

# **Stromness Primary School Parent Council**

## **Easy-read version of the Constitution**

This document isn't meant to replace the Constitution. It's designed by the Parent Council to offer a plain English version, which we hope will allow all parents to access it easily without having to unravel the legalistic language of the original. We'll still have to refer to the formal version whenever we need to interpret the rules.

We've laid it out below in a question and answer form, which we hope you will find helpful. You'll see we sometimes use 'PC' as shorthand for our full title, to avoid heavy repetition.

### **What is the purpose of Parent Council?**

Our job is:

- to support the work of the school and to help make it a welcoming place for children and parents alike
- by our actions to support the education and welfare of the pupils
- to find out the views of parents on all aspects of the education and support the school provides.

### **How many people are on the Parent Council?**

There can be as few as four parents and as many as 20. There should be two representatives from each year group.

### **Who can be a Parent Council Member?**

Any parent of a pupil at the school can volunteer to be a member. If there happen to be too many volunteers, existing members will draw names out of a hat. If any volunteer isn't selected, there may be opportunities for them to be part of any sub-group the PC sets up.

### **What is our formal relationship with the Head Teacher?**

The Head Teacher has the duty to give advice to the PC on any matter, if asked. They also have the right to attend our meetings, or to send a representative, but they can't be a member.

## **Who else has the right to attend PC meetings?**

The following people can attend by right, and speak, but cannot be PC members:

- the Director of Education and Housing, or a nominated officer
- a councillor for the electoral ward which includes the school. As there are normally more than one, we will ask them to nominate one to attend.

## **Can anyone else be involved?**

We can co-opt, or invite, up to four members to help with our functions, for up to a year. We can consider extending membership at the end of the year, or to co-opt replacements. There should always be more parent members than co-opted members on the PC.

## **What about Office Bearers, such as Secretary and so on?**

The PC nominates and votes on the selection of a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). These office-bearers will normally serve until the next AGM, when, if they are willing, they can be elected for another year. If not, the PC will elect a replacement for each role.

If an office bearer stands down between AGMs, the PC will elect a replacement at their next scheduled meeting.

## **How often does the Parent Council meet?**

The PC has to meet at least once in each school term. If any three or more members request additional meetings, the Secretary will give all members at least one week's notice of the date, time and venue.

## **Are PC meetings open to the public?**

Yes, unless the PC decides that an issue needs to be discussed confidentially. In this case only PC members will attend, together with the Head Teacher or a nominated school representative.

## **How does the PC make decisions?**

The PC votes on matters that need to be decided, on the basis of one vote per member. If there's a tie, the Chair will have a casting vote.

## **What is the Parent Forum?**

Any parent of a child at the school is automatically a member of the Parent Forum.

## **What's the Parent Forum's relationship with the Parent Council?**

The Parent Forum has the right to request a special general meeting to discuss any issues covered by the Parent Council. The meeting will be open to all and will take place if at least 25% of Parent Forum members request it. The Parent Council must then

- arrange the meeting
- give all Parent Forum members at least two weeks notice of it, and
- circulate an agenda of the matters to be discussed.

## **What happens at the Annual General Meeting?**

The AGM will be held in April of each year. The Parent Council will inform the Parent Forum of the date, time and location at least two weeks in advance. The agenda will include:

- a report on the work of the PC and any sub-committees
- the selection of the new Parent Council
- invitations to any co-opted members
- discussion of any issues raised by the Parent Forum
- approval of the accounts and appointment of the auditor.

## **What's expected of Parent Council Members?**

Members are there to support the objectives of the Parent Council. Should any member act in a way that other members think undermines the objectives of the PC, a majority of members can terminate that person's membership. We will let the member concerned know of our decision in writing.

## **Who gets to see minutes of PC meetings?**

Any of the following is entitled to copies of the minutes :

- all who attended the meetings
- parents of children at the school
- the OIC Education Department, and
- all staff at the school.

The Parent Council Secretary and the school office will have copies available to give out.

## **Is the Parent Council able to raise and spend money?**

Yes. We can raise funds by any means except borrowing. This includes asking for and accepting grants and gifts, except for land and buildings. The Treasurer is responsible for running a bank or building society account in the PC's name. Any withdrawals need to be signed by the Treasurer and one other Parent Council member, not from the Treasurer's household.

## **How does the Treasurer record and report payments in and out?**

The Treasurer has to keep an accurate record of all income and expenditure. They will provide a summary of this for each PC meeting, and a full account for the Annual General meeting. The PC will arrange for the accounts to be audited before each Annual General Meeting. It's also the PC's role to make sure that PC funds are used only to support its objectives.

### **If the PC ceases to exist at any point, what happens to its funds?**

In this case, the funds will pass to the education authority to be used for the benefit of the school.

### **What other role does the Parent Council have?**

The Parent Council takes part in the selection of the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher, in accordance with education authority policy.

### **Can this constitution be changed?**

Yes, but only with the consent of the Parent Forum. The PC will send a copy of the proposed change to members of the Parent Forum, and allow reasonable time for the response. They will then send a copy of the amended or new constitution to the Head Teacher and the education authority.