at the class level (baking cakes is not compulsory for parent spokespersons)
- Passing on information from the parents' council or the school, including via communication outside of the class parents' meeting, for example by email

## Elections and voting

For elections and votes, parents have two votes for each of their children. This also applies if there is only one parent. Each parent may cast their vote independently of each other and at their own discretion.

If only one parent is present, they do not require a proxy to cast the vote on behalf of the other parent. Parents or other persons who represent more than two children in the class, for example care home or residential school representatives may cast a maximum of four votes (Section 89, Paragraph 5, Sentence 2 SchulG).

### The following people are eligible to vote and be elected:

- Legal guardians, usually the parents (Section 88, Paragraph 4, Sentence 1 SchulG)
- Persons responsible for the care of the minor child with the consent of the legal guardian (Section 88, Paragraph 4, Sentence 2 SchulG); evidence of this must be provided upon the request of the school

## Electing two class parents' spokespersons

Two class parents' spokespersons with equal rights will be elected by the class parents' meeting each new school year, within one month from the start of teaching (Section 89, Paragraph 3, Sentence 1 (1) SchulG).

Eligible persons have two votes for each child, up to a maximum of four.

The two representatives are elected for a term of one school year. However, in principle, they will remain in office during the subsequent school year until two new class parents' spokespersons have been elected.

## Electing two parents to the class committee

Two parents are elected to the class committee. The class parents' meeting may decide whether these positions should be filled by the two class parents' spokespersons or whether two other parents should be elected. In addition, up to four deputies must also be elected.

Both the class parents' spokespersons and the members of the class committee are to be elected during the same parents' meeting at the beginning of the school year. The invitation to this meeting must mention the elections. If positions remain vacant, elections can be held at a subsequent class parents' meeting.

## Convening the election

The previous class parents' spokespersons are responsible for convening the election, in consultation with the class teacher (Section 89, Paragraph 4, Section 1 SchulG). For newly formed classes - as is generally the case for Grades 1 and 7 as well as for mixed year-group classes - only the class teacher will be responsible for convening the election (Section 89, Paragraph 3, Sentence 2 SchulG).

The invitation must be issued at least seven days prior to the meeting.

## Prior to the vote

During the election meeting, the previous parent representatives should provide information on the positions that need to be filled. If there are no (existing) parent representatives, this will be the responsibility of the class teacher (Section 47, Paragraph 1, Sentence 2 (5) SchulG).

## Conducting the vote

- The person chairing the election should usually be an adult who is not standing for election or the class teacher.
- The class parents' meeting is deemed to have a quorum, irrespective of the number of eligible voters present.
- The election meeting must be documented in the form of minutes.
- The two class parents' spokespersons are to be elected in separate rounds of voting.
- Deputies are always elected in a separate voting process. A fixed order for the deputies should be set out to make it clear who is to stand in if one of the spokespersons is absent.
- Those absent may stand for election if the election chair has received written consent from the candidate to accept the office.
- Those absent may not vote. Postal votes are not permitted.
- Elections are generally carried out on an anonymous basis.
- An open vote (by show of hands) may be possible if requested by at least one person who is entitled to vote and if all those entitled to vote agree. This must be noted in the minutes.
- The two candidates with the most votes are elected - i.e. by simple majority. The same applies to the election of deputies.
- In the event of a tie, a second vote will be conducted.
- In the event of a second tie, the election will be decided by drawing lots. The person chairing the election will draw the lots.
- Those elected then declare whether or not they accept the position.

## After the vote

The parents will receive the contact details for the class parents' spokespersons.

The election documents (the minutes and voting papers) are to be kept at the school for the period of one school year.



### THE ELECTION MEETING MINUTES MUST CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

1. Place and date of the election
2. Number of persons eligible to vote
3. Names of persons eligible to vote who are present
4. Number of voting papers distributed (two per child) and the number of persons eligible to vote with more than one voting paper; or
5. The decision to use an open vote
6. Number of valid votes cast for each candidate
7. Number of invalid votes
8. Number of abstentions



← A class parents' meeting election minutes template can be found here [www.berliner-elternvideos.de/elternfortbildner/downloads/wahlprotokoll-fuer-die-klassen-elternversammlung.pdf](http://www.berliner-elternvideos.de/elternfortbildner/downloads/wahlprotokoll-fuer-die-klassen-elternversammlung.pdf)



## Voting out by means of a second election

The class parents' meeting may unelect a class parents' spokesperson if an invitation to a second election is sent in due time with a corresponding item on the agenda; if at least half of those entitled to vote are present and if the subsequent candidate receives more than half of the votes of those present and entitled to vote. In the event of a tie, a second vote will be conducted.

It is recommended that the parent representative to be voted out of office be given the opportunity to make a statement.

### ELECTIONS IF THERE ARE NO CLASS GROUPS

If there are no class groups, two parent spokespersons' with equal rights will be elected per every new set of 25 students under the age of 18 even if the number of 25 has not been reached, whose children have not yet reached the age of 18 at the time of the election (cf. Section 89, Paragraph 3, Sentence 3 SchulG).

## Resignation and by-election

A class parents' spokesperson must vacate their office if:

- their own child is no longer in the class;
- the class is divided into different classes;
- they resign.

If their child turns 18 during the course of a school year, the elected class parents' spokesperson may remain in office until the end of the school year. The school year officially begins on 1 August and ends on 31 July of the following year.

If a class parents' spokesperson vacates their office, a by-election may take place. It is also possible that an elected deputy step up to fill the position of spokesperson for the remainder of the term of office.

Each class parents' meeting may decide independently on which option they wish to apply.

## Meeting participants

Participating in the class parents' meeting allows responses to parents' needs and wishes to be found (Section 89, Paragraph 2, Sentence 1 SchulG). In addition to teachers, guests may also be invited with regard to specific topics.

Teachers invited in writing are, in principle, obliged to participate in the meeting. This is why the date and time of the meeting should be agreed upon in advance with the class management and respective teacher.

When specific issues are being discussed, for example problems and conflicts within the class, it may be useful to invite students (represented by the class spokesperson or other students) and to listen to their opinion.

