

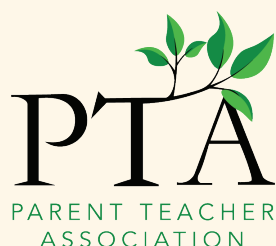


PARENT AND TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (PTA)

CHARTER AND CONSTITUTION



As Amended and Approved by Vote of the Members and SLT
September 2024



Using this handbook

These guidelines have been developed in consultation with members of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), the Leadership Team of the British International School, Istanbul (BIS).

In this publication both new and experienced PTA members will find information and guidance to assist with the establishment and smooth running of the BIS Parent Teacher Association. PTA members of the BIS must conduct their business in accordance with these guidelines.

It is recommended that PTA members discuss these guidelines, so that they have a shared understanding of the important partnership role the PTA plays in the school.

BIS Parent Teacher Association

First edition 2022

PTA Guiding Statements

- To welcome all families in the school community, helping them stay connected to each other and to the school;
- to create a communication ground for parents, students, teachers, and the school;
- and to add some fun to the school year for the BIS community.

The PTA is led by a PTA Committee, made up of dedicated, volunteering parents, Senior Leadership Team members and teachers. Together, all the BIS Community help make the events, activities and correct directives for parents seeking help and advice happen, and they won't happen without everyone's support.

PTA Values

- **Collaboration:** We will work in partnership with a wide array of individuals and organizations to broaden and enhance our ability to serve and advocate for all children and families.
- **Commitment:** We are dedicated to children's educational success, health, and well-being through strong family and community engagement, while remaining accountable to the principles upon which our association was founded.
- **Diversity:** We acknowledge the potential of everyone without regard, including but not limited to: age, culture, economic status, educational background, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, legal status, marital status, mental ability, national origin, organizational position, parental status, physical ability, political philosophy, race, religion, sexual orientation, and work experience.
- **Respect:** We value the individual contributions of members, employees, volunteers, and partners as we work collaboratively to achieve our association's goals.
- **Accountability:** All members, employees, volunteers, and partners have a shared responsibility to align their efforts toward the achievement of our association's strategic initiatives.



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Chapter 1—PTA Charter Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Charter

1. The PTA is a highly valued organization that exists to support ongoing school events and the BIS community via fundraising and awareness campaigns. The PTA is led by the Committee which is made up of:

- a. Chair (Parent with at least 3 years of affiliation with the school)
- b. School Director
- c. Vice-Chair (Parent)
- d. Secretary (Parent or Teacher)
- e. Treasurer
- f. Members of the school's Senior Management Team International and National
- g. Teacher representative from primary and secondary
- h. Subcommittees if and when required

2. The PTA shall endeavour to:

- a. Raise the profile of the school, its students, staff and Board via event leadership, internal and external communications, and fundraising;
- b. Support the school, its students, faculty, administration and the Board in all its endeavours both publicly and during PTA meetings;
- c. Strive sincerely to continuously improve relationships and work as a team with one another and the leadership of BIS;
- d. Seek agreement with the school leadership in order to initiate and administer all PTA-sponsored events and campaigns;
- e. Be available to promote and support the work of the school and its employees;
- f. Publicly support decisions of the group after honouring the right of individual members to express opposing viewpoints;
- g. Express all concerns of a sensitive nature with people involved face-to-face;
- h. Give careful consideration to all issues brought forward by individuals and particular groups of people;
- i. Ensure formal meetings follow only the agenda;
- j. Record and publish minutes from all formal meetings for all staff and parents at BIS;
- k. Ensure that staff representatives are always present at a formal PTA meeting;
- l. Initiate promotional events and campaigns in an effort to support the continuous school improvement;
- m. Promote and advance the cause of internationalism in education;
- n. Make decisions as a PTA only at officially called meetings. PTA members recognise that individual members have no authority to take individual action in policy or in school administrative matters;
- o. Attend regularly scheduled PTA meetings unless a situation occurs that makes attendance impossible;
- p. Listen carefully, with courtesy, to others and give others equal opportunity to speak during meetings;



- q. Cast a vote on all matters except when a conflict of interest arises;
- r. Review, revise the PTA charter on a yearly basis, as appropriate, for submission and final approval of the administration of BIS;
- s. **All members need to sign the BIS Non-Disclosure Agreement** – this agreement protects the personal information of all parents of the school.



