

The St. Bernadette Parent Teacher Organization Charter

Article I – MISSION STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

Parents have the responsibility of being primary educators of their children. According to Pope John Paul II, “Their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it.” Corresponding to their right to educate their children is “a serious duty to commit themselves totally to a cordial and active relationship with the teachers and the school authorities” (*i.e.*, *Familiares Consortia*). The St. Bernadette Parent Teacher Organization (the “**St. Bernadette PTO**” or the “**PTO**”) should help parents to this end.

The St. Bernadette PTO will provide spiritual, academic, athletic, community, and physical support, as needed, to our parent members, teachers, students, and other members of our Catholic school community. The PTO will strive to foster a sense of inclusion and community at St. Bernadette Catholic School (the “School”).

Article II – MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP DUES

Section 1 – Overview

The St. Bernadette PTO will be comprised of all parents and/or guardians of students currently enrolled in the School, as well as all faculty and staff of the school (the “**General Membership**”).

Section 2 – Membership Dues

Annual dues of \$50 will be collected from each family prior to July 1 of each year.

Faculty and staff are exempt from the payment of dues.

An increase in the amount of dues requires a Charter change in accordance with Article X; increases reflected in proposed budgets for the next year will not be put into effect unless approved via such a Charter change.

Article III – MEETINGS

Section 1 – General Membership Meetings

General Membership meetings will be held at least three (3) times during the academic year.

Two (2) of these meetings must include the following:

1. PTO Officer Nominations and Presentation of the Proposed Budget (March).
2. Certification of Election and Approval of the Budget (May).

All General Membership meetings will begin no earlier than 7:00 p.m.

The schedule of meetings will be published at the start of the school year. Any changes will be communicated to the School community at the earliest date possible.

Section 2 – Executive Committee and Operating Committee Meetings

The Executive Committee (defined below in Article V, § 1) shall at least meet in person monthly from September through June of each school year, including with the Operating Committee in September and at least three (3) other times during the school year.

As needed, in order to conduct business and take votes between monthly meetings, the Executive Committee or the Operating Committee (defined below in Article V, § 2) may meet in person, by teleconference or video conference so long as all Executive Committee members are given advanced

notice and an opportunity to participate in the meeting. The Executive Committee or Operating Committee may also meet by email (under the conditions set forth below in Article IV, § 1).

Section 3 – Quorums

A quorum of the Executive Committee is a simple majority of the voting members of the Executive Committee present at an Executive Committee meeting.

A quorum of the Operating Committee is a simple majority of the voting members at an Operating Committee meeting.

A quorum at a General Membership meeting is defined as twenty-five (25) members of the PTO present at the General Meeting.

Article IV – VOTING POLICIES

Section 1 – Overview

Unless otherwise prohibited within this Charter, each individual member of the PTO is entitled to one vote.

Voting on any matter that comes before the Executive Committee or Operating Committee may occur in person, by teleconference, videoconference or e-mail at the discretion of the President (or Acting President). If any member of the Executive Committee or Operating Committee requests a discussion by teleconference, video conference or in person, such discussion must take place before a vote may be held.

A majority of votes cast in person, by teleconference, video conference or e-mail where a quorum of the Executive Committee or Operating Committee, as applicable, participate in the voting will be sufficient to approve any matter that comes before the Executive Committee or Operating Committee; provided, however, that any vote to be taken by the Executive Committee or Operating Committee to approve the expenditure of PTO funds requires a majority vote by the Committee and not merely a quorum majority.

Votes by the General Membership concerning the overall business of the PTO may be conducted in one of the following ways:

1. Voice vote at General Membership meetings;
2. Paper ballot at General Membership meetings; or distributed ballots to each general member. At the discretion of the Executive Committee, the ballots may be distributed in either hard copy form or electronically by email to email addresses for each family currently on file with the School Office,

All votes concerning modifications to the Charter must be accomplished by distributed ballot.

If there is more than one nominee for any position on the Executive Committee or the Operating Committee, the vote must be determined by distributed ballot. If there is only one nominee for each position, the slate of candidates will be approved or rejected by a voice vote at the General Membership meeting to be held in May.

Section 2 – Voting Policies as to Grade Representatives:

Each member of the PTO may vote for a Grade Representative of their child(ren)'s respective grade(s) for the following academic year.

