



## Powerstown Parent Teacher Association

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## Powerstown Educate Together National School

### Parent Teacher Association

### Constitution

#### **1. 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 of children attending Powerstown Educate Together National School can work together for the best possible education for their children. The PTA will work with the Principal, staff and Board of Management 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 students 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.*

*(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 issued by that national association of parents with the concurrence of the Minister.*

The PTA is to be a good carer of the multicultural environment of the school: being always open and inclusive, and nurturing multicultural diversity through promoting good intercultural understanding and relations.

## **2. THE AIM OF THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION**

The aim of the PTA is to enable parents to play their part in ensuring provision of the best possible education for their children and that this is achieved through the Association's programme of activities.

The PTA will promote the interests of the students in co-operation with the Board of Management, Principal, teachers and students, in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998.

The PTA will work for the wellbeing of the school's multicultural environment.

The PTA will support the financial well-being of the school through fundraising to its best potential.

## **3. THE WORK OF THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION**

The PTA will undertake a programme of activities which will promote the involvement of parents and which will support pupils, parents and school staff. In planning its activities, the PTA will consult with the school Principal. The main fields of effort of the PTA will be:

- Educational parental involvement and teacher support in the educational process.
- Parental empowerment and school community building.
- Fundraising for out-of-budget school needs.
- Establishing and maintaining good relations with other schools in the area.

## **4. THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION**

All parents / grandparents / guardians of children attending Powerstown Educate Together National School as well as all teachers from the school will be deemed to be members of the PTA, are eligible to be a member of the PTA committee and is invited to attend the Annual General Meeting. There is no subscription for membership of the Association.

## **5. VOTING**

For fair play voting each school family will be granted two votes that can be used during AGM voting and on PTA surveys among parents regardless of the number of family members attending the meeting. Single parent families as well as teachers will also have two votes to use. Separated parents will have a single vote each.

At committee meetings and working group meetings each member uses a single vote.

All decisions are to be taken with simple majority (50%+1). Whenever a decision cannot be taken due to equal voting the Chairperson can give a second vote.

## **6. THE COMMITTEE OF THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION**

The members of the PTA will elect a committee with a maximum of 15 and a minimum of 5 members at the Annual General Meeting to take place in September. This committee will have responsibility for representing the body of the PTA.

The committee should schedule their first meeting no more than a week after being elected. At this meeting they should elect the committee officers. They should be advised by the Principal on the school's calendar with emphasis on parental involvement throughout the school year and planned events. They should outline their targets for the year in terms of fundraising and other activities.

The officers to be elected are Chairperson, Secretary, Fundraising Coordinator, Communication Officer and other if necessary. If an elected nominee wishes, they can nominate another committee member for a deputy in order to be supported in their work.

It is important that members of the committee are active members. In the event that members do not attend three or more consecutive meetings they may be asked to step down, in order to enable an alternative member to fulfil the role.

#### **7. THE ELECTION OF THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE**

The members of the committee will be elected each year at the AGM of the Parent Teacher Association.

Each member will be elected for one year. At the AGM all committee members step down, but they can be re-elected as long as they continue to be eligible to serve, that is as long as they continue to be a parent / grandparent / guardian of a child or a teacher in the school.

There should be a minimum of 3 places available for new members each year, as well as 1 member from the previous year remaining on the committee. A teacher representative is elected by the staff team. There should be at least one teacher on the committee.

Parents' representatives elected to the Board of Management are automatically members of the committee, but will not hold an officer position on the PTA committee.

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

#### **8. THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION**

The PTA committee will be responsible for ensuring that all parents are consulted on issues which are pertinent to the entire parent 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 association on behalf of the parent body (the members).

The committee will draw up a plan for the activities of the association, in consultation with parents and in accordance with their wishes.

The committee will be responsible for seeing that activities are run in an efficient and effective way.

The committee will consult with the school Principal and Board of Management when planning the programme of activities for any particular year.

The committee will arrange with the Principal and Board of Management a system for ongoing communication.

