



ST. JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL



**" A school at the heart of the community,
community at the heart of the school "**

Constitution

The Constitution of the Parent, Teacher, Friends Association (PTFA) for St Joseph's Primary School, Strangford at 31 Downpatrick Road, Strangford, County Down, BT30 7LZ.

The Committee has a minimum number of members of at least 2, please refer to current list of Committee members document for full details.

Purpose

The purpose of the association is to advance the education of pupils in the school in particular by:

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

Powers

The committee members have the following powers, which may be exercised only in promoting the purposes:

- To provide advice
- To publish or distribute information
- To co-operate with other bodies
- To raise funds (but not by means of permanent trading)
- To acquire or hire property of any kind
- To make grants or loans of money and to give guarantees
- To set aside funds for special purposes or as reserves against future expenditure
- To deposit or invest funds in any lawful manner (but to invest only after obtaining advice from a financial expert and having regard to the suitability of investments and the need for diversification
- To take out public liability and personal accident insurance to cover association meetings, activities, committee members, to insure the association's property against any foreseeable risk and take out other insurance policies to protect the association where required

- To employ paid or unpaid agents, staff or advisers if relevant or necessary
- To enter into contracts to provide services to or on behalf of other bodies
- To pay the costs of forming the association
- To obtain and pay for goods and services as are necessary for carrying out the work of the charity
- To open and operate in the name of the association a bank and other accounts as the committee members consider necessary
- To do anything else within the law that promotes the purposes. BUT the committee shall not undertake any activity in the school premises without the consent of the Principal.

Membership

Members of the association are parents, guardians or carers of any pupil currently attending the school. They can also be friends of the school or teachers past and present who are over the age of 18 wishing to offer appropriate support or help to the school and who is accepted by the committee as a member. Please refer to current list of committee members held by the Chair.

Membership is terminated if:-

- the member dies
- the member resigns by written or in writing notice to the association
- the committee members may for good reason, regardless of whether or not this is at the request of the Board of Governors or the Principal, exclude any person from membership or from attending an event whose presence at or support of the school is deemed a danger to the school or its pupils or staff or might bring the association into disrepute. Removal is not effective until the member concerned has been notified in writing of the proposal and his/her right to respond within 14 clear days, and the matter has been considered in light of any representations made.

General Meetings (Annual, regular or extraordinary)

All members are entitled to attend any general meeting of the association. Meetings can be held physically or virtually. A virtual meeting may be held by suitable electronic means agreed by the committee members in which each participant can see and hear all other participants. These meetings must comply with all other rules for the meeting including chairing, taking of minutes etc.

All general meetings are called by giving 21 clear days written or in writing notice of the meeting to the members. The notice should specify the date, time and location of the general meeting as well as give an overview of the agenda.

The Chair or (if the Chair is unable or unwilling to do so) some other committee member elected by those present is in charge of a general meeting.

Except where otherwise provided in this Constitution, every issue at a general meeting is decided by a simple majority of the votes cast by the members present at the meeting.

Except for the Chair of the meeting, who has a second or casting vote where a vote is equally divided (tied), every member present is entitled to one vote on every issue.

The association must hold a general meeting within 12 months of the date of the adoption of this constitution. Thereafter, an AGM must be held in each subsequent year and not more than 15 months may elapse between successive annual general meetings.

Thereafter, meetings can be held throughout the year depending on what fundraising the committee are doing. An agenda should be communicated to all members prior to the meetings and minutes or notes of each meeting taken and distributed to every member afterwards.

The Principal of the school will attend all AGM meetings but is not required to attend other meetings unless they wish to do so, or attend for a discussion about a particular topic.

At an AGM the members:-

- will receive the accounts of the association for the previous financial year or if not, at an agreed period thereafter
- receive the report of the committee members on the association's activities since the previous AGM
- accept the retirement of existing committee members and elect the new committee members including the Chair if they resign
- appoint an independent person to undertake an examination of the association's accounts for the forthcoming year if required and different from previous years
- discuss and determine any issues of policy or deal with any other business put before them
- An EGM (Extraordinary general meeting) may be called at any time by the committee and must be called within 21 days to happen within three months of a written or in writing request being received by the committee from at least 3 members.

