



Plaxtol School Association

Trustee & Committee Conflicts of Interest Policy

This policy sets out the principles for trustee and committee conflicts of interest within Plaxtol School Association (PSA). It is relevant to all within the association and is endorsed by the PSA Committee. It is distinct from any policies the school may publish.

What is a Conflict of Interest?

PSA Trustees and Committee members have a legal duty to act in the best interests of the PSA when deciding. If a Trustee or Committee member's decision-making process is influenced by a personal, financial, or other interest in the matter under discussion, that Trustee or Committee member may be unable to act in the best interests of the PSA. (The Charity Commission for England and Wales provides advice on conflicts of interest.)

Managing a Conflict of Interest

Having a conflict of interest doesn't mean a PSA Trustee or Committee member has done something wrong. Preventative action is needed to ensure a conflict of interest doesn't hinder PSA Trustee and Committee members' ability to make decisions in the best interests of the PSA.

The PSA takes the following steps to identify and deal with any conflicts of interest:

- Make all new PSA Trustees and Committee members aware of this policy.
- Ask all PSA Committee members to declare any conflict of interest:
 - 1) When they are appointed.
 - 2) At the beginning of each meeting, if a matter is being discussed where there is a conflict of interest. (Charities may open all meetings by asking for any conflicts of interest to be declared.)
 - 3) Whenever a PSA Trustee or Committee member becomes aware of a possible conflict of interest.
- Any PSA Trustee or Committee member with an identified conflict of interest should remove themselves from discussions and abstain from voting about a matter in which they have a conflict of interest, to ensure the decision-making process remains impartial.
- Where conflicts of interest arise, make sure it is recorded in the meeting minutes, along with any action taken to deal with the conflict. (For example, the minutes might note "asked the committee member concerned to withdraw from the discussion/vote".)

- The PSA will work to make sure there is a good mix of parents across the school involved with the PSA, e.g. as Committee members and Trustees. This is intended to stop any one part of the school being overly represented.
- Where decisions made may favour one year group, subject area or aspect of the school over others, we will ensure we have consulted with our members and over time will ensure that all aspects of the school will benefit equally.
- Consulting the school, parents and carers, and pupils on how PSA funds should be distributed.

Examples of Conflicts of Interest

Almost all PSA Trustee and Committee members are parents of children that are beneficiaries of their PSA's activities. Care needs to be taken to ensure parents aren't putting the interests of their own children first when making decisions about how their PSA operates. (This can also apply to members of school staff if they are part of the PSA Committee, when decisions may benefit their class or subject area.)

PSA Trustees or Committee members may occasionally contract a committee member for the supply of goods and services. For example, hiring a committee member who runs a fencing firm to mend the school fence, paid for by the PSA as requested/agreed by the school. This is a conflict of interest for this committee member; they cannot vote on appointing themselves to do work on behalf of your PSA.

Useful Links

www.parentkind.org.uk/Info-sheets/Conflicts-of-interest

www.gov.uk/guidance/managing-conflicts-of-interest-in-a-charity