



Dear Potential Member,

Thank you for your interest in the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations (OFHSA). We are pleased to enclose information that introduces you to the importance of Home & School Associations in the school community.

The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations has been in existence since 1916 when the first Home & School Council was formed in Toronto. During that long history, our members have been strong advocates for parents and students across Ontario. Our activities have focused on ways to improve the health, safety, education and social well-being of children and youth in our province. We have made it our mandate to provide parent members with the support, resources and training that are necessary to better do this work. Home & School is an independent organization, run entirely by volunteers, representing the views of parents across Ontario. OFHSA is one of four parent organizations officially recognized in the Education Act; in each school where a Home & School Association exists, a representative of that association must be given representation on the School Council.

While Home & School membership is through the local school, when parents and other community members join a Home & School Association they become members of a provincial network of volunteers working towards common goals. Home & School members have a reputation across the province as being informed, pro-active partners with educators and governments in striving to achieve, "The Best for Each Student".

Home & School Associations act as a link between the home and the school. Associations create opportunities to enhance education and the student outcome beyond the core curriculum by promoting parent engagement and community participation

Home & School Associations are linked at the local school board level with committees to provide feedback on policies and collaborate with their education partners. As well as this school board link, Home & School members are represented on working committees at the provincial level.

Please contact the OFHSA office to arrange a meeting with a representative to speak to any questions you may have around forming a Home & School Association.

We look forward to working together to achieve "The Best for Each Student".

THE ONTARIO FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

51 Stuart Street Hamilton, ON L8L 1B5 905-308-9563

info@ofhsa.ca

www.ofhsa.ca

Mission Statement:

The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations, a province-wide network of dedicated members, is committed to informed and proactive involvement in our homes, our schools and our communities to obtain the “The Best for Each Student”.

Belief Statements:

Basic Belief #1

We believe parents/guardians are willing and active partners with those delivering education programs and services.

Basic Belief #2

We believe "Home and School" at all levels is an advocate for the students in the public school system.

Basic Belief #3

We believe co-operative and healthy environments in the home, the school and the community are necessary for the development of each student.

Basic Belief #4

We believe local, provincial and national parental networking is essential.

Basic Belief #5

We believe effective communication is critical.

OFHSA MEMBERSHIP FEES

When you purchase a Home & School Association membership, you become a member of your local Home & School Association and the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations.

As a member of OFHSA, you are entitled to:

- ◆ Vote on all motions presented during your Association's meetings
- ◆ Hold office on your local Association executive committee
- ◆ Represent your Association at local Home & School Council meetings
- ◆ Represent your Association as a voting delegate at the OFHSA Annual Meeting
- ◆ Be insured for liability while you are carrying out sanctioned Home & School activities

Why does OFHSA charge a membership fee?

- ◆ The purchase of a Home & School membership represents a commitment to an agreement with the purpose, beliefs and objectives of the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations.
- ◆ When members pay their fee, OFHSA can identify where their support lies.
- ◆ Membership fees are a source of funds for the organization so that the Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations can work on behalf of its members.
- ◆ Charging a small fee each year from members allows the Federation to pay its own way.

