

Garden Suburb Schools' PTA

Policies and Procedures

Introduction

These policies and procedures have been compiled by the Garden Suburb Schools' PTA for its members, active members of the Committee and Trustees. It gives a more in-depth explanation about the PTA and includes safety and procedural policies which are required for Charity organisations. If you have any questions that remain unanswered, please contact one of the Committee members via the school office or speak to a member of school staff.

We are one charitable organisation that serves two schools. Each school has its own committee and runs its own events, but the trustees and the overall charity are for the two schools together. The charitable funds are reported and managed together, however for ease of administration the charity currently has four bank accounts, two per school – one for main fundraising and one for gift aid donations. Treasurers work together to ensure that funds are shared as per the finance policy.

Why do we have a PTA?

We are fortunate at our schools to have a PTA that is and has been an integral part of the school community for many years. In its time the PTA has raised thousands of pounds, which have been spent on equipment and resources to enhance our children's education and whole school experience as well as the schools' facilities.

Our PTA is about much more than simply fundraising. The PTA exists to provide closer links between home and school and it is an excellent way to bring staff, parents and friends together socially in support of the schools, working towards a common goal. It is fun too - just ask any of the Committee members or PTA helpers!

All parents and members of the school community are encouraged to get involved, even if they only have a small amount of time available. All families are automatically members of the Garden Suburb Schools' PTA when their child joins one of our schools.

The PTA is extremely conscious of the ethos and diversity of our schools, and we try very hard when organising and planning events to respect this. Not all of our events are run as fundraisers. The PTA financially assists events aiming to give the children extra learning opportunities and a good time on the school grounds.

The PTA is an essential part of our schools. All parents/carers and staff are members and everyone's contribution is highly valued. The work of the PTA is fundamental to the continued success of the schools. Financial support enables the schools to create a richer learning environment for our children, for example through investment in technology, the school grounds and play equipment. These could never have been installed so quickly without the incredible support of our PTA. Numerous curriculum resources have also been provided which children throughout the schools are able to enjoy.

The wide variety of social functions allow us all to get to know one another in a more relaxed setting. The children see their parents and the school staff working together for their benefit. They appreciate this united effort and it adds to their feeling of security. Our schools would not be the vibrant, nurturing and welcoming learning environment they are without the enthusiasm, commitment and hard work of our PTA.

Charitable status

Charity law requires voluntary organisations such as ours with an annual income in excess of £5,000 to register with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. As a charity we must abide by Charity Commission rules and regulations and we are bound by a governing document referred to as our constitution.

Being a registered charity enables the PTA to:

- receive charitable donations from local and national companies;
- apply to grant-making charitable trusts. Most charitable trusts will give grants only to groups formally recognised as charities;
- receive donations made through ‘payroll giving’ and ‘company matched’ giving schemes; and apply for Gift Aid
- enjoy invaluable links with local businesses.

We have, over time, developed strong links with the local community and are always well supported by both residents and businesses, for which we are very grateful. Many of our businesses and local shops are very generous providing donations for raffle prizes and auction items, and some have taken part in our fairs. We are also extremely grateful to the local businesses and organisations that have participated in charity matched giving schemes and donations. This has made a huge difference to our fundraising efforts.

Role of the Committee

Our PTA Committee consists of three Office positions (being Chair, Treasurer and Secretary), with two members in each role, one dedicated to the Junior School and one to the Infant School. We therefore have two Chairs (sometimes with Co-Chairs), two Treasurers and two Secretaries. The respective Head Teachers of the schools are also Committee members. All members of the committee are also trustees, except the secretaries who are administrators. Together with the Committee’s support, there are also active PTA members who form dedicated teams to lead events. The Committee meet on a regular basis, with smaller working groups meeting as necessary when we are planning larger events.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Our Annual General Meeting is held in the autumn term and provides an opportunity for all parents to come along and hear in more detail about the work of the PTA, the events we have run, the funds we have raised and how the money has been spent. It is also the occasion when we elect our new committee members.

Support from Parentkind (formally PTA-UK)

Our PTA is a member of Parentkind, which is a national charity and membership organisation for Parent Teacher Associations. We pay an annual membership fee which gives us lots of member benefits, including comprehensive insurance cover for all PTA run events, support and advice on running the PTA and fundraising ideas and good practice hints and tips.

How we raise money

Like most PTAs, the majority of our funds are raised through the events that we run. Some of our most popular events are:

- Seasonal Fair,
- Discos,
- Treasure Hunt,
- International Food Fair,
- Summer Fair, and
- Summer Camp.