Section 3 – Voting Policies as to The Budget:

Any expenditure requiring Diocesan approval must be addressed at a General Membership meeting prior to being acted upon by the Operating Committee.

Section 4 – Voting Policies as to Expenditures

All expenditures of PTO funds must be voted upon, and approved by a majority of the approving body prior to being expensed.

1. Expenditures of \$500 or less must be approved by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.
2. Expenditures in excess of \$500, but less than \$2,500, must be approved by a majority vote of the Operating Committee.
3. All expenditures in excess of \$2,500 must be approved by a majority of the General Membership.

Article V – OFFICERS, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OPERATING COMMITTEE

Section 1 – Officers and Executive Committee

The PTO officers are the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Ways & Means Chair (the “**Officers**”, and with the Grade Representatives, form the Executive Committee (“**Executive Committee**”). The Pastor and the Principal are *ex officio* members of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee’s duties shall be to transact business between meetings in preparation for the General Membership meeting, create standing and temporary committees, prepare and submit a budget to the General Membership, approve routine bills, and prepare reports and recommendations to the General Membership. The Executive Committee is elected to one-year terms.

PRESIDENT. The President shall: Chair all meetings of the PTO, the Executive Committee and the Operating Committee; serve as an *ex officio* member of all committees; appoint the Charter Chair and chairs of all ad hoc PTO committees, as needed; serve on the Diocesan Council of PTOs or designate a PTO member to represent the St. Bernadette PTO on this Council.

VICE-PRESIDENT. The Vice-President shall: Perform all duties of the President in his/her absence; act as the parliamentarian for the Operating Committee; serve as Legislative Liaison for the School and coordinate enrollment growth and other development issues with the Pastor, the Principal and/or the Faculty; arrange for presentations at the PTO’s General Membership meetings of the PTO; and keep minutes at any PTO meetings where the Secretary is unable to attend.

SECRETARY. The Secretary shall: serve as Chair of the Communications Committee; keep minutes of all PTO meetings, including Executive Committee meetings, Operating Committee meetings and General Membership meetings; ensure that at least the previous five years of minutes are maintained on the School’s website and accessible to the General Membership; maintain the PTO’s website and social media outlets, if any; and, for any election, coordinate with the Charter Chair to distribute, collect, and count the ballots and inform the President of this count.

TREASURER. The Treasurer shall: serve as the Chair of the Finance Committee; manage the collection and disbursement of funds, in cooperation with the parish officials responsible for handling bank accounts and financial records; maintain a general ledger of the PTO’s funds in conjunction with the Parish Office in accordance with established accounting procedures established by the Diocese of Arlington; present the proposed annual budget to the Operating Committee at the monthly meeting preceding the March General Membership meeting; present the proposed annual budget to the General Membership at the March meeting; present the annual budget to the PTO for approval at the Certification of Election and Approval of the Budget General Membership meeting each May; provide monthly reports to the Operating Committee and the PTO on the generation of revenue and obligation of funds.

WAYS & MEANS CHAIR. The Ways & Means Chair shall: serve as the Chair of the Ways & Means Committee; serve on the Finance Committee; coordinate all PTO fundraising activities, either directly

or through appropriate delegation after consultation with the Executive Committee.

GRADE REPRESENTATIVES. There will be three Grade Representatives, one Representative for each of the following categories: Grades Pre-K-2; Grades 3-5; Grades 6-8. The Grade Representatives shall: Serve as Co-Chairs of the Morale Committee; act as liaisons for the Principal and the Operating Committee with their respective grades' parents; coordinate as needed with teachers in their respective grades on the selection of room parents; and coordinate social activities as approved by the Operating Committee.

Section 2 – Operating Committee

The Operating Committee consists of the Executive Committee, Pastor, Principal, Faculty Representative, Cultural Arts Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator, and Charter Chair. The Pastor, Principal, and Charter Chair are non-voting advisors to the Committee while the remaining Operating Committee members can vote during an Operating Committee meeting. The Operating Committee is responsible for conducting the day-to-day business operations of the PTO.

THE PASTOR. The Pastor is an *ex officio* member of the Operating Committee. The Pastor is the final approval authority for all PTO fundraisers, activities and expenditures. The Pastor must approve all contracts for goods or services purchased by the PTO.

