

## **Monmouth Comprehensive School Friends Association Operating Policies**

**These policies and procedures set out the principles for operating the Monmouth Comprehensive School Friends Association. They are relevant to all members of the Friends Association and are endorsed by the Committee and Monmouth Comprehensive School. All policies will be reviewed bi-annually to ensure that they remain appropriate to the Association, its beneficiaries and its volunteers.**

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### **Complaints Procedure**

#### **Introduction**

As Committee Members and Trustees of Monmouth Comprehensive School Friends Association we understand it is our duty to make decisions that are in the best interests of the Monmouth Comprehensive School and The Friends Association. We know that where any of us hold a personal or other interest, this will stop us from achieving this duty and acting in the best interest of our Friends Association

#### **Applicability**

This applies to every member of the Monmouth Comprehensive School Friends Association.

The Friends Association defines a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction in the Association's actions or the standard of service provided.

Our Friends Association takes the following steps to identify and deal with any complaint made against the Association:

- We make all new committee members aware of this policy
- Complaints should be made in writing to the committee and handed, in the first instance, to the Chairperson. If the complaint is regarding the elected Chairperson then the complaint may be passed to another elected committee member.
- The committee will meet to discuss any complaint made within (28 days) of receipt of the written complaint.
- The committee will respond to the complainant, detailing the committee decision made and whether there will be any further discussions or meetings regarding the complaint.

- If a meeting is arranged for the complainant to meet with the committee, the complainant may bring additional representatives with them. The complainant is also required to supply any documentation or evidence that they wish the committee to view at least (10 days) prior to the meeting
- At the meeting the complainant should detail their grounds for complaint. The Friends Association may ask questions of the complainant. Minutes of the meeting will be taken.
- Any decision made by the Friends Association in response to a complaint will be confirmed in writing within (7 days) with details of any action to be taken

## **Volunteering Policy**

### **Commitment**

Monmouth Comprehensive School Friends Association acknowledges the contribution made by its volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways that are encouraging and supportive. The organisation also recognises its responsibility to arrange volunteering efficiently so that the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

### **Definition**

A volunteer is a person who, unpaid and of their own free will, contributes their time, energy and skills to benefit Monmouth Comprehensive School Friends Association.

### **Volunteer Co-ordination**

All volunteers should report to the Friends Association committee, who will offer guidance and support to the volunteer so they may carry out task effectively. Volunteers may be given an individual name of a committee member to report to. Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description, will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and be given all necessary information and equipment to enable them to complete the activities. It is the volunteer's responsibility to ensure they understand the task they have been given and to raise any concerns or training needs before undertaking any activity

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

The association recognises the rights of volunteers to :

- Know what is expected of them
- Have adequate support and training
- Receive appreciation
- Volunteer in a safe environment
- Be insured
- Be free from discrimination

### **The association expects volunteers to :**

- Be reliable
- Be honest
- Respect confidentiality
- Carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the association
- Carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- Respect the work of the association and not bring it into disrepute
- Comply with the association's policies.

## **Safeguarding Policy**

### **Responsibility**

Friends Associations have a duty of care to consider the safety of children and vulnerable adults. This should be taken into consideration when risk assessing a Friends event and the duration of such events. It is best practice for Friends Associations to have a set of procedures in place and guidelines for volunteers to follow at events, this may be developed with guidance from the school

All Friends Association members should be aware of the person responsible for safeguarding within the school.

### **What to do if you have concerns about a child**

You may have concerns about a child because of something you have seen or heard or a child may choose to disclose something to you.

