



ST. MARY'S EPISCOPAL PRIMARY SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

1 NAME

This is the constitution for St. Mary's Episcopal Primary School Parent Council ('the Parent Council').

2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Parent Council are:

- to work together to create a welcoming school which is inclusive for all;
- to identify and represent the views of all parents¹ of children at St. Mary's Episcopal Primary School ('the School' ²), on the education provided by the School and other matters affecting the education and welfare of the pupils;
- to promote partnership between the School, its pupils, the parents, the staff, St. Mary's Episcopal Church and the wider community;
- to develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of the pupils;
- to organise a fundraising programme for the benefit of the School and the pupils;
- to be engaged in strategic planning and appointments for the School;
- to carry out all the functions of a Parent Council as set out in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 (including subsequent revisions) and any other relevant statutory provisions.

3 PARENT COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Parent Council will be between a minimum of five and a maximum of twenty parents of children attending the school.

Any parents of a child at the school can volunteer to be a member of the Parent Council. In the event that the number of volunteers exceeds the number of places set out in the constitution, members will be selected by a simple voting system (i.e. a show of hands at the AGM). Anyone not selected to be a member of the Parent Council may be offered the opportunity to be part of any sub-groups set up by the Council. It is our aim that at least one parent per year group, including the nursery, will volunteer for membership of the Parent Council.

¹ The term 'Parent' includes a guardian and any person who is liable to maintain or has parental responsibilities in relation to, or has care of a child. All Parents at the school are members of the Parent Forum.

² Throughout the constitution 'the School' is taken to be inclusive of both primary school and nursery.

4 ELECTION OF PARENT MEMBERS

Members of the Parent Council shall be appointed at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). They shall be elected for a one year term and be eligible for re-election. Parents shall always form the majority of the Parent Council.

In the event that a Parent Member ceases to have a child in attendance at the School, then he or she will cease to be a member of the Parent Council. In the event of the parent being an Office Bearer then the new Office Bearer will be decided at the next meeting.

If a Parent Council member acts in a way that is considered by other members to undermine the objectives of the Parent Council, their membership of the Parent Council shall be terminated if the majority of Parent Members of the Parent Council agree. Termination of membership would be confirmed in writing to the member.

5 OFFICE BEARERS OF THE PARENT COUNCIL

At the first meeting of the Parent Council following the Annual General Meeting of the Parent Forum, the Parent Council will choose one Parent Member to serve as Chair, one Parent Member to serve as Vice-Chair, and one Parent Member to serve as Secretary of the Parent Council for that year. In addition the Parent Council will appoint a Treasurer who may be a Parent Member of the Parent Council or Member of a Parent Council sub-group or co-opted member of the Parent Council. The Maximum term of office for any office bearer will be three years.

6 CO-OPTED MEMBERS

The Parent Council shall each year co-opt one member of the teaching/support staff of the School nominated by the teaching staff.

One member of St Mary's Episcopal Church will be co-opted onto The Parent Council.

The Parent Council may at any time co-opt other parents, pupils, members of staff or members of the wider community to advise or assist in the carrying out of its functions. All co-opted members serve until the succeeding Annual General Meeting of the Parent Forum, and are eligible to be co-opted in the following or any subsequent year. A person may serve as a co-opted member as many times as the Parent Council thinks fit.

Members of the community will be invited to attend meetings in an advisory capacity as appropriate.

7 SUB-GROUPS

The Parent Council may form such other sub-groups as it considers necessary to carry out its functions and fulfil its objectives. The Parent Council will set the remit for, and may delegate appropriate authority to that sub-group.

8 PARENT COUNCIL MEETINGS

The Parent Council will meet as soon as possible after the Annual General Meeting of the Parent Forum and within the first term. Thereafter the Parent Council will meet regularly during term time (and at least once in each term) on dates to be set and agreed by the Parent Council in advance. Except in exceptional circumstances a notice period of two weeks will be given to the Parent Forum of the Parent Council Meetings. The agenda for a meeting will be circulated at least one week in advance of the date of the meeting and will be made available to parents.

Any two Parent Members of the Parent Council may request that an additional meeting be held, and all members of the Parent Council will be given at least one week's notice of the date, time and place of the meeting.

The Head Teacher of the School, or his or her representative, has a right and a duty to attend meetings of the Parent Council.

All Parent Council meetings will be open to the Parent Forum unless the Parent Council decides that consideration of any matter should be on a confidential basis, in which case only the Parent Members and co-opted members of the Parent Council and the Headteacher, or his or her representative, will be entitled to be present.

