

## **The Constitution of the Parents Council of Oatlands Primary School**

### **1. Purpose of the Parents Council**

The purpose of the Parents Council is to:

- provide a structure through which the parents\* of children attending Oatlands Primary School can work together with the Principal, Staff, Board of Management and whole school community to provide the best possible education for their children;
- support and empower parents to take an active role in their children's education within the school and provide an opportunity to work together with other parents in a supportive, flexible and sociable forum;
- raise funds for the school and allocate those funds towards pre-agreed projects, activities, resources and equipment which will enhance the education of the children in the school (all such expenditure to be pre-agreed with the Principal of the school);
- undertake other activities, as agreed by the Council and the Principal from time to time, which will enhance the overall experience of the children in the school and/or their parents.

\*For the purposes of this Constitution the term parent/parents shall include parents and guardians of children in the school.

### **2. Work of the Parents Council**

- The Parents Council will work with the Principal to build effective partnership between home and school.
- The Parents Council will plan a calendar of events/activities for each academic year, to achieve its purposes as listed above. Events and activities can be added, altered, or cancelled during the course of the year, once approved at a Council meeting or by majority email consent should a decision be required between meetings. All events/activities must be pre-approved by the Principal as he/she is best placed to assess the viability and impact of such events/activities within the school.
- The Parents Council will be responsible for seeing that activities are run in an efficient and effective manner.
- The Principal and the Parents Council representative on the Board of Management are responsible for communicating the Parents Council activities to the Board of Management.
- At the annual general meeting (AGM) the Parents Council will report to the parent body about its work.
- The Parents Council will manage and account for all funds raised and expended by the Council; however, all funds raised and expended are ultimately under the responsibility of the Board of Management.
- All work of the Parents Council is carried out on a voluntary basis and the Council endeavours to the best of its ability to ensure an equal division of tasks among the

members. Should any member find that they are unable to complete a task, or need support in order to do so, they should inform the Chairperson as early as possible.

- No member shall receive any payment from the Parents Council other than out-of-pocket expenses which shall be reimbursed on submission of appropriate receipts.

### **3. Finance**

The Parents Council will keep records of all income and expenditure of the Council. It will keep a bank account in its name with a maximum of three authorised signatories: the Chairperson, the Secretary and the Treasurer. Purchases must be pre-agreed in advance by the Chairperson and Treasurer. Each cheque issued must be signed by two signatories. Reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses is on submission of appropriate receipts.

### **4. Formation of the Parents Council**

Membership of the Parents Council is open to all parents of children in the school and the Council is formed at the AGM each year. All parents are invited to attend the AGM. Any parent attending the AGM can put themselves forward to join the Council. If a parent cannot attend the AGM, but would like to join the Council, they can inform the Principal and be put forward in their absence.

As a guiding principle, the Parents Council will endeavour to have at least one class representative from each of the classes in the school and a mix of experienced and new members each year.

Parent representatives elected to the Board of Management are automatically members of the Parents Council, but will not hold an Officer position on the Council.

There is no time limit on membership of the Parents Council.

### **5. Election of Officers of the Parents Council**

The Officers of the Parents Council are elected each year at the first meeting of the Council following the AGM. They hold office for that upcoming academic year. Any member of the Council is eligible to become an Officer. Council members can put themselves forward for the Officer positions available either before or at the first meeting of the Council by submitting intent to the Secretary or Chairperson. In the absence of any nominee for a post, a person may be nominated by a member and seconded by another member. The nominee may then accept or decline the post. When two nominees are in competition for a post, election of the member is awarded based on the majority vote of a secret ballot. In the absence of any competition for a post, i.e. only one candidate, then that candidate is elected by two public showings of support from Council members.

In accordance with best practice, the officer positions should be rotated every three years, where possible. Outgoing Officers may be re-nominated after one academic year has passed. The Officer positions are as follows: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

### **Summary of Parents Council Officer positions**

#### **The Role of Chairperson**

- Circulates the agendas and chairs all meetings, ensuring that meetings run effectively.
- Responsible for all communication and for organisation of events.
- Communicates with the school on behalf of the Council.
- The Chairperson must be impartial and remain neutral in the management of meetings.

#### **The Role of the Vice Chairperson**

- Steps up as acting Chairperson if Chairperson is unable to proceed with Council duties for any reason.
- Liaises with the Chairperson with organisation of events.

#### **The Role of the Secretary**

- Keeps minutes of each meeting and circulates to all members of the Council.
- Maintains a list of Parents Council names, email addresses and phone numbers.
- Collaborates with the Chairperson on Parents Council administration.
- Communicates with the school on behalf of the Council if required.

#### **The Role of the Treasurer**

- Maintains a record of income and expenditure of the Parents Council and produces a Year End statement of same for the last Council meeting in June.
- Monitors the Bank Account and reports on same at each monthly meeting.
- Maintains receipts/invoices for all expenditure of the Parents Council.

### **6. Ordinary meetings**

The Parents Council usually meets once a month throughout the academic year and the Principal attends these meetings. The date of each meeting is usually agreed at the previous meeting. Meetings usually take place in the school hall, unless an alternative meeting is deemed more appropriate by the Council for a particular meeting or task. Most business is carried out through reports from the Principal, Board of Management Representative, Treasurer and Chairperson, as well as an AOB agenda item. If a vote is necessary on any issue a clear majority (one person, one vote) is required to approve any decision. All voting is open, unless a secret ballot is deemed necessary.

The agenda for each meeting generally comprises:

- Principal's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Chairperson's Report
- AOB

Members may request that an item be added to the Agenda by submitting same to the Chairperson or Secretary in advance or at the meeting.

Minutes of each meeting are taken by the Secretary and circulated to all Council members shortly after the meeting. Members unable to attend the meeting should give apologies to the Secretary in advance of the meeting by email or via the What's App group.

## **7. Communications**

Agendas, Minutes and all general communications of the Council are carried out by email. A What's App group is also in place for short messages necessary for carrying out Council activities. It is preferred that the What's App group is not used after 9pm.

Communications regarding the activities of the Parents Council are carried out as deemed appropriate by the Parents Council at their meetings.

## **8. AGM**

The Council must arrange the AGM each year in conjunction with the Principal – ideally to be held in late September. The business to be conducted at the AGM includes a report by the Chairperson on the purpose of the Parents Council, and the activities it carried out during the previous academic year. A statement of the income and expenditure of the Council in the previous academic year is given by the Treasurer.

## **9. Membership of National Parents Council Primary**

The Parents Council will maintain membership of National Parents Council Primary by annual subscription.

## **10. Changing the Constitution**

Changes to the constitution can be made at the AGM or, if an urgent decision is required, an EGM can be called for that specific purpose. Proposals to change the constitution must be submitted in writing to the Parents Council. The Parents Council will then circulate these proposals to all parents in advance of the AGM/EGM. All parents of children in the school in attendance at the meeting are eligible to vote on the proposals.