



Welcome to Your PTFA

- A Booklet for New Parents

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Introduction

A very, very warm welcome to our school.

This booklet has been written by our PTFA especially for you, as a new family within our school community. We realise it can be strange and a little nerve-wracking joining a school, and there always seems to be so many questions to ask! This booklet aims to set out all the information you will need about our Parent Teachers and Friends Association which is a big part of our school life.

If after having read it you have any questions, please do get in touch with one of the committee members, or ask via your class teacher, class representative, or the school office. You can find contact details for the core committee members on page 4 of this handbook or via the PTFA pages of the school website at

<http://www.st-patricks.wilts.sch.uk/ptfa.html>.

Why do we have a PTFA?

We are very fortunate at our school to have a PTFA that is and has been such an integral part of the school community for many years. In its time the PTFA has raised many thousands of pounds, which have been spent on improving equipment and resources to enhance our children's education and the facilities in school in general.

But it is much, much more than just fundraising. The PTFA 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. And it's fun! Just ask any of the PTFA core committee or parents who provide support. Obviously as in any organisation, there are times when it is more 'challenging', but with the continued support of parents and staff, our PTFA has always succeeded in its efforts.

All parents and members of the school community can get involved if they want to, even if they only have a small amount of time available, and all parents are automatically members of the Association when they join our school.

The PTFA is extremely conscious of the ethos and morals 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. We aim to strike an appropriate balance between fundraising activities and those which simply provide some fun for the children or reward for effort. Our children's discos for instance are run with the aim of giving the children a good time and as a way of thanking families for their continued support to the PTFA.

Why we are registered as a charity?

The Charities Act 1993 requires organisations such as ours with an annual income in excess of £1,000 to register with the Charity Commission.

As a charity we must abide by Charity Commission rules and regulations and we are bound by a Constitution. Our Constitution lays down rules about how we operate as a PTFA and how we conduct ourselves. A full copy of the Constitution by which we will be bound upon registration is available via our website.

Being a Registered Charity provides us with many extra benefits.

- We are able to apply for Gift Aid, which can earn us an extra 28.2p in every pound **donated** to the PTFA.
- We can raise funds more easily from grant giving trusts, local businesses, etc.
- We can take advantage of charity matched funding schemes.

Our PTFA history

The PTFA has been running for many years and many of the people, who were Committee members years ago, still help us out in a number of ways today. A number of those who are parents of children at the school today attended themselves as pupils. So you can see we are a very close knit community.

Links with our local community

Naturally the school and the PTFA have strong links with the parish churches of St Patrick's in Corsham and St Anthony's in Melksham. Indeed a number of successful fundraising events have been held over the years linked to the work of the church. Recently for example, we hosted a sponsored fun run at the school raised much needed funds supporting a Cheshire Homes initiative based in Zambia involving Sister Stella who formerly worked in the parish has been associated with the



school for a number of years.

We have, over time, developed strong links with the local community and are always well supported by both residents and businesses, for which we are very grateful. Many of our local shops and businesses are very generous in their donations of raffle prizes and sponsorship of events. For example, we held a race night at the Town Hall on St Patrick's Day this year which, with the help of many local businesses, raised over £1,500 and provided all the parents and friends of the school with a sociable and enjoyable evening.

Role of the PTFA Committee

Our PTFA Committee includes 4 core members (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary). Currently the core members are,

Peter Dove	Chair	chair@stpatricksptfa.org.uk
Nick Skeet	Vice-Chair	vicechair@stpatricksptfa.org.uk
Paul Arrowsmith	Treasurer	treasurer@stpatricksptfa.org.uk
Letitia Bradley	Secretary	secretary@stpatricksptfa.org.uk

The core members, Mr Loftus (or his representative) and all other interested parents, teachers or friends of the school meet on a regular basis, usually once or twice per half term, with smaller working groups meeting as necessary to organise our bigger events.

The Committee meetings are vital in directing the priorities of the PTFA and in helping us spend your money wisely! We would like to take this opportunity to encourage all new parents to the school to get involved and assure you of a warm welcome to any of the meetings organised.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Our Annual General Meeting is normally held at the beginning of the autumn term, and this is an opportunity for all parents to come along and hear in more detail about events run, funds raised, and how the money has been spent. It is also the occasion when we elect our new Committee and Class Representatives. Last year we integrated the AGM with a quiz night which made the evening a really enjoyable social event.



Class Representatives

Our Class Representatives play a very important role in helping to promote and facilitate the work of the PTFA Committee throughout the school. There are usually two per class, to provide a link between individual classes, the parents and the PTFA Committee.