Meetings will be chaired by the Chair of the Parent Council, whom failing the Vice-Chair, whom failing a Parent Member chosen by the members of the Parent Council present at that meeting.

The quorum of meetings will be three elected Parent Members of the Parent Council. In the event that a vote is necessary, each Member at the meeting will have one vote, with the chair of the meeting having a casting vote in the event of a tied vote.

Copies of the minutes of the meetings will be available to all parents and teachers at the School.

CONFIDENTIALITY

No individual pupil or member of school staff will be discussed or directly named during open meetings, unless this is in connection with the recognition of individual or collective achievement. If a specific situation arises then a closed meeting of the Parent Council can be called, in which case only the Parent Members and co-opted members of the Parent Council and the Headteacher, or his or her representative, will be entitled to be present.

RECORDS OF MEETINGS

Copies of the minutes of all Parent Council and sub-committee meetings will be available to all parents and staff of the School. Copies will be available from the Secretary of the Parent Council and from the school office. A copy will also be posted on the school notice board and the school website.

9 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE PARENT FORUM

All Parents of children at the School are members of the Parent Forum. The Annual General Meeting of the Parent Forum will be held in the first term of each school year. A notice of the meeting including the date, time and place will be sent to all members of the Parent Forum at least two weeks in advance.

The Annual General Meeting will include:

- (i) A report on the work of the Parent Council, and sub-groups formed by the Parent Council
- (ii) Treasurer's report including presentation of the accounts
- (iii) Appointment of accounts reviewer
- (iv) Headteacher's report

The Annual General Meeting will be chaired by the Chair of the Parent Council, whom failing the Vice-Chair, whom failing another Parent Member chosen by the members of the Parent Council present at the meeting. In the event that a vote is necessary, each member of the Parent Forum at the meeting will have one vote, with the Chair of the Parent Council having a casting vote in the event of a tied vote.

10 SPECIAL MEETINGS OF THE PARENT FORUM

The Parent Council may at any time call a Special Meeting of the Parent Forum.

If 5 members of the Parent Forum request a Special Meeting of the Parent Forum to discuss issues falling within the remit of the Parent Council, the Parent Council shall arrange this.

The Parent Council will give all members of the Parent Forum at least two weeks notice of the date and time of any Special Meeting and the issues to be discussed at the meeting.

11 FINANCES

The Treasurer will open and maintain a bank or building society account for the Parent Council. All 4 post holders: Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary will be signatories. The account will require the signature of the Treasurer and one other post holder to authorise withdrawals from the account.

The Treasurer will be responsible for keeping proper accounts in relation to all income and expenditure of the Parent Council and will provide a summary of this for each Parent Council meeting and a full account for the Annual General Meeting.

The Parent Council accounts will be inspected by the reviewer appointed at the Annual Meeting. The reviewer must be independent of the Parent Council and have the necessary skill to examine accounts, but need not be a member of any professional body.

The Parent Council shall be responsible for ensuring that all monies are used in accordance with the objectives of the Parent Council.

12 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Parent Council may change or replace this constitution after obtaining the consent of the members of the Parent Forum. Members of the Parent Forum will be sent a copy of any

proposed amendment and given at least two weeks to respond to the proposal. If a majority of the members who respond timeously consent to the amendment the Parent Council may amend the constitution accordingly.

A copy of the amended constitution will be sent as soon as reasonably practical to the local education authority and to the Headteacher.

13 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

In exceptional circumstances, following discussion among the Parent Members and where a majority of the Parent Members are concerned that there is a need to act more quickly than would otherwise be allowed under this constitution, they may do so, subject to that action being reported to and agreed by the next meeting of the Parent Council. This may include calling meetings at shorter notice and without prior publication of papers.

14 DISSOLUTION

Should the Parent Council cease to exist, any remaining funds will be passed to the education authority, specifically for the benefit of the School where this continues.

APPENDIX 1

Summary of the functions of a Parent Council, as outlined in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006.

