

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION
OF “ST PATRICK’S NATIONAL SCHOOL GREYSTONES”

Dated 22nd October 2020

The Purpose of the Parent Teacher Association

The purpose of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is to provide a structure through which the parents/guardians (herein referred to as ‘parents’) and teachers of St Patrick’s National School can work together for the best possible education of the children. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) will work with the Principal, staff and Board of Management (BoM) to build effective partnership between home and school.

Under the Education Act, 1998

Section 26. – (1) The parents of students of a recognised school may establish, and maintain from among their number, a parents’ association for that school and membership of that association shall be open to all parents of that school.

(2) A parents’ association shall promote the interests of the students in a school in co-operation with the board, Principal, teachers and students of the school and for that purpose may

(a) advise the Principal or the board on any matter relating to the school and the Principal or board, as the case may be, who shall have regard to any such advice, and

(b) adopt a programme of activities which will promote the involvement of parents, in consultation with the Principal, in the operation of the school.

(3) The board shall promoted contact between the school, parents of students in that school and the community and shall facilitate, and give all reasonable assistance to parents who wish to establish a parents’ association and to a parents’ association when it is established.

(4) (a) A parents’ association shall, following consultation with its members, make rules governing its meetings and the business and conduct of its affairs.

(b) Where a parents’ association is affiliated to a national association of parents, the rules referred to in paragraph (a) shall be in accordance with guidelines issues by that national association of parents with the concurrence of the Minister.

All parents of children in the school and all teaching staff of the school are members of the Parent Teacher Association. These parents and teachers elect a committee to work on their behalf from for the duration that they are members of the committee.

The PTA of St Patrick’s National School is affiliated with National Parents Council Primary and will maintain membership by annual subscription.

The Role of the PTA

Although the PTA may organise many activities, these activities should all assist the association to achieve its two main roles within the school, in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998:

- To work in partnership with the Principal, BoM and the whole school community for the betterment of the children in the school
- To support and empower parents to be active in the best interests of their children's educational lives

The aims of the PTA are the promotion and encouragement of co-operation between parents, teachers and the BoM, provision of a forum for discussion of issues, relevant to association members, the exchange of ideas and promotion of understanding between of parents and teachers.

The Work of the PTA Committee

The PTA will undertake a programme of activities, including fundraising and social events, which will promote the involvement of parents and teachers, and which will support pupils, parents and school staff. In planning its activities the PTA will consult with the school parents and teachers.

Structure and Membership of the PTA

All parents/guardians of children attending and teachers employed at St Patrick's National School are automatically granted membership of the PTA, while they still have a child enrolled in the school and/or while they are teaching staff at the school.

The PTA Committee

The members of the PTA will elect a committee with a minimum of 8 parent representatives and 2 teacher representatives – with parents and teachers each electing their own respective members of the PTA Committee. This committee will have responsibility for representing the parents of St Patrick's National School and managing the activities of the PTA. A quorum is achieved when a minimum 5 members (including at least one parent and one teacher representative) are in attendance.

If this quorum of members is not achieved for any PTA Committee meeting, the meeting must be postponed.

Where voting is required during a PTA Committee meeting, and where there is a hung vote, the Chairman has the deciding vote.

There are three officer positions, Chair, Honorary Treasurer and Secretary. Elected parent members of the PTA committee may hold these positions.

The Principal and a parent rep from the BoM will also attend meetings. The Secretary of the PTA Committee will notify the PTA Committee members and the BoM parent reps of upcoming PTA Committee meetings.

The PTA recognizes the value in representation of diversity within its committee, and where possible, will encourage diversity of membership.

The PTA takes a zero tolerance approach to racism, bullying, and indeed any form of harassment. All reports of such behaviour may be reported, without prejudice, and with expectation of privacy, to any officer of the PTA committee, the Principal, or any member of the Board of Management. Anyone found in violation of this policy may lose their membership of the PTA including all voting rights.

PTA Committee Meetings

The Chair will, ahead of a meeting, liaise with the Principal about any items for the agenda of the meeting, and will report this at the meeting. The Chair will report back to the Principal after the meeting.

In consultation with the Chair, the Secretary will put together the Agenda, take minutes of each meeting and circulate these afterwards by email among the committee and Principal.

The committee shall have a minimum of five meetings per year, two to be held before Christmas, two to be held after Christmas, and a final meeting in the summer term.

Where Government Department of Health guidelines, and/or with advance agreement of both the Chair of the PTA committee and the Principal, PTA committee meetings, including the AGM, may be held over non-recorded Video Conference.

Minutes from PTA Committee meetings will be saved in a secure location (for example the school's Microsoft SharePoint site) in accordance with the Data Protection Commissioner's guidelines, or for 7 years, whichever is longer.

Subcommittees

St Patrick's National School has a strong history of creative and purposeful subcommittees which greatly enrich the work of the PTA committee. These subcommittees are established to achieve specific outcomes for the benefit of the students, and the school. While being involved in the governing of these subcommittees, the PTA Committee does not need to be involved in day-to-day running of these subcommittees.

The subcommittees may also co-opt people to assist in their work. Unless pre-approved by joint agreement of the BoM and the PTA Committee, subcommittees do not have independent decision making ability. At all times, subcommittees remain accountable to the PTA Committee, and through it, the BoM.

Insofar as possible, funds raised by subcommittees for their area will be used for their purposes only and will be carried forward. Their funds are held in the PTA Account.

