

Friends of St Mary's C of E (Aided) Primary School, Pulborough

Operating Framework and Policies

PTA Operating Framework

V5.0 September 2024

Introduction

This document provides details of the way that the PTA is expected to operate and the expectations of the Board of Trustees. It operated alongside our constitution, which is a legally binding document.

Structure

Friends of St Mary's C of E (Aided) Primary School (Pulborough), referred to as "the PTA" is a registered charity with number 1147547. We have a board of trustees (the Board) who provide oversight and governance for the charity. Trustees are elected annually, but the Board tries to retain some consistency with many trustees standing for re-election.

The main fundraising activities are delegated to an Events Committee. The Events Committee volunteers at the AGM and the Board formally approve the appointments as a delegated sub-committee of the Board.

All parents, guardians or carers of children at the school and all teaching and non-teaching staff are automatically members of the PTA.

The charity commission sets out six core roles for trustees of a charity:

- Ensure we are meeting our purposes for the public benefit
- Comply with governance and the law
- Act in the PTA's best interest
- Managing our resources (finance, volunteers, reputation, etc.)
- Acting with reasonable care and skill
- Ensuring the PTA remains accountable

The rest of this document sets out guidance as part of the Board's role in ensuring that these core roles are met.

Above all, the Board is in place to support the Events Committee – many of the trustees have experience of PTA events from previous years and can share those experiences and ideas to new committee members, although new ideas are always welcome.

What we can do (our purposes)

The constitution of the PTA sets out specific things that the PTA can do; this is fairly broad and covers:

- 1) Developing effective relationships between the staff, parents and others associated with the school
- 2) Engaging in activities or providing facilities or equipment which support the school and advance the education of the pupils.

This means that the PTA can (and should) put on events for the benefit of the children which are not just about making money.

All Board decisions require a quorum which is 50% of the trustees on the Board (rounded up).

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Meetings and Communication

Board of Trustee meetings

The Board meets at least three times per year, usually close to the start of the term.

The Chair of the Events Committee, or their delegate, is invited to each meeting to give an update on the events and to act as a liaison between the Board and the Events Committee.

In addition, an AGM is held each year during the first half of October. 21 days notice of the AGM must be given to the wider membership of the PTA.

Events Committee meetings

It is expected that the Events Committee will hold at least 6 open meetings each year (nominally one per half term). These should be publicised in advance to the full membership of the PTA.

It is expected that additional ad-hoc meetings will be arranged as necessary to support the Events Committee Programme.

Events

Over the years, the PTA has put on many events, many of which are fundraising activities, others are simply for the benefit of the school. Some have been very successful and well-received and others have been much harder work for little benefit. We always welcome new ideas and aim to strike a balance between these ideas as well as learning lessons from past events. There are a few key dos and don'ts that must be followed:

1. Events must be appropriate for a school environment and consider the fact that St Mary's is a Church of England School.
2. All events and event themes must be agreed with the Headteacher and/or the Board in advance, ideally at the beginning of the year or each term.
3. Email communication from the PTA to the wider membership should be sent through the School Office using the school mailing system. Thought should be given to whether emails should be consolidated to reduce the number.
4. Each event must have a person in charge of the event, which must be made clear to the other volunteers. For larger events, that person should be located centrally so that they can be easily found by other volunteers if needed.
5. The Events Committee must make sure that where necessary, the appropriate events, lotteries or other licences are obtained in advance of the event from the relevant authorities.
6. An event checklist must be completed in advance of each event and lessons learnt captured. This will ensure that committees in future years gain the benefit of knowing what has gone well and what has not gone so well.
7. Fire risk and health and safety assessments must be completed for every event, although in many cases these may simply re-use existing school assessments.

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Code of Conduct

Introduction

This Code of Conduct binds both committee and non-committee members of Friends of St Mary's C of E (Aided) Primary School (Pulborough).

These guidelines describe the basic expectations for behaviour and the importance for all members to conduct themselves professionally and ethically, and will run alongside our constitution, which is a legally binding document, and our Conflict of Interest Policy.

In order for the PTA to function successfully it is essential that all members agree to follow these guidelines while in acting in association with the PTA.

