**The New Lumsden School Parent Council Constitution 2017.**

**OBJECTIVES OF THE PARENT COUNCIL ARE:**

* 1. To help staff promote camaraderie, happiness and a fun learning environment for the children of Lumsden School.
  2. To identify and represent the views of **all** parents on the education provided by the school.
  3. To promote close cooperation and communication between parents and teachers.
  4. To promote, develop and engage in community partnerships within the village of Lumsden and with other primary schools in the Alford network (cluster).
  5. To welcome and encourage **all parents** to attend and partake in the Parent Council.

**2. MEMBERSHIP**

**2.1**

(a) All parents / carers with a child currently attending the school are automatically members of the **Parent Forum**.

(b) The **Parent Council** is made up of volunteers from the forum.

(c) The **Parent Council** elects its **Office Bearers** either at the AGM or EGM (See 3 appointments).

**2.2**

(a) The **Parent Council** can choose (or not) to co-opt NON-PARENT members to help run the council.

(b) Parent / carers must always have a two to one majority on the council.

(c) The law requires the Chairperson to always be a parent. First option for the Treasurer and Secretary should be parents also.

**2.3**

All CO-OPTED members serve the council in a non-voting advisory capacity only.

**2.4**

Co-opted members can be staff (only one staff member at any one time), community members or local councillors.

**2.5**

The Head Teacher whilst not a council member (no vote) has a right and a duty to attend Parent Council meetings. The Head Teacher can nominate another member of staff if they are unable to attend a meeting.

**2.6**

(a) All co-opted members are chosen by the Parent Council.

(b)Co-opted members will be invited to serve for one year. A second year can be served after review. A MAXIMUM OF TWO CONSECUTIVE YEARS ONLY.

(c) All co-opted members (including staff) must have a year out (after two years’ service) prior to any new invitation to serve again.

**2.7** **Procedure for inviting a guest to a PC meeting.**

Guests can only be invited by the Parent Council parents or the forum. At least two office bearers or four parents from the Forum must be in agreement.

1. **APPOINTMENTS OF OFFICE BEARERS.**

**3.1**

**(a)** The election of Council Office Bearers is by secret ballet; one person equates one vote. One vote majority is sufficient to be elected.

**(b)** In case of votes cast being equal for named candidates, names to be placed in hat/ box and first name drawn is elected (see 3.5).

**(c)** Elections take place annually at the AGM or if required an EGM.

**(d)** Balloting is organised by the Parent Council. Two nominated parents from the Forum or Council will count the votes.

Any form of communication can be used to indicate a parent’s willingness to serve or if a parent wants to resign. In person, at the AGM, or by letter/email to the current Chairperson or Secretary prior to the AGM.

**3.3**

The three main Office Bearers are the Chairperson, Secretary and the Treasurer.

The office bearers are elected for one year at a time (AGM to AGM, unless a member resigns mid–term).

**3.4**

**(a)** Terms in office automatically terminate at AGM. **Office Bearers can only serve two years maximum run consecutively in any one office post (Chair or Secretary etc).**

**(b) THIS DOES NOT STOP THE INDIVIDUAL SERVING ON THE PARENT COUNCIL IN A DIFFERENT CAPACITY EITHER AS AN ELECTED OFFICER (DIFFERENT POST) A PARENT MEMBER WITHOUT OFFICE.**

**3.5 In case of multi candidates for the same posts (Office Bearer)**

**(a)** Parents will be asked to vote not only for their first choice candidates but second and if required third choice also.

**(b)**If no clear result from first choice votes being evident add the second choice votes to the first for the same named candidate.

**(c)**If in the unlikely scenario still no clear decision is evident the candidate’s names will be placed in a box / hat and the first drawn will be elected.