Chapter 2 – Support for Parents

1. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) should be a structure that actively supports parents and teachers to ensure the best interests of the children. Parents value opportunities to meet other parents and share experiences about bringing up children and helping them to learn. The PTA will be stronger and will help networking if it fully represents all parents. Therefore, efforts should be made to:
 - a. Produce materials using straightforward and simple language, that is, avoid abbreviations and the use of jargon and make all communication respectful, unambiguous and clear
 - b. Choose times for meetings that will suit contributing parents and teachers
 - c. Ensure, where possible, that PTA meetings are always held in accessible locations
2. The PTA can actively support the involvement of parents by:
 - a. Arranging opportunities for parents to meet informally;
 - b. Running a social event (such as a coffee morning) for parents of a particular school class or year group;
 - c. Having a parents' page on the school website;
 - d. Welcoming new parents and making sure to include parents from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds;
 - e. Providing a PTA notice board in the school;
 - f. Finding out what information parents would like or need;
 - g. Contributing to the preparation of a school handbook in cooperation with staff.

Advising parents in dealing with an issue relating to their child.

It is important to note that a PTA is not a forum for complaint against an individual teacher, parent or child, nor does it have a punitive nor supervisory role in the school.

3. It may be appropriate for a PTA to advise parents with a concern in two ways:

- 1) **When it is related to a school policy.**

For example, a parent may have a concern about a child's experience of conflict with another student. The parent should be advised to bring their concern through the proper channels (see below). However, the PTA executive might also propose specific policy amendments with the Director.

- 2) **In supporting parents.**

In the situation of a parental concern regarding a specific issue the PTA can:

- Let a parent know that there is a complaint procedure available through the school and encourage the parent to use the procedure.

The PTA needs to be non-discriminatory in the way it deals with issues of concern from parents and treat all concerns objectively and equally. The PTA must treat all parents with respect and dignity and provide all parents with the same guidelines and advice.



Chapter 3 – Establishing a PTA

Step 1: Establishing a PTA executive.

1. While all parents are members of the PTA, not all can, or need to, be involved in the day-to-day business of organising the work. It is for this reason that parents in a school elect a PTA Committee. The PTA committee consists of a:
 - Chair (Parent)
 - Vice-Chairperson (Parent)
 - Secretary (Parent or Teacher)
 - Treasurer (Parent)
 - Subcommittees as and when needed
 - Members of the school's Senior Management Team International and National (Appointed by School Management Team)
 - Teacher representative for primary and secondary
2. The committee is the team of people who manage the tasks of the PTA on behalf of the parents. The PTA committee needs to work as a team in order to be effective. In establishing or electing the PTA committee it is vital that all members of the PTA understand the role and work of the committee.

The role of the PTA committee

3. The committee manages the business of the PTA.
4. The PTA committee must:
 - Communicate with the entire parent body;
 - Represent the entire parent body in relation to events within the school.
5. The team has shared responsibility for:
 - Planning for the future and developing a vision for the PTA;
 - Planning and managing the annual program of activities for the PTA;
 - Communicating, consulting with and involving as many parents as possible in the activities of the PTA;
 - Planning agendas and keeping records of meetings;
 - Managing the PTA finances;
 - Valuing diversity and interculturalism and making sure parents who might find it hard to get involved are encouraged and supported to do so.

Remember - there may be many parents who do not want to be on a committee but who may want to help with particular activities. It is important to gather this information; this can be done during regular PTA meetings or by sending out a communications to parents.

