

Thriplow Primary School PTA Policies and Procedures

Introduction

Welcome to our school. This policy and procedure has been compiled by the PTA for its members, active members of the committee and Trustees. It gives more in-depth explanation about the PTA, safety and procedural policies which are required for Charity organisations. If you have any questions that remain unanswered, please contact one of the committee members (Chairman, Treasurer or Secretary) via the school office or speak to a member of school staff.

Why do we have a PTA?

We are fortunate at our school to have a PTA that is and has been an integral part of the school community for many years (originally registered with the Charities Commission in 2002). In its time the PTA has raised thousands of pounds, which has been spent on equipment and resources to enhance our children's education and whole school experience as well as the school's facilities.

Our PTA is about much more than simply fundraising. The PTA exists to provide closer links between home and school and it is an excellent way to bring staff, parents and friends together socially in support of the school, working towards a common goal. It is fun too and a great way to get to know other parents and make friends - just ask any of the Committee members or PTA helpers!! Obviously, as in any organisation, we have experienced some challenges but with the continued support of parents and staff, our PTA has always succeeded in its efforts.

All parents and members of the school community are encouraged to get involved, even if they only have a small amount of time available. All families are automatically members of the Thriplow School PTA when their child joins our school.

The Thriplow School PTA is extremely conscious of the ethos and diversity of our school, and we try very hard when organising and planning events to respect this. Not all of our events are run as fundraisers. The PTA financially assists events aiming to give the children extra learning opportunities and experiences both at school and on school trips.

Charitable status

Charity law requires voluntary organisations such as ours with an annual income in excess of £5,000 to register with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. As a charity we must abide by Charity Commission rules and regulations and we are bound by a governing document referred to as our constitution. Our constitution sets out the rules about how we operate as a PTA and how we conduct ourselves financially as well as an entity. If you would like to see a copy of the constitution, please contact a Committee Member or the school office. Our Charity Commission number is 1084152. Being a registered charity enables the PTA to:-

- receive charitable donations from local and national companies

- apply to grant-making charitable trusts; most charitable trusts will give grants only to groups formally recognised as charities
- receive donations made through payroll giving and company matched giving schemes
- apply for Gift Aid

We are also required to file appropriate accounts annually and these can be viewed online via the Charity Commission website.

Links with the local community

We have, over time, developed strong links with the local community and are always well supported by residents, businesses and other local charities, for which we are very grateful. Many of our businesses and local shops are very generous providing donations for raffle prizes, auction items etc.

We are also extremely grateful to the local businesses who have participated in charity matched giving schemes and donations.

As a school, Thriplow Primary is actively involved in the Daffodil weekend, providing space for stalls and tea rooms and running the school tea room with parent and teacher volunteers across the whole weekend. Whilst our commitment to the Daffodil weekend reflects the community-spirit which is so central to the school's ethos, as a school, we have been extremely grateful for the numerous grants awarded to the school by the Daffodil Committee for essential facilities such as a mini-bus, new playground equipment and so forth. This has made a huge difference to our fundraising efforts and we hope this close relationship will continue for the foreseeable future.

Role of the Committee

Our PTA committee consists of three Officers: Chair or Co-Chairs, Treasurer and Secretary all of whom are trustees as well as three other members. This is a minimum requirement for a charity however there are active PTA members who form other dedicated branches such as the bi-annual ball Committee which is the main PTA fundraiser and the Cornerstone Committee which was formed to raise funds for two new classrooms at the school.

The Committee meet on a regular basis usually once per term, with smaller working groups meeting as necessary when we are planning larger events.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Our Annual General Meeting is held in the spring term and provides an opportunity for all parents to come along and hear in more detail about the work of the PTA, the events we have run, the funds we have raised and how the money has been spent. It is also the occasion when we elect our new committee members.

Support from Parentkind (formally PTA-UK)

Our PTA is a member of Parentkind, which is a national charity and membership organisation for Parent Teacher Associations. We pay an annual membership fee which gives us lots of member benefits including comprehensive insurance cover for all PTA run events, support and advice on running the PTA plus fundraising ideas and good practice hints and tips. As all families are members of the PTA when joining the school, all families can benefit from Parentkind services.