# Class parents' meeting procedure

## Who is responsible for convening the meeting?

- The class parents' spokespersons with equal rights, after having consulted the class teacher
- The class teacher for newly formed classes

## Who is invited?

- All parents with children in the class
- The class teacher
- Subject teachers if requested by the parents or necessary given the topic to be discussed (these teachers are then obliged to participate)
- The class spokesperson if requested by the parents or necessary given the topic to be discussed
- If applicable, a copy of the invitation should be sent for information purposes to the school management, teachers and premises management

## What information should the invitation contain?

- Date: the day of the week, date and time (start time and expected end time)
- Place (classroom)
- The proposed agenda
- The email address for the parent representative or teacher to confirm participation
- If applicable, a tear-off return sheet with response options ("I will be participating / I will not be participating") and the request for this to be returned by a certain date to the class management or directly to the child of the class parents' spokesperson

## How should the invitation be sent?

Invitations should always be made in writing – either in printed form or electronically via email, or via another agreed method such as the school cloud system. Invitations printed out or copied by the school office can be distributed by the class teacher to the children, who can then pass this onto their parents.

## When should the invitation be sent?

Ideally, the invitation should be sent one to two weeks prior to the planned date of the meeting. In specific cases, it is possible to send an invitation closer to the date of the meeting.



### WHAT MOTIVATES PARENTS TO TAKE PART IN A CLASS PARENTS' MEETING?

- An agenda that addresses as many of parents' own questions as possible
- When the meeting is organised at a time that allows parents to participate and when childcare is provided (if applicable)
- When the meeting is chaired well, when the discussion is not intimidating and a punctual ending
- Curiosity about new teachers
- When teachers are open and willing to talk
- A desire to get to know other parents and to work together to achieve something for the children
- Interesting topics or guest speakers
- A desire to get involved with projects, the class party, etc.
- A feeling that the current situation is not right and that something must be done
- A request from their own child

## Preparing for the meeting

- Discuss the date and time of the meeting with the participating teachers, educators and other parents, and, if applicable, with the guests or persons speaking at the meeting
- Gather potential agenda items, for example based on conversations with children, parents and teachers
- Discuss the agenda with the class teacher
- Send any preliminary information relating to specific topics to the teachers who are to be invited
- Write and distribute invitations
- Inform the premises management so that access to the school premises and classroom can be organised
- Set up the chairs in the classroom in a circle or square so that all participants can see each other
- Prepare a register as well as name tags for parents and teachers if necessary
- Provide snacks and drinks if this has been agreed

## Conducting the meeting

1. Welcome the participants - full introductions are recommended for the first parents' evening of a new class
2. Ensure an understanding of the agenda and add further items if necessary
3. Work through the agenda-state the objectives for each item, for example, information, opinion, discussion or decision
4. Conclusion: feedback on the meeting, suggestions for the next parents' evening, fixed date for the next meeting, farewell

### Using videoconference as an alternate option

In accordance with Section 116, Paragraph 8, Sentence 1 of the SchulG, class parents' meetings may also be held via videoconference if agreed. How this will proceed should be set out in advance. If the class parents' spokespersons are unable to organise a video meeting, all teachers in Berlin can set up a video meeting for free using the school portal and so can support by using this format.

### Public meetings and confidentiality

Although the class parents' meeting does not constitute an official body within the meaning of the School Act, it is recommended to apply the regulations applicable to official bodies (in particular Sections 116-122 SchulG). Accordingly, the class parents' meeting should not take place in public.

Whilst the items discussed are, in principle, not subject to confidentiality, this may be applied in individual cases (Section 120, Paragraph 3, Sentence 1 (2) SchulG).

#### TIP

A class parents' meeting does not always need to take place in a formal environment. In particular, when parents are meeting for the first time or to exchange opinions and experiences, an informal meeting in a relaxed atmosphere can work well, for example a parent get-together.

However, decisions and votes must take place during an official parents' evening.

## Chairing the discussion

The two class parents' spokespersons may chair the meeting between themselves, taking into account the following recommendations:

- Own opinions should not be given
- Keep to the agenda and focus on fulfilling the objectives of the discussion
- Keep a list of all speakers and allow everyone to speak who wishes to do so
- Put a stop to conversations relating to the problems of individual children and instead discuss problems which impact a larger proportion of the class
- Prevent any personal attacks
- Put a friendly end to any side conversations
- Use any visual aids if possible, such as boards, projectors or interactive whiteboards, so as to improve concentration and prevent repetitions
- Record the results of the discussion and provide a summary
- End the meeting punctually at the scheduled time or when all items on the agenda have been discussed

## Subsequent work

- Put the classroom back to how it was found
- Critically reflect on how the meeting went
- Provide written information about important decisions to parents who were not present, the school management and, if necessary, the parents' council
- Implement the decisions



### THE SCHOOL'S DUTY TO PROVIDE INFORMATION

In order to be able to participate successfully at the class level, parents require comprehensive information about school-related and teaching-related matters. The school management, all teachers in the class and, in particular, the class teacher must provide this information alongside any other necessary information to the class parents' meeting (Section 47 SchulG).

This includes:

- Advice on the transition to secondary school
- The requirements for school-leaving certificates
- Optional subjects
- Changes to the school profile
- The results of any evaluations

Matters concerning individual students may only be discussed at the class parents' meeting if this has been approved by the parents concerned and, if the child is 14 or over, by the student too. Sensitive issues are best discussed during an individual appointment in order to be able to consult a trusted individual if necessary.



# PARENTS' COUNCIL

The parents' council is the highest parent body within the school. It represents the interests of parents vis-à-vis the school. The parents' council meets at least three times per school year.





The parents' council consists of all the class parents' spokespersons in the school (Section 90, Paragraph 1, Sentence 1 SchulG). Given that usually two class and two year group parents' spokespersons with equal rights are elected, both of these are also voting members of the parents' council.

Through the compulsory parents' council elections, parent representatives can also gain the right to participate in other internal and external school bodies. → [Page 22](#)

The parents' council focusses on matters and issues that impact the entire school, school life and the development of the school. Accordingly, the school management is the primary point of contact for the parents' council.