Subcommittees can be created for specific activities or events. It is important to note, however, that subcommittees may not make decisions; they remain at all times accountable to the main committee.



Step 2: Electing the PTA committee

6. It is the PTA's responsibility to conduct annual elections each year, PTA will be elected using an online ballot.
7. **Soliciting Candidates.** The PTA will send notices to all members informing them of the need to hold annual elections. The notices should include:
 - a. A list of all available executive board positions;
 - b. An acknowledgement that the only qualification for all offices is that the candidate be a teacher or a parent of a child in the school;
 - a. The date that nominations will be officially closed.

Anyone who is a teacher or a parent of a child in the school can be nominated to be on the PTA committee as long as this is with their knowledge and consent. The PTA must ensure that all parents understand what it means to be a committee member and possible commitment requirements.

Conducting an Election Meeting:

8. **Before the Election Date:**
 - **Director Notification:** The PTA Committee must inform the Director of the proposed date and time of the election meeting in advance .
 - **Written Notice:** The PTA Committee must send written notice to all PTA members informing them of the date and time of the election meeting. The notice must be dated and distributed at least 10 school days before the election meeting
 - **Online Voting:** All PTA members will be able to vote by completing and submitting an online ballot (**A Google Form**). Online voting will be available 3 days prior to the election meeting and closed at 12pm on the Election.
9. **Voting system**
 - a. The PTA will use a simple voting system, based on who gets the highest number of votes. If a class representative is being elected, only the parents of children in that class vote.
 - b. Participation and the right of all parent voices to be heard are fundamental to the running of a democratic structure like a PTA. All parents must have access to and be given the opportunity to vote. By establishing a tradition of transparency and democratic process it is more likely that parents will expect similar consultation in other aspects of PTA life.
10. **Term of office of the committee.** It is good practice to have a combination of experienced and new members. Either the Chair and/or Vice-Chair should have at least 3 years' experience as a BIS parent.
11. **Term of elected members.** Positions are for a period of one year then re-elect in the new school year.



Step 3: Electing the Officers of the PTA committee. Before parents are elected as officers of the committee the roles of the officers should be clarified.

12. **The Chairperson.** The role of the Chair of the PTA Committee is to:

- Lead and guide the committee in planning and delivering on their activities. This should involve:
 - Chairing meetings
 - Helping the committee to have a clear vision and clear goals
 - Keeping the work of the PTA to agreed targets
 - Ensuring all members are respected, listened to and are encouraged to have their say
 - Facilitating people to work well together ensuring that the work of the committee is shared
- Reviewing the work of the committee
- Ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of their roles within the committee
- Delegate the work of the committee to ensure all work is not the responsibility of one or two people
- Work closely with the Vice-Chair, the Secretary and staff representatives to plan the agendas and meetings
- Work in regular collaboration and dialogue with the Director on a monthly basis in due time before each PTA meeting
- Ensure that the minutes are approved, dated and kept safely
- Encourage the committee members to be prepared for the meetings
- Ensure meetings start and finish at the agreed times
- Make sure that, as each item is finished, the group is clear about what has been decided
- Ensure that all decisions are taken democratically and with respect for everyone's opinions
- Check on responsibilities taken on by members of the committee and make sure they have been clearly understood and allocated
- Summarise all decisions at the end of the meeting
- Ensure that at the end of term of office all relevant documentation is passed on to the incoming Chair.

