

SOUTH MORNINGSIDE PARENT COUNCIL

Constitution

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1. NAME

- South Morningside Parent Council (SMPC)

2. BACKGROUND

The Parent Council is constituted in accordance with the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006¹. It represents, and is accountable to, the Parent Forum. The membership of the Forum comprises all parents, carers and guardians of the pupils at South Morningside Primary School and Nursery. Hereafter in this constitution, the term:

- '*parent(s)*' refers to parent(s), carer(s) and legal guardians(s) of pupils at the School and Nursery
- '*School*' refers to South Morningside Primary School and Nursery
- '*written notice*' refers to any form of appropriate non-verbal communication, for example letter or email. 'Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006' refers to that act, to its guidance and accompanying documents and any subsequent amendments to them. (Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, Scottish Executive ISBN 0-7559-5147-6 (available online at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/148166/0039411.pdf>))

3. PURPOSE

- To develop and engage in activities which support and advance the education and welfare of the pupils by providing and assisting the provision of facilities at the school which are not normally carried out by the local authority.
- Full details of the functions of all Parent Councils are outlined in Section 8 of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement Act) 2006

4. OBJECTIVES

- To work in partnership with the school to create a welcoming school which is inclusive for all families.
- To identify, seek and represent the views of parents and families whenever and wherever possible on at least a yearly basis, using the document *How Good is Our School* and *Journey to Excellence* and to collate those views and report them to:
 - The parent forum
 - The headteacher of the school
 - The education authority
 - Other persons as it appears to the Parent Council appropriate to include for the purposes of the paragraph.
- To promote and facilitate contact between the school, parents, pupils, providers of nursery education, secondary education and the wider community.

Full details of the functions of all Parent Councils are outlined in Section 8 of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006¹.

- To ensure the accountability of the Parent Council to the Parent Forum on monies spent. This will be via the Finance Sub-group (see Section 10.1).

5. MEMBERSHIP

- The Parent Council shall comprise two types of membership, voting and non-voting. The non-voting member representation shall not exceed one-third of the total membership.
- All members shall be in agreement with the purpose and objectives of the Parent Council and will be furnished with copies of the constitution and the Parental Involvement Act and any additional relevant information on appointment.

5.1 Voting members

- Voting members shall comprise a minimum of ten and a maximum of 30 members of the Parent Forum ie parents of children attending the school or nursery. Each person including the Chair will have one vote with the Chair having an additional casting vote in the event of a tied vote.
- Selection will be on a volunteer basis with a maximum commitment of three years providing their child(ren) remain enrolled with the school or nursery. In the event that the number of volunteers exceeds the number of places set out in the constitution, members will be selected by ballot at the Annual General Meeting (see Section 8.1). Each member of the Parent Forum is entitled to vote for as many applicants as there are places available. If the vote is tied, lots shall be drawn.
- On completion of the three-year term of membership, with the exception of office bearers or individuals who intend to stand for these positions, an individual cannot stand for re-election, or be co-opted to the Parent Council, for a period of a year. However, they can continue to be involved in sub-group activity.
- Anyone not selected to be a member of the Parent Council may be offered the opportunity to be part of any sub-groups set up by the Council (see Section 10.1).
- If a member resigns during a period of membership or a position is left vacant at the AGM, the Parent Council may co-opt a parent on to Council to serve until the next Annual General Meeting. This person will have voting rights.

5.2 Non-voting members

The Parent Council may co-opt non-parent members (who will not have a vote) as follows:

- The Head Teacher of the School, or his/her nominated representative, who has both a right and a duty to attend meetings of the Parent Council
- The School shall be invited to provide at least one teacher and one non-teaching member of staff
- Individuals from the wider school and local community including pupils and local councillors.
- Normally, co-opted non-parent members will be expected to serve the same term as parent members and the same rules will apply for re-election.

6. OFFICE BEARERS

- There will be a minimum of three office bearers comprising of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The Parent Council can create and elect other roles as considered to be appropriate.
- Office bearers must be a member of the Parent Council.
- Office bearers will be elected by ballot (written or otherwise) of the parent members of the Parent Council following the Annual General Meeting. Each member has one vote with the acting Chair having the casting vote in the event of a tie.

