

Friends of Mowden School - Terms of Reference

The Friends of Mowden Schools (Parent Teacher Association - PTA) is an organisation of parents and staff. Its role is to fundraise for the school and encourage closer links between home and school.

How is the Friends of Mowden Schools organised?

At Mowden, like most schools, all parents/carers and staff are automatically members of the Friends of Mowden Schools and are welcome to all general committee meetings.

We hold our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in September, at the start of the school year. At this meeting a committee is elected to run the Friends consisting of a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Communications Officer, plus other committee members. See Appendix 1 for a breakdown of these roles.

This committee automatically become the Trustees of the Friends of Mowden Schools Charity – see Appendix 2.

The committee usually meets once or twice a term and may set up smaller working groups to organise individual events under the direction and agreement of the whole group.

Aims of the Friends of Mowden Schools

1. To enhance the education and wellbeing of the pupils of Mowden by providing or supporting provision of facilities and resources through fundraising.
2. To promote positive close co-operation and communication between parents and school staff.
3. To provide activities and events to support and enhance school resources.

It is **not** the purpose of the Friends to raise or discuss individual pupil or parent concerns. Such matters should be raised through the appropriate channels following school procedures.

School management/operational procedures; curriculum or timetabling; staff selection and appointment; school hours or holidays and management of budget all fall outside the remit of the Friends.

Fundraising

The Friends help raise much needed money by organising and managing various fundraising events throughout the year. The money raised by the Friends is used to promote educational and enrichment opportunities such as learning resources, IT equipment, sports equipment and outdoor resources.

The Friends raises money through a wide range of fundraising events over the course of the year. At our school these include annual events such as Christmas cards, raffles, discos and the Summer Fair.

Events like these and those mentioned above provide an opportunity to bring the whole school and wider community together.

There are also other opportunities to raise donations such as links with business partnerships and bid writing. See Appendix 3 for guidance around handling funds raised.

Communication Within the School Community

Another one of the roles of the Friends is to build strong relationships among teachers, staff, children and the community at large. Relationships are built through positive communications. The Friends share messages via the school newsletter and letters to parents sent through the school. The Friends also communicate on the Mowden parents and carers Facebook group, as well as on the School's official Facebook page.

Communication Between Committee Members

The Friends committee members communicate primarily through face-to-face meetings held on school premises. Electronic forms of communication are also used including email and a WhatsApp message group. These are used to post updates around organisational matters and are not intended as a medium to discuss matters that require a decision.

Meeting Structure

The Friends work collectively as a group for the benefit for all the children of Mowden. Meetings are led by the Chair and in the Chair's absence the Vice Chair. Any items for discussion need to be sent to the Chair in advance of the meeting. All opinions are valued, and any member can ask to add items to the meeting agenda; however where options differ, a majority view will be sought on a voting basis if required.

Consultation and Governance

The Friends committee must keep the Headteacher informed about activities and key decisions. Minutes and a record of notes from meetings should be maintained and shared with all committee members following meetings. These will also be posted on the School's website, for all parents and carers to access.

Appendix 1 – Committee Roles and Responsibilities

Chair

Characteristics

The Chair provides leadership for the committee sets the agenda for meetings and manages meetings in line with the agenda.

The Chair should ensure that issues are properly debated and an agreement is reached. Some committee members will be better at expressing themselves than others; it is important that the chair welcomes contributions from all members of the committee so that everyone feels involved.

The Chair will ensure that all new members feel welcome and their contributions valued. The Chair will introduce them to the other members and encourage them to play an active part in the discussions at committee meetings.

To ensure the smooth running of meetings the Chair must remain impartial and make sure that all parties have a voice and the opportunity to participate in decision-making.

The Chair will work closely with the Treasurer and Secretary to ensure that the Friends of Mowden is run effectively. As an Officer of the committee, the Chair will authorize the signing of cheques on behalf of the Friends of Mowden along with other designated signatories.

Role function

To ensure that the business of the 'Friends' is conducted in accordance with the wishes of the representatives of the Friends of Mowden

Vice-Chair

Characteristics

The support provided by the Vice-Chair is invaluable. Deputising for the Chairperson when necessary, the Vice-Chair helps to ensure that the Committee and all of the events continue to run smoothly. Enthusiasm and energy are necessary qualities for this post.

