



Thornhill Primary School

PTA Handbook

Thornhill Primary School Parent/Teacher Association
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Introduction

Welcome to our school

This booklet has been compiled by our PTA especially for you, the parents of children within our school community. It aims to provide you with information about the Thornhill Primary School Parent Teacher Association which forms a major part of school life.

If, after reading this booklet, you have any questions that remain unanswered, please contact one of the Committee members or your Year Representative.

Why do we have a PTA?

We are fortunate to have a PTA that is, and has been, an integral part of the school community for many years. In its time the PTA has raised around one hundred thousand 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 and pupils, working towards a common goal. It is fun too - just ask any of the Committee members or PTA volunteers. Obviously, as in any organisation, we have experienced some challenges but with the continued support of parents and staff, our PTA has always succeeded in its efforts.

All families automatically become members of the Thornhill Primary School PTA when their child joins our school. All parents, teachers and members of the school community are encouraged to get involved, even if they only have a small amount of time available.

The PTA is extremely conscious of the ethos and diversity of our school, and we try very hard when organising and planning events to respect this. Not all of our events are run as fundraisers. For example, the North Cardiff Schools Football Tournament, The Carols by Candlelight Community Concert and supporting the school open days. Other events, such as our Bags2School recycling initiative, raise money but at no cost to parents. All are run with the aim of helping the school, or giving the children a good time, whilst embracing the wider community of Thornhill.

Our PTA history

We can trace our PTA history back since the school opened in 1991. Some of the many projects and resources funded in this time include interactive whiteboards in all the classrooms, outdoor play equipment and our first school minibus, as well as treats such as pantomime and theatre visits.

Links with the Community and Local Businesses

We have, over time, developed strong links with the local community and are always well supported by both residents and businesses, for which we are very grateful.

Sainsburys

We have a good relationship with our local Sainsburys superstore, who help us advertise our activities, support our events with product donations and allow the children to use the supermarket to fundraise, such as the choir singing in the lobby at Christmas and bag packing.

Thornhill Church

We are very grateful to the members of Thornhill Church Centre who work with us to organise joint community events such as the Carols by Candlelight and, in 2012, the Golden Jubilee Big Lunch.

The Pendragon

The Pendragon is one of Thornhill's local pubs and we have throughout the year held several fundraising evenings hosted on their premises, including the Curry and Quiz night.

La Maison Estate Agents

Official sponsors of the school's 20th anniversary year events, La Maison Estate Agents is based in Llanishen.

Other Supporters

Many of our local shops and services are very generous providing donations for raffle prizes, financial support for our events and some have taken part in our Christmas and Spring Fayres.

Listed below are our regular supporters.

Evans, Hailes and Dean - Opticians	Boots the Chemist
Thornhill Cars	Techniquet
Cardiff City Football Club	Jazzy Jungle
Cardiff Blues	Greenmeadow Community Farm
Cardiff Devils	Cefn Mably Farm
Jump	Alfresco Landscape and Garden
Usbourne Books	Ice Hairdressers
The Old Cottage	Young's Solicitors
Easy Ironing Company	Michelle's Petcare Services
J A O'Connor Davies Opticians	J&P Autos
Karen the Florist	

Role of the Committee

Our PTA Committee consists of four Officers: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. We also have between 6 and 10 members who make up the full Committee, including our Head Master, Mr Tucker and several teachers.

The Committee meet on a monthly basis, with smaller working groups meeting as necessary when we are planning larger events. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Dates for the meetings are publicised and an Agenda and Minutes are issued to those who attend or are interested. To be included in circulation, please e-mail thornhillpta@hotmail.co.uk.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Our Annual General Meeting is held in September at the beginning of the school 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 Year Representatives.

Year Representatives

Our Year Representatives undertake a very important role. There is one Representative per school year whose role it is provide a link between individual year groups and parents and the PTA Committee. The support from Year 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 PTA Committee Members and Year Representatives is at Appendix 2 at the back of this booklet. Updated lists are sent out each year after the AGM. If you are interested in joining the Committee or acting as a Year representative or PTA volunteer, please do not hesitate to contact us (see How you can contact us – page 10).