#### **Other council meeting participants:**

- The school management (right of participation and also obligation to participate if requested by the parents' council, Section 90, Paragraph 3, Sentence 3 SchulG)
- The two advisory members of the teachers' council (right of participation and also obligation to participate if requested by the parents' council, Section 90, Paragraph 3, Sentence 3 SchulG)
- The two advisory members of the student council (right of participation and also obligation to participate if requested by the parents' council, Section 90, Paragraph 3, Sentence 3 SchulG)
- The members of the school committee who are not parent representatives (right of participation Section 75, Paragraph 3, Sentence 1 SchulG)

#### **Representation in the event of absence**

If a voting member of the parents' council is unable to attend a council meeting, a deputy may attend the meeting. This is possible provided deputies have been elected by the class parents' meeting for one or both of the class parents' spokespersons.

#### **Using videoconference as an alternate option**

In accordance with Section 116, Paragraph 8, Sentence 1 of the SchulG, parents' council meetings may also be held via videoconference if agreed. How this will proceed should be set out in advance. If the parents are unable to organise a video meeting, all teachers in Berlin can set up a video meeting for free using the school portal and so can support by using this format.

#### **TIP**

To ensure the continuity of the work carried out by the parents' council, the parents' council may decide by majority - if possible during the first meeting of the school year - and specify in the rules of procedure that the elected deputies may be invited to meetings as guests. These "permanent" deputies should register with the school parents' representative at the beginning of each meeting. They may be fully involved in the work of the parents' council, however only have the right to vote if the class parents' spokesperson for their class is absent.

## Convening the meeting

The school management is responsible for convening the first meeting of the parents' council in the school year (Section 90, Paragraph 3, Sentence 2 SchulG). This meeting should take place within six weeks from the start of teaching and so usually two weeks after all class parents' spokespersons have been elected.

The parents' spokesperson for the school is then responsible for convening further meetings, as chair of the parents' council. It may be useful to discuss the agenda with the school management, however this is not a legal requirement.

## Invitation period

The invitation period for the first election meeting must be a minimum of seven days, in accordance with the SchulG-MGO.

### TIP

Guests may be invited to parents' council meetings by the school parents' spokesperson. However, the school management must be informed in advance that guests will be present.

Guests may be speakers for specific topics but may also be student representatives, representatives of the teaching staff or the district office, representatives from school supervisory authorities, representatives from other parent bodies such as the district or state parents' committee, parent representatives from neighbouring schools or educational policy spokespersons from parliamentary groups of the House of Representatives or the District Assembly.

## Agenda

The school parents' spokesperson draws up an invitation including the proposed agenda, provides this to the school so that they can make copies and distribute them to the children of members of the parents' council (usually the class teacher will distribute these). Alternatively, the school parents' spokesperson may send the invitation to members via email or other electronic means.

Included in the agenda should be a series of fixed, recurring points, for example:

- Welcome and determination of whether there is a quorum
- Decision on the agenda
- Acceptance of the previous meeting's minutes
- Current items proposed by the parent representatives
- Information from the school management
- Reports on the implementation status of previously discussed or resolved items
- Reports from the members of the school committee
- Any reports from internal and external bodies
- Important dates and meetings

## Meeting minutes

The parents' council may either elect a permanent secretary from its ranks or members may take it in turns to keep the minutes. This may be carried out in alphabetical order or by class. In accordance with the SchulG-MGO, the chair may appoint a voting member to take the minutes for the meeting if no other person is found. However, this should be taken in turns. Anyone who has already kept the minutes should not be appointed.

All parents of children at the school, the pedagogical staff and the students have the right to consult the minutes of this body, provided these are not confidential (Section 122, Paragraph 2 SchulG). Body members may also receive a copy of the minutes upon request.

**The minutes to be kept for every parents' council meeting (Section 122, Paragraph 1 SchulG) must contain the following information as a minimum:**

1. Place and date of the meeting
2. Names of the voting and advisory members who are present
3. The items discussed and proposals submitted
4. Resolutions reached
5. Election results

### TIP

So as to regularly inform parents about the work carried out by the parents' council, a one to two-page newsletter should be published one to four times per year. This may be distributed via the class parents' spokespersons to all parents. It is also recommended that a contact address for the parents' council board be set up and sent to parents. Post to the parents' council must be handed over by the school unopened.

# Elections

During the first parents' council meeting of the school year, voting members will be elected to fill the following positions:

1. One parents' spokesperson for the whole school
2. Up to three deputies
3. Four voting members to the school committee (elected for and every two years, usually in even-numbered years; by-elections may be held for one year or until the end of the standard two-year term of office)
4. Two members to the district parents' committee
5. Two advisory members each to the teachers' council and the specialist committees as well as the student council at secondary schools
6. One advisory member each to other sub-committees of teachers and students at the school, unless corresponding parents' sub-committees have been set up

Up to two deputies are to be elected for the positions listed under 3-6 (Section 117, Paragraph 2, Sentence 1 SchulG), provided there are candidates for these positions. However, there should be at least a sufficient number of people who apply for the positions on the school committee. A fixed order for the deputies should set out who is authorised to vote if several deputies are present.

The elections for the positions listed under 1-6 and the corresponding deputy positions should be carried out in separate rounds of voting. The election should be chaired by a member of the parents' council who is not standing for election, the school management or, upon request, a parent educator.



A parents' council election minutes template can be found here:

← [www.berliner-elternvideos.de/elternfortbildner/downloads/wahlprotokoll-fuer-die-gev.pdf](http://www.berliner-elternvideos.de/elternfortbildner/downloads/wahlprotokoll-fuer-die-gev.pdf)



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Right to vote

For all elections and votes at the parents' council, all voting members receive only one vote each. Parent representatives who represent more than one class within the parents' council receive one vote per class. It must be clear which vote was cast for which class.

### Unpaid office

Members of the parents' council hold an unpaid public office. Accordingly, they are covered by statutory accident insurance against physical injury when carrying out their work. No other claims may be made. In particular, it is noted that no attendance fees will be paid.

### Material costs

The state of Berlin must cover the business costs of the parents' council (Section 121 SchulG). This generally includes costs incurred within the framework of the work carried out by the parents' council for photocopies, postal fees and any necessary telephone calls.

## Teachers' council and specialist committees

The teachers' council and specialist committees for teachers provide the two parent representatives elected to these by the parents' council with a good opportunity to get involved and receive information.

