



TERMS OF REFERENCE: KG AND PS PARENT FORUM

Introduction

Waldorf Schools around the world are known for being vibrant communities where teachers and staff work together to manage the daily operations, supported by the constructive and enthusiastic involvement of the parent body. To bring this to life, Michael Oak's organisational structure is based on a system where groups of committed persons are mandated to fulfil certain responsibilities.

The Kindergarten & Primary School Forum ("KG & PS Forum") operates in accordance with this structure. The KG & PS Forum is one of three Stakeholder Forums referred to in the school's Trust Deed, which is the

document that describes the school's governance structure. The purpose of the KG & PS Forum is to serve as a channel of communication to assist and support the smooth running and development of the Kindergarten and Primary School.

Purpose of the Terms of Reference

The purpose of these Terms of Reference is to set out the KG & PS Forum's Role and Responsibilities, as well as the requirements for its composition, meeting procedures and performance monitoring.

Role of the KG & PS Forum

The role of the KG & PS Forum is to facilitate discussion between the School and parent body. The intention of the KG & PS Forum is to move processes forward in the most effective way possible by facilitating constructive discussions and planning between the Parents, Teachers and Administration.

Each year parents from each class in the Kindergarten and Primary School are selected as representatives who meet on a regular basis to address matters pertaining to school-life that are not learner-, teacher-, or parent- specific, including:

- Assisting new families to settle into the school community
- Encouraging parents' to gain deeper understanding of the methods and approach of a Waldorf school
- Raising awareness of the annual calendar of parent engagement at the school, via schoolwide and class events, fundraising, outings and other activities - as well as to encourage participation in those activities
- Coordinating the annual review of the Parent Handbook
- Discussing issues that span across classes

Composition

The KG & PS Forum is composed of one parent representing each Primary School Classes 1-7. Kindergarten and Playgroup will be represented by the Chair of the PG&KG Faculty and a single parent representative who, preferably, also has a child in Primary School. The Primary School Class Forum Representatives are chosen by each class with the assistance of the class teacher. The selection process is to take place as soon as possible in the 1st term of each year, and preferably by the end of

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the first week of February so that new Representatives are in place for the first Forum meeting of the year. If a class is not able to have the selection process that early in the year, then Class Forum Representatives from the previous year are requested to remain in their role until a new Representative is chosen. This is to make sure each class is represented at the first meeting of the year. Playgroup is welcome to wait until Term 2 to attend their first meeting.

The Class Forum Representatives select a Chairperson and Secretary for the KG & PS Forum at the end of the 3rd term each year, in line with the selection of new members of the Board, which takes place at the school's AGM (Annual General Meeting) at the end of August each year. This provides the incoming Chairperson and Secretary one term for the handover process so that they are ready for the start of the new school year. The Chairperson and Secretary should ideally both have been a Class Forum Representative for at least one year, at any time, prior to being chosen for these roles. Should no candidates be forthcoming, the KG & PS Faculties may approach suitable parents to fill this role. Prospective candidates are to be presented to the KG & PS Class Forum Representatives, two weeks prior to election.

The KG & PS Forum Working Group

The KG & PS Forum is coordinated by the Kindergarten & Primary School Forum Working Group ("KG & PS Forum Working Group"), which is composed of the Chairperson, Secretary, and School representatives namely: a KG Faculty Representative, a PS Faculty Representative, the school's pedagogical coordinator, a representative from College of Teachers (if none of the other roles are already a member of College) and the School Administrator (or representative from the School Administration).

By the end of the first week of February each year the KG & PS Faculties, together with the College of Teachers, decides who will represent the school on the Working Group as well as in the actual Forum meetings. It is important that KG & PS Forum Working Group members have a problem-solving approach and are engaged in proactively resolving parental and faculty concerns. The KG & PS Faculty Representatives are responsible for coordinating the faculty's engagement with the issues raised.

Recruitment

Recruitment for and membership in Working Groups, Committees and Forums at our school shall be guided by the following principles:

- Diversity of views and background adds depth to decision-making,
- Membership is a training ground for future members of the Board of Trustees and College of Teachers, and
- The inclusion of the broader parent body and faculty members brings greater legitimacy to governance structures.

