



# The Consortium Trust

*Where together excellence and pupils thrive*

## Guidance Paper on School 'Parent, Teacher Association Groups'

This document provides guidance on the framework in which a 'PTA / PTFA / Friends of' Group should operate. The group should ensure that it takes its own advice in the legalities of operation and in respect of the Trust's and Schools own policies and procedures.

Guidance can be obtained from:

<http://www.pta.co.uk>

<https://www.parentkind.org.uk>

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The PTA is an important part of the school community, focusing on community cohesion, social events and fundraising events. Further information can be found at:

<http://www.pta.co.uk>

<https://www.parentkind.org.uk>

## 2. GETTING STARTED

It is good practice to talk with your school Academy Head or Senior Teacher in the first instance about creating a PTA. Discuss with teachers how you think the PTA will work and listen to their concerns and suggestions. If this is agreeable, hold informal discussions about setting up a PTA and gauge interest among parents and the school community.

If you are having difficulty recruiting committee members think about job-sharing roles or targeting specific members. Enlist the support of your Academy Head to explain to parents the importance of the PTA. Start recruiting early and target new parents joining the school.

Put a clear plan in place that sets out how the PTA will work, including who will be the main point of contact for parents at the school, how often meetings will be held, and who will be responsible for deciding how to spend any funds raised

A constitution will help the PTA by giving everyone involved an understanding of the parameters within which the PTA will work and clearly defining the aims of the association. It is good practice to adopt a constitution when you start your group, or as soon as you can if your association does not have one.

## 3. LAUNCHING YOUR PTA

Launch the PTA and set a date for the first annual general meeting. Give people as much notice as possible and circulate information on the Committee roles (see below Job Descriptions). This notice should explain the purpose of the AGM, give the order of business and include a reply slip seeking nominations for election to the committee.

All parents, carers of children and staff working at the school are automatically members of the PTA body.

- Communicate details about the PTA to relevant parties
- Make signing up to the PTA as easy as possible
- Publicise and celebrate the things they do well
- Get staff involved
- Encourage parent engagement as soon as their child starts at the school

### *The first AGM:*

- Elect your Committee Officers
- Adopt a Constitution (see below)

### *How are committee members elected?*

The best way to do this is to have a vote of those present at the meeting, with each person standing needing to secure a majority of the votes cast. Where this is competitive, it is a good idea for those standing to leave the room whilst the vote happens. Usually a show of hands is sufficient but if it is close and contentious it may be

better to conduct a written ballot with the results being carefully recorded.

The PTA constitution will specify how committee members should be elected. If a member of staff is elected, the PTA should consider possible conflicts of interest for the individual. For example, although a member of staff would have equal voting rights to any other PTA member; they may need to abstain from votes which directly affect them, such as choosing which curriculum area to buy equipment for.

#### 4. CONSTITUTION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Your PTA should have a constitution. This is a document which establishes the fundamental rules by which the PTA is governed and describes: -

- The aims of the PTA and its powers
- Its objective and scope of its discussions, role and responsibilities
- Its membership
- The size of the committee, structure and how members are elected
- Frequency and location of meetings, including the AGM
- Finance, fund raising and agreeing spending
- The need for an annual general meeting and independent examination of the accounts
- The document should note that 'out of scope' issues related to specific staff, pupils or parents should be discussed in a one-to-one meeting with the relevant member of staff, such as the Academy Head and not in open forum.

Your PTA should refer to their constitution to clarify who can hold office, and how the process of electing individuals should take place. Your Constitution and Terms of Reference should define the goal of your PTA – Here are some ideas:

- Creating a positive, inclusive school community
- Providing extra opportunities for our children
- Fundraising for amazing equipment
- Offering the extras that enhance education

#### 5. COMMITTEE ROLES

##### *The Chair*

**Main duty:** To have the final say on PTA decisions.

**Key jobs:** To make all committee members feel welcome and valued; to set the PTA agenda; to provide leadership; to co-write the annual PTA report.