- It is recommended that each office bearer is shadowed in their final year and thus, office bearers-elect should be appointed one year prior to the start of their term of office
- The term of any office bearer shall normally be a maximum of three years, in addition to any tenure as an ordinary voting member.
- In the event that the post has not been shadowed, and there are no nominations for it, the incumbent may stand for re-election for a further (4th) year of office.
- An office bearer who wishes to resign from their post shall normally give one month's written notice to the chair of the Parent Council. It is the responsibility of the Parent Council to find a replacement office bearer within the membership of the Parent Council. The appointment will be made via the standard selection process noted above.

7. MEETINGS OF THE PARENT COUNCIL

- The Parent Council should meet at least six times per year. There is no minimum requirement of meetings for any Parent Council sub-group.
- A meeting shall be considered quorate when one-half of the voting membership is in attendance.
- The voting structure of the Parent Council will be by a simple majority of the voting members present including the Chair, with the Chair having the casting vote in the event of a tied vote
- On the rare occasion when a vote is required between meetings:
 - Two working days' notice of the vote must be given to all voting members
 - All voting members must be contacted and a majority vote of the voting membership will carry the vote in the event that there is not a 100% response rate
 - Details of the voting outcome must be collated and reported to the membership following the deadline
 - Details of the voting outcome must be reported and minuted in the next Council meeting.
- At least seven days' notice of ordinary meetings shall be given to all Parent Council Members.
- An Agenda and minutes shall be produced and circulated for each Parent Council meeting:
 - Any member of the Parent Council or Forum may raise an Agenda item
 - All agenda items shall be notified to the secretary at least five days in advance of the Council meeting
 - The agenda shall be agreed between the Secretary, Chair and Head Teacher (as appropriate) and shall be circulated at least two days before the meeting.
 - All agenda items must fall within the purpose and objectives of the Parent Council as laid down in the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement Act) 2006
 - Following the meeting, minutes of the Parent Council meetings shall be circulated to all attendees for approval.
 - Once confirmed by the next meeting of the Parent Council, the minutes will be circulated to all members of the Parent Council and made public to all members of the Parent Forum by appropriate means, for example school notice boards and the school website.
- All documents which are to be reviewed prior to a meeting should be circulated at least seven days before the meeting. Reports should be circulated at least two days before the meeting. Thereafter reports must be tabled at the meeting.

- Details of any pertinent pre-meeting communication relating to agenda items which has taken place prior to the meeting should be noted when the subject is discussed during the meeting.
- Individuals must have the approval of the Parent Council before they are able to represent the views of the Parent Council externally.
- Discussions at Parent Council meetings shall be open to the Parent Forum and general public, unless the matters to be discussed relate to issues that may impact upon the confidentiality of individuals or that of the school (see Section 12).
- Any member of the Parent Forum may put an appropriate topic for discussion on the Agenda..
- Discussion of any item not on the Agenda is at the discretion of the Chair.
- In the event of the Chair's absence, Parental Council meetings will be chaired by the Vice-chair. If there is no Vice-chair or the Vice-chair is also absent, the meeting shall be chaired by an individual chosen by a ballot of voting members.

8. GENERAL MEETINGS OF THE PARENT FORUM

The Parent Council is responsible for organising the General Meetings of the Parent Forum:

8.1 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

- An Annual General Meeting will be held in September. Where this is not possible it should be held as soon as possible thereafter. Written notice of the meeting shall be given 14 days in advance to every member of the Parent Forum. Non-receipt of such notice by any member shall not invalidate it.
- The AGM shall include the:
 - Establishment of the Parent Council membership
 - Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting
 - Report from the Parent Council
 - Result of annual review of constitution
 - Presentation and voting of any motions
 - Identification of the posts on Council to be filled at the next AGM
- Any member of the Parent Forum can raise a motion at the AGM. This should be submitted in writing to Chair, at least ten days before the date of the meeting and should be supported by 25 signatures of the Parent Forum members. Any such motion raised will be notified to the Parent Forum within seven days of the AGM.
- A motion will be considered as passed if at least two-thirds of the parent forum in attendance, vote in favour.

