Stow Primary School Parent Council Constitution

Briefing Note: Updates Made to Original Document

Document Version: August 2020 - Updated September 2025

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

The original constitution has been enhanced with six major new sections and three specific amendments to strengthen governance, improve accessibility, and modernise operational procedures.

NEW SECTIONS ADDED

1. Virtual and Hybrid Meetings (Section 8c-f)

Purpose: Enable flexible meeting attendance post-COVID

- Permits meetings to be held in-person, virtually, or in hybrid format
- Establishes technical requirements for virtual meetings
- Maintains same quorum rules for all meeting formats
- Requires secure platforms and clear voting procedures

2. Electronic Communications and Voting (Section 8g)

Purpose: Enable urgent decision-making between meetings

- Allows email voting for urgent matters
- Requires 48-hour response time for members
- Decisions need simple majority of all members (not just respondents)
- All electronic decisions must be ratified at next full meeting

3. Emergency Powers (New Section)

Purpose: Provide mechanism for urgent decisions

- Office Bearers (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer) can make emergency decisions
- Limited to genuinely urgent matters that cannot wait
- Expenditure limit of £200 for emergency decisions
- All emergency decisions subject to ratification at next meeting
- Cannot be used for constitutional changes

4. Communications (New Section)

Purpose: Formalise reporting to parent community

- Minutes distributed via email within two weeks of meetings
- Key decisions communicated through multiple channels
- Annual reporting requirements established
- Provision for non-email users (paper copies available)

5. Code of Conduct (New Section)

Purpose: Establish behavioural expectations

- Eight core principles covering respect, confidentiality, inclusivity
- Focus on child welfare and professional conduct
- Meeting etiquette guidelines
- Enforcement mechanism for persistent breaches

6. Conflict of Interest (New Section)

Purpose: Ensure transparent decision-making

- Mandatory declaration of personal, professional, or financial interests
- Clear procedures for managing conflicts during meetings
- Record-keeping requirements for all declarations
- Register of interests accessible to Parent Forum

ENHANCED SECTIONS

Finance Section - Electronic Banking (Section 9b-e)

Purpose: Modernise financial management

- Permits online banking, electronic transfers, direct debits
- Maintains dual authorisation principle for electronic transactions
- Single authorisation allowed for routine expenses under £50
- Security and documentation requirements established

SPECIFIC AMENDMENTS

1. Quorum Reduction

Original: 5 members required for Parent Council meetings **Updated:** 4 members required for Parent Council meetings **Rationale:** Improve meeting viability with smaller membership

2. Dissolution Clause Amendment

Original: Funds pass to Local Education Authority **Updated:** Funds pass to Stow Primary School for pupil benefit, with provision for grant funding to return to fund administrators **Rationale:** More direct control over fund usage and proper grant compliance

3. Template References Removed

Original: Included Connect/Scottish Parent Teacher Council company details **Updated:** Removed template attribution text **Rationale:** Not relevant to Stow Primary School's constitution

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GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENTS ACHIEVED

Accessibility & Flexibility

- Virtual meeting options increase participation opportunities
- Electronic communications enable responsive decision-making
- Multiple communication channels ensure broader parent engagement

Transparency & Accountability

- Code of conduct establishes clear behavioural standards
- Conflict of interest procedures ensure transparent decision-making
- Enhanced reporting requirements improve parent forum communication

Operational Efficiency

- Emergency powers enable timely responses to urgent matters
- Electronic banking modernises financial management
- Reduced quorum requirements improve meeting viability

Risk Management

- Conflict of interest policies reduce governance risks
- Electronic banking maintains security through dual authorisation

- Clear procedures for emergency decision-making with appropriate oversight