(a) to support the endeavours of those managing the school:

(i) to raise standards of education in the school,

(ii) to secure improvements in the quality of education which the school provides, and

(iii) to develop to their fullest potential the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the pupils attending the school,

(b) to make representations:

(i) to the school's Headteacher and to the education authority about the arrangements in the school for promoting the involvement of parents in the education of such of those parents own children (of whatever age as attend the school and of its pupils generally,

(ii) to the education authority about the arrangements in its area for promoting the involvement of parents of pupils attending schools in that area in the education of such of those parents own children (of whatever age) as so attend and of those pupils generally,

(c) to promote contact between:

(i) the school,

(ii) the Parent Forum,

(iii) parents of prospective pupils of the school,

(iv) pupils in attendance at the school,

(v) the community, and

(vi) such other persons as it appears to the council appropriate to include for the purposes of this paragraph,

(d) to report on the council's activities to the members of the Parent Forum, as often as appears to the council to be appropriate but in any event

(i) not more than 12 months after the council is established, and

(ii) after that first report, at intervals of not more than 12 months,

(e) to ascertain the views of the members of the Parent Forum as regards

(i) the standards of education in the school,

- (ii) the quality of education which the school provides,
- (iii) the exercise by the council of its functions, and
- (iv) such other matters as appear to the council to be of interest or concern to the Parent Forum,
- (f) to collate those views and report them to
 - (i) the headteacher of the school,
 - (ii) the education authority, and
 - (iii) such other persons as it appears to the council appropriate to include for the purposes of this paragraph,
- (g) to review from time to time its constitution, and with the requisite consent, to amend (or replace) the council's constitution whenever it appears to the council to be necessary or expedient to do so.

Requisite consent

(a) is consent obtained after each member of the Parent Forum has been sent a copy of the proposed amendment or replacement with an invitation to the member in question to indicate, within such reasonable time as the council may specify in the invitation, whether the member agrees to that amendment or replacement, and

(b) is the consent of the majority of such members of the parent forum as respond timeously to that invitation.]

(h) whether or not it has ascertained and collated the views of the members of the Parent Forum as regards a matter mentioned in paragraph (e) above, to make representations to

(i) the headteacher of the school,

(ii) the education authority, or

(iii) such other person as it appears to the council appropriate to include for the purposes of this subsection, as regards that matter.

(i) to agree and reasonably request an appropriate form for the report which the headteacher must make to the Parent Council at least once a year, evaluating the performance of the school and stating what the headteacher's objectives and ambitions for the school are, having regard to:

(i) the school's development plan and in particular the objectives for the school which the plan sets and the statement of ambitions for the school which it contains,

(ii) the report most recently prepared under section 6(4) of the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 (asp 6) (report as to what has been done, over a period of 12 months, in implementation of that plan),

(iii) the measures and standards of performance defined and published most recently under section 7(1) of that Act (review of school performance), and

(iv) the equal opportunity requirements.

(j) involvement in the education authority's appointment process for filling any headteacher or deputy headteacher post at the school, including consultation over changes to that process, creation of job descriptions and person specifications, shortlisting, interview and selection.

(k) involvement in the setting up and review of the education authority's complaints procedures

(l) involvement in the preparation and review of the school's development plan

APPENDIX 2.

Financial powers of a Parent Council, as outlined in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, section 10.

(1) A Parent Council may

- a) raise funds by means other than borrowing
- b) receive gifts and may expend any sums so received at its discretion

(2) A Parent Council is to keep proper accounts in relation to any sums received by it under subsection (1)

(3) A Parent Council is not to acquire any interest in heritable property, whether by inheritance, gift or otherwise.

APPENDIX 3.

The following reference documents can be found at the appropriate links:

1. The Scottish Government guidance on **parental involvement in the appointment processes** for Headteacher and Depute Headteacher posts.
 - a. http://www.stirling.gov.uk/__documents/education-and-skills/management-of-schools/parent-councils/parentcouncilheadteacherappointentguidance.pdf

2. The Scottish Government issued guidance on how the new **Parental Involvement Act** should be implemented to all Local Authorities.
 - a. http://www.stirling.gov.uk/__documents/education-and-skills/management-of-schools/parent-councils/parentcouncilscottishschoolsact2006.pdf

APPENDIX 4.

This appendix includes guidelines for certain office bearers and roles for the Parent Council. These include:

- PC Chair & VC
- PC Secretary
- PC Treasurer
- PC Fundraising coordinator
- Headteacher
- School Secretary & IT Support

Guidelines for the Parent Council Chairperson and Vice Chair

Both of these roles come with the least time/task specific remit, however the Chairperson has overarching responsibility for all the workings of the PC. They must also always be a parent of a child currently in the school.