13. **The Vice-Chairperson.** The Vice-Chair has the responsibility to assist the Chair with all the duties of the Chair. In addition, the Vice-Chair will be responsible for the following duties:

- Preside at any PTA Meeting where the Chair is absent
- Preside at any PTA event where the Chair is absent.
- Aid the Chair in his/her duties as required.
- Is responsible for organizing staff Appreciation events

14. **The Secretary** The role of the Secretary of the PTA committee is to:

- Take minutes at each meeting
- File all correspondence and minutes safely - Minutes should be brief and should be a record of decisions made and actions to be taken; they may also record a brief outline of issues discussed
- Agree the agenda for committee meetings with the Chair. It is important that all committee members have a right to have items included on the agenda, therefore they must be given adequate time to pass these items on to the Secretary
- Make sure all committee members have the agenda prior to the meetings so they can be adequately prepared
- Make sure all parents and staff receive a copy of the minutes of meetings, including committee members who had been unable to attend
- Appropriately administer incoming and outgoing correspondence



- Ensure the minutes are approved at each meeting. It is important at committee meetings that the minutes are agreed by those that attended to be a true and accurate record of what happened. Once this has been agreed by the committee the Chair, Vice-Chair and Director must approve.
- Assist the Chair with clarification of decisions made at meetings
- Ensure that at the end of term of office all relevant documentation is passed on to the incoming Secretary

15. **The Treasurer.** The role of the Treasurer of the PTA committee is to:

- Lodge and record all financial transactions
- Manage and maintain books/record of income and expenditure
- Give monthly reports on the PTA finances to the PTA committee
- Issue and keep receipts for all financial transactions
- Ensure that the committee has the necessary information to understand the PTA's financial needs
- Advise on how the resources can best be used to fulfil the aims and work plan of the committee
- Present a full account of the year's income and expenditure at the PTA Annual General Meeting.
- Ensure that at the end of term of office all relevant documentation is passed on to the incoming Treasurer

It is also recommended that additional roles, like those listed below, are fulfilled to ensure the whole school population is being represented within the PTA:

- Early Years PTA representative
- Primary PTA representative
- Secondary PTA representative
- Communications Officer
- Class Representatives
- Student Council Representative
- Volunteers Coordinator

If the PTA Committee decide mid-year that they wish to create new roles, or working groups for specific issues and events, individuals can be added to the committee through a simple vote within the committee without having to go through another election. If there is any disagreement within the committee on this, then a full election will be required for that post.

The interim additions should not be for the core roles of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary or Treasurer. Any requirement to replace those roles, mid-year, must be done with an extraordinary election.



Chapter 4—The PTA Committee and how it functions

- **The committee and communication.** The PTA committee needs to make their communication respectful, unambiguous and clear. It is important to choose times for meetings that will suit the participating parents and staff. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Committee can communicate with the parents in a number of different ways for example by means of:
 - An informal social gathering to welcome and involve new parents
 - A newsletter
 - A notice Board
 - The school website or the PTA page on the school website
 - Through the PTA email
- **Running committee meetings**
 - a. **Agenda.** The agenda is the list of items that will be discussed at a meeting. A focused agenda is essential to having a productive meeting. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary set the agenda together. It is a good idea to specify the time allocated for each item on the agenda. The agenda should be sent out to all members of the committee a week in advance of the meeting where possible. This gives all members of the committee an opportunity to prepare for the meeting and to inform the Chair or the Secretary of any items they would like added to the agenda.
 - b. **Draft Agenda.** A draft agenda must be sent to the Director prior to the set meeting for approval, discussion or change.
 - c. **Minutes.** Minutes should list those who attended the meeting and any apologies received. Minutes cover the topics discussed, decisions taken and who will do what and when. Minutes should not include comments made by individuals. Minutes should be sent within a week of the meeting and published on the PTA website.

Remember – minutes of the committee meetings are sent out to all parents, SLT and teachers via the school’s communication team. At the next meeting certain agenda items of the previous meeting can be confirmed as addressed.