At the annual general meeting (AGM) the committee will report to the parent body (the members) about its work.

#### The PTA and individual complaints

**The PTA does not have a role in pursuing individual complaints.** If a situation arises whereby an individual parent approaches the PTA about an experience of concern the parent should be advised to bring their concern through the proper channels (at school level: teacher, principal, board of management- see Parent Teacher Communication Policy).

### **9. WORKING GROUPS**

Working groups can be set up for particular tasks. The working groups may also co-opt people both in and outside the PTA members to assist in their work. The working groups may not make decisions outside their specific task; they remain at all times accountable to the main committee. Every member of the committee can start a working group after agreeing on its goal with other committee members\*. Every member of the PTA can submit a proposal with the relevant aim activity to the PTA committee and upon approval\* is encouraged to set and lead a Working Group to realise the proposal. Once the proposal is approved, the submitter is responsible for its realisation and becomes the leader of the Working Group to deliver it or nominates a PTA member willing to take his/her place. A committee member is assigned to the group for quick communication point and mentorship. In the case of the proposal not being approved the Chairperson should reason the committee's position in written form to the submitter.

*\*Voted with simple majority (50%+1).*

### **10. COMMUNICATION**

WhatsApp is used by the PTA to support communication. The PTA have 3 WhatsApp groups in operation:

- Powerstown PTA [2022/23] – WhatsApp group for active committee members of the PTA whose membership is seconded during the AGM. It is used for communication, important information and updates, and to progress with PTA's annual agenda.
- PTA Class Reps – WhatsApp group for the admins of the individual class WhatsApp groups. News, updates and important information are shared and should be forwarded to the individual class groups as appropriate. Class reps/group admins are a link between parents and PTA, therefore only

active PTA members can take up the role. The individual class groups could provide important feedback for PTA while PTA can provide additional support for parents.

- Individual class WhatsApp Groups

See Appendix 2 for further details and information on the use of WhatsApp groups for communication by the PTA.

Members who are not re-elected to the PTA committee should leave/will be removed from the PTA WhatsApp groups, and their role as admin in class WhatsApp group where applicable.

## **11. POLICY FORMATION**

Parents are partners and stakeholders in the school. They can and should contribute to school policy. Like parents/guardians of pupils attending the school, all parents adhere to school policies published on the school website.

Examples of school policy issues where parents make an essential contribution include:

- Strategies for encouraging school attendance
- Home School Partnership Policy
- Homework Policy
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Parent Teacher Meetings Policy
- Information and Communication Technology Policy
- Acceptable Usage Policy
- Policy On Special Needs
- Policy for Addressing Bullying Behaviour
- Admission Policy
- Participating in the Whole School Evaluation process

The Parent Teacher Association can help with school policy by

- Creating opportunities for parents to discuss aspects of policy with each other and with the principal and board
- Gathering views about aspects of school policy from parents
- Channelling these views into the policy making process
- Giving information to parents on how they can contribute to school planning and policymaking

The Parent Teacher Association can advise the school's Principal about ongoing issues and incidents that may require a review of school policy.

**12. FUNDRAISING FOR THE SCHOOL**

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

**13. MEMBERSHIP OF NATIONAL PARENTS COUNCIL**

The PTA committee will decide on membership of National Parents Council Primary's annual subscription each year.

**14. 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. A minimum of 10 PTA member supporters of the changes should support the proposal via signing it prior to submission in order for an EGM to be called.

Proposals to change the constitution must be submitted in writing to the PTA Committee. The PTA committee will then circulate these proposals to all parents before the AGM/EGM. All parents of children in the school at the meeting are eligible to vote on the proposals.

## APPENDIX 1 – Roles within the PTA Committee

### The Role of a Parent Teacher Association Committee Member

The committee manages the business of the PTA in accordance with the rules (Constitution) of the PTA from one AGM to the next.

