

LIGUANEA PREPARATORY HOME-SCHOOL ASSOCIATION



CONSTITUTION and HANDBOOK

Revised January, 2012

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CONSTITUTION and HANDBOOK

This document shall be recognized as the Constitution and Handbook that will guide the affairs of the Liguanea Preparatory Home-School Association (HSA).

The roles and functions of this HSA will include:

1. Sharing at meetings, knowledge of the required standards, policies and targets of the Ministry of Education and Youth in order to help parents monitor students achievement and aid in their improvement.
2. Informing and educating parents about school development, parenting skills, and child development.
3. Lobby or advocating for reasonable changes on matters of particular interest such as school management, curriculum issues and programme expansion.
4. Encouraging the involvement of parent and public in the educational institutions of the nation.
5. Implementing special projects related to students or staff welfare, improvement of school facilities and mobilization of parents.
6. Supporting and representing the interests of children and youth before the school administration and any other organization that makes decisions that affect the students.
7. Promoting the welfare of the students and youth in schools, churches and wherever they gather or are involved.
8. Assisting the school through direct dialogue to produce satisfied clients.
9. Assisting parents in developing the skills they need for the proper upbringing of their children and by so doing, raise standards of home life. This assistance may involve parenting seminars and workshops.
10. Consulting with the school to help guide school development for example curricular development, disciplinary matters and extracurricular activities.
11. Acting as the forum through which differences between parents and teachers can be resolved amicably by mediation.

12. Developing between educators and the general public a united effort that will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education.

Basic Policies of the Liguanea Preparatory HSA.

The HSA shall be a non-commercial, non-profit, non-sectarian and non-partisan group. Non-profit shall be interpreted to mean that all funds that are raised by the HSA shall serve the cause of the HSA and shall be used exclusively to further the objectives of the organization. No member of the group shall benefit financially from the funds. The HSA shall not endorse commercial products or trade in business. Neither shall it participate in, whether directly or indirectly, any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to, any candidate for public office. The HSA must recognize that all people have the right to practise their own spiritual faith but should not advance or support any one religion or its beliefs.

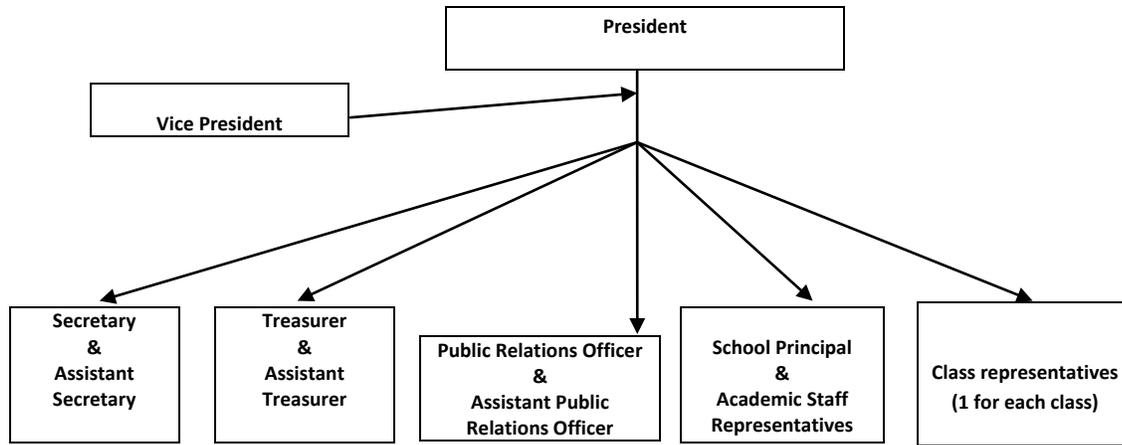
The HSA shall work with the school to provide quality education for all the children and youth and seek to participate in the decision making process that establishes school policy.

The HSA must recognize that the legal responsibility to make decisions is delegated to the Board of Governor of the School. All legal matters must be referred to the Board of Governors of the school.