 - d. **Communication and confidentiality.** The committee should communicate openly with parents in the school. Occasionally matters may arise that should be kept confidential, it is very important that this confidentiality is explicitly stated to committee members and is respected.
 - e. **When and where meetings should be held.** Meetings are usually held approximately once a month or specific to school events during staff working hours in the school. Giving committee members advance notice of meetings will ensure better attendance. The PTA calendar can be discussed at the first meeting of the school year with the rest of the PTA members.
 - f. **Length of committee meetings.** Knowing the length of the meeting helps people stay focused and encourages a good use of time. In addition to an accountability person for the meeting, the meeting leader (i.e. Chair), it is helpful to have the additional support role of a Timekeeper. A Timekeeper is one who is responsible for monitoring the time of the entire meeting as well as each agenda item. He or she gives the participants awareness of time frames in order for them to pace themselves appropriately. If during the meeting it is identified that further discussions are required for a specific item in the agenda, a different meeting should take place at another time with those involved on the matter. Often a meeting is



believes he or she can do the role of the Timekeeper. It is better to assign others in the meeting the responsibility of this role as it allows the meeting leader to stay focused on the meeting process, content and dynamics. PTA meetings, unless otherwise requested, will run for one hour.

g. **Evaluating.** It is a good idea for the committee to develop the practice of reviewing their work. This enables the group to be effective and to value the work they do. A brief informal evaluation can take place at the end of a meeting; however, an overall review of the work of the committee should be done at the end of each school year. After each PTA event, a “lessons learned” discussion can take place and if needed a written record kept for future events.

h. **How to be a good committee member.** It is important as a committee member to act effectively as an individual but it is also essential to work collectively as part of the committee team. Take time at the start of the year to help newcomers to feel welcome and get actively involved. Remember it is hard for new people to join an already established group. If you are a newcomer don’t be afraid to ask, you won’t be expected to know everything.

- 1) **Prepare well.** Read the minutes and any other information sent out before the meeting. Be clear about the purpose of the meeting. Prepare any points that you are going to raise.
- 2) **Participate fully.** Listen carefully and think about what is being said. Feel free to speak when you have something to contribute. Make your point at the appropriate time.
- 3) **Be mindful of others.** It is important to be aware of other points of views, cultural backgrounds and people’s feelings, this will help everyone hear and understand better.
- 4) **Listen to other views.** Be reasonable and open to changing your mind – one of the purposes of the meeting is to exchange information and ideas, to learn from each other and to listen to other views on issues.
- 5) **Communicate honestly and openly.** It is important that people should give their opinions at the meeting and that these are appropriate and relate to the agenda items. This can be difficult at times, but it is more constructive than making comments outside the meeting, which can sometimes happen if views are not properly aired.
- 6) **Support the Chair.** Be supportive of the Chair. Give constructive feedback. Give ideas on ways to proceed. Remember it is important that the committee works as a team.
- 7) **Be reliable.** If you agree to take on a task be sure to carry it out. Then be ready to report back at the next meeting.

Removal of a PTA member

The PTA Committee in collaboration with the SLT have the right to remove a person or group of people from the PTA if their behaviour does not align with the aims of the PTA – for example; continuous negative, disruptive or non-productive behaviour.



Chapter 5 - PTA Finances

1. **The legal background.** The PTA is entitled to raise funds for the administration and activities of the association. All transactions (income and expenditure) must be accounted for and a report given at each committee meeting by the Treasurer using the Financial Balance Sheet in Appendix A.
2. **Fundraising.** As BIS is a for profit school, it is inappropriate for the PTA to raise funds to purchase items that would reasonably be expected for the school to finance. However, all funds raised can be used to purchase services or equipment that the PTA decides is appropriate, either for the betterment of the school experience in BIS, or to aid the students at BIS with one of their projects. (Eg if the BIS School children wish to support a particular charity, etc). Receipts should be kept by the PTA for all items/services purchased with funds used from the PTA. The PTA Expenses Form should be used for this purpose (see Appendix A). Full accounts must be maintained and presented at the PTA Annual General Meeting, in accordance with the rules (constitution) of the association.
3. **Support from Board of Governors.** Periodically the Board of Governors of BIS may donate funds to the committee to aid it in particular events or endeavours. In which case those funds have a Restricted Purpose and can only be used for the intended purpose.