**Needs to be:** Enthusiastic, calm; good at listening; decisive.

##### *The Deputy or Vice Chair*

**Main duty:** To support the work of the PTA Chair.

**Key jobs:** To step in for the Chair when the Chair is absent; to work with the Chair to see the PTA runs smoothly and communicates well.

**Needs to be:** Supportive, enthusiastic; energetic; organised.

##### *The Treasurer*

**Main duty:** To oversee the PTA's financial affairs.

**Key jobs:** To manage accounts; do banking and maintain up-to-date financial records.

**Needs to be:** Reliable; organised; good with numbers.

### *The Secretary*

**Main duty:** To keep up-to-date records of PTA activity.

**Key jobs:** To organise PTA meetings; to prepare and distribute agendas and minutes; to build strong relationships with key school staff – including the office staff and caretakers.

**Needs to be:** Organised; good at time management and friendly.

## 6. PTA RESPONSIBILITIES

**The PTA should ensure that they are legally compliant and consider:**

- Trust, School and PTA Policies: to ensure they operate within the legal framework and policies;
- Safeguarding (further guidance below);
- GDPR (further guidance below);
- Social Media (further guidance below);
- Risk Assessments: Preparation and implementation of for events (further guidance below);
- First Aid: Ensuring an appropriately trained first aider is present at PTA events;
- Grant opportunities: Ensuring opportunities are identified and applications meet the criteria;
- Finance: Conscious appropriation of fund raising income and transparent accounting;

## 7. SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is about organisations that work with children developing a child-friendly culture and taking responsibility for their safety. For example:

- making sure that volunteers are recruited, supported and managed safely;
- ensuring policies and procedures are in place to keep children safe;
- ensuring volunteers know how to behave towards children; and that they know what to do if they have concerns,
- taking steps to manage risks.

**Even if you only volunteer for the school PTA, you have responsibility for keeping children safe. According to the Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance Keeping children safe in Education, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people is everyone's responsibility.**

Even if your PTA volunteering role does not involve work or volunteering activity directly with children, the importance of understanding safeguarding and child protection is essential because the school whom you are volunteering for, obviously does.

As a volunteer, you are in a position of trust. For this reason, safe working practices must be adhered to at all times, as a duty of care to the children, yourself and the staff around you. Children have a right to be safe and should be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect.

**Volunteers should be aware of, and understand:**

- the school's safeguarding and or child protection policy;
- arrangements for managing allegations against staff and staff behaviour policy
- the school's Whistleblowing policy;

## **Safeguarding FAQs:**

### ***Do all committee members need a DBS check?***

There is no legal requirement for committee members to have DBS checks (not even the chair). The only people who legally need them are those involved in Regulated Activity with children. Regulated Activity is defined as **regular** (at least once a week, four days over a 30-day period, or overnight between 2am and 6am), and where a person is generally unsupervised. It includes:

- caring for or supervising children;
- driving a vehicle for children;
- personal care, even if only done once (this is not recommended in any circumstances);

### ***What does supervision mean?***

The supervision element relates to whether the volunteer is supervised by a person in Regulated Activity e.g. a teacher. If a volunteer is running an event for children where no DBS-checked adults are supervising, they would require a check. Essentially it means 'such supervision as is reasonable to protect the children concerned'. It is up to your association to assess whether the event and supervision provided, falls under Regulated Activity (see below).

It is unlikely that all committee members will be undertaking Regulated Activities - if this is the case, there is no obligation to check them. However, the Trust requires for checks to be carried out, given that children at your school will trust PTA members as being in positions of authority, for the four officers of the PTA as described above as a minimum: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary.

### ***Regulated Activity***

Volunteers who regularly help out at one-off events should also be considered for a check. One-off events - children's fashion shows, school discos, bingo, beetle drives - may not be regular enough. You can use unchecked volunteers for these, but if this is the case, be careful what you ask them to do e.g. avoid situations where they take children to the toilet.

