

Overton CE Primary School Parent Council Terms of Reference

Draft v 0.1 – September 2024

1. Purpose

The Parent Council of Overton CE Primary School serves as a voluntary body, representing the views of parents and carers of children attending the school. It provides a structured forum for meaningful dialogue between parents and the Leadership Team (LT), including the Governing Body (GB). This collaborative relationship aims to ensure that the voices of parents are heard and considered in decisions affecting the school, while supporting the school's overarching educational goals and welfare of all children. As the Council is intended to be primarily a vehicle for exchange of information, there is no defined quorum. Ultimate decision-making rests with the Head Teacher and the Governing Body.

The Council works in partnership with school leadership to foster an inclusive, welcoming environment for all parents, helping to create a sense of community and shared responsibility for the success of the school.

2. Objectives

The core objectives of the Parent Council are to:

- Promote partnership between parents, the school, and children by facilitating open communication and collaboration
- Work with the school to develop and engage in activities that enhance the educational experience and welfare of the children
- Identify, gather, and represent the views of parents on key matters affecting the school's operations and the children's wellbeing, ensuring that these perspectives are effectively communicated to the LT and GB
- Support the school's efforts to create a welcoming atmosphere for all families, encouraging parental involvement in school life

The Parent Council is not a decision-making body but provides a platform for consultation and discussion. It complements the work of the LT and GB by offering a structured way for parents to contribute constructively to the school's development.

3. Scope of Responsibility

The Parent Council will provide advice and consultation on a wide range of issues, which may include:

- School procedures and policies that affect day-to-day operations, such as homework practices, school events, and safety protocols

- Communication methods between the school and parents, focusing on improving transparency, clarity, and responsiveness
- Ways to foster greater parental participation in school activities and promote engagement with their children’s education, particularly for parents who may feel less involved

However, there are specific areas that fall outside the scope of the Parent Council’s work. These include:

- Issues relating to individual pupils or members of staff. These concerns should be addressed directly with the relevant teacher or member of the LT
- Matters related to specific curriculum policies or procedures
- Personal grievances or complaints from parents, which must follow the school’s formal complaints procedures

4. Structure and Membership

Membership of the Parent Council is open to all parents and carers of children currently attending Overton CE Primary School. The ideal structure aims to have at least one volunteer parent (referred to as a “Parent / Carer Member”) from each class with at least one representative from each year group. This ensures that the views and concerns of parents from across the school community are heard and considered. If insufficient parents volunteer, then the HT and Governing Body may consider suspending the Council and find other ways for communication and collaboration to take place.

The Parent Council will include:

- The Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher, who provide insights into the school’s operations and respond to feedback from the Council.
- A nominated member of the Governing Body (GB), who will act as a liaison between the Parent Council and the GB and Chair the meetings.
- Other members of the school staff may be invited to attend meetings on an ad-hoc basis, depending on the topics under discussion.

Appointment of Class Members:

- Towards the end of each academic year, all parents will be invited to express their interest in becoming a Parent / Carer Member for the following school year.
- In cases where more than one parent expresses interest in representing a year group, those parents will be encouraged to select a single member from the group. If a single member cannot be identified then these members will be encouraged to attend on a rotating basis.

- If no parent volunteers for a year group, the position will remain vacant until a suitable representative is found, potentially during the school year.

The term of office for Parent / Carer Members is one year, with the option for members to serve for up to three consecutive years.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Chairperson: The Chairperson is nominated by the Governing Body at the beginning of each academic year. They are responsible for leading the Parent Council, setting the agenda in collaboration with the Head Teacher, and ensuring that meetings are conducted in a constructive and solution-oriented manner. The Chairperson also represents the Parent Council in communications with the LT and GB.

Secretary: The Secretary, elected from the parent members, is responsible for taking minutes during meetings, distributing relevant documents, and ensuring that feedback from meetings is communicated effectively to all parents. The Secretary will also be responsible for gathering and collating feedback from parents via surveys or forms in advance of each meeting.

Parent / Carer Members from each Year: Each Year Member represents the parents of their child's year. They are responsible for actively gathering the views and feedback of parents on key issues through informal discussions, surveys, and other means. They bring these views to the Parent Council meetings and help to ensure that all voices within their year are heard.

6. Meetings

The Parent Council will meet once every half-term during the school year. Key information regarding the meetings, such as the dates, times, and agendas, will be communicated to parents well in advance.

- Agendas will be set in collaboration between the Chairperson and the Head Teacher, and circulated to all members one week prior to the meeting.
- Each meeting will focus on a range of issues that have been raised by parents
- Meetings will be minuted by the Secretary, and minutes will be circulated to all parents after they have been reviewed and approved by the Chairperson and the Head Teacher.

To ensure the meetings are productive, discussions will be conducted respectfully, with a focus on identifying solutions.

7. Reporting and Communication

Minutes from each meeting will be made publicly available to all parents via the school's online communication platform. Key issues raised during meetings will be fed back to the LT and the Governing Body for consideration.

8. Review of Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Parent Council will be reviewed at the end of each academic year, initiated by the Chairperson. Feedback from Council members, school staff, and the wider parent community will be considered to ensure that the Parent Council continues to function effectively and serves its intended purpose.