Role of the Chairperson

The primary role of the Chairperson is to:

- Meet with the KG & PS Forum Working Group to prepare the agenda;
- Chair meetings in a balanced and careful manner, seeking consensus by creating an atmosphere of openness and respect, recognising that consensus is not reached unless consent and dissent are voiced.
- Ensure that all participants are familiar with and adhere to the Michael Oak "Meeting Values and Guidelines".
- Ensure that the meeting remains aligned with the agenda and that new issues raised in the meeting are noted and tabled for future discussion unless there is agreement at the meeting to discuss.
- Share relevant information with and consult with other school bodies as needed.

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- Follow up with the KG & PS Forum Working Group after each KG & PS Forum meeting to ensure all agenda items are answered as well as possible, and for minutes to be shared with the school community.
- Write a report to the Trustees before their termly meeting, as well as a review of the KG & PS Forum's annual calendar for parent engagement, which will form part of the KG & PS Forum's annual report to the Trustees and the AGM.

Role of the Secretary

The primary role of the Secretary is to:

- Coordinate the meeting calendar with the Chairperson and School Secretary responsible for internal events.
- Call the meeting and distribute the agenda.
- Take minutes at the KG & PS Forum meeting.
- Prepare the first draft of the minutes, as detailed below.

Current members

The list of current Class Forum Representatives and KG & PS Forum Working Group members, including their

dates of service, can be found in the Admin Group's governance database, available on the school's intranet.

Tenure

Class Forum Representatives and KG & PS Forum Working Group members should ideally serve for a minimum of one year. Representatives and members can serve for as long as they desire. If a representative has served for a year, and someone else would like to have a turn, the new person would take preference.

The Chairperson and Secretary may serve for a maximum of 2 consecutive years.

Responsibilities

Termly KG & PS Forum meeting

The Secretary and Chair are responsible for coordinating the termly meetings for both the KG & PS working group and the KG & PS Forum meetings with all relevant members and other guests.

- There are four (4) KG & PS Forum meetings scheduled in any one calendar year, one per term, the dates of which are communicated and publicised by the 2nd week of the 1st term. It is recommended that the final meeting of the year, given limited capacity in the 4th term, should focus on reviewing the previous year and making recommendations and plans for the coming year.
- The dates for the meetings shall follow this rhythm each term:
 - Week 1-2: Parents settle in
 - Week 3: Parents are requested to submit agenda items
 - Week 4: Working Group meets
 - Week 5: Links Meeting
 - The schedule should allow for the minutes to be ready for the Trustees meeting.
- All Class Forum Representatives are expected to attend all the meetings. If they are unable to attend, they are to find a replacement and notify the Secretary and Chairperson.
- The Class Forum Representatives are to seek out agenda items from their class parents, which will be brought to the KG & PS Working Group before each meeting.
- KG & PS Forum meetings are open to all interested Kindergarten and Primary School parents.
- The KG & PS Forum Working Group may invite guests, such as representatives from College,

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the Board of Trustees, other committees and working groups, as well as individuals such as the sports coordinator, to address specific issues.

Class Forum Representatives

The Class Forum Representatives support communication and engagement between the parent and teacher bodies.

- They help direct individual or pedagogical queries or issues to the teacher or other correct school body, in accordance with our various policies. For this reason the Class Forum Representatives are requested to familiarise themselves with the school's Policies & Procedures, and to assist their class parents in becoming familiar with the working of the school. Some of these documents include: Parent Bringing a Concern Procedure, Anti-bullying Policy and the various Codes of Conduct. The Bringing a Concern procedures should be followed in raising any concerns involving teachers and staff.
- All Class Forum Representatives are required to represent their classes in a non-judgemental, transparent and equitable manner, encouraging open communication and fair representation.
- After each KG & PS Forum meeting, the Representative is to:
 - give feedback to individual parents who raised issues.
 - share the minutes with their entire class, via the class communications link with a short preamble highlighting any concerns that the class raised, or topics of interest.
 - give feedback from the meetings to the class parents at their next class meetings. If the Representative has something specific to bring to the meeting, then the class teacher is to be informed a week before the parents meeting.
- Class Forum Representatives will also be invited to meetings of the KG and PS Faculties.

Board's Nominations Committee

Each year the Board's Nominations Committee selects the slate of nominees for the Board of Trustees.