Although they are only members in an advisory capacity, in accordance with the School Act (Section 116, Paragraph 2, Sentence 4), they have the right to speak and submit proposals. In accordance with the SchulG-MGO, they must be invited to the committee meetings with due notice by the subject teachers.

### Teachers' council

At the teachers' council, all teaching staff and pedagogical specialists primarily discuss matters and issues relating to teaching and education at the school (Section 79, Paragraph 1 and 3 SchulG). The teachers' council meets at least three times per school year.

### Specialist committees

The specialist committees primarily deal with work related to the relevant specialist subject area. They should meet at least four times per school year.

The meetings should cover discussions and resolutions relating to the following:

- Implementing the framework curricula and setting specific priorities for the school
- The results of the national comparative assessments (VERA) for Grade 3 (German and Maths) and Grade 8 (German, Maths, Primary Foreign Language – English or French)
- Selecting the teaching and learning resources for the respective subject for each class





# SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The school committee is the highest advisory and decision-making body in terms of school self-governance. It acts as a means of cooperation between students, parents and representatives from the teachers' council (Section 75, Paragraph 1 SchulG).

## Composition

In contrast to all other school bodies, the school committee at general education schools has almost equal representation of different groups. It is made up of four voting representatives from the teachers' council, four voting student representatives and four voting parent representatives.

The chair is held by the school management, by virtue of their office. If the principal school management is absent, the deputy school management is responsible for chairing the committee.

In addition, an external member who is not affiliated with the school sits on the committee. This voting member, and if applicable their deputy, is proposed and elected for a period of two years by simple majority of the members of the school committee during the first meeting. This election takes place in the same year as the elections for the parents' council, the student council and the teachers' council.

The term of office for full and deputy members of a school committee is two school years. If someone vacates their position as a member of the body, a successor will be elected via by-election for the remainder of the term.

## Representation in the event of absence

To ensure constant participation in the school committee, two deputies should be elected per full member (Section 117, Paragraph 2, Sentence 1 SchulG). These deputies are to be assigned a ranking, either based on the number of votes received or by drawing lots.

Deputies may participate in all school committee meetings. This protects the voting rights of the four parents' council representatives. In the event of substitution, they will be informed about previous meetings and items of discussion.

## Forms of participation

There are three forms of participation in the school committee: Decision-making rights, the right to be heard and the right to advise.

### Decision-making rights

Decision-making rights are the strongest form of participation in the school committee. These apply, in particular, to the cases listed under Section 76, Paragraph 1 and 2 of the SchulG. Decisions made as part of this process are binding for the entire school. That means everyone must comply with these decisions.

**With a majority of two thirds, the school committee may decide on items including the following:**

- The principles for distributing and using the staff and material resources assigned to the school and under its own management (Section 7, Paragraphs 3, 5 and 6 SchulG)
- The school curriculum and the resulting principles for school and lesson organisation (Section 8 SchulG)
- The admission criteria and the admission procedure in the event that the school is placed under excessive demand, upon the proposal of the school management (Section 56, Paragraph 6 SchulG)
- Timetable deviations (Section 14, Paragraph 4 SchulG)
- The replacement of school marks by written information on learning development, performance development and the development of specific skills and the replacement of the half-year marks by compulsory parent-teacher discussions (Section 58, Paragraph 4, Sentences 6 and 7 SchulG)
- Proposals regarding the appointment of school management (Section 72, Paragraph 4, Sentence 1 SchulG) and permanent deputy school management
- Principles regarding the amount and distribution of homework, in consultation with the responsible school supervisory authority
- The proposal to change to a (different) youth welfare organisation
- The expansion of the early years stage to include Grade 3 (Section 20, Paragraph 1 SchulG)
- The length of the school week (Section 53, Paragraph 2 SchulG)
- The organisation of class councils within the meaning of Section 84a, Sentence 2 of the SchulG
- The name of the school

A two-thirds majority is achieved if ten votes out of 14 voting members are in favour. If there is no external member on the school committee, nine votes out of the 13 voting members constitute a two-thirds majority.

**With a simple majority, the school committee may decide on items including the following:**

- Proposals to carry out a school pilot project or to establish the school as a specialist school (Section 18 SchulG)
- The daily start of teaching
- Proposals to establish the school as an all-day school, including a bound all-day school (Section 19, Paragraph 1 SchulG)
- Principles for student group activities (Section 49, Paragraph 2 SchulG)
- The evaluation of academic and social conduct (Section 58, Paragraph 7 SchulG)
- A statement on the appointment of school management (Section 72, Paragraph 4, Sentence 2 SchulG) and permanent deputy school management
- Rules of conduct for the proper running of external operations (premises rules) including the school's own principles on:
  - The offer of goods for sale in the school within the framework of authorised commercial activity; and
  - Advertisements at the school as well as the type and scope of any sponsorship
- The establishment of a learning resources fund
- The establishment of a school library in accordance with Section 16, Paragraph 2a of the SchulG
- Times for study days

A simple majority is achieved if the majority votes in favour of a proposal; abstentions are not taken into account.

## LEARNING RESOURCES

For all students up to Grade 6, learning resources are provided free of charge.

From Grade 7 onwards, parents or adult pupils at secondary schools must contribute towards relevant learning resources such as textbooks and workbooks, up to a maximum of €100 per school year. Those receiving a housing allowance or a maintenance allowance on the basis of the German Social Security Code are exempt from this payment (Section 7 Learning Resources Ordinance [LernmittelVO] of the 28 June 2010).

If decided upon by the school committee (Section 76, Paragraph 2 (10) SchulG), the school may set up a learning resources fund to which those required to contribute normally may participate, but are not obliged to (Section 50, Paragraph 2, Sentence 3 SchulG). The required learning resources are then provided on loan.

The fixed annual contribution to the learning resources fund may be paid into and managed via an account specifically set up for this purpose at the district office or to a special account held by the school's support association. This is tax-free on the basis of proper accounting. Information about this can be obtained from the Board of the State Association for Daycare Centre and School Support Associations for Berlin-Brandenburg (email:info@lsfb.de).

## RIGHT OF PROPOSAL IN THE SELECTION OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

The school committee has a special right of participation in the selection of a new school management (Section 72 SchulG).