The Code

- All work done on behalf of the PTA is voluntary and is carried out for no personal gain.
- All members will act in the best interest of the PTA and the school.
- All members will be encouraged to make relevant and positive contributions to the meetings they attend.
- All members have the right to be heard and must respect each other's opinions.
- All members have the right to communicate together responsibly. All communication to members should be sent via the School Office to all members. Members may communicate with the Events Committee at pta@friendsofstmarys.net or the WhatsApp group. The Board may be contacted via the School Office. Any matters relating to the school should be directed to the School Office.
- Any items emailed through to the PTA email address may not be answered immediately. All Board and Events Committee members work on behalf of the PTA on a voluntary basis, in their free time, and so may not be able to address issues straight away. Any query raised will need to be discussed by the Board / Events Committee and if necessary will be added to their next meeting agenda.
- The Board and Events Committee will work to the rules stated in their constitution. As per the constitution, decisions will be made by a majority vote of the Board or by majority vote of the Events Committee membership. The Board and Events Committee may from time to time consult with the wider membership, however the Board's decision is final.
- All members and committee members are expected to support that decision once it is made irrespective of any vote which they cast.
- All members and committee members must abstain from drinking, possessing or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages while representing the PTA.
- All members and committee members must [abstain from the use or being under the influence of illegal drugs on the committee or](#) whilst dealing with PTA matters.
- Whilst a member is not expected to pay for their entry to events at which they are volunteering, it is expected that they pay for members of their family who are participating in that event.
- Unless refreshments are provided for volunteers as part of the organisation of the event, volunteers should bring their own or purchase refreshments from the food and drink stalls. .

(continued overleaf)

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Code of Conduct (continued)

- All members must ensure that any material or discussion of a confidential nature, especially matters concerning individual staff, pupils or parents / guardians, is confined to the relevant meeting, The chairman of the meeting reserves the right to request that only the membership of the Board or Events Committee meeting to be present for the relevant agenda item(s). Names will be blacked out of the meeting minutes, if necessary.
- The Board or Events Committee should be made aware of any conflict of interest and the person involved should withdraw from any discussion pertaining to that subject.
- All members must respect the school and personal property
- All paperwork and assets relating to the PTA are the property of the PTA, and not that of the individual. When leaving the PTA a member should return any relevant paperwork or assets to the Board or Events Committee.
- Should it be deemed by the Board that any member has disregarded this code or their actions have brought the PTA or the school into disrepute, the Board has the right to exclude that member from future involvement. The procedure for removal of a PTA member or committee member is stated in the constitution.

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Safeguarding Policy

Working in a school environment, the safeguarding of children and other vulnerable persons is paramount. The PTA follows the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy which can be found on the school website.

All those participating in the running of events for the PTA should know the names of the school's Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and should report any concerns to a DSL as soon as possible.

The school's current DSL is Mrs Samantha Copus (Headteacher).

Deputy DSLs are: Mrs Seren Hatcher, Miss Hannah Turner and Miss Rachel Sleat

All Trustees and Events Committee members must have a DBS check completed by the school. Any unsatisfactory check will mean that either additional controls must be put in place or that person will not be permitted to be a Trustee or Events Committee member.

Guidance for Events:

- All events should be risk assessed
- Events where children are dropped off and collected – a register should be available and children should be checked in and out of the event. The PTA should have a list of any child being collected by another parent/carers or travelling home alone
- Contact details for the child's parent/carers may be collated by the PTA for the event
- Exits should be monitored to ensure children cannot leave an event unattended
- If this is a regulated activity the volunteer will need an Enhanced DBS check

This policy will be reviewed by the Trustees annually ~~before the AGM~~.

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Financial Control and Expense Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the principles for financial control and expenses within the PTA. It is relevant to all within the association and is endorsed by the Trustees and the Events Committee of the PTA. It will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains appropriate to the Organisation and its volunteer's needs.

Applicability

This policy is applicable to all Trustees and Committee Members who are legally responsible for the running of the association and for all Members of the Association who are entitled to be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses which they legitimately incur whilst supporting the delivery of the charity's objects.

It is expected that the PTA Treasurer will also be or will become a trustee. As this is a significant position with control of the finances, the Board reserves the right to confirm the position after acceptable references have been received.

Purchases and Expenses

In general, the Trustees must approve the activities, facilities and equipment and their associated costs from the funds raised. These are based on suggestions from the school but we also welcome suggestions from the Events Committee too as those members have put much of the effort into raising the money.

When deciding what to support the Board takes into account:

- 1) The financial position of the year, ensuring that sufficient funds remain to support the upcoming fundraising events commitments.
- 2) Regular costs likely to be incurred throughout the year, currently including the swimming pool maintenance, ~~hire of Big Top~~support for year 6 production, Christmas Panto and a number of other smaller items.
- 3) That support is in line with our charity objectives.
- 4) A balance between items that will benefit EYFS, KS1 and KS2.

Costs Associated with PTA Events

Members of the Events Committee are entitled to be reimbursed for costs incurred in organising PTA events providing the following procedure is followed;

- Events to be organised by the Events Committee should be agreed at a trustees meeting, or by remote census of trustees between meetings
- Purchases, expenses or non-refundable costs associated with an event in excess of ~~£200~~£250 that may expose the charity to risk of significant non-recovery of costs must be approved by the Board as an agreed spending of funds.
- Purchases, ~~expenses~~ and significant costs associated with an event can be authorised by remote consensus between meetings if necessary.
- All other expenses should be pre-approved by the treasurer
- All claims for reimbursement must be made within 30 days of the date of purchase/expense.
- Receipts must be provided for all purchases or cost associated with events.