For the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) go to [gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check](http://gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check), email: [customerservices@db.s.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@db.s.gsi.gov.uk) or call 0300 0200 190. NSPCC ([nspcc.org.uk](http://nspcc.org.uk)) runs a free, 24/7 helpline: 0808 800 5000, or email [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk), giving UK-wide advice on safeguarding and child protection.

### ***How do we get checks done and how much does it cost?***

You will need to arrange checks via an umbrella organisation - usually through your school or local authority. Decide whether to ask volunteers to join the DBS Update Service. This lets applicants keep their certificates up to date and allows organisations to check a certificate online. DBS checks are free for volunteers, as is subscribing to the Update Service, although the umbrella organisation may charge an administrative fee. There is no charge for using the Update Service to make status checks.

**The Trust requires for checks to be carried out, given that children at your school will trust PTA members as being in positions of authority, for the four main officers of the PTA as described above, as a minimum and as part of providing a safe environment for children. DBS checks shouldn't discourage most volunteers if they understand why they are necessary. We recommend that you:**

- Make clear why the checks are needed, as your association's commitment to keep children safe;
- Reassure volunteers that you will help make the process as easy as possible;
- Explain that checks can be transferred to other roles/organisations if they subscribe to the Update Service. In addition, if they are already subscribed and their check is up to date, they don't need a new one;

- Ensure that volunteers understand that the check is free;

## 8. GDPR

PTAs are responsible for their GDPR compliance. Your Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is a separate legal entity from your school; this means that it is the 'data controller' under data protection law for any personal data it handles. If your PTA handles any personal data, it needs to ensure it's compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) from **25 May 2018**.

***Personal data is any information relating to an identified, or identifiable, person, such as their name, contact details, or anything relating to their finances.***

### GDPR FAQs

***We want to send out a letter to parents asking them to give us their email addresses so we can contact them more easily. Can we do this? Do we need to include any special wording?***

You can do this as long as parents would reasonably expect to hear from the PTA by letter and they haven't asked you not to contact them. In the letter you should clearly explain why the PTA wants to collect the information and what you'll do with it, including what you'll be using it to contact parents about. The PTA needs to give parents a genuine choice and obtain their opt-in consent for you to contact them by email or SMS. The school is not permitted to share any personal data with the PTA directly or indirectly.

The school will also refrain from distributing through 'book bags' direct marketing materials, schools will have their own methods for sharing this information, ie a physical or virtual community noticeboard or a letter rack in the school reception foyer.

***The school sends out a contact form at the start of every academic year. Should we be doing the same for the PTA?***

It would be good practice to do this on an annual basis to check the accuracy and the relevance of the information you hold. You can also use it to check parents' preferences on how they'd like you to stay in contact with them - whether that's by email, SMS, letter or not at all.

***We have a database of parents' email addresses and phone numbers - does this mean our PTA needs to register as a 'data controller'?***

Generally, organisations which hold or process personal data do need to register with the Information Commissioner's Office. There are, however, some exemptions including not-for-profit organisations. As long as your PTA is working on a not-for-profit basis - regardless of whether you have charitable status - you are NOT required to register as a data controller. You still have to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 though.

***Some of the principles relevant for PTAs require you to make sure that the information you hold is:***

- Processed for limited purposes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate and up-to-date
- Not kept for longer than is necessary
- Held securely - this includes keeping it safe so that unauthorised individuals can't access it, and not disclosing it to anyone else, including other parents. So if your PTA is emailing groups of parents, make sure you use the 'bcc' option to ensure that personal details are hidden from other recipients.

### Social Media Communications

There are a variety of ways in which social media sites can be used to communicate - some of which might be compliant from a data protection point of view and some which will not be. Just because parents have a publicly-accessible social media account doesn't mean its fair game for organisations to use that information as

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they wish - parents may not want to be contacted in this way.

As mentioned earlier, you need consent from parents to be able to contact them electronically, however, if you set up a private Facebook group and let parents know the details, including how the PTA will use the group to contact parents, they can choose whether to join the group or not.

