



## **CONSTITUTION OF THE SOUTHSIDE MONTESSORI SCHOOL PARENTS AND FRIENDS GROUP**

### **1. NAME**

The name is the Southside Montessori School Parents and Friends Group (the "P&F").

### **2. PURPOSE**

#### **2.1. What is the purpose of the P&F?**

The P&F recognises and values the role that parents/carers play in the education of their children and aims to strengthen a partnership based on mutual trust and respect between family, School and the wider community for the benefit of their children's overall development and learning.

#### **2.2. How will the P&F do this?**

The P&F will endeavour to do this by:

- a) Enlisting the cooperation of the parents and other interested parties ("Friends") of the School's students in all matters which concern the welfare of the School;
- b) Building a friendly and welcoming community which seeks to involve all its members;
- c) Working collaboratively with and reporting to the School Principal, and provide a parental perspective to assist the Principal in decision making;
- d) Raising funds to provide resources and opportunities to enrich the learning environment and to advance the interests of the School;
- e) Fostering awareness and parent education regarding Montessori philosophy and support parents/carers in their parental responsibilities to nurture their children's true potential;
- f) Acting as a mechanism for representing parents when it is appropriate to do so;
- g) Pursuing projects or undertakings for the welfare or benefit of the School;
- h) Fostering and coordinating parent interest groups to support co-curricular activities of the School;

- i) Providing a forum for interested parties who are not current parents (or members of the Southside Montessori Society) to remain connected and involved with the School;
- j) Promoting social interaction between parents of the School including new parents;

### **3.LIMITATION**

#### **Are there any restrictions on the P&F?**

- 3.1. The P&F has no legal identity separate from the School. It is a consultative body established under the auspices of the Principal, who is responsible for carrying out the policies and directives of the Board of Southside Montessori Society.
- 3.2. The P&F has no authority in the day-to-day operation or management of the School.
- 3.3. The P&F shall seek the consent of the Principal for activities that affect the School property and its use.

### **4.MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Who can be a member of the P&F?**

Members of the P&F are:

- 4.1. All parents/carers of pupils attending the School for the period their children's enrolment at the School.
- 4.2. Current members of the Southside Montessori Society.
- 4.3. Friends of the School who are interested in furthering the purpose of the P&F, as admitted by the Executive Committee.
- 4.4. The Principal shall be an ex-officio member.

#### **What does membership entail?**

- 4.5. No entrance fee or annual subscription shall be payable for membership of the P&F.
- 4.6. Members may pay a voluntary levy per term as per clause 11.2 (c).
- 4.7. Only members of the P&F are entitled to vote at general meetings and to stand for election as an elected member of the Executive Committee.

### **5.MANAGEMENT**

#### **5.1. What is the Executive Committee?**

- a) The Executive Committee is the group responsible for the management of the P&F.
- b) The Executive Committee, which will consist of a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 11 members, always comprises the President, Secretary, Treasurer, and wherever possible comprises Vice President, Parent Liaison

representative, representative of past students, together with the ex-officio members and others members elected at the last General Meeting of the year.

- c) The Principal is an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee.
- d) The Executive Committee has the power to make decisions at Executive Committee Meetings on behalf of the P&F when appropriate and within the limits of clause 11.3 (c) (allocation of funds).

## 5.2. **What are the responsibilities of the Executive Committee?**

The Executive Committee is responsible for:

- a) Organising an appropriate induction process for members;
- b) Identifying and using opportunities that promote the purpose of the P&F;
- c) Ensuring that the P&F works collaboratively and co-operatively with the Principal;
- d) Ensuring the P&F's financial accountability (see clause 11 Funds);
- e) Organising General Meetings (see clause 10.1 Meetings);
- f) Setting up and supervising Sub-Committees that assist with the work of the P&F (see clause 12 Sub-Committees);
- g) Keeping the School Board apprised of progress by means of the School Principal.

## 5.3. **How does the Executive Committee work?**

The Executive Committee shall meet when appropriate with the Principal or Principal's nominee for the effective planning & management of the P&F as per clause 10.3 (Executive Committee Meetings).

## 5.4. **Indemnity - can members of the P&F be held liable?**

The Executive Committee of the P&F or any person or persons assisting them acting bona fide in the discharge of their respective duties shall be and are hereby indemnified.