If a child discloses information to you, you should:

- Listen to the child without displaying shock or disbelief
- Accept what is said and reassure the child, do not make promises that you may not be able to keep , e.g. 'Everything will be alright now'
- Do not ask leading questions and do not interrogate the child – this is not your responsibility to investigate
- Explain to the child what you have to do next and who you have to talk to
- Take notes, if possible, or write up the conversation as soon as possible afterwards
- Contact the school safeguarding officer or a member of the school leadership team as soon as possible

### **Guidance for Events: where children attend without parents**

- All Events should be risk assessed
- Events where children are dropped off and collected – a register should be available and children should be checked in and out of the event. The PTA should have a list of any child being collected by another parent/carer or travelling home alone
- Contact details for the child's parent/carer may be collated by the PTA for the event
- Exits should be monitored to ensure children cannot leave an event unattended
- If this is a regulated activity the volunteer will need an Enhanced DBS check.

### **Useful Links**

<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/Info-sheets/Volunteer-checks>

## **Risk Management Policy**

### **Introduction**

This policy sets out the principles for risk management within Monmouth Comprehensive School Friends Association. It is relevant to all within the association and is endorsed by the committee of Monmouth Comprehensive School Friends Association. It will be reviewed bi-annually to ensure that it remains appropriate to the Organisation and its volunteers needs.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of Risk Management is to identify risks as early as possible, develop a strategy to mitigate those risks and implement a risk management process as part of our Friends Association event planning process.

#### **For all PTA events:**

- A Risk Assessment is to be carried out by a committee member to:
  - Identify potential hazards
  - Identify who may be harmed by such hazards
  - Determine whether existing precautions are adequate or whether further action needs to be taken
  - Record your findings on the Friends Association Risk Assessment template
  - Review your assessment and update when necessary
- Take advice from the school/venue where appropriate – look at previous risk assessments and adhere to recommendations
- Take advice from the HSE where appropriate – [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
- A copy of the Risk Assessment to be kept in a designated folder In the Dropbox for use by the Friends Association Committee – this can be used for reference if the same event is being run in the future
- A copy of the Risk Assessment given to the school if requested
- All committee members should be made aware of each risk assessment.

#### **Useful Links**

<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/Info-sheets/Producing-A-Risk-Assessment>

[https://www.parentkind.org.uk/file\\_download\\_resources.aspx?ID=4400](https://www.parentkind.org.uk/file_download_resources.aspx?ID=4400)

## **Equal Opportunities Policy**

### **Commitment**

The Monmouth Comprehensive Friends Association is committed to Equal Opportunities for all members of the association.

### **Definition**

It is our policy that all committee and volunteer decisions are based on the legitimate needs of the association. The Friends Association will not discriminate on the basis of race, nationality, sex, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, disability, religion or belief, age or any other ground on which it is or becomes unlawful to discriminate under the laws of England and Wales.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

The association recognises the rights of its members to be able to volunteer for the association without fear of discrimination or harassment.

The Friends Association commitment to equal opportunities extends to all aspects of volunteering including:

- Election of Committee Members
- Allocation of Tasks
- Conduct Issues, discipline and grievances.

All members have a responsibility to ensure compliance with this policy, to treat other members with dignity at all time and not to discriminate against or harass other members.

## **Conflict of Interest Policy**

### **Introduction**

As Committee Members and Trustees of Monmouth Comprehensive School Friends Association we understand it is our duty to make decisions that are in the best interests of the Friends Association. We know that where any of us hold a personal or other interest, this will stop us from achieving this duty and acting in the best interest of our Friends Association.

### **Applicability**

This applies to every member of the Friends Association. Our Friends Association takes the following steps to identify and deal with any conflicts of interest:

- We make all new committee members aware of this policy.
- We ask all committee members to declare any conflict of interest
  - 1) When they are appointed
  - 2) At the beginning of each meeting
  - 3) Whenever a committee member becomes aware of a possible conflict of interest
- Any committee member with an identified conflict of interest is asked to withdraw from any discussion of and/or vote on that issue.
- Where conflicts of interest arise we will detail in the minutes of the meeting how this has been addressed.
- The PTA will work to make sure there is a good mix of parents and staff across the school involved within the PTA. This will stop any one part of the school being overly-represented.
- Where decisions made may favour one year group, subject area or particular 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.