The Annual General Meeting

The AGM should be held in September/October each year. PTA members shall receive 14 days' notice of such a meeting, to be communicated via the class reps and email. The quorum for the AGM shall be a number equal to 10% of the number of children in the school. Each member of the association shall have equal voting rights.

Election of the PTA Committee

The elections for the PTA parent committee members shall be held each year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the PTA. Each member will be elected for two years with the possibility of being re-elected for one final year, as long as they are parents of a child currently enrolled in the school.

Parent members can be voted in by being proposed and seconded by members of the PTA at the AGM. Any parent can propose and/or second. The nominations will only go to vote by secret ballot in the case of there being more candidates than spaces on the PTA committee. In this case, election shall be through majority vote from all the PTA members in attendance. Absentee voting shall not be

accepted unless approved under extraordinary circumstances and agreed by the BoM. In the event of a deadlock (i.e. tie) in voting, the deadlock can be broken by (in order of precedence)

- 1.) A new vote of a member who is in attendance of the meeting
- 2.) The Chair of the PTA may cast a second vote to establish a majority vote

Members can be elected back onto the committee by the PTA committee after a two year break. No more than one parent per family shall serve on the PTA committee or the BoM at any one time.

Teacher reps are nominated by the teachers for a term of one year.

Should a PTA committee member be elected to the BoM, they must relinquish their position on the PTA committee.

No more than one parent of each family can be a member of either the BoM or PTA committee at any one time.

No member of the committee will hold the same officer position for more than three consecutive years.

Removal/resignation/co-option

A member of the committee who fails to attend any 3 consecutive meetings of the committee without reasonable explanation or whose attendance rate in any one year fails below 50% without reasonable explanation may be deemed to have tendered their resignation to the committee. Proper communication with the committee member is an essential first step in this process, and the person should be engaged to find out their reasons. Removal of the committee member should only be the last option.

A member of the committee will be removed by 75% of the entire committee voting for their removal. A member of the committee may resign in advance of completing 3 years by written notification to the secretary. Where a vacancy occurs on the Committee during a school year the Committee may co-opt a member to serve until the next AGM.

Complaints

The Association shall not have power to deal with, and is not a forum for, complaints against members of the school staff, Principal or Board. Such complaints should be dealt with under the nationally agreed Complaints Procedure, which has been adopted by St Patrick's National School and is available on the website. https://f9b3af03-b8d3-4bb1-ba2c-d7f8f1f8fca7.filesusr.com/ugd/61eb51_a631fd30474bca94dc319329cee314.pdf. (I might ask Brigitte to supply a link sitting on the STPNS.IE website)

The Work of the PTA Committee

The PTA committee will be responsible for ensuring that all parents and teachers are consulted on issues which are pertinent to the entire parent and teacher body. The PTA committee may advise the Principal and Board of Management on any matters relating to the school in accordance with the Education Act, 1998, 26.- (2)(a).

The committee is the team that will manage the tasks of the PTA on behalf of the parents and teachers.

The committee will consult with the school Principal and BoM when planning the programme of activities for the year ahead.

The committee will liaise with Class Representatives and communicate all relevant PTA activities with them.

At the AGM the committee will report to the parent body and teachers about its work. There should be a 14 day notice period ahead of the AGM.

The committee will manage and account for any funds collected or expended by the PTA.

Communication with the PTA Committee

The PTA committee shall have a dedicated email address set up to direct all email communications to: ptacommittee@stpns.ie.

Finance

The PTA committee will finance the activities of the PTA through fundraising. The Honorary Treasurer is responsible for maintaining the accounts and presents the Finance Report to the Committee at each meeting. The Honorary Treasurer also submits accounts to the BoM at least each term. The Honorary Treasurer presents the annual accounts to the PTA at the AGM.

A minimum of four signatories are required on the PTA Account. All subcommittees' moneys should be held in the PTA Account.

The PTA Account, including all other bank accounts associated with the school, together with the BoM annual accounts are amalgamated and submitted for auditing by an independent firm of auditors/accountants, as afforded by the FSSU, and in accordance with their guidelines. The audited accounts must be submitted to the FSSU by 28th February of the following year.

The PTA committee must have visibility of their funds raised and be allowed to carry them over to the following year in order to allocate funds for multi-year projects.

Fundraising

Fundraising for the school by the PTA will be done with the prior agreement of the Board of Management. The PTA committee will agree with the Board of Management as to the specific purposes for which funds are to be raised by the PTA.

Changing the Constitution

Changes to the constitution can be made at the AGM or, if for an urgent reason, an EGM can be called for that specific purpose. 14 days notice must be given to the PTA of any proposed changes to the constitution.

A review of the constitution will take place every two years.

Proposals to change the constitution must be submitted in writing to the PTA committee. The PTA committee will then circulate the proposals to all parents for comment by email before the AGM/EGM. All parents of children in the school and/or teachers at the school at the meeting are eligible to vote on the proposals (one vote per person).

Rules governing an EGM

The quorum for an EGM shall be a number equal to 10% of the number of children enrolled at the school. The PTA committee may summon an EGM of the association, or an EGM shall be called upon the written requisition addressed to the Honorary Secretary of the PTA with supporting signatures of

not less than twenty ordinary members of the association, stating the object and purpose of the proposed meeting. Association members shall receive at least 14 days written notice of such a meeting. Each member of the association shall have equal voting rights.