### The work of the committee

The team has shared responsibility for:

- Planning for the future and developing a vision for the PTA
- Planning and managing the annual program of activities for the PTA
- Communicating, consulting with and involving as many parents as possible in the activities of the PTA
- Communicating and consulting with the Principal and Board of Management
- Planning agendas and keeping records of meetings
- Managing the PTA finances
- Drawing up the Constitution by which the PTA operates
- Valuing diversity and inter-culturalism and making sure parents who might find it hard to get involved are encouraged and supported to do so

### Commitment of a Committee Member

- Commit to attending the majority of the monthly meetings across the school year
- To help plan and carry-out program of activities/events
- To engage and communicate with committee members and officers
- To be open to taking on role within the committee Ethical Behaviour
- To be respectful and courteous in all communications with other committee members
- To be respectful of confidentiality of committee communications and workings
- To be punctual regards attendance
- To come prepared to meetings
- To be open to considering one's position if unable to fulfil your commitment to the PTA.

### Roles of Committee Officers

#### *(A) Chairperson and Co Chair*

- a) Responsible for ensuring that the rules of the Committee are followed.
- b) Prepares the agenda for the meetings with the Secretary.
- c) Chairs all meetings. and moderates on all discussions to ensure all attendees are afforded an equal opportunity to contribute to the business of the meeting.
- d) Presents the chairman's report at the AGM

- e) Ensures that the work is shared and that teamwork is reviewed.
- f) Helps the committee to have clear vision and goals.
- g) Represents the PTA at any formal occasion or nominates someone in their place if needed
- h) Signs the minutes of the previous meeting when approved by the committee as a record of the business and decisions of that meeting.

*(B) Secretary and Co Secretary*

- a) Records the minutes of meetings including matters arising.
- b) Helps the chairperson prepare the annual report for the AGM.
- c) Notifies committee members of forthcoming meetings and forwards minutes of the last meeting and the agenda for the next meeting.
- d) Coordinates help for PTA activities
- e) Prepare the agenda for meetings in consultation with the Chairperson
- f) Ensures an attendance record of all attendees is completed for all committee meetings.

*(C) Fundraising Coordinator*

- a) Responsible for collecting fundraising ideas and presenting them during PTA meetings
- b) Provides support for fundraising events and subcommittees
- c) Delegates tasks to make sure events are properly prepared for and everything is looked after
- d) Responsible for the fundraiser email address
- e) Works closely with school staff as well as school community
- f) Reports back to parents on amounts raised

*(D) Communication Officer*

- a) Updating the list of admins of the WhatsApp groups
- b) Providing school with links of WhatsApp groups if requested so it can be sent to parents
- c) Make sure all admins are in the Class Rep WhatsApp group
- d) Make sure only active committee members are in the PTA WhatsApp group
- e) Write weekly PTA update for the newsletter on behalf of the PTA committee
- f) Create the junior infant WhatsApp groups for incoming class
- g) Create senior infant WhatsApp groups at the end of the year when the junior infant classes are split
- h) Help the PTA write other communication pieces when required

## APPENDIX 2 - Powerstown Educate Together National School PTA WhatsApp Groups

PETNS Parent Teacher Association will have 3 different WhatsApp Groups in operation

- Powerstown PTA [2022/23] – WhatsApp group for active committee members of the PTA whose membership is seconded during the AGM. It is used for communication, important information and updates, and to progress with PTA's annual agenda.
- PTA Class Reps – WhatsApp group for the admins of the individual class WhatsApp groups. News, updates and important information are shared and should be forwarded to the individual class groups as appropriate. Class reps/group admins are a link between parents and PTA, therefore only active PTA members can take up the role. The individual class groups could provide important feedback for PTA while PTA can provide additional support for parents.
- Individual class WhatsApp Groups

### 1. WhatsApp groups User Agreement

The aim of these WhatsApp groups is to support communication in our school community. The goal is to create a sense of community for the parents/guardians of children in each class where parents can support each other and subsequently their children. As an example, parents often discuss homework, children's daily activities, ask for clarification about certain things mentioned to them by their children. They can give each other helpful tips for lunchboxes, time management and have been able to easily find and communicate with the parent of their child's friend who they might not meet at school during drop off/collection time.