*Last year we ran a PTA shopping and pamper night. I have recently been contacted by a local nursery to ask for details of our stallholders for an event they're planning, but can I pass these details on?*

**NO!** Unless you made it clear when you originally collected the stallholders' data, that you might share details with third parties, then you shouldn't pass this information on. Suggest that you email your contact list and ask that they get in touch with the nursery direct if they wish to get involved.

*We often put photos of events on our noticeboard or videos on our PTA website. Are there any data protection issues with this?*

When taking photographs or videoing people in order to publish on your noticeboard or website you should get their consent, explaining what you intend to do with the photograph/footage including whether it is to be published and where. In relation to younger children, consent must be given by a parent or guardian on their behalf. Consent should not be necessary when photographing/videoing a crowd where the individuals remain anonymous. In no circumstances should the names of a child be linked to an image.

## 9. SOCIAL MEDIA

Online social media tools can provide exciting new opportunities for schools to engage communicate and collaborate with parents and the wider school community. A PTA should have the full support of the senior leadership team and Locality Committee before deciding to use social media and should be able to demonstrate the steps they have taken to reduce the risks of using social media. Using a social media site or service can never be completely free of risk, so schools should put a "clearly defined" incident procedure in place.

*Considerations when establishing a Social Media presence:*

- Who is the intended audience?
- Have the risks of the site or platform been assessed by both educational and technical staff?
- Is the site or platform age appropriate?
- Have you explored the site's or platform's privacy and control settings?
- Is the use of social media covered in the school's e-safety policy?
- Identify a designated person who is responsible for keeping the content up to date

*Recommendations:*

- Include the use of social media in relevant school policies, including the e-safeguarding and acceptable use policies;
- Include appropriate use within the home-school agreement, or developing a separate social media policy;
- Designate someone to manage the page;
- Store usernames and passwords securely;
- Send a letter to parents with advice and information about the page;
- Develop a clear rationale for use; for example:  
"The PTA has a social media policy which explains that the Facebook / Twitter account etc are used exclusively for the running of the association" which includes:
  - Communicating with members;
  - Promoting events;
  - Recruiting volunteers;
  - Canvassing members' views;

### ***Benefits:***

- Increased parental engagement
- More effective communication with parents about school events

### ***Associated Risks:***

- Data protection
- Child protection
- The reputation of the school or the Trust
- Conflict between parents

### **Outline unacceptable use of the Social Media, for example:**

- The PTA's social media site does not allow any personal correspondence between members and is not intended for discussing any aspect of the school other than the PTA.
- Inappropriate posts, including any derogatory comments, can and will be removed by the administrator. The Trust on behalf of its member schools reserve the right to instruct PTAs that are directly associated with our schools to remove posts, events or information that may or may be perceived to bring the Trust or its schools into disrepute.

## **10. FIRST AID**

**When planning events, you will inevitably need to deal with the issue of first aid provision. Ensure you are aware of the school's First Aid policies and procedures, access to a telephone and know the schools full address for emergency services.**

**Speak to your Academy Head as to whether a suitably trained staff member could be present (please be aware that there is no requirement placed on staff to be present at PTA events and the responsibility for first aid cover rests with the PTA).** You should ensure that first aiders are contactable and identifiable - high-vis jackets and mobile phones may help. Have a designated room to be used for first aid.

### ***Is there a legal requirement to have a first aider present at every PTA event?***

Event organisers have a duty of care to everybody attending, but do not have to provide medical cover. They are, however, legally bound to this duty of care and to keep people 'safe'. So, where there is even a minimal risk of injury, they need to ensure that they have taken the necessary steps to respond to potential incidents.