# 6. DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

## 6.1. **What is the role of the President?**

### **The President:**

- a) Provides leadership and direction for the P&F by working co-operatively and collaboratively with the Principal and/or his/her nominee;
- b) Promotes the purpose of the P&F in dealings with its members;
- c) Supports the Executive Committee members;
- d) Presides at all meetings or, if absent, nominates another member of the Executive Committee to preside;
- e) Ensures the efficient running of meetings;

- f) Prepares the agenda for all meetings in consultation with the Executive Committee;
- g) Ensures that Minutes of the previous meeting are endorsed as being an accurate record of what took place;
- h) Prepares and presents the Annual President's Report of the P&F.

**6.2. What is the role of the vice President?**

**The Vice President:**

- a) Assists the President in any duties as required;
- b) Takes responsibility for the efficient running of the P&F at the direction of the President.

**6.3. What is the role of the Secretary?**

**The Secretary:**

- a) Manages the day-to-day communications and records of the P&F;
- b) Organises meetings, records accurate Draft Minutes, including resolutions and proceedings of each meeting together with a record of all attendees, in a style agreed upon by the Executive Committee;
- c) Receives and deals with correspondence in a manner agreed upon by the Executive Committee;
- d) Maintains copies of Minutes and such correspondence as is appropriate;
- e) Receives agenda items as in clause 10.1 (c) (Meetings);
- f) Ensures that regular communication to parents occurs via the School newsletter, website and by separate notice, as approved by the Principal or his/her nominee;
- g) Keep custody of all books, documents and securities of the P&F;
- h) Passes on records, in good order, to the incoming Secretary;

**6.4. What is the role of the Treasurer?**

**The Treasurer:**

- a) Is responsible for ensuring that all the financial dealings of the P&F are carried out in accordance with clauses 11.3;
- b) Receives all monies and keeps appropriate financial records with full details of all receipts and expenditure connected with the activities of the P&F;
- c) Summarises the financial records referred to in a simple ledger updated monthly and available for inspection by members, the School book keeper, Treasurer of the School Board and by the School Auditor if requested;
- d) Communicates with the Treasurer of the School Board regarding shared interests and for receipt of advice and assistance;
- e) Passes on records, in good order, to the incoming Treasurer.

## **7. ELECTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **How will elections be conducted?**

- 7.1. The members of this P&F shall elect the Executive Committee at the last General Meeting of the year (see clause 10.1) before the beginning of December.
- 7.2. A notice for nominations shall be published in the School newsletter, website and by separate notice to members at least 4 weeks before the last General Meeting.
- 7.3. Nominations must be received signed by a proposer, seconder and nominee at least 14 days prior to the last General Meeting.
- 7.4. The names of all nominees must be published in the School newsletter, website and by separate notice to all members.
- 7.5. Candidates for the Executive Committee are to be nominated and seconded. If the nominations received do not exceed the number of notices the person chairing the last General Meeting shall declare the persons nominated to be elected. If there are a greater number of candidates than required, an election is to be held by secret ballot and shall be decided by simple majority.
- 7.6. Candidates for President should preferably have previous service on the Executive Committee or active participation on other P&F Committees.
- 7.7. The returning Executive Committee member for any election is the Principal (or nominee).
- 7.8. Any vacancy on the Executive Committee may be filled by appointment of a P&F member by the Executive Committee and the member so appointed may continue in office up to and including the last General Meeting of the year.
- 7.9. The names of the persons elected shall be published in the School newsletter, website and by separate notice to all members.

## **8. RE-ELECTION**

### **Can Executive Committee members be re-elected?**

- 8.1. Each member shall remain on the P&F Executive Committee until the last General Meeting of the year next after the date of their election at which time they are eligible for re-election.
- 8.2. With the exception of the Principal, Executive Committee members may not serve continuously for a period exceeding six years.

## **9. TERMINATION OF OFFICE**

### **Can positions be terminated?**

- 9.1. The position of any Executive Committee member absent from any two consecutive General Meetings without reasonable cause may be declared vacant.
- 9.2. Providing due notice of a motion specifying the grounds for removal has first been given, a member of the Executive Committee may be removed from

office by resolution of the P&F carried out at a General Meeting or Special General Meeting.

## **10. MEETINGS**

Regular meetings facilitate the achievement of the purpose of the P&F to discuss, consult, plan, share information, decide, act and work.