### Proposals from the school supervisory authority

After the participation procedure has been completed, the school committee will receive one of the following proposals from the responsible school supervisory authority:

- The two most suitable candidates (cf. Section 72, Paragraph 2, Sentence 1 SchulG)
- The only suitable candidate (cf. Section 72, Paragraph 2, Sentence 1 in conjunction with Section 72, Paragraph 4, Sentence 2 SchulG)
- The clearly most suitable candidate (Section 72, Paragraph 2, Sentence 2 SchulG)

### School committee candidate hearing

In accordance with Section 72, Paragraph 3 of the SchulG, the school committee will meet within the period of one month. Candidates for the position of school management may only be invited to the school committee meeting to present themselves separately.

Under the Berlin SchulG, preliminary talks are not provided for and not permitted. This is to avoid unfairly influencing the school committee. This applies in particular given that the selection decision may be subject to an administrative court review.

The school committee is to be informed about the candidates' education and career, taking due account of their personal rights. During the candidate hearing, members of the school committee may ask questions.

The chair of the school committee is responsible for convening the candidate hearing. Voting members will then decide on the proposal with a majority of at least two thirds (Section 72, Paragraph 4, Sentence 3 SchulG).

If only one candidate has been proposed to the school committee, the school committee's right to proposal is replaced with a right to express an opinion. For this opinion, a simple majority of votes cast is sufficient.

### Review and appointment by the school supervisory authority

The responsible school supervisory authority reviews the proposal which the school committee has voted in favour of or takes into consideration the opinion statement. It then puts forward one individual to be appointed as school management. The responsible head of department then makes a decision on this proposal. If this decision is different to that put forward by the school committee, justification must be provided.

## Right to be heard

In certain cases, members of the school committee have the right to express their opinion on a matter prior to decisions made by other bodies (Section 76, Paragraph 3 SchulG). The decision-making body – for example the school supervisory authority – assesses these opinions, however is not bound by them when making its decision.

### **The school committee has the right to express an opinion in the following cases:**

- Prior to school management applications in accordance with Section 7, Paragraph 3, Sentence 4 of the SchulG
- On disciplinary measures in accordance with Section 63, Paragraph 2, Sentence 1 (4) and (5) of the SchulG
- Prior to decisions on changes to the organisation of the school or regarding major structural changes at the school
- Prior to major decisions impacting the school currently under consideration by the responsible school supervisory authority and relating to school development planning and school route safeguarding as well as prior to forming and changing school catchment areas at primary schools
- Prior to concluding a school contract in accordance with Section 9 of the SchulG
- Prior to selecting a caterer for lunches at the school

## Right to advise

The school committee has the right to offer advice in all important school matters and to offer recommendations to other school committees (Section 75, Paragraph 2 SchulG). This must be discussed at the next meeting. However, in this respect, the school committee does not have the right to make binding decisions.

## Special right to information

Members of the school committee benefit from an exclusive right to information. They may participate in all other school committees in an advisory capacity (Section 75, Paragraph 3 SchulG, with the restrictions referred to here for participation in class committee meetings, cf. Section 82, Paragraph 5, Sentence 2 SchulG).

In order to exercise their respective right to speak and submit proposals, members must be informed about the time, place and agenda for the meeting. Accordingly, the school management should include school committee members in the mailing list.

## Derogating provisions

In addition to the general provisions applicable to the school committee (Sections 116 et seq. SchulG), the following special provisions shall also apply:

- The school committee must be convened at least four times per school year by the chair.
- A quorum will only be met if the majority of the voting members are present. Accordingly, one person more than half the number of voting members must always be present. For a standard school committee, this means eight of the 14 members must be present.
- Major resolutions require a two-thirds majority of all voting members of the school committee (Section 76, Paragraph 1 SchulG). This means a minimum of ten members must be in favour for a resolution to pass.
- In schools with more than 50 students who do not speak German as their primary language at home, the following applies: Of the participating student and parent representatives, one person for each group of representatives should be someone who does not speak German as their primary language. If this is not the case, the school committee may consult one student and one parent who do not speak German as their primary language in an advisory capacity (cf. Section 77, Paragraph 3 SchulG).
- If the student and parents' councils have elected less than half of the voting members to which they are entitled (two seats) to the school committee, the tasks and decision-making right of the school committee will be taken over by the teachers' council (cf. Section 77, Paragraph 5 SchulG). The respectively elected parent representative is then able to participate as a voting member in the teachers' council.





# CLASS COMMITTEE

To understand the role and composition of the class committee, it is useful to take note of the following three sections of the School Act: 81, 82 and 63.



Voting members obliged to participate in the class committee are the following:

- The class teacher who is also chair
- The teachers and pedagogical staff who regularly teach or work with the class
- Two student representatives from the class
- Two parent representatives

Accordingly, two full parent representatives and up to four deputies must be elected to the class committee (cf. Section 82, Paragraph 4, Sentence 1 (4); Section 89, Paragraph 3, Sentence 1; Section 117, Paragraph 2, Sentence 1 SchulG).

As with the majority of other bodies, the class committee meets at least four times per school year (Section 116, Paragraph 1 SchulG).

When discussing grading, class transfer decisions or support outlook, class committee meetings will take place without parent and student representatives (Section 81, Paragraph 1 (1) (2); Section 82, Paragraph 5, Sentence 2 SchulG).

During class committee meetings on the following topics, the elected parent representatives may also take on a joint advisory role:

- The amount and distribution of homework and learning outcome reviews
- Teacher cooperation
- The coordination of cross-curricular and interdisciplinary teaching sessions
- Details concerning the involvement of parents and other persons in teaching and other school events
- Questions concerning cooperation with parents and students

## Class committees and disciplinary measures

The class committee shall convene in the event of disciplinary measures including a written warning or exclusion from lessons or other school-related events for up to ten days (Section 63, Paragraph 2, Sentence 1 (1) and (2) SchulG). This meeting will be chaired by the school management.

Parent and student representatives may only participate in the meeting if the child concerned and their parents so wish (Section 81, Paragraph 1 (8); Section 82, Paragraph 5, Sentence 2 SchulG). In this case, these representatives have no right to vote.

The school management also has no right to vote on disciplinary measures. Instead, the school management will facilitate the meeting. However, in the event that the vote is tied, the school management will have the deciding vote (Section 116, Paragraph 4, Sentence 4 SchulG).