Role function

To support the Chair in all aspects of their role, to ensure that the business of the Friends of Mowden is conducted in accordance with the wishes of the representatives of the Friends of Mowden.

Secretary

Characteristics

The Secretary ensures that the Friends runs smoothly and provides a link between Committee Members and parents/carers, and between the Friends and the School. This requires good organisational and communication skills and being able to stick to deadlines.

Role function

The Secretary is a key committee member as they are responsible for ensuring effective communication links between committee members and between the Friends and the school.

The Secretary deals with all the correspondence that the Friends receives and helps the Chair ensure that committee meetings run smoothly. Building up a good relationship with the school office will help make sure that correspondence, sent to the school, is passed onto the Friends promptly.

As well as dealing with correspondence, following a committee meeting, the Secretary will need to make bookings and other arrangements for events. The Secretary may also be involved in co-signing cheques on behalf of the Friends of Mowden.

Treasurer

Characteristics

A key role for all committee members is to manage and control the funds the Friend' raises. Although all the committee members have equal responsibility for the control and management of funds, the Treasurer plays an important part in helping the committee carry out these duties properly.

Role function

To maintain up-to-date records of all Friends financial transactions, including issuing bills and receipts on behalf of the Friends. To complete banking transactions on a regular basis. To organise floats for fundraising events, collect and reconcile monies raised at these events and report totals raised to the appropriate stakeholders.

The Treasurer also needs to prepare and report financial statements at Friends Meetings, plus a concise Financial Report for the Annual General Meeting. They are also responsible for the annual return to the Charity Commission and ensuring that the details of the Trustees recorded with the Charity Commission are accurate.

Communications Officer

Characteristics

A vital role within the Friends is promoting and communicating work of the Friends. The Communications Officer must be an excellent communicator, especially on Social Media.

Role Function

To communicate and promote the work of the Friends to the parents and carers, via communication sent from school, the Friends page on the School's website, the School's Facebook page and the parents/carers Facebook group. Also ensuring posters ensuring posters are displayed around the school and local community in good time. It is crucial that all information on Friends work is kept current and up to date.

Committee Members

Committee members attend Friends meetings, get involved in planning and running events and fundraising projects. They also encourage participation and enthusiasm for the events organised by the Friends.

The Friends would ideally like representation across all year groups and new parents to the school will be warmly welcomed.

Appendix 2 – The Role of Trustees

The Friends of Mowden School is a registered charity, registered under the name 'Mowden School Association' – number 1021897. This means that the committee are also trustees of the charity, along with key school staff members.

The Treasurer are also responsible for the annual return to the Charity Commission and ensuring that the details of the Trustees recorded with the Charity Commission are accurate.

As Trustees they must make sure that the charity is carrying out the purposes for which it is set up, and no other purpose. This means they should:

- Ensure they understand the charity's purposes as set out in its governing document.
- Plan what the charity will do, and what they want it to achieve.
- Be able to explain how all of the charity's activities are intended to further or support its purposes.
- Understand how the charity benefits the public by carrying out its purposes.

Further information about the role of trustees can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>

Appendix 3 - Handling Funds

Although the Treasurer has responsibility for maintaining up to date financial transactions etc, any member of the committee can be involved in handling funds. Therefore this guidance ensures consistency:

- Money raised at school events will be locked in the school safe after the event. Money should never be taken to an individual's home, as it will not be covered by insurance.
- Money will then be counted in school by a minimum of 2 people – with at least one person being a committee member.
- Money will be taken to Lloyds bank by a minimum of 2 committee members and paid into the Friends account. If one of these is not the Treasurer the Treasurer must be informed of the deposit on the same day.
- In situations where there is a large amount of loose change, it has been agreed by the committee that these funds can be paid into a personal Natwest account of a committee member (as there is a counting machine in the branch), and then immediately transferred to the Friends account. This has to be carried out by 2 committee members and all deposit and transfer receipts must be emailed on the same day to friendsofmowden@gmail.com and the Treasurer copied in.