THE PRINCIPAL. The Principal is an *ex officio* member of the Operating Committee. The Principal may approve or reject recommendations and expenditures of the PTO, or refer them to the Pastor for final disposition.

FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE. The Principal will appoint one Faculty Representative. The Faculty Representative shall: serve as a liaison between the Faculty and the Operating Committee and is a voting member of the Operating Committee. The Faculty Representative is appointed for a one-year term.

CULTURAL ARTS COORDINATOR. The Cultural Arts Coordinator is elected for a one-year term. The Cultural Arts Coordinator shall: design the cultural arts program for the academic year; serve as the School's representative to the Arts Council of Fairfax County; publicize the cultural arts programs with the PTO community through electronic or other means, and through the Church bulletin.

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR. The Volunteer Coordinator is elected for a one-year term. The Volunteer Coordinator shall: Serve on the Ways & Means and Morale Committees; solicit volunteers for PTO activities and committee membership; organize a volunteer orientation at the beginning of each school year; notify committee chairs of volunteers for their committees and activities; and assist potential volunteers regarding completion of the requirements for compliance with the Diocese of Arlington's Child Protection and Safety Program.

CHARTER CHAIR. The Charter Chair is appointed by the President for a one-year term. The Charter Chair shall: Provide advice and counsel on matters concerning interpretation and implementation of the Charter's provisions; serve on the Communications Committee; act as parliamentarian for the PTO; accept recommendations and suggestions for changes to the Charter from the General Membership; present changes to the existing Charter to the Operating Committee and the General Membership; and be present for the counting of ballots in connection with any election held by the PTO.

Article VI – NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS, AND TERMS

Section 1 – Overview

All elected or appointed positions are for one-year terms. Elections will be held at the last General Membership meeting of the school year. Nominations will be accepted and a slate will be presented to

the General Membership prior to the last meeting. At the General Membership meeting prior to the last meeting, nominations may also be made from the floor. Voting must be by voice vote if a slate is presented. If there is more than one candidate for a position, a ballot vote must be taken. All positions are elected by a simple majority vote of the members present at the General Membership meeting.

Section 2 – Terms of Office

No elected member may serve for more than four (4) consecutive years. The newly elected or appointed members of the Executive Committee or the Operating Committee will assume their duties July 1, in the year they are elected or appointed.

Section 3 – Order of Succession

If the President is unable to finish his/her term of office, until the vacancy can be filled in accordance with the previous section, the order of succession is as follows:

1. Vice-President
2. Secretary
3. Treasurer
4. Ways & Means Chair

Section 4 – Vacancies and Removal from Office

The Operating Committee may remove from office any member of the Operating Committee who has more than two (2) unexcused absences. A motion for removal must be made and seconded within the Operating Committee and two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members of the Operating Committee must vote for removal before the member can be removed.

Should an elected position become vacant for removal or any for other reason, the President (or acting President) shall accept nominations and make a good faith effort to fill the position within forty-five (45) days from the date of vacancy. If two or more members are nominated for the position, a special election will take place via distributed ballot.

Article VII - NON-OPERATING COMMITTEE POSITIONS

Section 1 – Room Parents

Each teacher shall appoint one or more room parent(s) for his/her class. Each teacher will coordinate, as needed, with the Grade Representative for his or her respective grade on the selection of Room Parent(s) for his or her class. The Room Parent(s) shall: provide support to the teacher as requested, including assist, plan and/or implement class parties, activities and field trips; serve on the Morale Committee; enlist parental support for specific PTO activities as needed; attend Room Parent meetings scheduled by the Grade Representatives; and, as a grade, coordinate one teacher appreciation event per year.

Article VIII – STANDING COMMITTEES

Section 1 – Overview

Standing committees are hereby established. The staffing of these committees will be accomplished by soliciting volunteers from the PTO. The Operating Committee may dissolve committees. Any committee requiring use of PTO funds must provide the Treasurer with a cost estimate for budgetary and funding purposes. The following committees are established: Finance, Ways & Means, Communications, and Morale.

Section 2 – Finance Committee

Chair: Treasurer

Membership: Ways & Means Chair, and a minimum of two (2) volunteers.

The Finance Committee shall: Solicit input for the annual budget; prepare the annual budget; prepare monthly finance reports to be presented to the Operating Committee; and prepare projection reports for long-range expenditures.

Section 3 – Ways & Means Committee

Chair: Ways & Means Chair

Membership: Volunteer Coordinator and volunteers as required.