# DISTRICT AND STATE BODIES

## District parents' committee

The district parents' committee discusses all matters that have an impact on schools within the district. This may include structural issues or changes to regulations. It also serves as a preparatory meeting for the district school advisory board.

It consists of two representatives from each state and private general education school in the district. Two representatives from each of the state-recognised alternative schools in the district may also attend the committee meetings in an advisory capacity.

The first meeting of the district parents' committee takes place eight\* weeks after the start of the school year at the earliest, after the following representatives have been elected within the schools:

- The two parents' spokespersons for the class parents' meetings, elected within one month from the beginning of the school year
- The two representatives (and up to four deputies) to the district parents' committee elected by the parents' councils within the first six weeks

The member of the district office responsible for education - such as the district councillor - is responsible for convening the inaugural meeting (Section 110, Paragraph 4 SchulG).

At this meeting the chair and at least one deputy will be elected for a period of one year by the voting members (Section 110, Paragraph 3 SchulG).

Every two years - and always on even years (2024, 2026, 2028, etc.) - the following parent representatives are also elected:

- 12 representatives and up to 24 deputies to the district school advisory board as well as two advisory school representatives from state-recognised alternative schools
- Two representatives and up to four deputies to the state parents' committee
- One representative and up to two deputies to the state school advisory board (Section 110, Paragraph 3 SchulG)

The number of votes cast during the election determines the order in which each deputy will be called up to represent the elected representative. This is to be recorded in the minutes. In the event of a tie, lots will be drawn.

### Using videoconference as an alternate option

In accordance with Section 116, Paragraph 8 of the SchulG, district parents' committee meetings may also be held via videoconference if agreed. How this will proceed should be set out in advance.

In accordance with Section 121, Paragraph 1 of the SchulG, district bodies are entitled to receive resources free of charge. Based on current practice, this also includes videoconference licenses and access.

\* Given that members names must be submitted by the school to the district office and that invitations to the inaugural meeting must be issued in a timely manner, this period may be longer.

## District school advisory board

The district school advisory board consists of twelve parents, twelve pedagogical members of staff and twelve students. In addition, advisory representatives from state-approved alternative schools from the district school bodies, a representative from the District Assembly Committee for Participation and Integration and a representative from the youth welfare committee are also present.

The district school advisory board advises the district office and the school supervisory authorities in all school system-related matters and ensures the exchange of information.

Members of the district school advisory board are elected for two calendar years (Section 110, Paragraph 3 SchulG).

During the inaugural meeting of the district school advisory board, the chair and their deputy (a minimum of one person) are elected for one calendar year. This meeting takes place at the start of the calendar year and again after expiry of the one-year term of office (Section 117, Paragraph 1; Section 119, Paragraph 1 SchulG).

The previous chair is responsible for convening the inaugural meeting. They remain in office after the end of the school year until new elections are held.

Elected members remain on the district school advisory board even if they are no longer a parent representative or in the event that their child changes school, provided they still have a child attending a school in the same district.

If a full or deputy member of the district school advisory board, state parents' committee or state school advisory board vacates their position within this body after one year, by-elections will be held in odd-numbered years to elect a member for the remainder of the term of office.

## State parents' committee

The state parents' committee serves as a preparatory and coordination meeting for the state school advisory board. It also represents the school-related interests of parents vis-à-vis the Senate Department for Education.

Members of the state parents' committee are elected from amongst the members of the district parents' committees for a period of two calendar years (Section 110, Paragraph 3, Sentence 1 (3) SchulG).

The chair and up to three deputies are elected for one calendar year (Section 117, Paragraph 1 SchulG). The same specific rules applicable to the district school advisory board also apply here.

From amongst all the representatives of Berlin's state-recognised alternative schools to the district school advisory boards, two representatives are chosen to attend the state parents' committee in an advisory capacity.

State parents' committee meetings may also be held via videoconference if agreed, in accordance with Section 116, Paragraph 8 of the SchulG. How this will proceed should be set out in advance. In accordance with Section 121, Paragraph 1 of the SchulG, state bodies are entitled to receive resources free of charge. Based on current practice, this also includes videoconference licenses and access.

The state parents' committee organises school and issue-based working groups, in which any parent (even if they do not have a position) may participate.

## State school advisory board

The state school advisory board consists of one teacher or pedagogical specialist, one student and one parent from each district. In addition, representatives from various education-related associations also sit on the state school advisory board.

The state parents' committee representatives from state-recognised alternative schools also attend the state school advisory board in an advisory capacity and represent teachers, students and parents.

The state school advisory board advises the Senate Department for Education in all major matters relating to school development, teaching and education (Section 115, Paragraphs 1 and 2 SchulG).

Members of the state school advisory board are elected for a period of two calendar years (Section 110, Paragraph 1 SchulG). The chair and deputy are elected for a period of one calendar year (Section 117, Paragraph 2; Section 119, Paragraph 1 SchulG).



← [www.leaberlin.de](http://www.leaberlin.de)





# OTHER FORMS OF INVOLVEMENT

## Lunch committee

In every school providing lunch, the school committee will establish a lunch committee (Section 78, Paragraph 2, Sentences 2 and 3 SchulG) which has the following tasks:

1. Supporting the school committee in forming its opinion on the choice of caterer
2. Ensuring and monitoring the quality of school lunches
3. Exchanging information with the department responsible for inspecting school lunches in the district

The number of members and composition of this committee is decided upon by the school committee. Members of this committee do not necessarily need to be members of the school committee.

Members of the lunch committee should have an interest in school lunches and be prepared to get involved and familiarise themselves with nutritional matters, in particular with the recommendations issued by the German Nutrition Society (DGE) - the DGE Quality Standard for Meals in Schools (5th Edition).

## Construction committee

At schools undergoing structural changes or new construction projects, the school committee should set up a construction committee, with parent, student and pedagogical staff representatives (Section 78, Paragraph 2 SchulG). Members of this committee do not necessarily need to be members of the school committee.

## Finance committee

The school committee may also choose to set up a finance committee. This committee deals with the use and distribution of resources assigned to the school. It is also recommended that parents and students participate in this committee (Section 78, Paragraph 2 SchulG). Members of this committee do not necessarily need to be members of the school committee.