The HSA shall cooperate with other organizations and agencies concerned with child welfare, but persons representing a particular PTA shall make no commitment that binds the association without a HSA membership vote authorizing them to do so.

The HSA shall be bound by the laws of Jamaica as well as by the relevant policies of the Ministry of Education.

Organogram of the Liguanea Preparatory HSA Executive



The Liguanea Preparatory HSA Executive and Membership

At the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the HSA, a new executive shall be elected by the general membership. This is done by persons in attendance proposing nominations for various posts. If the person accepts the nomination and it is seconded by another person then it is put to a vote and the nominee with the highest number of votes is elected to the post.

The Executive shall comprise of the President, the Vice President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer, Public Relations Officer and Assistant Public Relations Officer, School Principal, Academic Staff Representative and Class Representatives. Class Representatives and the Principal shall not be elected officers.

The Education Regulation requires that two members of the HSA represent the HSA on the Board of Governors. These person should be one the existing executive members and another person who has been elected to this post by the general membership. The general membership will comprise teachers, parents and guardians.

Term limits for Office

The recommended term for office shall be one year for all elected officers. Some persons can be elected for more than one year to a maximum of two years. Rotation of officers is recommended to maintain vibrancy. New members usually bring new ideas and promote the growth of the HSA.

Quorum

The business of the HSA shall be conducted by the minimum of a quorum of members. The quorum shall be equivalent to 25% of the student population. The business of the Executive shall be carried out with a quorum of 6 of its members.

What the New President Should Do?

Before meeting with the Executive for the first time, the new President should study the constitution and handbook and become familiar with HSA policies and positions, Ministry of Education policies and positions and meet with the school's Principal to discuss the school's plans for the year, including an improvement plan for the school.

The First Meeting of the Executive – Orientation

The first meeting of the Executive should be an orientation for all members. The orientation of the Executive should be used to:

- Determine-
 - The frequency of meetings
 - The number of meetings that the members are expected to attend
 - Dates and locations of meetings, that is convenient for the majority

- Review-
 - The structure of the HSA
 - Policies and procedures, bylaws and standing rules.
 - What constitutes an effective school
 - Procedures for reporting (written, oral or both), when due, what is included.
 - Roles and responsibilities of executive members.
 - Attendance of executive meetings, and the procedures to follow if unable to attend.

- School improvement Plan and its implementation.

- Expect participation at Executive meetings, including homework when required, discussion, listening, voting; abiding by the supporting decisions.

Membership: Who can be a Member?

Membership in the Liguanea Preparatory HSA is generally limited to parents, guardians, and past parents along with teachers and administrators of the school. Representatives from school and community interest groups shall be granted membership upon due consideration by the HSA Executive. The HSA should ideally have one parent or guardian in its membership for every three students enrolled in the school. The HSA shall keep a list of members and their attendance.

Basic Money Matters

Dues should be set and approved at AGM and be reflected in the budget. The budget is prepared by the Treasurer and approved by the executive and ratified by the general membership.

There should be a bank account (current account) in the name of the HSA with four signatories. Ideally, two from the HSA school executive, including the President, and two from the school, including the Principal. Investments should only be done with the expressed approval of the executive. There should be an annual external audit of the accounts and the report presented to the general membership.

Description of HSA Officer Positions

The President

The President has duties both as presiding officer and as an administrative officer. The duties of a presiding officer are to be found in the section about meeting procedures on page. The administrative duties help the HSA to run smoothly. They include the following:

- Convening meetings;
- Representing the HSA on the School's Board;
- Leading the HSA in addressing the needs of children and school;
- Providing information to other officers and project chairmen and to the membership;
- Overseeing projects and programmes, delegating responsibilities as necessary;
- Developing positive interpersonal relationships with staff, HSA officer and general membership;
- Exercising responsibility in oversight financial operations of the HSA; and
- Allocating time to various tasks.