How we raise money

Like most PTAs, the majority of our funds are raised through the events that we run. Some of our most popular events are:

- Christmas cards/ tea towels
- Ice cream sales/ cake sales
- Quiz
- Welcome drinks at school events (nativity, summer production, sports day etc)
- Movie Nights
- Discos

So you can see there is always something going on!

We always try and respond to the children's requests via the School council; it is great to see them having fun at the events or enjoying using a piece of new equipment that the PTA has donated.

We raise money in other ways too. Donations from parents are extremely important. You can donate time, money, items for sale, raffle prizes and auction lots or offers of services and skills.

We are also in the process of offering Gift Aid.

How we spend the money we raise

Following a fundraising event the money is banked straight away. It is at our PTA Trustee meetings, that the decisions on how to spend the money are agreed.

Usually, our Head of School will have a consultation with the children and staff to discuss items that the school would like the PTA to consider funding.

At other times it will be for resources to improve a particular area of the curriculum or school environment. The PTA usually subsidises school trips to make them more affordable for parents and thereby more inclusive. The PTA funds are spent on the 'extras' that are not provided by the school's budget, thus making our children's learning experiences so much more fulfilling and exciting.

We always endeavour to spend our funds in ways that will benefit all our children across all areas of the school and curriculum. Many of the resources purchased; interactive whiteboard screen and the library have a direct link to the School's Vision.

The money we raise is usually spent fairly quickly. That way, you can be sure that in supporting our school, your child/ren will feel the benefit, along with everybody else. Of course there will be times when we may have to fundraise for a large project in the future and at this time, that is the Cornerstone Classroom Project which is currently raising £350,000 to create two new classrooms including a dedicated STEM facility, a music room, Library and SEN room, Staff Room, Open Plan Project Area and Cloak Room. The PTA is clear, however, that despite the need to raise funds for Cornerstone, there is a continued duty to support the children and their everyday learning experiences and therefore the PTA and the Cornerstone funds are held separately and events are clearly advertised as to which cause they are supporting.

Gift Aid

If you are a UK tax payer, we are able to claim 20p in every pound that you donate to our PTA for events that are for sponsorship only. There are strict guidelines as to what can be claimed and further information is found on HMRC website.

A form for an event will have a tick box option to donate and your name and address will be required. This can then be applied on mass at the end of every 3 years or so and the donation received. HMRC prefer to deal with hundreds of pounds rather than tens of pounds for Gift Aid reimbursement.

Company matched giving

Company matched giving is very simple. Companies or businesses pledge to donate to a charity such as ourselves an amount of money relating to the amount that an employee(s) donates or fundraises for us. We have been helped enormously in the past by this type of donation, and there are several benefits to both ourselves and the company involved:

- employees' morale is boosted by having their efforts supported by their employer
- the company benefits from having charitable donations written off against taxable profits
- the company can endeavour to get publicity for their giving
- our PTA benefits from receiving perhaps double what we have raised at an event

If you think that your employer has a matched giving scheme already in operation, or if you would like some more information about charity matched giving or setting up a scheme in your workplace, please talk to one of the PTA committee members, or ask in the school office.

How we get information to you

- All PTA letters are sent via the school email or the PTA email with hard copies available for those not on the internet. The letters include information on forthcoming events and dates plus requests for assistance, when we are planning large events.
- PTA events are posted on the PTA notice board, which is situated in the school grounds by the gate.

- We also use the PTA Facebook page
- Reminders are included in the school's weekly newsletter.

How you can get involved

There are lots of ways you can help and support your child through the PTA.

Offering to help before events or at other times during the year is so valuable. It doesn't matter if you can't help on a regular basis, or even if you cannot come into school. There are always jobs that can be done from home if you have half an hour to spare e.g. wrapping gifts, preparing raffle tickets etc. We really couldn't achieve what we do without the behind the scenes help that we receive.