Teachers and Staff

The teaching and support staff are invaluable to the work of the PTA. They attend meetings, provide ideas, support and participate in our events. They also help communicate PTA information to the children and provide feedback from the children and parents to the PTA Committee.

Support from PTA-UK

Our PTA is a member of PTA-UK, which is a national charity and membership organisation providing support and guidance for all home school associations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our association is one of over 13,000 members in current membership of PTA-UK.

We pay an annual membership fee which gives us lots of member benefits including comprehensive insurance cover for all PTA run events, support and advice on running the PTA, plus fundraising ideas and good practice hints and tips. PTA-UK also provides us with the opportunity to meet and communicate with other PTAs to discuss and share experiences. We receive termly publications and we receive guidance to ensure our events are legal and safe. All in all, we have a valuable resource at our fingertips.

How we raise money

Like most PTAs, the majority of our funds are raised through the events and schemes that we run.

Fundraising Events

Christmas Fayre – This is our largest event of the year. At the Fayre we have stalls selling reasonably priced gifts, a used toy stall, Christmas themed games, refreshments, crafts and a fantastic Santa's Grotto.

Discos – Aimed for all the family, the disco offers dancing, food, soft drinks and a bar for the parents.

Cinema Evenings – Taking place straight after school in the school hall, there is a certificate U film for the Infants and a PG film for the Juniors. These are supervised by the teachers.

Spring Fayre – Our Spring Fair is organised with a theme, there are third party stalls as well as PTA run stalls, refreshments, games and activities for the children, such as bouncy castles .

Summer BBQ – the summer BBQ is a family favourite, taking place on a Friday offering entertainment, stalls, a talent BBQ food and a bar for the parents.

Curry and Quiz nights – for adults only, this is a chance to get out and socialise with other parents and the community. These are held at the Pendragon pub.

Bakesales – Bakesales are held throughout the school year. Each school year group has a bakesale and they get to choose what to spend the money raised on!

Mothers / Fathers Day Sale – these events provide a convenient opportunity for children to buy cards and a reasonably priced gift for their parent.

Non Uniform Days – A bit of fun for the kids, for a small donation they can wear their casual clothes to school.

Easter Egg Hunt and Bonnet Parade – A traditional Easter activity which takes place at Cefn Onn Park. The children get to go on a magical hunt for Easter goodies and parents get to relax with a tea or coffee at the end and enjoy watching the children take part in a Bonnet Parade and sports games.

Community Events

Carols by Candlelight – this is a wonderful event involving the school choir and orchestra. A chance for the children and parents to get into the festive spirit.

North Cardiff Football Challenge - A children's football competition, supported by Cardiff City Football Club and open to teams from other local primary schools.

Fundraising Schemes

Christmas card project – This is a fundraiser, where the children produce artwork and have their very own design printed up into Christmas cards for parents to buy and send out to friends and family at Christmas.

Bags2School - One of our most successful fundraisers is our Bags2School recycling collection. Bags are sent home with the children for you to donate your unwanted clothing, bedding, curtains, soft toys etc. The school then receives money based on the total weight of the donated items.

Shopping

We also raise funds through loyalty shopping schemes, where parents can shop and raise money for the school at the same time. They are:-

www.easyfundraising.org.uk

www.yellowmoon.org.uk

Amazon

So you can see there is always something going on. We always try and respond to the children's requests; it is great to see them having fun at the events or enjoying using a piece of new equipment that the PTA has donated.

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

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 by the Committee, members and staff.

Usually, Mr Tucker will have a 'wish list' of items that the school would like the PTA to consider funding. Sometimes funding will be allocated as a result of the children or parents asking for something. For example, this year the parent questionnaire highlighted that many parents wanted children to get involved in more competitive sports. In response to this request, the PTA purchased a minibus for the children to take part in inter-school competitions and other curriculum based trips.