The support from Class Reps is absolutely vital when it comes to organising our main events. They are the point of contact for much of the organisation of our events and we really could not manage without them! Current Class Reps are,

Reception: Jo White, Andrea Hunt

Yr 1: Cindy Burke, Pippa Moore

Yr2: Fiona Dowling, Sarah Taylor

Yr3: Elinor Anderson, Rhiannon Price

Yr4: Jane Paulton, Veronique Needham

Yr5: Pippa Moore, Isabella Meadon, supported by Charmaine Cooke and Julie Bryan (swimming rota co-ordinator)

Yr6: Erica Newbury, Marie Doherty Smith, Amanda Fitzgerald

Typically, the Class Reps will be asked to get involved in helping with the following,

- Encouraging involvement and support from others
- Organising volunteers to help with events
- Providing support in relation to events
- Helping to increase awareness of events and activities
- Organising and running 'Class Teas' specific to their year

Class Reps positions will be up for election at the AGM at the start of the autumn term – if as a new parent you would like to get involved please contact any of the PTFA core committee members or current Class Reps.



Support from NCPTA (National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations)

Our PTFA belongs to NCPTA, which is the national charity that advances education and supports PTAs and PTFAs. We pay an annual membership fee to NCPTA which gives us lots of member benefits: a comprehensive insurance package, support and advice on PTFA and fundraising matters, opportunities to meet with other PTFAs to discuss and share experiences, a special banking package to help us make the most of our funds, and an extensive list of PTFA information and resources.

NCPTA also has a range of parental information sheets on subjects such as: literacy and numeracy, special educational needs, how to help your child get the most out of their school days, bullying, homework, using the internet and career paths to name but a few. You can access this information via the NCPTA website, www.ncpta.org.uk To gain entry to the site you will need our membership number, which is 36738 and our school postcode which is SN13 9HS Do have a look.

How we raise money

As in most schools, the majority of our funds are raised through the events that we run. Some of our most popular events are the Summer Fete, Christmas Fair, Race Night and Valentine's Disco. We have had sponsored events such as the fun run mentioned previously and curriculum based sponsored spelling. Events can range from the large and grand, such as the Summer Balls, down to a simple but equally effective Class Tea. These latter events are held for each year group and staggered across the year to raise money for each class teacher to spend on those little (or not so little) extras in the classroom. This year they have been responsible for raising in excess of £1,500.

In the recent past the PTFA has been responsible for funding the purchase of vital extra equipment such as, staging for use in the main hall and an enhanced PA system. We are extremely proud of the outdoor classroom donated in the autumn of 2006 allowing teachers to take classes outside in fairer weather. So you can see, there is always something going on! We always try and respond to the children's requests for events and it is truly the icing on the cake to see them having fun at the events or enjoying using a piece of new equipment that the PTFA has donated.

We are fortunate however to have other opportunities open to us to raise



money.

Donations are extremely important. These can be time, money, items for sale, donations for raffles or offers of services and skills etc.

As our PTFA is a registered charity, we are able to raise money through Gift Aid and Charity Matching Schemes.

Gift Aid

Gift Aid allows the PTFA to boost its funds considerably. It is tax claimed back from the Inland Revenue from donations made to us out of your earned income.

If you are employed and pay income tax, we are able to claim 28p in every pound that you donate to our PTFA. The procedure for this is very simple. We ask our parents to sign a declaration form (this only has to be done once whilst you are at school) to confirm their employment and the declaration can be cancelled at any time. Following this, every time the signatory supports the school with a cash/cheque donation or if a sponsored event is supported, the PTFA can claim the Gift Aid on the contribution.

There is nothing further for you to do and we need no other information from you. The issue of Gift Aid is taken on trust and you can support more than one charity in this way. We will not, and are not required to, divulge any personal information to the Inland Revenue from your completed forms.

Please do sign the declaration form if you are able. If both parents are taxpayers, please request another gift aid form from our PTFA Treasurer. As a PTFA we are very conscious that with a relatively small school community, the demands are often not as widely spread as in larger schools, and because of this, we try to raise our funds from as many different sources as possible.

How we spend the money raised

Very quickly!

Once money is raised from events the funds are banked straight away. It



is at our PTFA Committee Meetings that the main decisions on how to spend the money are taken and ratified.

Usually, Mr Loftus and the school's teaching staff will have a 'shopping list' of items that the school would like to purchase. Sometimes this will be as a result of the children asking for something through their 'School Council', such as a recent request for a "Friendship Stop" or it may be an item that has been identified by both parents and the school, such as the new playground equipment and outdoor improvements.

