



FAIRFIELD  
Prep School

# Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Q&A

This Q&A is designed to give you a better idea of what the PTA Committee actually does and how it functions. It is particularly useful for those who wish to become members of the PTA Committee. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask one of the Officers or email [fairfield.pta@lsf.org](mailto:fairfield.pta@lsf.org).

## **How is the PTA organised?**

The PTA is organised under a written Constitution which sets out its aims and objectives and also practical things like how the PTA Committee is established and when meetings should take place.

## **What is the PTA Committee?**

The PTA includes all parents/guardians/carers of children currently attending the school (“parental members”) and all





current teaching staff (“staff members”). Not all members choose to be actively involved in the PTA. Those members that do want to be actively involved, like you, may be elected to join the PTA Committee (which is called the “Executive Committee” in the PTA Constitution).

The PTA Committee is therefore the group of parental members and staff members that effectively run the PTA and that organise the various events for the children and parents of the school.

Members of the PTA Committee are elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), which is held each year in the Autumn Term. There is a further opportunity to elect members at a Special General Meeting (SGM) in the Spring Term.

To function properly, the PTA Committee must have at least ten members. At least six of these must be parental members and at least four must be staff members – but this includes the Head Teacher and the Deputy Head Teacher(s). For a meeting to be valid, at least seven members of the PTA Committee must be present.

### **What will I actually do as a member of the PTA Committee?**

As a member of the PTA Committee you will help to organise the various PTA events that are held throughout the year. For example, you may be asked to provide practical help such as manning a stall, being a parent volunteer, or clearing up after an event has taken place. The PTA Committee is always open to new fund-raising ideas and events that help to promote the links between the school and the wider parental community. As a new member, we would like to hear your ideas – so please share them with us!





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Being a member of the PTA Committee also means that you will have an opportunity to comment on all aspects of how the PTA is run, and to help decide how the funds that the PTA has raised will be spent within the school.

Members of the PTA Committee also help to run the Nearly New Shop (see below).

## **Is there a time limit on membership of the PTA Committee?**

You may remain a member of the PTA Committee for as long as you are a parental member of the PTA, i.e., while you still have a child at the school. But you will have to be re-elected each AGM.

## **What are the Officers of the PTA Committee and what do they do?**

The Officers of the PTA Committee are trustees of the PTA and their role is to ensure the effective functioning of the PTA in accordance with the wishes of its members and to uphold the PTA Constitution.





Most of the Officers are elected at the AGM, normally from existing members of the PTA Committee. The elected Officers serve until the next AGM and are eligible for re-election. No member of the PTA Committee may hold the same office for more than three years. However, a member may hold two or more offices during their time on the PTA Committee if they are elected to do so.

**Head Teacher:** The Head Teacher is a non-elected Officer of the PTA Committee along with the Deputy Head Teacher(s) who are also non-elected Officers. They support the PTA in achieving its aims and objectives and provide leadership in areas where the PTA Committee needs to work closely with the school – e.g., when providing events and activities for the children.

**Chair:** The Chair provides leadership for the PTA Committee by setting the agenda for meetings and managing the meetings in line with the agenda. The Chair will work closely with the other Officers to ensure that the PTA is run effectively. The Chair must always be a parental member. The Chair will welcome contributions from all members of the PTA Committee so that everyone is involved in the discussion and ensure that all issues are fully debated and agreed upon.

**Vice-Chair:** The Vice-Chair supports the Chair and will stand in for the Chair at meetings or other PTA events if necessary.

**Treasurer:** The Treasurer manages and controls the funds raised by the PTA. The Treasurer maintains the records of the financial





transactions, deals with receipts, invoicing and banking, and provides a financial report at PTA Committee meetings.

**Secretary:** The Secretary prepares and distributes the minutes of the meetings of the PTA Committee and deals with other PTA correspondence. The Secretary also has an important role in preparing for the AGM.

### **How many meetings are there, and will I always be expected to attend?**

There are three meetings of the full PTA Committee each school year.

The AGM is held in the Autumn Term and is when the various Officers and members are elected to the PTA Committee. The Chair will provide an overview of the previous year's events and the Treasurer will present a detailed financial report. This is often when important decisions are taken, such as how funds raised by the PTA and the Nearly New Shop should be spent.

An SGM is normally held in the Spring Term and is open to parental members who are not already members of the PTA Committee. It is another opportunity for electing members to join the PTA Committee.

A meeting of the PTA Committee is normally also held in the Summer Term. This meeting is a "closed" meeting and is not open to non-members.

Additional meetings of sub-groups of the PTA Committee might be held at other times during the school year – e.g., to deal with planning for specific events or for other reasons.





Meetings are normally held on school premises on a weekday evening. It is possible to attend by phone or video-call if you prefer.

Attendance at PTA Committee meetings is not compulsory, but we hope that you will be able to come to most of them and that you will be an active member of the group.

### **How are decisions made at the PTA Committee meetings?**

Most decisions are taken unanimously and with the general agreement of all members. But in the event that a formal vote is needed, each member present at the meeting has one vote and voting is by simple majority (this would include a member who is attending by phone or video-call). The Chair has a casting vote if there is a tie.

In some limited cases, for example when making changes to the PTA Constitution, a vote may require agreement from at least two-thirds of the members present.

### **Can I help with the Nearly New Shop?**

Yes you can! The Nearly New Shop is run by the PTA Committee and is always looking for additional volunteers. Please talk to one of the current volunteers for further information.

### **How is information about the PTA Committee communicated to members?**

Formal information relating to the PTA Committee such as notifications of meetings, the circulation of draft minutes, agendas etc. is communicated by e-mail to all of the members.





The PTA Committee also uses a WhatsApp group which is used only by parental members. Posts to the WhatsApp group should be limited, as far as possible, to PTA business only.

**As a member of the PTA Committee will I have an opportunity to influence school policy?**

No you won't. The PTA Committee deliberately does not get involved with school policy.