Any member who has not received pre-approval for a purchase is not guaranteed reimbursement.

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Financial Control and Expense Policy (continued)

Purchases under ~~£200-250~~

The Treasurer has delegated authority to approve purchase requests from the Events Committee members up to a value of ~~£200-250 for charitable works (i.e. for items not associated with the running of an event)~~~~(is this per item or per event?)~~ without the prior consent of the Trustees.

All purchases should be discussed with and agreed with the Treasurer in advance of the cost being incurred. ~~Purchases must be for an event that has already agreed by the Trustees~~

~~The £200 delegated authority limit may be exceeded where items, such as alcohol, are purchased on a sale or return basis (providing the items can be returned after the date of the planned event).~~
~~Annie has added this paragraph~~

Expenses

All Trustees and events committee members of the PTA may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred whilst carrying out their duties. PTA members, Events Committee members or trustees who incur expenses on behalf of the PTA must keep all receipts and submit an expense claim form. This must be approved by the Treasurer or another trustee prior to reimbursement.

Gift Aid

The charity is registered for Gift Aid. This means that Gift Aid may be claimed on any donations that are accompanied by a completed and signed Gift Aid declaration.

There are a number of HMRC rules around what does and does not count towards Gift Aid. However, in a general, for a donation to be counted for Gift Aid, the donor must not be in receipt of any benefit for the donation – for example, ticket sales and auction receipts do not count, but sponsored walks ~~for example~~ would.

Currently, small gift donations without associated forms may also be claimed up to a value of 10x the total Gift Aid received in any given year. Small gifts must be no more than £20 each.

Banking

The PTA maintain a current account and an account for reserves. These both require dual signatories in line with best practice. There should always be at least three signatories on each account.

In addition, there is an additional current account with associated debit cards. These will be held by the Treasurer and other nominated Events Committee or trustees to allow for purchases.

Our policy is that the debit card account will have no more than ~~£12000~~ £1000 held in it at any time and funds will be transferred prior to an event as necessary.

Cash Handling

The Board has a legal responsibility to ensure that all income is properly accounted for. The Board has therefore put in place the following guidelines:

- Wherever possible, the cash collected at an event should be counted in the presence of another member of the Events Committee or Trustee
- Where the cash collected at an event is likely to exceed £1,500 (including the float) then it should be counted on school premises and in the presence of a school Governor
- A PTA safe is located within the school. The Treasurer or a Board member may provide the codes needed to access this as necessary.

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Financial Control and Expense Policy (continued)

- All received cash should be stored in the safe until such time as it is to be counted or banked
- It is recognised that on occasions it may be necessary for an Events Committee member, Trustee or PTA member to take money home before or after an event. No member of the PTA may take more than £1,000 home at any time and if necessary money should be split between members.
- The insurance guidelines for carrying cash (not cheques) to the bank should be followed. These require a second person over 16 for deposits between £3,000 and £7,500 (A third person is required for deposits of £7,500 to £15,000). However, the insurance limit is £5,000, so wherever possible do not take more than £5,000 in cash to the bank in one trip.

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Volunteering Policy

Introduction

As a charity, the PTA is entirely reliant on the good will and support of many of its wider membership in addition to the Board and Events Committee members.

This policy sets out the principles for voluntary involvement within the PTA. It is relevant to all within the PTA and is endorsed by the committee (or volunteers) of the PTA. It will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains appropriate to the PTA and its volunteer's needs.

Commitment

The PTA acknowledges the contribution made by its volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways that are encouraging and supportive. The organisation also recognises its responsibility to arrange volunteering efficiently so that the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Definition

A volunteer is a person who, unpaid and of their own free will, contributes their time, energy and skills to benefit the PTA.

Volunteer Co-ordination

All volunteers should report to the events committee, who will offer guidance and support to the volunteer so they may carry out task effectively. Volunteers may be given an individual name of a committee member to report to.

The nominated committee member with overall responsibility for volunteering within the association is the PTA Events Committee Chairperson.

Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description, will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and be given all necessary information and equipment to enable them to complete the activities. It is the volunteer's responsibility to ensure they understand the task they have been given and to raise any concerns or training needs before undertaking any activity.

Rights and Responsibilities

The association recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- Know what is expected of them
- Have adequate support and training
- Receive appreciation
- Volunteer in a safe environment
- Be insured
- Be free from discrimination

The association expects volunteers to:

- Be reliable
- Be honest
- Respect confidentiality
- Carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the PTA

(continued overleaf)

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Volunteering Policy (continued)

- Carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- Respect the work of the PTA and not bring it into disrepute
- Comply with the PTA's policies and the school's Safeguarding policy.