## Working groups for school-related matters

Parents and students may and should play an active role in working groups for school-related matters. This promotes collaboration between all those involved in the school for the benefit of the school and ensures transparency and communication. Those participating in the working groups do not necessarily need to be members of the school committee.

## Support association

A support association actively supports schools and students in implementing ideas, concepts and projects. Good collaboration in this respect requires close consultation between the board of the support association, the school management and the parents' council. Since many parents are both parent representatives and sit on the board of the support association, a clear division of tasks should be set out.



# GENERAL INFORMATION

## Times of school body meetings

Teachers' and school committee meetings should take place at a time which is also suitable for working parents (Section 116, Paragraph 6 SchulG).

Exceptions are possible if organising a late-afternoon or early-evening meeting would cause organisational problems, for example because it would interfere with other committee meetings.

No exception is possible if an earlier meeting would mean that only pedagogical staff are accommodated for.

When agreeing or deciding on a suitable meeting time, parent representatives should also take into account the time commitment of pedagogical staff. Fruitful cooperation requires understanding and a willingness to compromise on both sides.

## Minutes

Minutes must be kept for body meetings (Section 122 SchulG). For parents' meetings, this only applies to elections. However, written summaries for other meetings are also preferable for the purposes of informing parents who were not present.

In order to determine the presence of voting members, registers should also be taken and attached to the minutes.

Minutes are not made public, however may be consulted by those involved in the school, for example at the school office. This said, all other parents may be informed of new developments via a newsletter or parents' council information letter.

In accordance with 8 (5) of the SchulG-MGO, the various bodies may agree on consultation rights and obligations to provide information that go beyond those provided for in the School Act.

Information that should be treated as confidential must be listed in an annex attached to the minutes. This may then only be consulted by members of the relevant body.

Before the minutes are sent via email, members of the relevant body must agree to being included in the mailing list. This involves verifying whether an open or hidden mailing list should be used (via Cc or Bcc).

## Mailing, class and body lists

### Mailing lists

Setting up a mailing list early on can be a good method of ensuring quick and transparent transfer of information to the parents and members of a school body. There are several options here:

- One of the elected parent representatives provides their email address to all parents so that they are able to send an email with their name to this email address. This means that one person receives the names and email addresses for consenting parents and can then set up a mailing list.
- The contact details for all parents (email address and phone number, if relevant) can also be collected via a list or individual forms, but should be verified.

The collection of email addresses should be supported by the class and school management, and subsequently also by the responsible district and state departments. In any case, the voluntary basis of providing this information and the confidentiality of it must be pointed out.

Emails are to be sent either within private mailing lists or via Bcc.

Experience has shown that setting up groups on messenger applications such as WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram or others is not advisable.

### Class and body lists

Class lists can be helpful for students. For example, to coordinate or ask questions about homework. However, data protection regulations in accordance with GDPR must be taken into account here. The same applies when creating lists for organisational bodies at the district or state level.

## Meeting times for district and state bodies

All committees and advisory boards generally meet once a month in the evenings during school terms and for approximately two to two and a half hours. Each district is responsible for determining which weekdays the meetings will take place on. Since the state parents' committee always meets on a Friday and the state school advisory board always meets on a Wednesday, the district meetings usually take place on other days of the week. Usually, these meetings take place in the town hall or at other school sites in the district.

To account for members that belong to other bodies, care should be taken to ensure that meetings do not interfere with other district or state body meetings (SchulG-MGO).

## Workload

Someone who is elected as a representative to all committees will have up to three or four evening meetings per month in addition to the school body meetings. In addition, they may occasionally be required to take minutes or participate in sub-committees.

## Election review

Every person entitled to vote may object to the validity of an election within one week of the announcement of the election result by submitting written reasons for this objection either to the election chair or school management or to the school supervisory authority, depending on the body concerned (Section 118 Election review).

## Premature end of the term of office

Parents whose child turns 18 during the course of a school year may remain in office until the end of the school year. After this, their term of office and membership within the body will end (Section 117, Paragraph 5 SchulG). Accordingly, they will no longer be permitted to participate as a member in meetings.

Parents who no longer have a child attending a general education school in Berlin may no longer be permitted to act as a member of the state parents' committee or the state school advisory board. This is the case, for example, if the child moves to a vocational school, a school in Brandenburg or to a private school.

A member of a body must inform the chair when their term of office is due to end, without being asked to do so. Membership is terminated automatically upon occurrence of the respective action or event.

# Data processing and the right to information

Schools and school authorities may process the personal data of students, their legal guardians and teachers, provided this is necessary in order to fulfil school-related tasks. Data subjects have the right to information (Section 64, Paragraph 1 SchulG).

For the purposes of school organisation, the school supervisory authority operates the Teacher-Teaching-School-Database, in which students' personal data alongside other data is stored (Section 64a, Paragraph 1 SchulG).

In accordance with Section 64a, Paragraph 1, Sentence 2 of the School Act and Section 19 of GDPR, the following categories constitute the primary categories of data processed:

## 1. Students:

- Identity information, contact data, legal guardians, language used within the family, school record and performance data, special educational needs or other support needs and the support level in accordance with Paragraph 3, entitlement to school-related social security benefits as well as data concerning vocational training, school statistic personal characteristics and membership in any bodies.

## 2. Parents/Legal guardians:

- Name, contact details and membership in any bodies



### ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS

The School Data Ordinance for the state of Berlin governs, amongst other matters, the requirements for keeping records such as student record sheets, student files and record sheets relating to special educational needs.

Students have a right to consult their records in accordance with Section 24, Paragraph 6, Sentence 1 of the Berlin Data Protection Act and in accordance with Section 29 of the German Administrative Procedure Act (Access to data by involved parties). A right to information about data processing also arises from Article 15 GDPR.

In principle, a minor is represented by their parents when exercising this right. However, once they reach the age of 14, students may exercise their right to consult their data without requiring approval from their parents, provided the school management does not make this approval a requirement (Section 64, Paragraph 9, Sentence 1 SchulG).

In order to consult a document, all that is required is an informal request submitted to the person responsible for the relevant file. The person consulting this document may take notes.