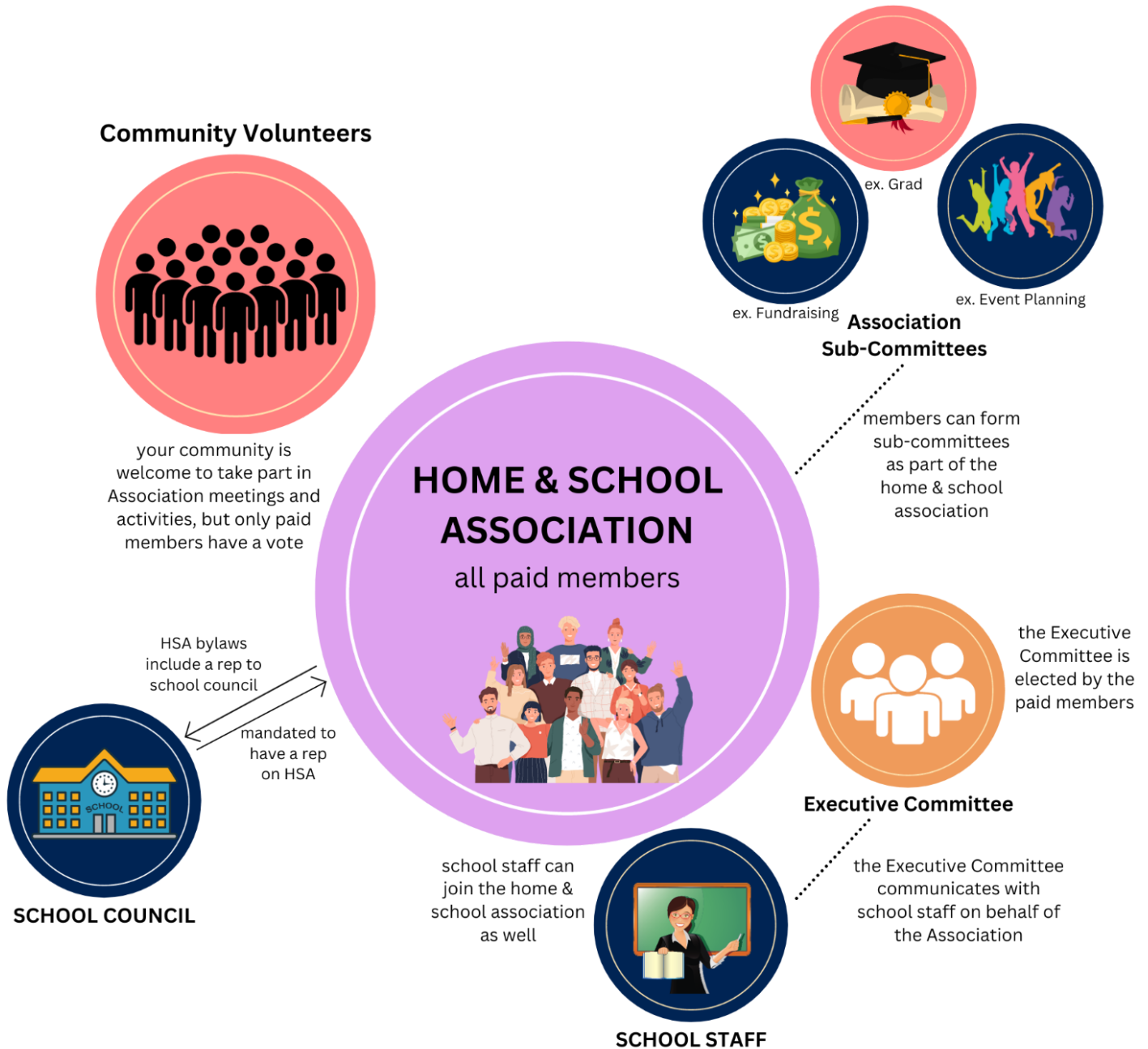
The membership fee is determined annually according to the financial needs of the Federation and ratified at the OFHSA Annual Meeting in April. Associations may charge more or less if they wish, but the ratified Federation amount per membership sold must be submitted to the OFHSA office.

The Fee is collected by the local Home & School Association, submitted to the OFHSA office, and utilized in the following ways:

- ◆ To maintain a central office to co-ordinate services (Executive Director's salary; rent; postage, paper, photocopying; telephone and web services; computer and equipment)
- ◆ To provide resources, training and workshops for members
- ◆ To communicate with and provide service for individual members and Home & School Associations across the province
- ◆ To provide financial support for local Home & School Councils
- ◆ To allow the Federation Workgroups to carry out tasks as directed by the members
- ◆ To ensure representation at the OFHSA Board of Directors table on behalf of Home & School members and the Canadian Home and School Federation
- ◆ To provide advocacy on behalf of members and parents; carrying member concerns and advocating OFHSA policies to government ministries and partnership tables, teachers' and trustees' organizations, and other groups interested in the welfare of children and youth
- ◆ To pay OFHSA's provincial membership fee to the Canadian Home and School Federation
- ◆ To maintain OFHSA's incorporated entity by providing an annual audit

A large portion of OFHSA's revenue comes from membership fees. Other income necessary to finance the operation of the Federation is derived from grants and interest from OFHSA's McLaughlin Endowment Fund.

Home & School Association Structure



Accountability of Home & School Associations

- Associations are formed and organized by the members, and operated by the membership
- Members elect their executive committee and set their bylaws
- Decisions of the Association are determined by majority vote (elections, budget, expenditures, ets)
- Associations are accountable to their members, their community, and the Federation

The OFHSA Connection

Do you have a question about H&S?

