

WELCOME TO YOUR PTA!

St James' RC School PTA 2022/2024

Raising funds for our children

Registered Charity No. 1057497

Email: pta.stjamesprimary@gmail.com

WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOL!

All families are automatically members of the St James' RC School PTA when their child joins our school. This booklet has been compiled by our Parent Teacher Association (PTA) especially for you, as a family with a new child joining our school community. We realise for parents new to the school that it can be strange and a little nerve-wracking and there always seems to be so many questions to ask. This booklet aims to provide you with information about our PTA which forms a major part of school life. If you have any questions, please contact one of the committee members, your class teacher or class rep.

Why do we have a PTA?

We are fortunate at our school to have a PTA that is an integral part of the school community. In its time the PTA has raised thousands of pounds, which has been spent on equipment and resources to enhance our children's education experience and the school's facilities.

Our PTA is about much more than simply fundraising. The PTA exists to provide closer links between home and school and it is an excellent way to bring staff, parents and friends together socially in support of the school, working towards a common goal. With the continued support of parents and staff, our PTA has always succeeded in its efforts. All parents and members of the school community are encouraged to get involved, even if they only have a small amount of time available.

Not all of our events are run as fundraisers, some are run with the simple aim of providing the children with a good time and as a way of thanking families for their continued support for the PTA.

PTA Committee

Our PTA committee currently includes the following roles: Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Communications Manager; we also have 2 or 3 class representatives from each year. The PTA committee is listed at the end of this document. The Committee meets on a regular basis during the school year.

Links with local businesses

We have developed strong links with the local community and are always well supported by both residents and businesses. Many of our local businesses are very generous providing donations for raffle prizes for our summer ball, Christmas and summer fairs. We are also extremely grateful to the businesses who have participated in charity matched giving schemes.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Our Annual General Meeting is held in October each year and provides an opportunity for all parents to come along and hear in more detail about the work of the PTA, the events we have run, the funds we have raised and how the money has been spent. It is also the occasion when we elect our new committee members and class representatives. This is a meeting for all members of the PTA. It is our chance to tell you about our achievements and the difference we have made. This is also the time for you to ask questions or voice your opinion. We need the support of parents so that decisions taken at the AGM are valid.

Class Representatives

Our class representatives undertake a very important role. There are usually at least two representatives per class who provide a link between individual classes and parents and the PTA committee. The support from class representatives is vital when it comes to organising our main events from selling tickets to organising rotas of help. We really could not manage without them.

A list of current class representatives can be found under the PTA section of the school website. Updated lists are published each year after the AGM. If you are interested in joining the committee or acting as a class representative please do not hesitate to talk to a member of the Committee.

How we raise money

Like most PTAs, the majority of our funds are raised through the events that we run. Some of our most popular events are:

- Summer and Christmas Fairs
- Summer Ball

We always try to respond to any new suggestions or ideas for future fundraising activities; it is great to see parents and children having fun at the social events or children enjoying using a piece of new equipment that the PTA has funded.

We raise money in other ways too. Donations from parents are extremely important. You can donate time, money, items for sale, raffle prizes or offers of services and skills.

Company matched giving

As our PTA is a registered charity, we are able to raise money through company matched giving schemes, so please do check with your employer to see if they offer this benefit. Company matched giving is very simple. Companies or businesses pledge to donate to a charity such as ourselves an amount of money relating to the amount that an employee(s) donates or fundraises for us. We have been helped enormously in the past by this type of donation, and there are several benefits to both ourselves and the company involved:

- Employees' morale is boosted by having their efforts supported by their employer
- The company benefits from having charitable donations written off against taxable profits
- The company can endeavour to get publicity for their giving
- Our PTA benefits from receiving perhaps double what we have raised at an event

If you think that your employer has a matched giving scheme already in operation, or if you would like some more information about charity matched giving or how to set up a scheme in your workplace, please contact our treasurer, Lola Adebajji, pta.stjamesprimary@gmail.com.

Charitable status

Charity law requires voluntary organisations such as ours with an annual income in excess of £5,000 to register with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. As a charity we must abide by Charity Commission rules and regulations and we are bound by a governing document referred to as our constitution. Being a registered charity enables the PTA to:

- Receive charitable donations from local and national companies
- Apply to grant-making charitable trusts; most charitable trusts will give grants only to groups formally recognised as charities
- Receive donations made through payroll giving and company matched giving schemes
- Apply for Gift Aid

How we spend the money we raise:

Following a fundraising event, the money is banked straight away. It is at our PTA Committee meetings, that the decisions on how to spend the money are agreed. Usually, Mrs Weeks and the teachers will have a 'wish list' of items that the school would like the PTA to consider funding.