# Tasks of the school management (Section 69 SchulG)

## Overall responsibility for the school

- The school management has overall responsibility for the work of the school.
- They are responsible for ensuring compliance with legal and administrative regulations and upholding internal rules.
- They decide on the distribution and use of the staff and material resources assigned to the school and under its own management. (The school committee, however, is responsible for deciding on the principles for this distribution and use.)
- Within the scope of the school's own responsibility, the school management concludes legal transactions on behalf of the state of Berlin.
- In accordance with Section 7, Paragraph 3 of the SchulG, the school management is involved in the hiring and deployment of teachers.
- They decide on the teaching duties for teachers and other pedagogical members of staff.
- The school management represents the school externally within the framework of resolutions decided upon by the school bodies.

## Organisation and development of the school

- The school management promotes collaboration between all those involved within the school and works towards the continued improvement of teaching.
- They ensure that the school curriculum is developed, updated and implemented and that the work of the school is subject to quality assurance and internal evaluation. The school management provides an annual school development report to the school committee and teachers' council.
- They inform student and parent representatives about all important matters concerning the school and support the work of these representatives.
- They promote the social and cultural openness of the school.

## Teaching and education

- Within the scope of their administrative duties, the school management is authorised to issue instructions to all teachers, pedagogical staff and other persons working at the school.
- They are responsible for informing themselves about the proper delivery of teaching and education.
- The school management advises teachers and pedagogical staff.
- They work towards the improvement of teaching and education, in particular with regard to cohesive evaluation standards.
- They intervene in the event of breaches of legal or administrative regulations, instructions issued by the school supervisory authority or other school authority, or the resolutions reached by the school bodies, and in the event that the quality of teaching or education is deemed insufficient.
- The school management promotes a participative, non-discriminative and democratic structure at the school.

## Staff deployment, training and development

- As a supervisor, the school management is responsible for requesting overtime or extra hours be worked.
- They are also responsible for approving secondary employment, special holiday, leaves of absence and professional trips and training and prepare professional appraisals.
- The school management works towards ensuring the continuous training of pedagogical staff.
- They promote internal training for trainee teachers and regularly obtain information on the quality of this training.

# School board or school supervisory authority – who is responsible?

<b>SCHOOL BOARD</b> (at the respective district office)	<b>DISTRICT SCHOOL SUPERVISORY AUTHORITY</b> at the Senate Department for Education, Youth and Family
<p><b>External school matters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The construction and maintenance of schools</li> <li>• The provision of school budgets (e.g. teaching and learning resources, office supplies)</li> <li>• Employing administrative authority for school caretakers</li> <li>• Monitoring compliance with compulsory school attendance and pre-school language support</li> <li>• Defining school catchment areas</li> <li>• The closure, conversion and opening of schools</li> <li>• School planning and organisation</li> <li>• School place allocation</li> <li>• Establishing the Grade 1 year group</li> <li>• The transition from primary school to secondary school</li> <li>• School development planning</li> <li>• Allocation of children who did not grow up in Germany to German as a Foreign Language “Welcome” classes</li> <li>• Lunch: Catering, quality assurance</li> <li>• Education and participation</li> <li>• School transport</li> <li>• The financing of extracurricular study groups, special interest groups and school clubs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Internal school matters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The objectives, content, organisation and quality requirements for teaching and supplementary support and supervision</li> <li>• Implementing educational policy requirements and pedagogical innovations</li> <li>• Staff management and development</li> <li>• Managing staff resources (teachers, school management, educators, school secretaries)</li> <li>• Complaints, conflict and crisis management including disciplinary measures</li> <li>• Regional staff training</li> <li>• Approving the closure, conversion and opening of schools</li> <li>• Managing inter-school cooperation</li> <li>• School quality development</li> <li>• Collaborating with youth social workers</li> <li>• School Psychological and Inclusive Education Advice and Support Centre (SIBUZ)</li> <li>• Practical school seminars</li> </ul>



## Frequently used German acronyms<sup>\*</sup>

<b>AV</b>	Implementation regulation	<b>LEA</b>	State parents' committee
<b>BBR</b>	Certificate of vocational education	<b>LISUM</b>	State Institute for School and Media
<b>BEA</b>	District parents' committee	<b>LPP</b>	State committee for pedagogical members of staff
<b>BPP</b>	District committee for pedagogical members of staff	<b>LSA</b>	State student committee
<b>BSA</b>	District student committee	<b>LSB</b>	State school advisory board
<b>BSB</b>	District school advisory board	<b>lsfb</b>	State Association for Daycare Centre and School Support Associations for Berlin-Brandenburg
<b>BuK</b>	Committee on culture and education	<b>MGO</b>	Standard rules of procedure (SchulG-MGO)
<b>BuT</b>	Education and participation	<b>MSA</b>	General certificate of education
<b>DSGVO (GDPR)</b>	General Data Protection Regulation	<b>PKB</b>	Staff cost budget
<b>eBBR</b>	Advanced certificate of vocational education	<b>SAPH</b>	Early years stage
<b>FK</b>	Specialist committee	<b>SchulG</b>	School Act
<b>GEV</b>	Parents' council	<b>Sek I-VO</b>	Level I Secondary School Ordinance
<b>GK</b>	Teachers' council	<b>SenBJF</b>	Senate Department for Education, Youth and Family
<b>GSV</b>	Student council	<b>SEP</b>	School development plan
<b>GsVO</b>	Primary School Ordinance	<b>SIBUZ</b>	School Psychological and Inclusive Education Advice and Support Centre
<b>GVBl</b>	Official Gazette of Laws and Ordinances	<b>SK</b>	School committee
<b>JabL</b>	Year-group specific learning	<b>VERA</b>	Comparative assessments
<b>Jg</b>	Year group	<b>VO-GO</b>	Upper Secondary School Ordinance
<b>JHA</b>	Youth welfare committee	<b>VV</b>	Administrative regulation
<b>JüL</b>	Cross year-group learning	<b>VWL</b>	Administrative management
<b>KMK</b>	The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs		

\* The acronyms listed here constitute a select list of acronyms used in this guide and, more generally, within the work carried out by the various bodies.

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## Publishing information

### **Publisher**

Senate Department for Education, Youth and Family  
Bernhard-Weiß-Straße 6  
10178 Berlin  
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### **Publication date**

February 2024

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