We raise money in other ways too

Donations from parents are extremely important. You can donate time, money, items for sale, raffle prizes or offers of services and skills. We also encourage parents to donate via Gift Aid. In addition, we actively seek out fundraising opportunities with businesses offering commissions or “money back” charitable offers, such as

Stikins name labels, Uniform4Kids and Easy fundraising, together with intermittent fundraising opportunities through large organisations such as Asda's CashPot for Schools.

The PTA also seeks to support families with cost effective, good quality second-hand uniform sales and provides a free textiles recycling facility so that parents can recycle their old clothing and shoes through the school, for which the school receives payment based on volume.

How we spend the money we raise

Following a fundraising event the money is banked straight away (or stored in the school safe in the short term if immediate banking is not possible). At our annual AGM proposed spending and plans for the year to come are discussed.

The Committee members are in regular consultation with the schools' leadership team and other staff to get feedback on items that the school would like the PTA to consider funding. The PTA funds a huge variety of equipment and resources for the school, aiming to advance and enhance the structure and infrastructure of the school, materials to assist the curriculum and the school environment. This has included new servers, student computers, interactive whiteboards and redecorations of parts of the school buildings. It has also included investment in reading scheme materials and play and sports equipment. In addition, where needed, the PTA is delighted to fund or assist with funding internal workshops for the children to support their learning and understanding of the curriculum. The PTA is dedicated to making our children's learning experiences fulfilling and exciting.

We always endeavour to spend our funds in ways that will benefit all our children across all areas of the school and curriculum and try to spend funds on a regular basis to deliver consistent support and benefit to the children as they progress through the schools. Many of the resources purchased have a direct link to the School Development Plan. There will be times when we may have to fundraise for a large project known to be due in the future.

Gift Aid

If you are a UK tax payer, we are able to claim 20p in every pound that you donate to our PTA. There are strict guidelines as to what can be claimed and further information is found on HMRC's website.

When donations are made through our school payment system, to the PTA, there is an option to put this through GiftAid.

Company matched giving

Company matched giving is very simple. Companies or businesses pledge to donate to a charity such as ours an amount of money relating to the amount that an employee donates or fundraises for us. We have been helped enormously in the past by this type of donation, and there are several benefits to both us and the company involved, including:

- employees' morale is boosted by having their efforts supported by their employer;
- the company benefits from having charitable donations written off against taxable profits;
- the company can endeavour to get publicity for their giving; and
- our PTA benefits from receiving perhaps double what we have raised at an event.

If you think that your employer has a matched giving scheme already in operation, or if you would like some more information about charity matched giving or setting up a scheme in your workplace, please talk to one of the PTA committee members, or ask in the school office.

How we get information to you

- All PTA letters are sent via the school communications software package that all parents and staff have access to, with hard copies available for those not on the internet. The letters include information on forthcoming events and dates plus requests for assistance when we are planning large events.
- There are regular PTA meetings held normally once a month that parents and carers are welcome to attend. The dates of these meetings are notified to the school community through the school communications package and parent WhatsApp groups.
- Information about PTA events may be posted on the notice boards in the school front playground.
- Text messages via the school systems.
- WhatsApp messages via class reps to the class groups.

How you can get involved

There are lots of ways you can help and support your child through the PTA.

Offering to help (and plan events), before events or at other times during the year, is so valuable. It doesn't matter if you can't help on a regular basis, or even if you cannot come into school. There are always jobs that can be done from home if you have half an hour to spare, for example wrapping gifts, preparing raffle tickets, doing an online shop. We really couldn't achieve what we do without the behind the scenes help that we receive.

If you would like to be more involved, you can volunteer to be a Committee Member or active member, or you can simply attend the AGM and give us your ideas for fundraising events. This is also the time to ask questions or voice your opinion. You can help by letting us know if you have any contacts or skills we could use - everything is potentially valuable to us.

If either or both parents complete the Gift Aid declaration form, your donations will be worth a lot more to us.

We are always extremely grateful to receive donations, and please come and see someone in the school office if you would like to discuss the best way to do this.