- ❖ *Do you have an idea to share?*
- ❖ *Do you need some assistance?*



Where do you go? Who do you contact?

Your first contact should be at the level immediately above yours in the chart below.

If you do not have a Home & School Council, you should contact the OFHSA office. If help is not available there, you will be put in contact with a member of the OFHSA Board of Directors.

OFHSA

51 Stuart Street
Hamilton ON L8L 1B5
Phone: 905-308-9563
E-mail: info@ofhsa.ca
www.ofhsa.ca



Here's How to Form an Association

- Once you have gone through this info package, email the OFHSA office at info@ofhsa.ca to set up a meeting with an OFHSA volunteer to meet with parents, and the school principal if they are available, in your school
- A minimum of 6 paid memberships is required to form a new Home & School Association (your charter members).

Once you have decided to join:

- sign up your charter members
 - collect full contact info for all of your members, and fill out the OFHSA membership list spreadsheet
- Set bylaws for your Association (we will provide the template for your group to fill out).
- Collect your first annual membership fees.
 - Membership runs from October 1st - September 30th annually, if your Association forms in January through September your fees will cover the partial year as well as the following full year.
 - There is also an annual Association Insurance Fee, during the forming year this fee is waived until the following September
- Send your membership list, bylaws, and membership fees to OFHSA
 - Fees when newly forming can be sent by e-transfer to info@ofhsa.ca, once your Association is formed and has an association bank account, fees will be paid by cheque
 - We will give you a link to upload your membership list and bylaws
- You will have access to the OFHSA Constitution and Bylaws, Association Guidelines, Executive Skills, and other resources available through a shared Google Drive that all associations have access to with an OFHSA Workspace account (given to each association)
- You will also receive your Charter for your Home & School Association
- Once all required documents and fees have been received, we will send you a letter to take to a bank allowing you to open an account in your association's name
 - You will open a nonprofit/community account in your Association's name (not the Federation name, and not the school name)
 - Make sure to use your association contact info (association email address and school's mailing address)
 - The members listed on your account as signing officers are determined by your bylaws
 - Remember all association accounts must be two-to-sign and cannot be issued debit/credit cards

Individual Federation Memberships are also available for individuals who have not been members of OFHSA, are not involved at a school with an association, and wish to join and support OFHSA. Please contact the OFHSA office for details.

We've Formed a Home & School Association, Now What?

Once you have submitted your membership list, fees and bylaws; received your bank letter; and opened your association bank account, you are ready to start your association activities.

You will need to schedule your first general meeting. Here are some things you will need to discuss with your members at that meeting:

- set meeting dates and times for the remainder of the year
- start planning what activities/fundraisers you want to hold that year
- prepare an operating budget based on the fundraisers and activities you plan to hold
 - motion and vote to approve your operating budget so the executive members can conduct the financial business of the association
 - budgets can be added to throughout the year as more planning is done; all expenditures must be decided as a motion/vote with the membership

Recruit some more members! Send out info to your community inviting people to join your association, and collecting info about activities they would be interested in. It's also a good idea to ask your community what they would like to see your association support. You will get more support from your community if they feel they have a voice in how your funds are spent, and what initiatives you support as an association.

We're here to support you! Networking is an invaluable part of being an OFHSA member; your association is never alone. Attending Federation and Home & School Council meetings are a great opportunity to learn about Home & School, meet members from across school districts and the province, and pick up some new ideas to try with your association.

Make sure to check out our website, and follow us on social media.

www.ofhsa.ca

facebook: facebook.com/OFHSA1916

twitter: [@OFHSA1916](https://twitter.com/OFHSA1916)

instagram: [@OFHSA1916](https://www.instagram.com/OFHSA1916)

Some Helpful Resources

[Executive Members Reference Handbook](#)

[Administrator's Guidebook to Home & School Associations](#)

[Home & School Association Guidelines](#)

[Tips for Home & School Executives](#)

[Financial Practices for Home & School Associations](#)

[Congrats You Have a Home & School Association](#)

[Home & School Associations and School Councils: What's the Difference?](#)

[Home & School Associations and School Councils: How Are We Similar?](#)

[Home & School Associations and School Councils Working Together](#)

[OFHSA Liability Insurance](#)

[Association Bylaws Template](#)