### ***How do we decide how many first aiders we need?***

A 'needs assessment' should be carried out before any event goes ahead. This should consider a range of factors such as:

- number of people attending and existing medical needs;
- location and what time of year it is;
- what activities are taking place (for example, a high-contact sport is likely to produce more injuries than a bingo event);
- previous casualty rates and how close the event is to an A&E department;

### ***What equipment do first aiders need?***

**In a school setting, you need a fully-stocked first aid kit designed with children in mind, which complies with HSE guidance. This might include:**

- Wash-proof plasters
- Sterile gauze swabs
- Microporous tape
- Sterile eye pads
- Sterile dressings
- Scissors
- Gloves
- Safety pins
- Icepacks
- Finger bandages
- Thermometer
- Disposable tweezers
- Triangular bandages
- Alcohol-free antiseptic wipes
- Emergency blankets

## **11. RISK ASSESSMENTS**

**It's essential to produce a risk assessment of your PTA events and it needn't be complicated! You have a responsibility to do what you can to make sure people don't get hurt.**

**Risk assessments are used to:**

- List the different hazards that people might encounter whilst taking part in activities run by your group
- List the different hazards that people might encounter whilst using equipment that is looked after by your group.
- List the different hazards that people might encounter whilst using a venue that is looked after by your group.
- Identifies possible activity hazards
- Supports you to put in place appropriate control measures

**However, for a Risk Assessment to be dynamic you should ensure:-**

- everyone running activities for your group is aware of it and does what it says;
- you keep it up to date; *and*
- ensure it is realistic (you actually intend to do the things that you write down)

## **12. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS (AGMs)**

**Your PTA has an obligation to hold an AGM once a year, and all members of the association - parents, carers and staff at your school must be invited to attend.**

This is the main way members hold the committee to account for its running of the association. Typically there is a report made by the treasurer on the funds raised and how these have been spent. The chair will highlight successes, thank those who have been involved and indicate what is planned for the next year. This is a good point in time to review what has happened and to recruit new committee members. Make sure everyone knows the date as far in advance as possible. It is usual for all members of the committee to stand down at the AGM but they can seek re-election.

### ***When should an AGM be held?***

Obviously once a year, which means the timing for future AGMs will mainly be determined by when the last meeting happened or the PTA was established. Typically an AGM is held either towards the end or at the beginning of the school year.

### ***How do we call an AGM?***

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It is best practice to give at least 21 days' written notice of an AGM to all members of the association. The PTA constitution should specify the minimum notice period and how this should be given. This notice should explain the purpose of the AGM, give the order of business and include a reply slip seeking nominations for election to the committee. Use all means available to notify members, including the school newsletter, Facebook, noticeboards, letters in book bags, posters on classroom doors and school-to-home email system.

#### ***How many people have to attend an AGM?***

The PTA constitution should specify the number of attendees required for the AGM. As a general guide, the number of AGM attendees should be twice the number of committee members or more: if your association has five committee members, then at least ten members of the association must attend (although this can include committee members as they are also members of the association).

#### ***Do all committee members have to stand down at an AGM?***

Usually committee members are elected for a year and then they stand down at the next AGM. There is nothing to prevent them from standing again, but they would need to be re-elected.

#### ***How are committee members elected?***

The best way to do this is to have a vote of those present at the meeting, with each person standing needing to secure a majority of the votes cast. Where this is competitive, it is a good idea for those standing to leave the room whilst the vote happens. Usually a show of hands is sufficient but if it is close and contentious it may be better to conduct a written ballot with the results being carefully recorded. The PTA constitution will specify how committee members should be elected.

#### ***How many committee members are required?***

It is usual to have at least a PTA chair, treasurer and secretary in addition to other members of the committee. Whilst many hands make light work, remember that you will need to have twice the number of committee members attend an AGM and that this might be difficult if the committee is large.

#### ***Can nominations for committee member roles be accepted at the AGM?***

Ideally, nominations should be received in advance of the AGM, to reassure the committee that enough people will be stepping forward. However, there is nothing to prevent nominations made at the AGM from being accepted.

#### ***What happens if our Chair can't attend the AGM?***

It isn't a requirement that the chair must attend the AGM, indeed another committee member can be chosen to chair the AGM. However, if the process of selecting someone to deputise for the chair is in anyway contentious, take a formal vote, counting and recording the results carefully.