If you would like to be more involved you can volunteer to be a Committee Member or active member. Or you can simply support the AGM and give us your ideas for fundraising events. This is also the time to ask questions or voice your opinion.

You can help by letting us know if you have any contacts or skills we could use, everything is potentially valuable to us.

If either or both parents complete the Gift Aid declaration form, your donations will be worth a lot more to us.

And finally, we are always extremely grateful to receive donations as mentioned before.

A Message from the Head Teacher

The PTA helps to ensure that Thriplow School is a nurturing, dynamic and aspirational community, by raising funds to benefit the children's education and by providing social events for children and adults. It is a vitally important organisation, that truly makes a difference to our children's lives.

Victoria Penty, Executive Headteacher, January 2020

A Message from the PTA Committee/Trustees

We hope you now know a little more about your Parent Teacher Association and policies. On behalf of all the pupils we would like to thank you for your very valuable support which enriches their learning experience and makes their time in school so enjoyable.

Paul Joghee, PTA Chair, January 2020

Appendix 1: PTA Safeguarding Policy Statement and Guide for Members

1. The health and safety of all children is of paramount importance. Parents send their children to school each day with the expectation that school provides a secure environment in which their children can flourish. In order to do this, a wide range of measures and policies are put in place by Thriplow Primary School. These are all available to view on the school website. The PTA support and abide by these policies.
2. The Thriplow Primary School Safeguarding Policy is updated on an annual basis and approved by the Governing Body.
3. The Designated Safeguarding Leader (DSL) is Mrs Victoria Penty. The governors responsible for safeguarding is Mrs Katherine Martin.
4. Thriplow Primary School PTA will ensure that we prioritise child safeguarding at every event that is held. We will complete a risk assessment which will be reviewed and approved by the school. This risk assessment will consider the safeguarding element.
5. All members of the PTA that visit school during the working day will adopt and follow school policies for signing in at the school office and other safeguarding procedures.
6. All PTA members are aware that any concerns regarding events they witness or are concerned about should be raised with the PTA Chairs and DSL immediately. It is crucial that PTA members recognise the importance of sharing information confidentially. Support will be offered if needed.
7. First Aid arrangements will be included as part of the risk assessment for any event. Should a child be injured or taken unwell during an event. The Lead PTA member will liaise with school staff to agree whether a parent/carer needs to be contacted to advise or collect the child or whether further medical attention is required.

Safeguarding and volunteer checks

PTAs have a duty of care to consider the safety and well-being of children and vulnerable adults, so make sure this is considered when risk assessing your event.

Who can be checked?

Not all people who have contact with children are required to have a DBS check. It will depend on how often they have contact with children and whether that contact is considered regulated activity.

How do we ask for a DBS check?

Ask at the school office for a volunteering pack. There is an online application form and details of the Identification paperwork which needs to be supplied.

Safeguarding is the primary concern of all events organised.

Appendix 2: Members Code of Conduct

A safe community is obtained not only through the use of written rules and consequences but is derived from a nurturing atmosphere in which all individuals are treated with respect and compassion. Our school community consist of staff, children and parents learning together in an environment in which each person feels safe, valued, respected and stimulated. This guide should be viewed as a means to strengthen our community of learners. It describes the basic expectations for behaviour, as well as the rules and consequences at PTA sponsored activities. The guide begins with the Members' Rights and Responsibilities, followed by School Rules and Guidelines for Behaviour at PTA Functions. **Throughout this document the word "members" refers to the children, staff and parents within our school community.**

Members' Rights and Responsibilities

- Members have the right to be treated with compassion and respect. They have the responsibility to be respectful of and sensitive to the feelings of others.
- Members have the right to be themselves. They have the responsibility to treat each other with fairness, courtesy and respect, because each is different from the other and each is special.
- Members have the right to be safe both physically and emotionally. They have the responsibility to maintain the safety of others.
- Members have the right to be heard. They have the responsibility to listen to the ideas of others and to communicate calmly and clearly.
- Members have the right to communicate together. They have the responsibility to use technologies (including social networking sites) responsibly by not disrespecting any other member or the school.
- Members have the right to expect that their personal and communal property will be safe and secure. They have the responsibility to respect the school building, school equipment, other members' property and their own personal belongings.
- Members have the right to learn about themselves. They may express their feelings and opinions appropriately without being interrupted. They have the responsibility to respect the feelings and opinions of others.
- Active members involved in events are asked to ensure the safety of children as a priority and retain an appropriate level of confidentiality i.e. we don't talk about other peoples children or their behaviour.

