

Stow Primary School Parent Council Constitution

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Stow Primary School Parent Council Constitution

August 2020 - Updated September 2025

AIMS

- a) Supporting the school and its work with pupils.
- b) Representing the views of the parent forum.
- c) Promoting contact between the school, parents, pupils, providers of nursery education and the community. d) Reporting to the parent forum.
- e) To study and discuss matters of mutual interest relating to the education and welfare of pupils.
- f) To engage in activities which support and advance the education of pupils attending the school.
- g) Operate in such a way that is accessible to and inclusive of all members of the parent forum, such that all members are encouraged to interact with the council and to participate in its activities.
- h) In line with Scottish Borders council policy, parent council members will be involved in the recruitment of senior school staff (head teacher and deputy head) only members who have completed the relevant training will be able to sit on a recruitment panel.

POWERS

The Parent Council shall have the power to do anything considered by them to be in furtherance of the aims but remembering that they are there to represent the views of the Parent Forum.

NUMBER OF MEMBERS

The membership consists of parents/carers of children attending Stow Primary school & nursery as selected by the Parent Forum. The parent membership of the council will be a minimum of 6 and a maximum of a third of school pupil parents and carers.

GENERAL MEETINGS

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) shall be held in the September of each year. The notice calling the meeting shall be sent to the Parent Forum at least two weeks in advance.

The business shall include: a) the work of the Parent Council b) approval of the accounts c) appointment of an individual who will review the annual accounts d) any resolutions submitted by the Parent Forum e) election of members to serve on the Parent Council

At all general meetings, voting shall be on the basis of one vote per parent/full Parent Council member present at the meeting.

At all general meetings the quorum shall consist of 5.

The Parent Council or 10 of the Parent Forum shall have power to call an Extraordinary General Meeting.

PARENT COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

a) Members of the Parent Council shall be appointed at the AGM. They shall be elected for a two-year term and be eligible for re-election after the initial 2 year period. Parents shall always form the majority of the Parent Council.

b) The Office Bearers will be Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and such others as may be required. This should include the position of a deputy or vice chair alongside the Chair. The office bearers will be elected by the Parent Council at the first meeting after the AGM.

c) The Headteacher or his/her representative has a right and a duty to attend meetings of the Parent Council.

d) The Parent Council shall invite pupil reps to parent council meeting.

e) The Parent Council may co-opt up to (2) persons to help carry out its functions at any time. The co-opted members shall retire at the AGM but shall be eligible to be co-opted for a further term.

f) Each member of the Parent Council shall have one vote and resolutions shall be passed by a simple majority vote of those present. The Chairperson shall have both a deliberative and casting vote – one vote as a PC member and one vote as Chair. The Chairperson's casting vote shall be used only in the event of a tie.

g) The Secretary/PC clerk shall be responsible for keeping accurate minutes of all meetings and shall make these available upon request to any member of the Parent Forum.

h) A member of the Parent Council failing to attend three consecutive meetings without reason/apologies may be deemed to have retired from the Parent Council.

MEETINGS

Standard Meetings

a) Meetings of the Parent Council shall be held as required, at least termly. At all meetings of the Parent Council 4 shall form a quorum.

b) All Parent Council meetings shall be open, and any member of the Parent Forum may attend although they will not have voting rights.

Virtual and Hybrid Meetings

c) The Parent Council may hold meetings in person, virtually via video conferencing, or in hybrid format (combining both in-person and virtual attendance).

d) Virtual meetings shall be deemed valid provided:

- All attendees can hear and be heard by other participants
- The meeting is conducted using a secure platform
- Technical difficulties do not prevent meaningful participation
- Voting procedures remain clear and verifiable

e) Notice of virtual or hybrid meetings shall include connection details and technical requirements.

f) The same quorum requirements apply to virtual and hybrid meetings as to in-person meetings.