Vice President

The Vice President may be asked to act in place of the President. A Vice-President does not have the authority to make the decision to assume the duties of the President. The vice-President usually acts as aide to the President. This means the President delegates certain responsibilities (for example, membership, fundraising etc.) to the Vice President. Because Vice Presidents may be asked to preside at meetings, they need to understand the responsibilities of a presiding officer. They also need a thorough understanding of the work of the association.

The Secretary

The Secretary is the custodian of the HSA records. The bylaws provide for specific duties of the Secretary. Often the Secretary is responsible for sending out notices of all meetings to officers and members. The Secretary should also have on hand, for reference, at each meeting:

- The minute book containing all minutes;
- An approved copy of the HSA Constitution and Handbook;
- A current membership list;
- An up to date directory of executive members
- An agenda of the accepted order of business for the executive meetings and for general membership meetings;
- A copy of the budget for the year;
- A copy of the projected programmes and projects for the year; and
- The Attendance Register.

Assistant Secretary

The Assistant Secretary may be asked by the President or Vice President (in the absence of the President), to act in place of the Secretary. The Assistant Secretary does not have the authority to make the decision to assume the duties of the Secretary. The Assistant Secretary usually acts as aide to the Secretary.

The Treasurer

The Treasurer is the authorized custodian of the HSA funds. The Treasurer should:

- Receive all money from persons delegated to collect or raise funds in an activity;
- Give a written receipt for funds received;

- Deposit all money or ensure such deposit, all money, in the name of the association in a bank account as approved by the executive;
- Maintain an accurate record of all receipts and disbursements in a permanently bound ledger book;
- Pay, by cheque, all authorized bills;
- Submit a written financial statement at each executive meeting and at each general membership meeting. This statement must be recorded and filed in the Secretary's minutes; and
- Ensure strict accounting measures/procedures are developed and maintained for the chain of custody and banking of the funds of the HSA.

Occasionally, it may be necessary for other officers or members to handle HSA funds (i.e. cash from fundraising). In these cases, great care should be taken to avoid any appearance of careless or inappropriate handling of funds. For the protection of the HSA, the Treasurer should provide strict accounting procedures which known to all members. It will be good fiscal policy to appoint three people to (one bring the treasure, if available) to count and record the monies received from fundraising initiatives. The President should be given a copy of the written and signed record of the monies. It is especially important to do this if cash is involved.

The Treasurer or Assistant or President should immediately have the funds deposited in the bank. Money belonging to the HSA should not be held in the homes of any HSA officer.

Public Relations Officer

The Public Relations Officer will be charged with the responsibility of engaging guests to address the HSA on several areas/topics of relevance. The Officer will also be responsible for assisting the school with public relations matters.

Assistant Public Relations Officer

The Assistant Public Relations Officer may be asked by the President or Vice President (in the absence of the President), to act in place of the Public Relations Officer. The Assistant Public Relations Officer does not have the authority to make the decision to assume the duties of the Public Relations Officer. The Assistant Public Relations Officer usually acts as aide to the Public Relations Officer.

Class Representatives

Class representatives shall act as a liaison among teachers, students and the HSA Executive.

Meetings and meeting procedures

The business of the HSA shall be conducted by the minimum of a quorum of members. The quorum shall be equivalent to 25% of the student population. The business of the Executive shall be carried out with a quorum of 6 of its members. At the beginning of each school year, there shall be an Executive meeting, which will be followed by an Annual General Meeting. Throughout the school year, at least one (1) meeting of the HSA Executive shall be held for each school term. At least one (1) meeting of the full membership shall be held during each school term of the school year. The dates and times of the meetings shall be decided and agreed on by the majority of the membership of HSA and the Executive, for respective meetings, at the start of each new school term. Under situations of emergency, emergency meetings shall be convened as appropriate.

An **agenda** is to be developed for all meetings and will establish the order of business. The business of the meeting shall follow the order of the agenda. Below is a sample agenda for an AGM. The format of this agenda may be adapted for other meetings.