8.2 Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM)

- If ten members of the Parent Forum request in writing an Extraordinary General Meeting to discuss issues falling within the Parent Council's remit, the Parent Council shall arrange this.
- The Parent Council shall give all members of the forum at least fourteen days' notice of the meeting and, at the same time, circulate notice of the motion(s) to be discussed at the meeting.
- A motion will be considered as passed if at least two-thirds of the parent forum in attendance vote in favour.

9. ACCESSIBILITY

All reasonable measures will be taken to ensure that:

- meetings of the Parent Council, sub-groups and Parent Forum are physically accessible to all who wish to attend.
- documents distributed by the Parent Council are made available in a suitable format for all who wish to read them.

10. ORGANISATION OF PARENT COUNCIL

- The Parent Council is accountable to the Parent Forum and will report to the Parent Forum at least once a year at the Annual General Meeting.
- Any member who misses three consecutive meetings shall be deemed to have resigned unless absence is due to extenuating circumstances. Termination of membership shall be confirmed in writing to the member.

10.1 Subgroups of the Parent Forum

- The Parent Council shall initiate the formation and support of sub-groups to carry out agreed specific tasks or functions. The objectives of the sub-groups shall not be in conflict with the purpose and objectives of the Parent Council
- There will be a Finance Sub-group
- Since the Parent Council is the representative body of the Parent Forum, any sub-group formed will be accountable to the Parent Forum, through the Parent Council.
- The membership of a sub-group shall include members of the Parent Forum with at least one member being on the Parent Council. Members can also be co-opted from the staff, pupils and community as appropriate
- The sub-group will meet as frequently as is required to fulfil its aims
- The sub-groups shall report to every meeting of the Parent Council. The guidelines for any written report submissions should follow the guidelines given in Section 7.

11. FINANCES

- The methodology by which the Finance Sub-group works will be defined by the parent council.
- The Finance Sub-group shall work within guidelines defined by the parent council and be responsible for:
 - The strategic overview of the finances of the Parent Council
 - The review of compliance therewith
 - Onward reporting to the Parent Council of funding requests, to be voted on by the Parent Council
- Parent Council funds shall be lodged in a bank account in the name of the Parent Council. Money shall be drawn from the account on the signature of any two office bearers, or other individuals as agreed in a minuted decision of the Parent Council.
- The Parent Council may raise funds by any means, other than borrowing, and can receive gifts. It can also enter into contracts and agreements, but may not purchase, or own, land or buildings. The Parent Council shall decide how any funds are to be spent, but should take into account the general views of the members of the Parent Forum and any advice from the Headteacher.
- The Independent Examiner will be appointed at the Annual General Meeting

- The accounts shall be closed on 30 June annually and will be reviewed by the Independent Examiner prior to them being submitted to the Annual General Meeting. The independent examiner must not be a member of the Parent Forum and should be deemed by the office bearers to be competent.
- Should the Parent Council be dissolved, any assets remaining after satisfying outstanding debts or liabilities shall be passed on for the benefit of the pupils and school as specified by the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006¹.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY

- Any issue of privacy or confidentiality (except recruitment – see Council guidelines) shall initially be attended to by a small group appointed by the voting members of the Parent Council which shall include the Chair, Head Teacher and a non-office bearer from within the voting membership of the Parent Council.
- If discussion at a Parent Council meeting is then required, only voting members of the Parent Council and the Head Teacher, or his/her representative, are eligible to be present. Each issue shall be considered as it arises.

13. CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION

- This constitution can be changed by a show of hands at the Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting where required. The motion will be considered as carried if at least two-thirds of those present and eligible to vote, vote in favour.
- Notification of the proposed changes should be circulated to the Parent Forum and members of Parent Council by appropriate non-verbal means at least 14 days in advance of the meeting (Section 8.1).
- Parent Forum members shall have the right to respond to the proposed change by appropriate non-verbal means until two days before the meeting at which the motion is to be tabled.

