
Committee Duties

A guide for Parents

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St. Peter's Under 5's Playgroup – Duties of the Committee

Duties of the Committee

As committee members you are trustees of the charity. All trustees are responsible for the operation of the charity.

Individual trustees work together as the voluntary management committee and should be a team carrying out the responsibilities set out in the constitution effectively and confidently.

The composition of the committee is set out in the constitution but your setting may choose additional roles for committee members apart from those stated.

The committee will:

- Employ and manage staff, provide staff contracts and annual staff development interviews
- Agree salaries and fees
- Ensure the setting complies with local legislation and regulations
- Maintain, update and implement the setting's policies to fulfil Ofsted regulations and Early Years Foundation Stage requirements
- Ensure that the setting is properly insured
- Take an interest in the setting's finances and ensure that they are being managed properly
- Work as a team ensuring the setting runs smoothly and efficiently and offer support to other committee members
- Attend committee meetings and send apologies if necessary
- Share out jobs amongst the committee
- Organise fundraising for the setting

Good team working between voluntary management committee and employed staff should lead to a successful, sustainable setting; provide personal and professional development opportunities. It also leads to a happy, safe and stimulating environment for children, young people and their families.

It is important for trustees to have motivation for the task in hand. Form good relationships so that new ideas are extended, are committed to the task and the team.

Duties of the Chair

The main areas of the Chair's role are to:

- Lead the team and include all committee members
- Plan and chair meetings
- Ensure that the setting runs according to its constitution
- Oversee the setting of agreed priorities and their achievement
- Represent the committee
- Be involved with the recruitment and management of staff
- Be a cheque signatory and receive duplicate bank statements

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Duties of the Treasurer

The Treasurer is normally a cheque signatory. The treasurer acts on behalf of the committee to ensure that the setting:

- Spends its money correctly
- Meets all its financial obligations
- Does not get into financial trouble
- Prepare budgets and regular financial reports, including the Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- Complies with legal requirements for payment of staff
- Your first responsibility on becoming a Treasurer is to receive properly examined accounts from the outgoing Treasurer and then sign and date each book.

Hints for good practice for Treasurers

- Never leave money (cash or cheques) unattended at the setting
- Never leave money overnight on the premises as any loss is not covered by insurance
- All money must be counted and agreed with another member of the committee
- All cheques require TWO signatures
- Never sign a blank cheque or ask anyone else to do so
- If your setting employs a financial administrator, you must remember that the committee still has overall responsibility for the finances and therefore the Treasurer will need to work closely with the administrator.

Duties of the Secretary

The secretary:

- Helps set the agenda
- Takes minutes of meetings
- Arranges the AGM
- Is usually a cheque signatory

Minutes should include:

- Date, time and place of meeting
- List of those present and those who sent apologies
- Name of person chairing the meeting
- The signing of the precious minutes as a correct record
- Balance of funds
- The decisions taken (discussions need to be recorded in great detail)
- Who will action the agreed decisions
- Circulate minutes to committee when approved by the Chair

Correspondence is usually dealt with by the secretary but could be done by the Chair.

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Remember that although the officers are carrying out the various tasks within their role, it is the responsibility of everyone on the voluntary management committee to ensure that the tasks are done.

Committee Meetings

Whilst committee meetings are for the committee members, it is good practice to invite, if not all the staff, certainly the Playleader to attend meetings.

For frequency of meetings see constitution.

- Your constitution states that “The committee shall meet at least three times a year and is responsible for ensuring that the setting complies with its aims and is properly managed”. In practice many playgroups hold six meetings a year.
- Your constitution tells you how many members must be present for the meeting to be quorate. In the PATA Group Constitution 2006 this is “not less than half of the committee including 2 of the officers”.
- Each member of the committee has one vote, the Chair having a second, or casting, vote. Paid staff may attend the meeting but may not vote.

It is important that everyone on the committee is made to feel welcome, understands their role, and the role of others, and is valued for their opinion. If committees do not work together as a team then ultimately the members may feel alienated and may eventually not bother to turn up to meetings at all.

It is essential that committee meetings are chaired in a friendly and business-like manner and this job falls to the Chair, or in their absence, the deputy.

The Chair must be able to listen, summarise, canvas opinion and ensure all committee members have the opportunity to participate so that everyone feels respected and understood.

An agenda will keep the meeting focused.

Annual General Meetings (AGM)

It is a legal requirement for your setting to have an AGM as stated in your constitution. It is important that you know when it should take place so that you can give your members enough notice to attend and also so you have time to get your annual accounts externally examined.

What to do after the AGM

- Send details of new committee to PATA
- Inform Ofsted of any changes in the committee and named contact. Complete the relevant forms provided by Ofsted
- Organise handover of account books and all relevant papers to the new committee. The outgoing committee should expect to set time aside to go through these papers with the new committee
- Tell the new committee about PATA especially training and support for new committees
- Give new committee the contact details for PATA
- Complete annual return for the Charity commission as requested

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Special General Meetings

These are usually called when a matter is of such importance that the committee feel they cannot take a decision without all the members' support, or requires members' consent or that the matter cannot wait until the next AGM.

DATA Protection

The Data Protection Act 1998 aims to promote high standards in handling of personal information and so protect the individual's right to privacy.

Those holding information on living individuals in electronic format and, in some cases, on paper, must follow the eight data protection principles of good information handling. These say that personal information must be:

- Fairly and lawfully processed
- Processed for specified purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date
- Not kept for longer than necessary
- Processed in line with the rights of the individual
- Kept secure
- Not transferred to countries outside the European Economic Area unless the information is adequately protected

Do we need to comply with the DATA Protection Act?

Yes, but you may **not** need to join the Register. You can find out whether you are exempt or whether you need to notify and join the register by contacting the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

Call the ICO helpline 08456 306060 or 01625 545740, email mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk, look at the website www.ico.gov.uk or write to the Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF.

If you need to join the register, the standard fee is £35.

There is a useful booklet available from the ICO "Getting it Right – a brief guide to data protection for small businesses". It is available from the website www.ico.gov.uk (put the booklet title in the search box), the ICO publications line 0870 600 8100 line, or via the PATA website www.pagaglos.org.uk FAQ page, third question, click on "booklet".

This information is taken from the PATA Business Pack 2008 Edition.