- KG & PS Forum selects one (1) member for the Board's Nominations Committee, in accordance with the procedures described in the Terms of Reference for the Nominations Committee.
- The person selected is any parent who understands the workings of Trustees and is a parent in Kindergarten or Primary School.

Agenda, Minutes & Reporting

- Two weeks prior to the KG & PS Forum meeting, the Secretary reminds the Representatives to contact their class parents and ask for agenda items to be submitted directly to their Class Forum Representative.
 - Agenda items should not be individual concerns, but rather have the broader collective in mind.
 - The minutes of the previous KG & PS Forum are attached to the email.
- The KG & PS Forum Working Group meets the week prior to the KG & PS Forum meeting to finalise the agenda and channel issues to their appropriate mandates for response or resolution.
 - The agenda is to be drawn up based on the prioritised needs of the school community.
 - Any proposed items not falling under the role of the KG & PS Forum will be directed to the relevant Faculty or Working Groups. The Procedure for a Parent Bringing a Concern is to be followed at all times.
- A detailed agenda together with supporting documentation (prepared by the Chairperson and Secretary) must be circulated to the Class Forum Representatives and any other invitees at least 3 (three) working days prior to the KG & PS Forum meeting.

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- A reminder of the meeting date and time is published by the School Secretary in the school newsletter and sent to the class WhatsApp groups.
- The Secretary is to take the minutes.
 - In order to make it easier to track the status of action items, minutes are to include: attendance, date, time, issues brought, short summary of discussion, action items, person responsible and deadlines.
 - Minutes must be completed as soon as possible after the meeting, preferably within one week so as not to lose momentum, and these draft minutes must be circulated to all the school and class representatives that attended the meeting for their approval.
 - Once any amendments are made, the Forum Secretary will send the final approved minutes to all members of the Working Group, the Class Forum Representatives and the School Secretary.
 - The School Secretary will distribute the minutes by email to KG & PS Faculties, College and the School Administrator.
 - Class Forum representatives will distribute the minutes to their class within one day of receiving them, highlighting topics of interest or any class issues raised at the meeting.
 - Finalised minutes should be distributed within 2 weeks of the KG & PS Forum meeting date.
 - Any parent or staff member within the school may request a copy of previous KG & PS Forum minutes from the School Secretary.
- The KG & PS Faculty Representatives are to take the relevant matters from the minutes for discussion to their respective Faculty Meetings. The KG & PS Faculty Representatives are responsible for feeding back any pertinent decisions or progress updates at the subsequent KG & PS Forum Working Group meeting, when the first agenda item is to review previous minutes.
- Highlights of minutes and key issues are reported to Trustees in advance of their next meeting by the Chairperson.

Meeting Procedures

- The KG & PS Forum will hold sufficient scheduled meetings to discharge all its duties as set out in these Terms of Reference, but subject to a minimum of one (1) meeting per term.
- Meetings in addition to those scheduled may be held at the request of the KG & PS Working Group, KG & PS Faculties, the Trustees or College.
- Meetings may be held in-person or via electronic means depending on prevailing restrictions and circumstances.
- If the Chairperson is absent, the members present must elect one of the members present to act as chairperson for the meeting.
- If the Secretary is absent, the members present must select one of the members present to take the minutes of the meeting.
- The meeting shall end with a review of the action items discussed and deadlines assigned, and reminder of the date of the next meeting.
- All members act in accordance with Michael Oak's "Meeting Values and Guidelines" that describes

the principles by which the meeting culture is established and nurtured.

Quorum

As this is not a decision-making body, a quorum is not necessary for meetings.

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Evaluation

An annual review of the performance of the KG & PS Forum will be made based on whether or how long it has taken issues raised to be resolved, as well as if there is any relevant feedback on the annual calendar for parent engagement. The review is to be performed by the Trustees, with input from PS & KG Faculty, College and the Forum Working Group.

Approval of these Terms of Reference

If the evaluation demonstrates that the KG/PS Forum isn't managing to achieve its goals because of governance issues, or because of issues raised by the Administration, College or Trustees, these Terms of Reference can be amended as required, subject to the approval of the Trustees after consultation with KG/PS Faculties and College. When a revision is recommended, the original as well as the revised versions must be made available, and the reason for the revision specified.

Adoption

These Terms of Reference were approved by the KG & PS Faculties in November 2022, and adopted by the Board of Trustees at their meeting of 5 December 2022.

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