At other times funds raised will be for resources to improve a particular area of the curriculum or school environment. The PTA funds are spent on the 'extras' that cannot be provided by the school's budget, thus making our children's learning experiences so much more fulfilling and exciting. For example, the interactive whiteboards.

The money we raise is usually spent fairly quickly. That way, you can be sure that in supporting our school, your own children will feel the benefit, along with everybody else.

At Appendix 3 at the back of this booklet is a list of items donated to the school by the PTA during the past couple of years and the amounts raised from various events.

Communication

How we get information to you

PTA correspondence is sent out using Parentmail, the schools e-mail tool. We also put posters up in class windows and PTA notices are also posted on the school notice boards which are situated at the main entrance and outside the reception classrooms. In addition we send out posters and application forms for individual events held during the year. We will also occasionally send out ad hoc reminders and requests for donations.

An important aspect of our correspondence includes a newsletter every half term, which includes feedback on events that have taken place, money raised, information on forthcoming events and dates, requests for assistance and a fundraising total for the school year to date.

Once a year we will send out an annual report, summarising the successes of the year and reporting on the funds raised. We also issue an annual questionnaire in the new calendar year to gather parent's opinions on the work of the PTA and seeking new ideas for events.

We have a website where you will find information about the PTA, details of past and up and coming events and information on how to get more involved – www.thornhillpta.btck.co.uk.

We also have a Facebook page which we also use to provide information to those who choose to subscribe Thornhill PTA Facebook Group.

Dates of PTA meeting are published for all parents. Agendas and minutes are only issued to those parents who have expressed an interest in receiving them. If you wish to receive them, please e-mail thornhillpta@hotmail.co.uk

How you can contact us

There are a plenty of ways you can contact the PTA

- Website: You can leave a message here www.thornhillpta.btck.co.uk
- Email: You can e-mail us on thornhillpta@hotmail.co.uk
- Facebook: You can leave a message Thornhill PTA Facebook Group
- PTA Mailbox: You can post any correspondence in our mailbox in the foyer of the main school entrance.
- Applications forms for event tickets can be given to your child to take to school and the teachers will ensure that they are posted in the PTA mailbox. (Please ensure that any money is securely enclosed within an envelope and clearly marked with your child's name and class.
- Talk to your Year Rep or a Committee member (see Appendix 2)

Helping out

How you can get involved

There are lots of ways you can help and support your child through the PTA.

To stage the events the PTA organise we rely on a large number of volunteers, at some events we have had some great help, whilst at others we struggle to get the support required.

Examples of how you could volunteer/help include:-

- Manning a stall at a Fayre
- Serving at the bar at a Disco
- Preparing filled rolls for a Cinema Evening
- Making gifts for Fayre and Sales
- Makes cakes for Bakesale

We are very grateful to the small percentage of parents that regularly volunteer to help – but we need more! If one parent per child were to volunteer just 30 minutes at one event in the entire school year, we would have more than enough help to support all the events.

Or would you be prepared to commit just 30 minutes of your time at our larger events? (Christmas and Spring Fayre, Disco and BBQ) Over the whole school year that's just 2 hours!

Offering to help before events or at other times during the year is so valuable. It doesn't matter if you can't help on a regular basis, or even if you cannot come into school. There are always jobs that can be done from home if you have half an hour to spare e.g. wrapping gifts, preparing raffle tickets etc. We really couldn't achieve what we do without the behind the scenes help that we receive.

If you would like to be more involved with your child's school you can volunteer to be a Class Representative or Committee Member. Or you can simply support the AGM and give us your ideas for fundraising events. This is also the time to ask questions or voice your opinion.

You can help by letting us know if you have any contacts or skills we could use, everything is potentially valuable to us. For example, do you know a good DJ, children's entertainer? Are you involved with any organisations that could help us with a new type event (for example, in 2012 Cardiff City Football Club helped us with the North Cardiff Football Challenge), can you get raffle prizes from your employer or is someone you know able to provide raffle prizes?

There is brief form at Appendix 4 of this booklet to fill in and return if you are able to help in any way, no matter how small. Don't forget to include an email address and phone number.