Sample Agenda for Annual General Meeting

AGENDA

- *Call to Order*
- *Opening (Welcome and Prayer)*
- *Reading and confirmation of minutes*
- *Matters arising from minutes*
- *Report of the President*
- *Report of the Treasurer*
- *Report of the Principal*
- *Unfinished Business (from last meeting)*
- *New Business – Election of Officers*
- *Programme (entertainment, guest speaker etc)*
- *Announcements*
- *Adjournment*

The President shall be the presiding officer over the meeting to be held. In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall be the presiding officer. If a quorum is present the presiding officer shall call the meeting to order and proceed with business. The meeting should as much as possible start on time. It shall be important that the agenda is reviewed by members at the beginning of each meeting, giving members a chance to understand all proposed major topics, change or modify if necessary and then accept changes before the agenda is adopted.

The President shall refer to himself or herself impersonally as ‘the chair’. In formal meetings of the general membership, the President should not express a personal view or opinion while presiding. The President shall facilitate the business of the meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting shall be circulated to members as they arrive so they may be read before hand and the members will be able to participate meaningfully in matters arising from the minutes. It is important that the minutes reflect an accurate account of what occurred at the meeting. The minutes should be entered into the official “Minute log”. The minutes should be brief and show action taken. The minutes of the meeting should show:

- The type of meeting (executive, general membership, special, committee, etc).
- The name of the school
- The name of the presiding officer and the Secretary, date, time and location of the meeting.
- For the general membership, meeting, a “Sign In” Attendance Register and for the executive committee meeting, a roll call of members.
- Topics of the programme, methods of presentation, names of participants, and important points covered; if there is to be a presentation
- Statements concerning the disposition of the minutes of the previous meeting (whether accepted or corrected by change, if any)
- Records of all motions, including the exact wording of the motion, the name of the member who introduced (made) the motion and what action was taken on the motion (Votes should be recorded with totals).
- Important statements from reports, including action to be taken
- Time of adjournment.

Confirmation of the minutes must be done by a person who was present at the last meeting at which the minutes were taken. The minutes may be seconded by any member.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's report should include:

- Balance of funds on hand at the date of the treasurer's previous report
- List of receipts in detail, totals, and list of disbursements, itemized and totalled.
- Receipts and disbursements should be itemized to show the amount received or spent in each budget category. The totals per category should be compared to the budgeted amount.
- Balance of funds on hand at the date of current report.

The Election of Officers

The following are rules governing the election of the officers of the HSA.

- The President presides at the election meeting.
- The privilege of voting shall be limited to members of the association who are present and are on the membership register (parent or guardian).
- Election of officers is held at the Annual General Meeting and will come under 'new business' on the agenda. The President calls upon the Secretary to read the sections of the guide pertaining to nominations and elections.
- The President open the floor to nominations.
- The privilege of nominating from the floor is extended to members of the association who are present.
- The privilege of voting shall be limited to members of the association who are present and are on the membership register. The membership is not obligated to nominate the President or any current officer eligible to serve a second term, or to nominate automatically the Vice President for President. Each nominee must be evaluated independently and by the same criteria as all other nominees. The membership is obligated to seek out those eligible members who would best serve in a particular office.
- A nomination is required to be second and if the nominee wishes to decline he or she must do so before the nomination is seconded.

- The President can ask for additional nominations for all positions in the order in which they are listed in the guidelines before closing nominations for all elected offices and then proceed with the voting. For example, the President may state: ‘ _____ has been nominated for President. Are there further nominations for President?’ (Pause). ‘ _____ has been nominated for Vice President. Are there further nominations for Vice President?’ (Pause). This procedure is used for each office. The President should then say, ‘Are there any further nominations for any of these offices?’ (Pause) ‘Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed.’
- The President restates the slate of nominees and asks each one to stand. The President conducts the election of the officers even if he/she is nominated for an office.
- When one person is nominated the voting is generally done by voice where the President says, “All those in favour ...” (pause) ... “All those against...”
- After the votes have been finalized, the persons so duly elected are presented.