### **How will the P&F meet?**

#### **10.1. General Meetings**

- a) General Meetings include Special Meetings.
- b) The Executive Committee will organise a General Meeting at least once every School term.
- c) The Executive Committee shall prepare the agenda and finalise arrangements prior to each General Meeting.
- d) The first General Meeting is to be held by the end of March and the last General Meeting before the beginning of December.
- e) Notice of meeting shall be given via the School newsletter, website and by separate notice 21 days prior if a special resolution is proposed, or 14 days prior in any other case, and shall indicate the need for members to send agenda items, in writing, to the Secretary 5 week days prior to the meeting.
- f) A quorum for a General Meeting shall be six (6) members and three (3) Executive Committee members.
- g) A special resolution is carried if at least three-quarters of members present vote in favour of it and any other resolution is carried if a simple majority of members present vote in favour of it.
- h) The President is entitled to chair all meetings or in his/her absence the Vice President may take the chair. In the absence of the President and Vice President the members present may elect one of their number to act as chair.
- i) A period of fifteen minutes is to be allowed before a General Meeting is cancelled.
- j) No meeting is to continue beyond two hours unless a two-thirds majority of those present agree to an extension.
- k) All meetings shall be conducted in accordance with standard meeting procedures. In the case of a tied vote the chairperson shall exercise a casting vote.
- l) The order of business is as follows, unless the majority of those present agree to change it or the Executive Committee agree to change it during the prior Executive Committee Meeting:
  - Welcome
  - Record of Attendance and Apologies
  - Confirmation and acceptance of the Minutes of previous meeting
  - Business arising from those Minutes

- Correspondence: incoming & outgoing
- Reports
- Matters arising from Executive Committee Meeting (includes Motions proposed)
- Guest Speaker and/or Discussion Session on nominated topic
- Matters for Future Consideration
- Confirmation of next meeting date
- Conclusion

## 10.2. **Special Meetings**

### **What is a Special General Meeting?**

A Special General Meeting is a mechanism for supporting the continued operation of the P&F in unusual circumstances.

### **What is involved in calling a Special General Meeting?**

- a) A Special General Meeting can be called on the authority of the Executive Committee or on written request to the Executive Committee of six (6) individual families being members of the P&F.
- b) A Special General Meeting must be held within 28 days of the request being appropriately registered or, if that 28 day period expires on a date which is not within a school term, within 14 days of the commencement of the next school term.
- c) At least seven (7) days notice of the Special General Meeting shall be given on a prior School newsletter, website and by separate notice. The object of the meeting shall be clearly stated.
- d) A Special General Meeting can also be called on the authority of the Principal in the event of there not being an appropriately constituted Executive Committee or if, in the opinion of the Principal, the P&F is not fulfilling its purpose.
- e) The only business that may be discussed at a Special General Meeting is the business set out in the notice of the meeting.

## 10.3. **Executive Committee Meetings**

- a) Executive Committee Meetings are additional meetings of the Executive Committee members only for the purpose of carrying out their responsibilities and ensuring the purpose of the P&F is fulfilled. The Executive Committee will decide the frequency of the Executive Committee Meetings.
- b) The Executive Committee Meeting must comprise half of the Executive Committee plus one.

## **11. FUNDS**

### **11.1. How are priorities for fundraising determined?**

- a) The P&F will work with the Principal to examine the specific needs of the School, in accordance with the purposes of the P&F, agree on a list of needs and set fund raising targets.

- b) Priorities for ratification for the upcoming school year will be determined at the first General Meeting each year.
- c) If new needs arise or priorities change, the Executive Committee will continue to consult with the Principal to agree on fundraising priorities and decisions will be presented at General Meetings.

#### **11.2. How are funds raised?**

- a) The Executive Committee develops a strategy for fundraising that considers the community's ability to raise funds. The proposals are presented to a General Meeting for discussion and approval.
- b) The P&F will design, advertise and run fundraising events.
- c) Members may pay a voluntary levy per term, charged with the School fees and approved at a General Meeting. Intended changes to the levy may be made at a General Meeting.