Electronic Communications and Voting

g) For urgent matters arising between scheduled meetings, the Parent Council may conduct business via email, provided:

- The matter is clearly urgent and cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting
- All Parent Council members are given at least 48 hours to respond
- A clear deadline for responses is set
- Any decision made is reported to the next full meeting for ratification
- Electronic votes require a simple majority of all Parent Council members (not just those responding)

EMERGENCY POWERS

In circumstances requiring urgent action between scheduled meetings, the Office Bearers (Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer) may make decisions on behalf of the Parent Council, subject to the following conditions:

a) The matter must be genuinely urgent and unable to wait for the next scheduled meeting b) Where possible, consultation with other Parent Council members should be attempted c) Any emergency decision must be reported to the full Parent Council at the next meeting d) Emergency decisions are subject to ratification by the full Parent Council e) Emergency powers cannot be used for decisions involving significant expenditure (over £200) or constitutional changes f) A record of emergency decisions and their rationale must be maintained

COMMUNICATIONS

Reporting to Parent Forum

a) Meeting minutes shall be distributed to the Parent Forum via email within two weeks of each meeting.

b) Key decisions and outcomes shall be communicated to the Parent Forum through:

- Email updates following each meeting
- School newsletters (where appropriate)
- Annual report at the AGM

c) The Parent Council shall maintain reasonable efforts to ensure all parents have access to communications, including offering paper copies where email is not accessible.

CODE OF CONDUCT

All Parent Council members and meeting attendees are expected to:

a) **Respect:** Treat all participants with courtesy and respect, regardless of differing opinions b) **Constructive Engagement:** Focus discussions on issues rather than personalities c) **Confidentiality:** Respect confidential information shared during meetings d) **Inclusive Participation:** Ensure all voices are heard and valued e) **Child-Focused:** Keep the welfare and education of pupils as the primary consideration f) **Professional Conduct:** Avoid discriminatory language or behavior g) **Meeting Etiquette:** Allow others to speak without interruption and follow the Chair's guidance h) **Accountability:** Take responsibility for commitments made during meetings

Persistent breaches of this code may result in exclusion from meetings or removal from the Parent Council following discussion and majority vote.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

a) **Declaration:** Parent Council members must declare any personal, professional, or financial interest in matters being discussed.

b) **Procedure:** When a conflict of interest is identified:

- The member must declare the conflict at the earliest opportunity
- The nature of the conflict must be recorded in the minutes
- The member may contribute factual information if requested but must not participate in the discussion or decision-making
- The member must absent themselves from the meeting during voting on the matter

c) **Ongoing Interests:** Members with ongoing conflicts (e.g., employment by a contractor being considered) must declare this at the beginning of their term and at each relevant meeting.

d) **Record Keeping:** All declarations of interest shall be recorded in meeting minutes and maintained in a register available to Parent Forum members.

FINANCE

Bank Accounts and Payments

- a) The funds of the Parent Council shall be lodged in a bank, building society or other account in the name of the Parent Council. There are two signature authorisation Cheques shall be drawn, or withdrawals made against the signatures of at least two named Parent Council members.
- b) The Parent Council shall maintain a minimum of two authorised signatories for all banking transactions, with a maximum of four authorised signatories to ensure operational flexibility.

Electronic Banking

- c) The Parent Council may utilise electronic banking services including:
 - Online banking for account monitoring and transaction history
 - Electronic transfers and payments
 - Direct debits for regular payments (utilities, insurance, etc.)

- Contactless and chip-and-pin card payments where appropriate

d) Electronic banking procedures must maintain the dual authorisation principle:

- Online payments require approval from two authorised signatories
- Banking login credentials must be securely managed and regularly updated
- Transaction limits may be set for different types of electronic payments
- All electronic transactions must be documented and reconciled monthly

e) Authorised signatories for electronic banking shall be the same individuals authorised for traditional banking, typically including the Treasurer, Chairperson, and Secretary or other designated Parent Council members.

f) For electronic payments under £50, single authorisation may be permitted for routine expenses (e.g., meeting refreshments, postage) provided:

- Prior approval exists from the Parent Council
- Monthly spending limits are established
- Full records are maintained and reported monthly
- The arrangement is reviewed annually

Financial Management

f) The Treasurer shall be responsible for keeping accurate records of the financial transactions of the Parent Council. The books shall be brought to balance six weeks before the AGM and the accounts shall be reviewed by an individual appointed at the previous AGM by the Parent Forum.

g) The Parent Council shall be responsible for ensuring that all property/money received by/for the Parent Forum/Council shall be applied for the aims of the Parent Council.

h) Records of all transactions and goods purchased should be presented at the AGM.

CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

a) Changes or additions must be made at an AGM or an EGM called for the purpose. The proposed change shall be specified in the notice calling the meeting and be approved by not less than two thirds of those present.

DISSOLUTION

In the event that the Parent Council ceases to exist any remaining funds passes to the Stow Primary School to use for the benefit of the pupils of Stow Primary School. Or where grant funding has been awarded, funds returned to the fund administrator.

