

# Parentkind

Bringing together home & school

## Committee roles and responsibilities

### Committee structure

The key elements of the structure of the association are the:

- constitution (governing document)
- members
- committee
- trustees

### Constitution

All associations need a constitution. This is a document which establishes the fundamental rules by which the association is governed and describes:

- the aims of the association and its powers
- its membership
- the size of the committee and how members are elected
- the need for an annual audit/independent examination as best practice
- annual general meeting and committee meeting

It is good practice to adopt a constitution at the outset or as soon as you are aware that your association does not have one. Parentkind has produced a model constitution for its members in England and Wales which has been accepted by the Charity Commission; we have also produced a version for our members in Northern Ireland, which is recognised by [Charity Commission for Northern Ireland](#).

### Members

The type of association your school has or wishes to establish will depend on its membership:

- in a Parents' Association (PA) members are limited to parents, carers and guardians of pupils currently at the school
- in a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or Home School Association (HSA) members are limited to the above plus the teaching and non-teaching staff currently employed by the school
- in any other association, such as a Friends of, Parent, Teacher and Friends Association (PTFA) or Community Association (CA), the members may be those described above plus any persons over the age of 18 wishing to offer appropriate support or help to the

school/association who is deemed suitable as a member by the Committee e.g. grandparents, members of the local community. Anyone that wishes to be considered as a member still need to be approved by the committee. The committee should keep a list of these persons so they can be invited to meetings. Those approved are also eligible to be nominated and elected for a committee role.

It is important that the definition of membership is clear in your constitution. Members are not legally responsible for the actions of the association. It is only the elected committee members who are legally responsible for the management of the association.

## Committee

A committee is a team of volunteers who are elected at the association's Annual General Meeting (AGM) to manage the association on behalf of the members. The current elected committee are equally legally responsible for running the association and its property and funds.

There are two types of committee member, Officer and Ordinary Committee member. Officers have specific roles such as [Chair](#), [Treasurer](#) or [Secretary](#). [Ordinary Committee Members](#) play a vital role working alongside and supporting the Officers. All elected committee members have equal voting rights, with the exception of the Chair, who has an additional casting vote, should this be needed. Some associations choose to have Co or Joint positions, such as Co-Chairs/Joint-Chair. It is important to decide at the beginning of the meeting who is the Chair for that meeting. That person will then have the casting vote if needed. Co-Chairs/Joint-Chairs should take it in turns to chair meetings.

It is normal for the size of the committee to vary, depending on the size of the school. The minimum number with which it is possible to operate is two; usually a Chair and a Treasurer. There is no restriction on the maximum number of committee members. However, it is in the association's interest not to make a committee too large, as this may prove to be unmanageable.

Please check your own constitution for your associations' minimum committee requirements and who may have a deciding vote, as these may vary.

## Additional support

In addition to the elected committee, it is valuable to have a list of volunteers/helpers, who are willing to support the work of the committee. Volunteers/helpers and any automatic members are welcome to attend open PTA meetings. Being a volunteer can be a gentle introduction to the PTA, many volunteers go on to being elected committee members.

## Trustees

If your association is a registered charity all the elected committee members (Officers and Ordinary) automatically become Trustees of the association (charity) and have a legal duty to ensure that the association (charity) acts lawfully and is managed properly. A [Trustee Eligibility Declaration form](#) should also be signed by the elected committee and kept as an internal

document to show your association have done their due diligence in making sure all elected committee members/ trustees are both eligible and suitable to act as trustees of your charity.

Whilst Trustees have a legal duty it is important to remember that all decisions should be made collectively by the committee. No one individual should take sole responsibility for a committee decision or activity.

Committee members and trustees are the same people. You should not have anyone on the committee that is not listed as a trustee and you should not have trustees that are not current elected committee members. You should update your trustee list with the Charity Commission after each committee change. If your association is in England or Wales you can contact the Charity Commission to check if your association is already a registered charity. If your PTA is in Northern Ireland, you can check your charitable status with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

Fast track charity registration is available to Parentkind members (England and Wales) who have adopted the Parentkind Model Constitution without change and have not previously registered.

## **Useful contacts**

[Charity Commission for England and Wales](#) 0300 066 9197. The Charity Commission helpline is open Monday-Friday 9am to 5pm.

[Charity Commission for Northern Ireland](#) 0283 832 0220 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

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