Group members will also receive school related news, updates and information. The latter could be repetitive for some, but very beneficial to those parents who may not receive messages via other channels or have no time to check the school website on a regular basis. Reminders about important events are also sent in the group.

WhatsApp groups are created solely for the parents and guardians of children attending a class in Powerstown Educate Together National School. Links to these groups are emailed by the school and not to be shared with anyone else. Parents are also asked to exit the group if their child leaves the class/school.

The group should have a positive atmosphere and those who join should be respectful to others. While these groups are for parents of children in the school, they are fully managed by PTA with the support of the school's Board of Management. All complaints or issues should be dealt with directly with the school on a personal level and not via PTA and these WhatsApp groups.

Parents/guardians are asked to be respectful of fellow parents. It is understood that people in general have different views and opinions, however, these should only be communicated in a considerate and positive way. The school must follow Department of Education guidelines and parents' cooperation is requested. Parents may not agree with some of these guidelines, but they should show respect to children, staff and other parents by following the rules regardless.

## **Dos and Don'ts**

- Personal views on all matters political, religious and so on should not be communicated via these WhatsApp groups.
- The Group should never be used as a platform to voice views/grievances regarding the school/teachers, child or parent in the class or school.
- Members should never share phone numbers or names without people's consent.
- Members of the WhatsApp groups should also respect the privacy of other members. Personal information is not to be shared with anyone. Conversations are also private between the members of the actual group and under no circumstances should it be shared with anyone outside the group.
- Inappropriate posts include using inappropriate language, personal attacks or insulting messages or bullying of any member will not be tolerated.

Breaches of these rules will have consequences including exclusion from these groups in extreme circumstances.

## **Procedure for Breach of Whatsapp Usage Terms**

### **1) Step One**

Where there is a breach, all members will receive a reminder of group rules/regulations from Admin. This is dependent on the severity of the breach in which case this step may be skipped.

### **2) Step Two**

If there is another instance from same offender, the Group Admin will notify the PTA and the individual will receive a warning.

### **3) Step Three**

For repeat offences, they will be removed for one month, following which they will be invited to rejoin the group (by sending the link).

### **4) Step Four**

In the event of further breaches the PTA will seek advice from the Board of Management if a situation cannot be resolved.

## **2. How are these groups set up?**

The groups were first created for all classes during the 2018/2019 school year, but in general the following process should be followed.

WhatsApp groups are created by the Communication Officer for the incoming junior infant classes. Administration of these class groups will be passed over to a more suitable representative following PTA's AGM at the beginning of the school year.

At the end of the year the admin of the junior infant class should create 2 new groups in the name of the 2

senior infant classes. The link to these 2 groups should be shared with the parents of both junior infant classes. Parents will be asked to join the group of their child's new class and leave the junior infant class once they have done it. The junior infant class should then be deleted.

For subsequent years there is no need to create a new group, just the name of the group should be updated appropriately as children will not be mixed again.

At the end of 6<sup>th</sup> class, the WhatsApp group should be deleted by the admin when children are leaving the school.

The admin of each group has to be an active member of the PTA committee in the current academic year. If someone is looking to step down as a group admin, that person needs to advise PTA so a suitable person can be found as a replacement.

### 3. Description to be used for these individual class WhatsApp groups

*Name of the group:* PETNS [insert class name] class [insert school year]

*Description:* This group was created to support communication and as an additional channel for school related information to be shared with parents.

It is a positive and supportive forum. Parents are expected to respect the children, school staff, Group Admin and each other. Personal views on all matters political, religious and so on should not be shared, and complaints on school related matters should be directed to the school. See PTA constitution for more details on breaches.

The admin of the group can be contacted directly (in private) if a parent wished to ask a question anonymously.

Thank you for your cooperation and let's hope for an amazing school year for our children.

### 4. Appropriate channels for communication



PETNS – Parent Teacher Association

## Communication Infographic