PTA Safeguarding Policy Statement and Guide for Members

1. The health and safety of all children is of paramount importance. Parents send their children to school each day with the expectation that school provides a secure environment in which their children can flourish. In order to do this, a wide range of measures and policies are put in place by Garden Suburb Infant School and Garden Suburb Junior School. These are all available to view on the schools' websites. The PTA support and abide by these policies.
2. The Garden Suburb Schools Safeguarding Policy is updated on an annual basis and approved by the Governing Body.
3. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Mrs Bhavsar (Junior School Headteacher) and Miss Sands (Infant School Headteacher). Other trained Designated Safeguarding Leads are Mrs Berger and Mrs Goldman (Junior School) and Miss Jowsey and Mrs Elia (Infant School). There is also a governor responsible for safeguarding who can be contacted through the school offices / Chair of Governors.
4. Garden Suburb Schools' PTA will ensure that we prioritise child safeguarding at every event that is held. We will complete a risk assessment which will be considered and approved by the school. This risk assessment will consider the safeguarding element.
5. All members of the PTA that visit school during the working day will adopt and follow school policies for signing in at the school office and other safeguarding procedures.
6. All PTA members are aware that any concerns regarding events they witness or are concerned about should be raised with the PTA Chairs and DSL immediately. It is crucial that PTA members recognise the importance of sharing information confidentially. Support will be offered if needed.
7. First Aid arrangements will be included as part of the risk assessment for any event. Should a child be injured or taken unwell during an event, the Lead PTA member will liaise with school staff to agree whether a parent/carer needs to be contacted to advise or collect the child or whether further medical attention is required.

Safeguarding and volunteer checks

PTAs have a duty of care to consider the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults, so make sure this is considered when risk assessing your event.

Who can be checked?

Not all people who have contact with children are required to have a DBS check. It will depend on how often they have contact with children and whether that contact is considered regulated activity. However, because PTA members are regularly in school unsupervised it has been agreed that all PTA Trustees and Committee members should have a DBS check. It has been agreed with the schools that DBS checks of PTA Trustees and Committee members will be carried out by the schools on behalf of the Charity and the costs of those checks reimbursed by the Charity to the schools.

How do we ask for a DBS check?

Ask at the school office for further details. DBS applications are done online and the office will provide details of the Identification paperwork which needs to be supplied.

Safeguarding is a primary concern at all events organised.

Members Code of Conduct

A safe community is obtained not only through the use of written rules and consequences but is derived from a nurturing atmosphere in which all individuals are treated with respect and compassion.

Our school community consist of staff, children and parents learning together in an environment in which each person feels safe, valued, respected and stimulated.

This guide should be viewed as a means to strengthen our community of learners. It describes the basic expectations for behaviour, as well as the rules and consequences at PTA sponsored activities.

The guide begins with the Members' Rights and Responsibilities, followed by School Rules and Guidelines for Behaviour at PTA Functions. Throughout this document the word "members" refers to the children, staff and parents within our school community.

Members' Rights and Responsibilities

- Members have the right to be treated with compassion and respect. They have the responsibility to be respectful of and sensitive to the feelings of others.
- Members have the right to be themselves. They have the responsibility to treat each other with fairness, courtesy and respect, because each is different from the other and each is special.
- Members have the right to be safe both physically and emotionally. They have the responsibility to maintain the safety of others.
- Members have the right to be heard. They have the responsibility to listen to the ideas of others and to communicate calmly and clearly.
- Members have the right to communicate together. They have the responsibility to use technologies (including social networking sites) responsibly by not disrespecting any other member or the school.
- Members have the right to expect that their personal and communal property will be safe and secure. They have the responsibility to respect the school building, school equipment, other members' property and their own personal belongings.
- Members have the right to learn about themselves. They may express their feelings and opinions appropriately without being interrupted. They have the responsibility to respect the feelings and opinions of others.
- Active members involved in events are asked to ensure the safety of children as a priority and retain an appropriate level of confidentiality i.e. we don't talk about other people's children or their behaviour.

School Rules and Guidelines for Behaviour at PTA Functions

The children will:

- Keep hands, feet and other objects to themselves.
- Show respect for all adults and other pupils by their words and actions, and listen carefully to directions when they are given.
- Respect school and personal property.
- Refrain from name calling, using inappropriate language or teasing others.
- Not engage in activities that may injure others whether intentional or unintentional.

What happens if a child behaves unacceptably at a PTA sponsored function?

Adult Responsibilities:

- It is the right and responsibility of active PTA members and volunteers attending a PTA function verbally to correct, or to report to the event coordinator, any misbehaviour by any pupil or parent that occurs at that specific PTA event.
- Parents/carers attending PTA sponsored functions with their children are expected to assume responsibility for their children's and their own behaviour and safety.
- Parents/carers unable to accompany their children to PTA sponsored functions are expected to designate or identify an adult who will be present and who will assume responsibility for their children's behaviour and safety. In the case of a school Disco, those present representing the PTA will assume this responsibility.
- The corrective action taken by the adult may range from simple verbal reprimand to suggesting the pupil have a short time out to calm down. If the behaviour is significant it will result in immediately contacting the child's parent/carer. The parent/carer will be expected to remove the child from the event. At any subsequent events a child may then need to be accompanied 1 to 1 by a supervising adult or be excluded from attending future PTA sponsored functions.