**4 OPERATING GUIDELINES**

**4.1** The Parent Council must meet at least once per term. In theory the Council can meet as many times as necessary.

**4.2** The Chair and HT must meet prior to every meeting to discuss Agenda content.

**4.3**

(a) **Generally decisions can best be decided by consensus without need of formal voting.**

(b) Should a vote be necessary at a PC meeting each parent has one vote.

(c) Parents of the Forum who attend a Council meeting will also have a vote.

(d) The Chair has a casting vote option or they can choose to refer to the Forum (balloting them by letter).

**4.4**

Occasionally the Parent Council may be asked to limit its number to discuss or be privy to sensitive information. In such cases, only the three main elected Office Bearers and the HT can be present.

Such meeting will be referred to as closed meetings; minutes will be taken if necessary but not be released to the forum.

**4.5**

For the avoidance of doubt no issue of a personal nature concerning an individual pupil, parent or child’s family can be subject of discussion at any Parent Council meeting.

Such matters are for the HT and Education Authority only.

**4.6**

**MINUTE TAKING**

(a)Minutes to be taken by the Secretary or a nominated stand in at every meeting.

**(b)** The Chair and HT MUST review the minutes before general release to the Forum (Verbal agreement).

**(c)** Any disagreement with the content of the minutes be it amendments or retractions will be discussed prior to next full meeting of Council.

Minute Taking is absolutely paramount to efficient and effective accountability and the democratic process of the Parent Council.

**4.7**

The PC has a responsibility to review its own constitution at least every five years. The constitution can be automatically reviewed prior to five years if a majority of parents (Forum) request it.

**4.8**

Questions asked of the Forum in respect to the Constitutional Review Process will be posed by the Chair after input from the Council.

**4.9**

Sub- groups. No less than four members in a group, of which the majority must be parents.

Final decisions referred to PC.

1. **FINANCE PRACTISE RULES FOR THE TREASURER**

**5.1** The Treasurer should open account if not already open.

**The PC requires three designated signatories for cheque withdrawals.**

**5.2** The Treasurer holds the cheque book and is responsible for book keeping, accurate records of the financial transactions of the Parent Council.

**5.3** For cross referencing, safe guarding and effective shared responsibility for the account, the Chair should receive the quarterly bank statements direct from the bank. It is for the Chair to provide copies; it is the shared responsibility of the PC and the Treasurer.

**5.4** The PC is required to find an Auditor for the accounts annually.

**5.5** Full contact details of the Auditor are required in the form of address, phone number and email.

**5.6** The Auditor is required to present end of year Financial Report at AGM. No blank cheques should be presented for a signature.

No signatory should ever sign a blank cheque.

**5.7 No member of the Parent Council should ever transfer money in form of cheques or cash into their own personal bank account, under any circumstances.**

**5.8** All cash from fundraising should be counted as soon as possible by multiple parents together with the Treasurer. It is recommended to ask the HT if the school safe can be used prior to the PC banking funds into its own account if events fall at weekends. If unable to use the school safe or bank straight away it is recommended for money to be put in a locked money box with the key held by another party until which time it can be counted or deposited.

* 1. The Parent Council is responsible for ensuring that all property / money received by / for the Parent Council shall be utilised for the aims and objectives shared by the Council and its Forum.

**6.REPORTING**

* 1. The AGM should take place between the end of September and prior to the October end of term holiday. This allows new parents to the school to ‘settle in’ and observe the school in progress prior to AGM.
  2. Notice of all meetings, dates, venue and time must be issued to all interested parties at least two weeks prior to holding meeting.
  3. AGM – EGM format, see 6.1 and Appointment Procedure 3.
  4. Announcement of the newly elected committees first meeting (PC) to be held within two – three weeks from the AGM date (first week back after October holidays.)

1. **CONDUCT**
   1. If a PC member acts in a way that is considered by the majority to be undermining the objective of the PC and PF. A two – third majority is required to terminate their membership/ post.
   2. A letter in such circumstances (7.1) will be sent confirming the Parent Council decision to terminate their membership.