Pre-school children

We recognise that volunteers may need to bring younger children to events. However, as some events may not be suitable for that age group or require children to remain with parents/carers, volunteers should check with the person in charge of the event first.

~~This policy will be reviewed annually by the trustees prior to the AGM.~~

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Complaints Procedure Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the principles for the Complaints Procedures within the PTA. It is relevant to all within the association and is endorsed by the Board and the Events Committee of PTA. It will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains appropriate to the Organisation and its volunteers' needs.

As Trustees and Events Committee Members of the PTA, we understand it is our duty to make decisions that are in the best interests of the PTA. We know that where any of us hold a personal or other interest, this will stop us from achieving this duty and acting in the best interest of our PTA.

Applicability

This applies to every member of the PTA.

The PTA defines a complaint as "an expression of dissatisfaction in the PTA's actions or the standard of service provided".

Our PTA takes the following steps to identify and deal with any complaint made against the PTA:

- We make all new committee members aware of this policy
- Complaints should be made in writing to the Trustees and handed, in the first instance, to the Chairperson. If the complaint is regarding the elected Chairperson then the complaint may be passed to another elected Trustee (*).
- The Chairperson, or Trustee in receipt of the complaint in the case of (*) above, shall inform the Headteacher of the complaint.
- The Trustees and Events Committee will meet to discuss any complaint made within 14 days of receipt of the written complaint.
- The Trustees will respond to the complainant, detailing the decision made and whether there will be any further discussions or meetings regarding the complaint.
- If a meeting is arranged for the complainant to meet with the Trustees and Events Committee, the complainant may bring additional representatives with them. The complainant is also required to supply any documentation or evidence that they wish the committee to view at least 7 days prior to the meeting.
- At the meeting the complainant should detail their grounds for complaint. The PTA may ask questions of the complainant. Minutes of the meeting will be taken.
- Any decision made by the PTA in response to a complaint will be confirmed in writing within 14 days with details of any action to be taken

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Risk Management Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the principles for risk management within the PTA. It is relevant to all within the PTA and is endorsed by the Trustees and the Events Committee. It will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains appropriate to the Organisation and its volunteer's needs.

Purpose

The purpose of Risk Management is to identify risks as early as possible, develop a strategy to mitigate those risks and implement a risk management process as part of our PTA event planning process.

Fire risk and health and safety assessments must be completed for every event, although in many cases this may involve considering and reusing existing school assessments.

For all PTA events:

A Risk Assessment is to be carried out by a committee member to:

- Identify potential hazards
- Identify who may be harmed by such hazards
- Determine whether existing precautions are adequate or whether further action needs to be taken
- Record your findings on the PTA Risk Assessment template
- Review your assessment and update when necessary
- Take advice from the school/venue where appropriate – look at previous risk assessments and adhere to recommendations
- Take advice from the HSE where appropriate – www.hse.gov.uk
- A copy of the Risk Assessment to be kept in a designated folder for use by the PTA Committee – this can be used for reference if the same event is being run in the future
- A copy of the Risk Assessment given to the school if requested
- All committee members should be made aware of each risk assessment.

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Conflict of Interest Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the principles for Conflict of Interest within the PTA. It is relevant to all within the association and is endorsed by the Trustees and Events Committee of the PTA. It will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains appropriate to the Organisation and its volunteer's needs.

As Committee Members and Trustees of the PTA we understand it is our duty to make decisions that are in the best interests of the parent teacher association PTA. We know that where any of us hold a personal or other interest, this it will stop us from achieving this duty and acting in the best interest of our PTA.

Applicability

This policy applies to every elected members of the Trustees and Events Committee.

Our PTA takes the following steps to identify and deal with any conflicts of interest:

- We make all new committee members aware of this policy
- We ask all Trustees and Events Committee members to declare any conflict of interest
 - 1) When they are appointed
 - 2) Whenever a committee member becomes aware of a possible conflict of interest
- Any committee member with an identified conflict of interest is asked to withdraw from any discussion of and/or vote on that issue.
- Where conflicts of interest arise we will detail in the minutes of the meeting how this has been addressed
- The PTA will try to include work to make sure there is a good mix of parents and staff across the school involved within the PTA. This will stop any one part of the school being overly-represented.
- Where decisions made may favour one year group, subject area or particular aspect of the school over others we will ensure we have consulted with our members and over time will ensure that all aspects of the school will benefit equally.
- As stated in the Financial Control and Assessment Policy that, when making purchases, The Board will take into account a balance between items that will benefit EYFS, KS1 and KS2.

Signed:

Date:.....