### **13. FINANCE**

**Your Constitution and Terms of reference should outline your PTAs financial objective and how it will go about achieving its objectives; i.e. through fund raisers, events, donations, grant applications etc. It should relate to the Schools Finance Policy and Charging & Remissions Policy and acknowledge any limitations of events set by the school, i.e restricting the number of fund raisers etc.**

The Constitution should also outline how spending decisions will be made and follow an appropriate tender process for large sums. Accounts should be independently audited by an appropriately knowledgeable person and available for public scrutiny.

### **14. CHARITABLE STATUS**

**Organisations engaged in charitable activities, with an annual income of more than £5,000, are required by**

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## law to register as a charity with the Charity Commission.

In England and Wales it is a legal requirement for organisations engaged in charitable activities, with an annual income of more than £5,000, to register as a charity with the Charity Commission. There is no charge currently for PTAs to register as a charity. Charity registration provides formal recognition of the PTA and gives your association a legal status which is publicly acknowledged. Benefits of registering as a charity include:

- exemption from the payment of income and corporation tax;
- eligibility to receive charitable donations from local and national companies;
- eligibility to apply to grant-making charitable trusts, statutory and lottery funding organisations;
- eligibility to apply for Gift Aid;

## 15. LETTING AND USE OF SCHOOL PREMISES, EQUIPMENT & RESOURCES

ALL PTA events must have a completed and receive a confirmed letting agreement, in most incidences the expectation would be that the school would provide this 'FOC' free of charge, although the school will reserve the right to charge for costs i.e. additional caretaking and cleaning.

Schools will always attempt to meet all reasonable requests for the use of facilities, equipment and resources from the PTA, when due notice has been given and it doesn't negatively impact on the operation of the school and it meets the aims and objectives of the PTA.

The PTA should take all appropriate measures to ensure that the premises, facilities, contents, equipment, resources and materials, are not damaged. In the event that damage occurs, the event organiser must advise the Academy Head immediately. Please refer to the Trust's Letting Policy for further information.

## 16. EVENTS & FUND RAISING – Local Authority Licences

### *Temporary Event Notices (TENs).*

Historically a PTA needed a TEN for the sale of alcohol and/or for 'regulated entertainment' from its Local Authority; however many of the activities outlined as 'regulated entertainment' have now been deregulated (from 6 April 2015). A TEN is still required for the supply of alcohol; i.e. sale by retail and 'proxy' sales (drinks included in the ticket price, donations for alcohol). A TEN costs £21 and is, in effect, a temporary licence authorising regulated entertainment and/or the sale of alcohol. As a result of deregulatory changes that have amended the 2003 Act, NO LICENCE IS REQUIRED for the following activities:

- **Plays:** no licence is required for performances between 08.00 and 23.00 on any day, provided that the audience does not exceed 500.
- **Dance:** no licence is required for performances between 08.00 and 23.00 on any day, provided that the audience does not exceed 500.
- **Films:** no licence is required for 'not-for-profit' film exhibition held in community premises between 08.00 and 23.00 on any day provided that the audience does not exceed 500 and the organiser (a) gets consent to the screening from a person who is responsible for the premises; and (b) ensures that each such screening abides by age classification ratings. The deregulation guidance further explains, "Under this exemption, one condition is that the film entertainment is not being provided with a view to profit. An entry charge does not of itself make the film entertainment licensable; it is whether the organiser intended to make a profit (that includes raising money for charity). A charge or contribution that is made solely to cover the costs of the film screening is consistent with 'not being provided with a view to profit'. The 'not with a view to profit' condition applies solely to the activity of exhibiting the film under this exemption. A charge with a view to making a profit may legitimately be levied for any other activity or event that is distinct from film admission, such as the provision of refreshments, film talks, or a social event."