The Committee

- Must consist of a Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and general members
- At least 3 of the committee members are trustees of the charity (charity trustees) usually the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary or nominated person. They have control of the association, its property and funds. Please refer to separate documents of signed declarations of charity trustees.
- Committee members can be elected at the AGM and shall hold office until they wish to leave or asked to leave, if necessary.

- All committee members, must be members of the association. Committee members shall have the power to nominate new committee members at any time.
- A minimum number of 5 members of the association must attend meetings for it and any decision made to be valid. It should be noted that the required majority is not a majority of the members present at the meeting but of the votes cast. The casting vote given to the person who is in charge of the meeting, i.e. usually the Chair. It is usual for the casting vote to be made in favour of allowing further debate on the matter on a future occasion if full agreement cannot be reached.
- An AGM is essential to the running of the association. These give a regular opportunity for members to review its activities.
- To ensure complete transparency of how funds are raised and spent, the associations accounts will be independently examined or audited by the Chair of the committee and the school secretary before submission.
- If an urgent or important matter which must be decided at a general meeting cannot conveniently be dealt with at an AGM, then an additional meeting needs to take place. This meeting is called an extraordinary general meeting.

Reporting

The Chair of the committee must produce an annual report detailing their purpose, structure, governance and expenditure decisions so that there is complete transparency of how funds are raised and spent by the committee.

This annual report should also detail current committee members, highlights from the previous academic year, feedback of events, funds raised and how they were spent. It should also include potential future plans if known at that stage and particularly thanks to any relevant persons and/or businesses associated with the committee.

Powers of the Committee

The following powers are available to the committee to help run the association:-

- To delegate any functions of the committee to sub-committees as recorded in the minutes of the committee meeting at which the decision was taken. These must consist of two or more persons appointed by the committee but at least one member of every sub-committee must be a committee member. All sub-committee proceedings must be promptly reported to the main committee
- To make rules consistent with this constitution about the committee and sub-committees, to govern proceedings at general meetings and generally about the running of the association including the operation of bank accounts and the commitment of funds

Property and Funds

The property and funds of the association must only be used to fulfil the purposes (see clause above).

Committee members can enter into contracts with the association for the provision of goods and services to the association (but not contracts of employment with the association except with the prior written confirmation).

Whenever a committee member has a personal interest in a matter to be discussed at a meeting, the committee member must:

- declare an interest before discussion begins on the matter
- withdraw from that part of the meeting unless expressly invited to remain in order to provide information
- withdraw during the vote and have no vote on the matter.

Records and Accounts

The committee must comply with the requirements of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 as to the keeping of financial records, the audit or independent examination of accounts and the preparation and transmission to the commission including an annual return in prescribed form.

The committee must keep proper records of:-

- all proceedings at general meetings
- all proceedings at committee meetings
- all reports of sub-committees
- Annual reports and statements of accounts relating to the association must be made available for inspection by any member of the association
- The committee must update the association's record held online by CCNI (Charity Commission for Northern Ireland) and notify directly any changes that cannot be updated online

Notices

Notice of any general meeting of the association may be sent by suitable communication such as via social media, St Joseph's Primary school website, the schools text messaging service, Seesaw or in any newsletter distributed by the association to its members.

A technical defect in the giving of notice which the members or committee members are unaware of at the time does not invalidate decisions taken at a general meeting.

Dissolution

The association may be dissolved by a resolution presented at a general meeting where this is included in the notice of the meeting. The resolution must have the agreement of two thirds of those voting and must give instructions for the disposal of any assets remaining after paying the outstanding debts and liabilities of the association.

The net assets shall not be distributed among the members of the association but will be given to St Joseph's Primary school for the benefit of the pupils of the school.

In the event of the school closing any remaining funds should be distributed to a neighbouring school or schools as selected by the committee. It must be agreed with the benefiting school(s) that the funds will be used to continue to fulfil the purposes of the association.

If it is not possible to dispose of assets as described in the clause above, only then can the assets be given to another charitable cause provided that the cause is within the purposes of the association.

The committee must notify CCNI (Charity Commission for Northern Ireland) promptly that the association has been dissolved. The committee must comply with any request from the commission including providing the association's final accounts.

Adopted at a meeting held on (date): _____ **at**

_____ **(place).**

Name: _____

Occupation: _____

Signature: _____

Chair of meeting

Principal Name: _____

Signature: _____

Committee member name: _____

Signature: _____