At other times it will be for resources to improve a particular area of the curriculum or school environment. The PTA funds are spent on the 'extras' that are not provided by the school's budget, directly enhancing our children's learning experiences. PTA funds are not generally spent on improving the fabric of the school building as this is the responsibility of the school Governing Body.

We always endeavour to spend our funds in ways that will benefit all our children across all areas of the school and curriculum. The money we raise is usually spent fairly quickly. That way, you can be sure that in supporting our school, your child/ren will feel the benefit, along with everybody else.

There are times when we fundraise for a large project. Most recently, the PTA funded the much-needed new Computer Lab and in the past, we have supported the extension of the KS2 playground and bought the climbing apparatus. We have also purchased iPads for KS1 and interactive Smartboards for all classrooms. However, whilst saving for these, we have still managed to find funds for smaller items thanks to the generous and continued support of our parents.

At the end of this document is a list of items donated to the school during the past couple of years and the amounts raised from various events.

How we get information to you

To help us remain as environmentally friendly as possible, PTA communications are normally emailed to parents, so please do ensure that both the school and the PTA have up-to-date contact information. We do at times send hard copies of the communications home in the children's school bags.

We also have a closed group on Facebook for current parents, PTA St. James' Primary, Petts Wood. This is proving to be a good forum for sharing useful information about forthcoming events, photos of school activities funded by contributions from the PTA and helpful prompts and reminders about school diary dates. This is a closed group and it is therefore not permitted to download or share photographs made available here.

How you can get involved

There are lots of ways you can help and support your child through the PTA. Offering to help before events or at other times during the year is so valuable and we really couldn't achieve what we do without the behind the scenes help that we receive. You can volunteer to be a Class Rep or Committee Member or you can simply support the AGM and

give us your ideas for fundraising events. You can help by letting us know if you have any contacts or skills we could use, everything is potentially valuable to us.

What the PTA means to our school

Comments from the children...

The children really enjoy the events such as the Christmas and Summer Fairs

'I can bring my family to the school!' *'It's fun to meet up with friends.'*

'It's exciting and everyone has fun.' *'The prizes are good!'*

'Everyone gets together to raise money.'

From the Governors

"The PTA is a huge asset to St. James'. Governors are grateful to the PTA for the extra resources they provide for the School. Governors are especially appreciative of the time and energy that goes into the organisation of the various fund-raising events. These events not only realise funds for the school but each event fosters a tremendous community spirit."

From our Head Teacher, Mrs Weeks

The PTA is an integral part of our school community. It has been a tremendous source of help and support to the school over the years in terms of fundraising, social activities and by assisting at school events. St James' has had a successful, committed, hardworking PTA for many years and their work has helped the school to flourish into the outstanding school that it is today.

The PTA does a brilliant job of bringing the community together. It provides an opportunity for people to meet other parents, to make new friends and to be involved in the life of the school. Being involved is a way to contribute to our school's success.

The PTA has raised a significant amount of money for the school and is invaluable in providing additional high-quality resources for the children including:

- The Computer Lab
- The Gazebo
- The outdoor classroom and pond
- The KS1 and KS2 playground equipment
- Funds towards the hall floor and windows
- Classroom Smartboards
- Laptops and iPads
- BBQ equipment for the Summer Fair
- Visiting Theatre Groups
- The butterfly and chick projects
- Sports coaching
- Funding towards educational visits
- Class budgets for each teacher to provide additional equipment
- The school gardens

The PTA also organises great community events which provide everyone connected to our school with the opportunity to come together in many different ways. They have organised discos, Easter Egg Hunts, fairs, Movie Nights, Quizzes, Bingo Nights, Summer Balls and a huge variety of other social events too numerous to mention.

Without PTA funding the school would be less vibrant and pupils would not have the wider experiences that make all the difference to their lives. I am always amazed at the amount of time that individuals give to our school on top of their daily commitments. I know that any time that parents can offer, however small, can make all the difference to the running of an event. It is also important that children see their parents' involvement in the school. The children are always rightly proud that their parents are involved in PTA events.

Thank you for taking the time to read our booklet. We hope you now know a little more about your Parent Teacher Association. On behalf of all the pupils we would like to thank you in advance for your very valuable support which enriches their learning experience and makes their time in school so enjoyable.

PTA COMMITTEE 2022/24

Chairperson - Paul Colonnese

Secretary - Layla Saunders

Treasurer - Lola Adebajji