At other times it will be for resources to improve a particular area of the curriculum or school environment. In the main the PTFA funds are for the 'extras' not provided by the school budget, that make 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 have a direct link to the plans of the Governors and indeed it has been agreed to establish closer links between the Governors and PTFA by establishing a joint strategy group that can better inform the direction of both bodies.

Of course there are times when we have a big project underway that we need to save money for. We have recently donated £5,000 to contribute towards the costs of outdoor improvements and development work to the Reception and Year 1 block. However, even with these large donations we have still managed to find funds for smaller items and our on going annual commitments thanks to the generous support of our parents.

How we get information to you

PTFA news is communicated through the following channels,

- items in the school's Monday newsletter,
- separate newsletters and fliers for special events,
- the PTFA notice board and others around the school,
- the PTFA pages of the school website.

How you can get involved

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



PTFA.

Offering to help before events, or at other times during the year is so valuable – it really is a case of ‘many hands make light work’. It doesn’t matter if you can’t help on a regular basis, or even if you can’t come into school, for instance, three of the four core committee members work full time as indeed do many of the other parents who help out. There are always little jobs that can be done from home if you have half an hour to spare. We really couldn’t achieve what we do without the unseen ‘army of helpers’ that exists in school.

You can of course if you feel able, volunteer to be a Class Rep or Committee Member.

You can attend the AGM and give us your ideas for fundraising events – this is also a good opportunity to ask questions or voice your opinion.

You can help by letting us know if you have any business contacts or skills we could use – anything is valuable to us. Below are examples of the skills that are always needed,

- Helping pair of hands
- Art and design
- Marketing and publicity
- Selling
- Baking and cooking
- IT skills
- Negotiating deals
- Creative ideas

Overall we need people with enthusiasm and a willingness to help us make things better for all of the children at the school. If you feel you have skills or business contacts that you would be willing to offer then please complete and return the ‘Skills List’ provided with this booklet.

What the PTFA means to us

Because our PTFA involves the whole school community we thought you would like to know what others think about our PTFA.

From the Governing Body

As a Catholic School, the Governors are responsible for all aspects of the school maintenance. The support the PTFA gives us, helps us to ensure that the buildings are in good order and that we have such excellent and varied resources.



The PTFA is an essential part of our school. All parents and carers are members and everyone's contribution is valued. The work of the PTFA underpins the whole school. Financial support enables us to create a richer learning environment for our children. Numerous curriculum resources have been provided which children throughout the school are able to enjoy.

The wide variety of social functions, allow us all to get to know one another in a more relaxed setting. The children see their parents and the school staff working together for their benefit. They appreciate this united effort and it adds to their feeling of security. Our school would not be the lively and welcoming learning environment it is without the enthusiasm, commitment and hard work of our PTFA. All of us in school are very grateful to them.

From Mr Loftus, Head Teacher

We have been most fortunate at Saint Patrick's to harness the energy, enthusiasm and support of PTFA members, whose dedicated approach to improving the children's learning environment has been at the centre of their success.

I am very mindful that the PTFA adopt a number of roles beyond their primary fundraising functions. Their contribution to the community provide a collective of skills, innovation and new ideas which are developed in collaboration with our school.

Our PTFA has achieved so much over the years and I look forward to continuing this dynamic partnership to the benefit of all the children in our care.

Thank you for taking the time to read our brochure. We hope you now know a little more about **your** Parents Teachers and Friends Association.

On behalf of all the children we would like to thank you for your very valuable support which enriches their learning experiences and makes their time in school so enjoyable.

From all the PTFA Committee

Peter Dove (Chair)



St Patrick's School PTFA

Everyone has something to offer

CAN YOU ORGANISE?

We always need people to organise:

- fund-raising activities (eg. Summer Fair, jumble sales)
- school social events (eg. carol evening, school disco, ceilidh)
- campaigns (eg. safe journeys to school)
- other people (eg. matching volunteers to stalls)

ALL YOUR SKILLS ARE USEFUL!

Almost all your skills could be of use as a supporter of PTFA and school related events. Here are some that parents contribute regularly:

Crafts	Publicity	Cooking	Serving
Word Processing	Purchasing	Sports	Art
Driving	Sewing	Building	Music
Performing	Writing	Childcare	Acting
Computer Skills	Gardening	Cleaning	Face Painting
First aid	Graphic Design	Ideas	'another pair of hands'
Marketing	Networking	Finance	Planning

Please note any useful business contacts that you have that can assist our work below.

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Please mark those skills and qualities that you would be willing to offer in helping the PTFA achieve its aims and return this form to Nick Skeet, Vice Chair via the school office.

Thank you