School Rules and Guidelines for Behaviour at PTA Functions

The children will:

- Keep hands, feet and other objects to themselves.
- Show respect for all adults and other pupils by their words and actions, and listen carefully to directions when they are given.

- Respect school and personal property.
- Refrain from name calling, using inappropriate language or teasing others.
- Not engage in activities that may injure others whether intentional or unintentional.

What happens if a child behaves unacceptably at a PTA sponsored function?

Adult Responsibilities:

- It is the right and responsibility of active PTA members attending a PTA function to verbally correct, or to report to the event coordinator, any misbehaviour by any pupil or parent that occurs at that specific PTA event.
- Parents/carers attending PTA sponsored functions with their children are expected to assume responsibility for their children's and their own behaviour and safety.
- Parents/carers unable to accompany their children to PTA sponsored functions are expected to designate or identify an adult who will be present and who will assume responsibility for their children's behaviour and safety. In the case of a school Disco, those present representing the PTA will assume this responsibility.
- The corrective action taken by the adult may range from simple verbal reprimand to suggesting the pupil have a short time out to calm down. If the behaviour is significant it will result in immediately contacting the child's parent/carer. The parent/carer will be expected to remove the child from the event. At any subsequent events a child may then need to be accompanied 1 to 1 by a supervising adult or be excluded from attending future PTA sponsored functions.

Significant Severe Behaviour:

- Wilfully endangering yourself or others.
- Wilfully destroying property.
- Wilful disobedience of adults attending PTA functions.
- Engages in abusive language or behaviour.

Events held within School grounds – Safety and Risk Assessment

The A frame is considered an area of increased risk and should be monitored when in use and so at some PTA events this may be out of bounds or used as a supervised fundraising activity. If designated as out of bounds any child using this equipment will do so at their own risk and could be asked to leave.

All PTA run events will have a comprehensive Risk Assessment which will be approved by the PTA prior to the event. The Risk Assessment will include health & safety, safeguarding, supervisions levels and first aid arrangements.

Before the start of any event a short briefing will be held to ensure that all PTA members/helpers understand their role and responsibilities, safeguarding , Health & Safety and who to go to if they have any concerns or need help, the location of the first aider and kit will be clearly identified. This will also include information about which senior leaders are available and who is the DSL.

Appendix 3: Complaints Policy

1. This is a procedure if there is a complaint against the Thriplow School PTA (PTA).
2. Thriplow School has its own complaints procedure. See school website for details.
3. The PTA defines a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction about the PTA's action or lack of action or about the standard of a service provided. A complaint can be written or verbal.
4. A complaint is not:
 - a request for service (such as the PTA not holding enough events)
 - a request for information or an explanation of PTA policy (such as why the PTA charges an amount for an event)

These issues will not be treated under the complaints procedure but instead can be addressed as seen fit by the PTA Chairperson.

Making a complaint about the PTA

1. If you feel that the PTA has failed to meet its requirements and you want to complain in the first instance you should contact the Chair (Co-Chairs) of the PTA.
2. If the complaint received by the PTA is in respect of the Chair, the complaint should be referred to the Secretary and Treasurer. If it is about all three Trustees it should be reported to the Head of School.
3. The PTA would expect that the vast majority of all complaints you have about the service from the PTA could be resolved at the first point of contact. You are encouraged to contact the PTA to let the PTA know of any problems and give the PTA the opportunity to put it right as soon as the PTA can.
4. If, after you have contacted the Chair, you are still not satisfied or the issue has not been resolved, then you have the right to raise the matter with the school. You can do this by contacting the school office and asking to speak to the Head of School. You may be asked to put your concerns in writing