The main tasks of the Chairperson

- arrange and chair regular PC meetings
- make sure meetings run smoothly, efficiently, are on time and are run in an inclusive and friendly way
- help the committee make decisions
- maintain good communication with other office bearers to remain aware of what is going on with fundraising, admin and expenses and meet separately when required
- delegate tasks to other members of the group and makes sure these are completed
- ensure all PC members know they are there to represent all the parents in the school
- develop and nurture good communication links with the school, meeting on a monthly basis with the Headteacher
- liaise with the Headteacher / school / local authority / community
- be a link with the SPTC and the school
- give an annual report to the parent forum at the AGM
- regularly update the parent body of the work of the PC through the school newsletter, website and/or app
- draft emails as required to send to the parent forum through the Secretary
- contact parents who have raised concerns and bring them to meetings if appropriate
- feedback directly to parents if an issue has been discussed with staff or at a PC meeting on their behalf

The role of the Vice Chair

- provide support to the Chairperson
- stand in for the Chairperson as and when required
- support contingency planning where the VC plans to take over the post of Chair in the future
- perform a specific task as requested by the Chair

Guidelines for the Parent Council Secretary

There are very few rules governing how Parent Councils operate; however it is good practice to have someone to take the role of Secretary. Some Parent Councils opt to pay a clerk to the committee instead, and some have both! A clerk can be paid for with the money a PC receives from the local authority but they can't be a member of the PC.

The main tasks of the Secretary

The Secretary can be any member of the committee. The main roles of a Secretary are to be responsible for the majority of the admin associated with the running of the committee; to support the Chairperson to ensure the smooth running of the PC; and to maintain effective communication between committee members and between the PC and the school. This looks like:

- Notifying the parent forum of upcoming meetings
- Contacting PC members to request agenda items ahead of meetings
- Taking accurate minutes that are clear and concise
- Circulating minutes to the PC for comment following the meeting
- Circulating finalised minutes to the parent forum
- Adding the minutes to the school website
- Regularly checking the school's PC email account
- Forwarding relevant emails to the relevant person / people
- Sending emails to the parent forum on behalf of the PC
- Holding current email addresses for all parents and obtaining permission from them to do so
- Maintaining records and administration. Historically these have been kept in a file to be handed on to the next Secretary; since 2013 everything has been digital
- Handling communication and correspondence from the PC

The role can also include:

- Booking meeting rooms
- Reporting on actions or matters arising from the previous minutes
- Clarifying any discussion points before the Chairperson moves onto the next item on the agenda
- Reminding the Chairperson if an agenda item has been missed
- Following up on any correspondence as soon as possible

Guidelines for the Parent Council Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for the overseeing and management of all the finances of the PC and the post may be held by anyone on the committee or by a person nominated by the PC, such as a paid clerk.

The main tasks of the Treasurer:

- To present annual accounts at the AGM, having had them independently verified. This will include an income and expenditure report for the previous school year.
- To keep accurate, up to date financial records which are easily understood and present them at each PC meeting during the year
- Produce the accounts using a spreadsheet or cashbook; if a spreadsheet is used then regular back ups must be made
- Ensure account headings such as 'donations', 'licences', or 'gifts' etc are used as appropriate
- Arrange any changes to the signatories on the PC bank account to reflect the current Treasurer, Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary
- Organise an annual independent review of the accounts before the AGM (whilst this does not have to be done by an accountant, it should be done by someone who is good with numbers, but not be a member of the PC, or a relative of one of its' members).

- Make a financial report to the members at the AGM once the accounts have been checked.
- Liaise with the bank and hold the cheque book
- Liaise with the Chair to discuss any matters arising
- Collect the bank statements and school expenditure statement from the School Office each month
- Sign cheques for the school for agreed expenses with 1 other signatory
- Give those cheques to Mrs Mackie in the School Office and telling her what they are for specifically so she can keep track
- Sign cheques for individuals for agreed expenses with 1 other PC member
- Only make payments by cheque and ensure receipts are obtained
- To oversee all financial processes of events, including maintaining an event cash flow sheet; liaising with the Fundraising Co-ordinator pre and post events; preparing a financial breakdown after events to aid with future planning; reimbursing individuals by cheque on the production of a receipt, and arranging any other cheques as required, such as for hall hire
- Ensure that the PC operates with financial integrity and transparency, and follows committee procedures when processing all donations to the school.
- Make accounts available to anyone from the parent forum who requests to see them via the Chair

The Treasurer can also undertake the following tasks at events, and can get help with these from any designated member of the parent body as appropriate:

- Liaising with the Fundraising Co-ordinator to agree budgets for events

- Preparing labelled floats ahead of events following agreement with Fundraising Co-Ordinator of amounts and breakdown. These should be recorded against each stall / activity
- Agreeing floats with bank in advance as they often require notice for large floats
- Arranging to have a spare float at a larger event in case cash runs low
- Ensuring all stall/activity holders keep their float and takings separate from other stalls
- Ensuring no monies are paid out of the floats / takings on the day
- Ensuring cash is not left unattended
- Ensuring large notes are removed from the stalls and stored safely in separate labelled cash bags until they can be counted and banked
- Making sure at least two people help count the money after an event – ideally they should not be good friends or family members
- Arranging for any money to be kept in a safe place like the school safe if the money can't be counted or banked straight away
- Banking money as required
- Ensuring cash carriers are accompanied at all times when transporting large amounts of cash

Connect advises that the Treasurer also needs to ensure that:

- All PC income is recorded in the PC balance sheet (eg EasyFundraising or grants etc)
- All donations from the PC to the school are recorded in the PC balance sheet and also appear on the school's annual accounts to be transparent to parents.
- The school is accountable for spending money gifted by the PC: if the money is donated for a specific purpose, it must be spent on that and the Treasurer should ask for invoices and/or receipts from the school showing that the money has been spent on the items it was intended for.
- It is the sole decision of the PC how to spend any fundraising money after consultation with the school and this should be recorded at a committee meeting
- It can be a good idea to ask the school to buy items on behalf of the PC as they can claim back the VAT on purchases

Insurance

Connect's membership-linked insurance provides cover against fraud or dishonesty by any member of the committee, including the Treasurer. It is a condition of the current policy that each cheque has a least two signatures. Connect's insurance policy also gives cover for holding money before being banked; see their website or call for more details: **0131 474 6199**.

Guidelines for the Fundraising Co-ordinator

Their entire role is to be responsible for organising and overseeing the work of the fundraising group, which consists of volunteers who do not have to be members of the PC, but who raise money on behalf of the PC. The co-ordinator takes the lead in planning the fundraising events and managing the volunteers.

All associated admin should be managed within the fundraising group. This may be covered by the secretary of the fundraising group if one is available.

The main tasks of the fundraising co-ordinator

- Lead the fundraising sub-group
- Oversee the planning, advertising, running, and tidy-up of events
- Be the main communication link between the PC and the sub-group
- Be the main communication link between the externals involved in events
- Liaise between the treasurer and Chair regarding finance and expenses post events
- Organise alcohol and gambling licences as required
- Organise and complete risk assessments for events
- Liaise with Hugh Grant from St Mary's re hall booking
- Report at every PC meeting
- Prepare an annual report for the AGM

What does the Headteacher bring?

The Headteacher, or sometimes someone standing in for the Headteacher, will be there to give encouragement, advice, support and guidance to the Parent Council.

The main contributions of a Head are:

- Keeping the PC informed on what is happening in the school and what plans there are for development and improvement
- Supporting the involvement of pupils in the activities of the PC and make links to learning and the curriculum
- Providing opportunities for **all** parents to join in school activities and plan with the PC how this can happen
- Working alongside the PC to help to support the school and realise its objectives
- Providing a link with other staff in the school and the local authority
- Giving advice and information on any matter falling within the Headteacher's area of responsibility, which covers all aspects of the work of the school, such as matters relating to the curriculum, uniform policies etc, if requested by the PC
- Providing a report at least once per year to the PC covering the performance of the school, the objectives and ambitions set out for the school in the school development plan
- Ensuring the school takes account of the local authority's parental involvement strategy

In addition to this, the *Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006* suggests that the Headteacher and the PC:

- work together in ensuring the school brochure is regularly reviewed so "it provides information that is useful to parents in a form that they find accessible and readable"
- work with all staff and parents to develop good relationships that will make subsequent discussions more fruitful

There will be a time slot on the PC meeting agendas for the Headteacher's report and they will also meet once a month with the Chairperson of the PC outside any formal meetings.

What about the School Secretary?

Our school secretary works part-time hours and has no responsibility for any Parent Council dealings.

Currently they:

- Send out the PC bank statement to the Treasurer once a month
- Give the SPTC membership document to the Chairperson each year
- Forward PC emails to relevant staff members / outside bodies as appropriate
- Can assist with small quantities of photocopying for meetings/events
- Receives cheques from the Treasurer and write a receipt using a PC receipt book
- Keep a spreadsheet of PC donations and expenditure for each amount used for the school

Local IT Support

Chris Sawyer is a local IT expert who helps the school with their website and is also involved with the technical aspects of school productions (sound, lighting, recording etc.).

He is currently able to help the PC with getting a dedicated section of the school website up and running.