#### **11.3. How are funds to be managed?**

- a) All funds raised by or on behalf of the P&F will be deposited promptly and fully intact into the School's bank account under a separate entry in the School's books;
- b) Full records of all monies received and expenditure incurred in connection with activities of the P&F must be kept.
- c) Monies required for fundraising events will be obtained in cash or by cheque from the School office out of the P&F funds, upon verbal request of the P&F President, Vice-President, Secretary or Treasurer.
- d) At the end of the school year, the P&F will retain a proportion of any remaining funds as seed money for the following year. The remaining funds will be given to the School for use on specific agreed upon projects (as per clause 11.1). The proportion to be retained will be decided by the Executive Committee.
- e) Records of monies received and monies spent will be available for audit as at 31 December each year by the School's Auditor.

#### **11.4. How are funds allocated and spent?**

- a) Funds raised by the P&F are to be allocated and dispersed solely for the needs and priorities agreed upon by the P&F and Principal as per clause 11.1.
- b) In exceptional circumstances, funds may be used for purposes other than those previously agreed, only upon consultation and agreement between the Executive Committee and the Principal.
- c) If an agreement cannot be reached in case of 11.4 b), the principal shall have the final say.

#### **11.5. What power shall the P&F have regarding assets?**

Solely for furthering the purposes of the P&F set out above (clause 2), the P&F shall have the power:

- a) To manage monies allocated to the P&F;



- b) To carry out activities.
- c) To act as trustee and to accept and to hold upon trust real and personal property.
- d) To take any gift of property.

**11.6. Assets and income are for the benefit of the School only**

The assets and income of the P&F are not held for the benefit of the members but for the benefit and welfare of the School. No portion may be distributed, paid or transferred directly or indirectly to or amongst members except as compensation for services actually rendered or out of pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the P&F.

**11.7. Property and Income**

The assets and income of the P&F are not held for the benefit of the members but for the benefit and welfare of the School. No portion may be distributed paid or transferred directly or indirectly to or amongst members except as compensation for services actually rendered or out of pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the P&F.

**12. SUB-COMMITTEES**

**12.1. How do Sub-Committees operate?**

- a) The P&F may set up Sub-Committees to carry out particular functions on its behalf. These Sub-Committees are to have specific Terms of Reference and are to report their operations to the Executive Committee. Where possible, they should include at least one member of the Executive Committee.
- b) After paying expenses (receipted) of their operations, the balance of funds of above Sub-Committees are remitted to the funds of the P&F as soon as it is practical to do so.
- c) The P&F Treasurer is responsible for the receiving, banking and reconciliation of all funds raised by the committees.

**13. NOTICES**

**How can notices be given to the Executive Committee?**

Unless otherwise provided, any notice to be given to an Executive Committee member may be given in writing delivered to the member in hard copy or by email. Any notice given is deemed to be delivered on acknowledgement of receipt by email or handed to the member.

**14. AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION**

**14.1. How can changes be made to this Constitution?**

The Constitution may only be changed by a resolution accepted by at least three quarters of those present at a General Meeting or Special General Meeting and only if:

- a) Notice in writing of the proposed amendment and of the intention to propose it as a special resolution is included in the notice of the meeting
- b) Notice in writing of intention to propose amendments has been delivered to the Secretary no less than 28 days prior to the meeting at which such amendments are to be considered or has been given at a previous General Meeting
- c) The proposed amendment has been published via the School newsletter, website and by separate notice, and
- d) The proposed amendment has been approved by Southside Montessori Society Board of Directors.

## **15. DISSOLUTION**

### **15.1. How might the P&F be dissolved?**

- a) The P&F is automatically dissolved if the School closes down or if Southside Montessori Society is wound up for any reason.
- b) The P&F can be dissolved following a Special General Meeting. This can be called in accordance with clause 10.3 specifically for the purpose of providing an opportunity for the School community to discuss dissolving the P&F. At least three-quarters of the members present must vote in favour of the resolution to dissolve the P&F for the motion to be carried.
- c) In certain serious circumstances where it is judged that the functions of the P&F are at variance with the vision and mission of the School, the Board of Southside Montessori Society may intervene and dissolve the operations of the P&F.

### **15.2. What happens to assets, records and funds on dissolution?**

After all expenses and liabilities are paid:

- a) Where the School is closed under clause 15.1 (a), the remaining assets, records and funds shall be handled in the same manner as all other funds of the Southside Montessori Society;
- b) Where the P&F is dissolved under clause 15.1 (b) or 15.1 (c), the remaining assets, records and funds shall be handed over to Southside Montessori Society.

**15<sup>th</sup> September 2014**