The Ways & Means Committee shall: Identify potential fundraising activities for the PTO; prepare the fundraising activity calendar for the PTO; prepare and distribute advertising for fundraising activities; and organize volunteer groups for fundraising activities.

Section 4 – Communications Committee

Chair: Secretary

Membership: Charter Chair and volunteers as required.

The Communications Committee shall: Prepare news releases to the Catholic and general public concerning School events; solicit from the PTO names of individuals desiring to serve on the Operating Committee; prepare and distribute ballots, nominee profiles, and charter amendment proposals within two (2) weeks of the Certification of Elections and Budget Approval General Membership meeting in May; and count ballots prior to the PTO Certification of Elections and Budget Approval meeting in May.

Section 5 – Morale Committee

Co-Chairs: Grade Representatives

Membership: Volunteer Coordinator, Room Parents, and volunteers as required.

The Morale Committee shall: Make recommendations to the Operating Committee concerning social activities and support the coordinators of these activities; designate a coordinator of the “Sponsor Families Program” and the related annual event to assist new families in the School; assist with PTO programs for Catholic Schools Week; assist as needed with activities for Teacher Appreciation efforts; provide for student and volunteer appreciation and recognition; meet monthly during the academic year.

Article IX – FINANCES

Section 1 – Budget

A budget will be drafted and presented each year to the General Membership for consideration at the March General Membership meeting and approval at the May General Membership Meeting. It must be approved by a majority vote of the members present.

1. The Executive Committee has discretion to make adjustments in the allocation of expenditures provided overall annual expenditures do not exceed the budgeted amount approved by the General Membership.
2. When proposed by any member of the PTO, the Operating Committee may approve any expenditure of funds in excess of the budgeted level for the current Fiscal Year, provided that the increase in expenditure does not reduce, in actuality and/or forecast, the estimated end-of-year equity below \$15,000. If the approved expenditure exceeds \$2,500, the expenditure must be approved by a majority of the General Membership, per Article IV, Section 4.

Section 2 – Outstanding Invoices

Upon the dissolution of the PTO organization, the Operating Committee must use any remaining funds to pay any outstanding bills. To the extent any funds remain after paying any outstanding PTO bills, such funds must be spent for the benefit of the School.

Section 3 – PTO Fiscal Year

The fiscal year shall run from July 1 to June 30 of the following year.

Section 4 – Diocesan Guidelines

At the beginning of each Fiscal Year, the President and Treasurer will meet with the appropriate individual in the Parish Office concerning the PTO’s finances to help ensure proper accounting practices are followed. The PTO and Treasurer must follow the Arlington Diocesan Guidelines for Treasurers to the extent the Arlington Diocese publishes or otherwise makes known any such guidelines.

Article X - CHANGES TO THE CHARTER

Section 1 – Changes to the Charter

Any member of the PTO may propose a change or addition to the Charter at any time. The Charter Chair will review the proposal for the following:

1. Whether the proposal is already covered in the Charter.
2. Impact on the Charter, identifying elements of the Charter that would be affected if the proposal were adopted.

Section 2 – Review of Proposed Changes to the Charter

The Charter Chair will present the proposal, along with his/her findings, to the Operating Committee at the next monthly meeting of the Committee. The Operating Committee will review the findings and submit the proposal to the Principal for approval. If approved, the Charter Chair will present the proposal to the PTO General Membership.

Section 3 – Voting on Proposed Changes to the Charter

The Communications Committee will prepare and distribute the necessary ballots to the PTO, including the findings of the Charter Chair and the recommendations of the Operating Committee.

Section 4 – Implementation of Approved Changes to the Charter

If the proposal is approved by the PTO General Membership, the Charter Chair will make all necessary changes to update the Charter.

Section 5 – Review of the Charter

The Charter should be reviewed periodically to determine whether any modifications are needed.

Section 6 – Recordkeeping

The Charter Chair shall maintain a file that will be passed to his or her successor showing any changes to the Charter that have occurred.

Article XI – SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

The PTO will look to the Pastor for direction in maintaining our focus on the spiritual dimension of the School. To support our efforts, the PTO will request that the Pastor, or his designee, pray the opening and closing prayers at PTO meetings, attend Operating Committee meetings when possible, and continue to provide spiritual guidance to the PTO.