- **Indoor sporting events:** no licence is required for an event between 08.00 and 23.00 on any day, provided that those present do not exceed 1,000.
- **Music:** no licence is required for a performance involving amplified live music and/or recorded music between 08.00 and 23.00 on any day, at the non-residential premises of a school, provided that the audience does not exceed 500, and the organiser gets consent for the performance on the relevant premises from school leaders.

## 17. CATERING

**Whether you're selling cakes at the summer fair or serving up curry at your quiz night, how can you ensure that the food you serve is safe? The FSA advice for preparing food safely in the home is based around the 'Four Cs':**

- 'Cooking' your food thoroughly;
- 'Chilling' it properly;
- 'Cleaning' kitchen surfaces and utensils; *and avoiding*
- 'Cross-contamination' between foods;

**Further guidance can be obtained from the following resources:**

<https://www.food.gov.uk/>

<https://www.food.gov.uk/food-safety>

<https://www.gov.uk/food-safety-your-responsibilities>

[https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/homehygiene/Documents/ICNA-TRAINING-RESOURCE-BOOKLET\[1\].pdf](https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/homehygiene/Documents/ICNA-TRAINING-RESOURCE-BOOKLET[1].pdf)

### *Transportation of Food*

When transporting food, make sure you use clean containers and equipment. If reheating food then do so thoroughly, making sure it reaches a temperature of 70°C for two minutes, or equivalent, so that it is steaming hot throughout. If you need to keep food hot for some time before serving, you should cook it thoroughly, until steaming hot, then keep it at a temperature of 63°C or above.

### *Do we need to have a food hygiene certificate?*

No - The detailed food hygiene legislation only applies if the food handling operation is a regular organised event. Where events are considered to be occasional, as may be the case for PTAs, they remain subject to the general food safety rules. These require all food served to be safe, regardless of whether they're for profit or not.

### *We run a cake stall at our fairs with home-made treats donated by parents. Is our PTA liable for any illnesses resulting from something eaten?*

Anyone supplying food in such circumstances is legally responsible for ensuring that the food they supply is safe. It's important that you take care to follow the hygiene advice available. Your local authority can also provide advice. If someone were to fall ill as a result of eating food that you've sold, your local authority might investigate to determine the cause.

### *Do we need to wear gloves to serve cakes and should we have one person serving, and another handling money?*

Gloves can help with good food hygiene practice, but they're not a substitute for thorough hand-washing. Ideally it would be good food hygiene practice to have a separate person handling money and serving the food, but this is not always possible. Instead it's important for food handlers to wash their hands or change gloves regularly. Also tongs can help to minimise direct contact between hands and food.

### *We have a few pupils with food allergies, should we ban products such as nuts completely or simply make sure that any items offered are labelled?*

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**Some schools have chosen to ban foods which pupils are allergic to at such events, such as nuts.** Where these rules are in place the PTA must follow them. However, people can be allergic to a wide range of food. Another approach would be to provide **clear labelling** so that parents, teachers and children can make informed choices and avoid foods which could cause an allergic reaction. Also minimise cross-contamination from other foods will need to be managed to reduce the risk of accidental exposure to food allergens.

#### **We're having a buffet at our next event. How long can we leave this out at room temperature for?**

For occasional events, there aren't any regulations that specify a maximum time that food can be left out. However, in the interests of safety, you shouldn't keep food out for longer than four hours. Warm food shouldn't be left cooling down for more than two hours. Any remaining food should be put back in the fridge or thrown away. If you have kept leftovers in the fridge, don't let them stand around at room temperature when you serve them again.

## **18. DISSOLVING A PTA**

In the event that a PTA that wishes to dissolve, they must hold an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) or an annual general meeting (AGM) and formally dissolve the organisation. This must be done by the trustees and members of the PTA itself.

Before actually dissolving the PTA, the trustees/committee must present a resolution at an EGM or AGM. Any remaining assets should be passed on to the school. She recommended that before the resolution is presented, the trustees who are stepping down could attempt to find new trustees/committee to replace them.