Significant Severe Behaviour includes:

- Wilfully endangering yourself or others.
- Wilfully destroying property.
- Wilful disobedience.
- Engaging in abusive language or behaviour.

Events held within School grounds – Safety and Risk Assessment

The climbing frames are considered areas of increased risk and should be monitored when in use. As a result, at some PTA events these may be out of bounds or used as a supervised fundraising activity.

If designated as out of bounds any child using this equipment will do so at their parents'/carer's risk and could be asked to leave.

All PTA run events will have a comprehensive Risk Assessment which will be approved by the school and committee prior to the event.

The Risk Assessment will include health & safety, safeguarding, supervisions levels and first aid arrangements.

Before the start of any event a short briefing will be held to ensure that all PTA members/helpers understand their role and responsibilities, safeguarding, Health & Safety and who to go to if they have any concerns or need help. The location of the first aider and kit will be clearly identified. This will also include information about which senior leaders are available and who is the DSL.

Serious Incidents Reporting

The responsibility to report

The Charity Commission requires charities to report serious incidents. If a serious incident takes place it is important that there is prompt, full and frank disclosure to the Commission.

What is a serious incident?

A serious incident is an adverse event, whether actual or alleged, which results in or risks significant:

- harm to the charity's beneficiaries, staff, volunteers or others who come into contact with the charity through its work;
- loss of charity money or assets;
- damage to charity property; and/or
- harm to the charity's work or reputation.

"Significant" means significant in the context of the PTA, taking account of its operations, finances and/or reputation.

The main categories of reportable incident are:

- protecting people and safeguarding incidents – incidents that have resulted in or risk significant harm to beneficiaries and other people who come into contact with the charity through its work;
- financial crimes – fraud, theft, cyber-crime and money laundering;
- large donations from an unknown or unverifiable source, or suspicious financial activity using the charity's funds;
- other significant financial loss;
- links to terrorism or extremism, including 'proscribed' (or banned) organisations, individuals subject to an asset freeze, or kidnapping of staff; and
- other significant incidents, such as – insolvency, forced withdrawal of banking services without an alternative, significant data breaches/losses or incidents involving partners that materially affect the charity.

It is the responsibility of the PTA Trustees to decide whether an incident is significant and should be reported. The Charity Commission's guidance on decision making may be helpful when deciding whether to report an incident.

Who should report?

The responsibility for reporting serious incidents rests with the PTA Trustees and they must make any such report in a timely manner.

Where a decision is made not to make a report about something serious that has happened, the PTA Trustees should be able to explain why they decided not to report it at the time.

Action in the event of a Serious Incident:

In the event that a serious incident is identified by the Trustees, immediate action will be taken to:

- prevent or minimise any further harm, loss or damage;
- report it to the Commission as a serious incident through the relevant procedures advertised by the Commission at the time;
- if appropriate and in all cases where there may have been criminal activity, report it to the police and/or other relevant agencies that may be required to assist;
- plan what to say to volunteers, members and the public where necessary;
- review what happened and prevent it from happening again – this may include reviewing internal controls and procedures, internal or external investigation and/or seeking appropriate help from professional advisers.

Complaints Policy

1. Please see below details of the procedure in the event of a complaint against the Garden Suburb Schools' PTA (PTA).
2. Garden Suburb Schools have their own complaints procedure. See school website for details.
3. The PTA defines a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about the PTA's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service provided. A complaint can be written or verbal.
4. A complaint is not:
 - a request for service (such as the PTA not holding enough events)
 - a request for information or an explanation of PTA policy (such as why the PTA charges an amount for an event)

These issues will not be treated under the complaints procedure but instead can be addressed as seen fit by the PTA Chair.

Making a complaint about the PTA

1. If you feel that the PTA has failed to meet its requirements or standards and you want to complain in the first instance please contact the Chair of the PTA.
2. If the complaint received by the PTA is in respect of the Chair, the complaint should be referred to the Secretary and Treasurer.
3. If it is about all three Trustees it should be reported to the Headteacher.

The PTA expects that the vast majority of complaints could be resolved at the first point of contact. You are encouraged to contact the PTA to let the PTA know of any problems and give the PTA the opportunity to put it right as soon as possible.

4. If, after you have contacted the Chair, you are still not satisfied or the issue has not been resolved, then you have the right to raise the matter with the school. You can do this by contacting the school office and asking to speak to the Headteacher. You may be asked to put your concerns in writing.