### **Useful Links**

<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/Info-sheets/Conflicts-of-interest>

## **Financial Control and Expense Policy**

### **Introduction**

This policy sets out the principles for Financial Control and Expenses within Monmouth Comprehensive School Friends Association.

### **Applicability**

This policy is applicable to all Trustees and Committee Members who are legally responsible for the running of the Association and for all Members of the Association who are entitled to be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses which they legitimately incur whilst supporting the delivery of the association's objects.

### **Bank Account Management**

- The Bank mandate will require two signatures from a pool of three to four signatories
- The Treasurer will operate the bank account and retain passwords for online banking
- Any payments made through online banking are required to be authorised by one other authorised person

### **Use of Bank Cards (We only have a deposit card, this cannot be used for purchases)**

- Any Bank card issued is the property of the Friends Association and should be returned to the committee if the card holder is no longer an elected committee member.
- Bank card should only be issued and used by the authorised member of Friends association.

### **Online Banking**

- Any online banking details issued are to be stored safely and only known to the person they have been issued to.
- If online banking details have been issued to an individual it is for their use only and not to be shared.
- If online banking details have been issued for the association rather than individuals, then these should only be known to the current bank signatories that have authority to act on behalf of the association.
- Dual authorisation is required then one person creates the transaction and another signatory authorises the transaction. The committee should have agreed to any payments or transfers in advance.
- If a person with online bank details leaves the committee, they should be removed as a bank signatory and the bank notified to remove their online access.

### **Expenses**

All Trustees of the Association may be reimbursed for reasonable expenses incurred whilst carrying out their duties as a Trustee or member of the Monmouth Comprehensive School Friends Association. All expenses must be approved by (two members of the committee) of whom neither may be the claimant

Receipts or proof of purchase must be provided for all expenses

All claims for reimbursement must be made within 30 days of the date of expense (late expenses are at the discretion of the committee)

### **Purchases**

Members of the Association are entitled to be reimbursed for purchases made for the Association. Purchases must be pre-approved by (the committee and in an emergency by the Treasurer or Chair) and have already been agreed by the committee as an agreed spending of funds.

Any member who has not received pre-approval for a purchase is not guaranteed reimbursement.

Receipts must be provided for all purchases

All claims for reimbursement must be made within 30 days of the date of purchase (late claims are at the discretion of the committee)

### **Waiving Expenses (Donating Expenses as Gifts in Kind)**

Members who generously waive their expenses for Friends Association purchases as 'donations' to the Charity inadvertently create some difficulties. If reimbursement of expenses and purchases are not claimed they cannot be entered into the accounts to show both the true running costs of the Charity and the generosity of supporters through cash-donations. If the amount of waived expenses and purchases are entered into the Charity Accounts, the Charity may not claim Gift Aid on these amounts as 'Gifts In Kind' are excluded from Gift Aid.

### **Payments to School (beneficiary)**

All payments to school should be backed up by an Invoice and agreed by the Friends Association Committee.

### **Reporting**



- The accounts will be reported to the committee In the form of a Treasurer's report given at Friends Association meetings (at least once a term).
- The Treasurer will keep a schedule of funds contributed to the school by faculty and subject area
- At the AGM the Treasurer will provide a report of the accounts that corresponds with the previous academic year
- The Treasurer will Insure that the accounts are audited and any recommendations from the auditor will be reported to the next Friends meeting and acted on.
- The Treasurer will ensure that appropriate and timely submissions are made to the Charity commission, Gift Aid and HMRC.

#### **Changes to the policy**

The Committee reserve the right to change its Expense Policy to maintain consistency with current best practice and the needs of the Charity.

These policies were Agreed **May 2025** and will be reviewed by the Monmouth Comprehensive School Friends Association committee bi-annually. Next review due **May 2027**.