By-laws of the  
Parents Association  
The School at Columbia University

Modified on May 7, 2014 by the PA Executive Board  
Modifications approved on May 9, 2014 at General PA meeting

Article I. Name  
The name of this organization is The Parents Association of The School at Columbia University ("hereafter referred to as the PA")

Article II. Mission and Objectives  
The mission of the Parents Association (PA) of The School at Columbia University (TSC) is to build a sense of community among families, faculty, and staff at TSC through thoughtful programming, by acting as a voice for families, and by providing support for TSC in achieving its educational goals.

The objectives of this organization are:
• To foster open communication between The School, parents and teachers.  
• To act as a voice for families and create spaces and opportunities for families to freely express their ideas, concerns, and perspectives regarding all aspects of their children’s education and social involvement in The School.  
• To promote the mission of The School and its programs.  
• To foster collaboration among students, parents/guardians, faculty, principals and administration of The School.  
• To have the Parents Association leadership be diverse, welcoming, and inclusive of all families in The School community.

Article III. Basic Policies  
• The organization shall conform to the policies and procedures of The School at Columbia University and Columbia University in the City of New York.  
• The organization shall be noncommercial, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan.  
• The organization shall work with The School to provide quality education for all enrolled.  
• The organization shall develop and adhere to our Parents Association’s Policies and Procedures Manual
Article IV. Membership
Section 1 Eligibility & Membership
Membership in the organization shall be limited to all parents and guardians of students (eligible persons) currently attending The School. All eligible persons are automatically members of the PA. Active participation is expected.

Section 2 Voting Privileges
Each eligible person shall be entitled to one (1) vote each.

Section 3 Dues
There will be no membership dues.

Article V. Officers and Their Duties
Section 1 Titles
The elected officers of the organization shall make up the Executive Board and be comprised of eligible persons. These officers are: President, President-Elect, Vice-President of Operations, Treasurer, Communications Representative, three Division Representatives: Primary (K-2), Intermediate (3-5), Middle School (6-8), Members-at-Large (up to two (2)) and PA group representative(s).

The expectation is that there will be one person for each position. Two Members may jointly hold a position with the exception of President, President Elect and Treasurer. Further nomination procedures are addressed in Article VI section 1. There will be only one vote per office.

Section 2 Eligibility
Any parent or guardian who has a child(ren) enrolled at The School is eligible to hold office.

Section 3 Terms of Office
Elected officers shall assume their official duties on the last day of the current school year with the exception of Treasurer whose term will run July 1 through June 30 each year. Each officer shall serve for a term of no more than two years in the same position.

No officer shall serve for more than three consecutive terms unless approved by the Executive Board.
An officer who has served more than one-half of a term shall be credited with
having served that term. One person may not serve in more than one office at a time. Ideally, approximately one third to one half of the board should rotate off each year, so that there is continuity among the Executive Board.

Section 4  Duties of Officers

• President

The President shall preside at all Membership and Executive Board meetings, be ex-officio of all committees except the Nominating Committee; coordinate the work of the officers and committees of the organization in order that the Objectives may be promoted; communicate regularly with the Head of School; and perform such other duties as may be provided for by these bylaws. The President will also attend the Oversight Council meetings of The School representing the Parents Association. The President, with the President-Elect, will oversee the Annual Annette Raphel Alumni Scholarship Essay Award and Presentation.

• President-Elect

The President-Elect shall act as an aide to the President and perform the duties of the President in the President’s absence or inability to serve. The President-Elect shall help to organize and coordinate various programs and outreach of the association and help with strategic planning. The will assist the President with the Annual Annette Raphel Alumni Scholarship Essay Award and Presentation. The President-Elect will act as the parliamentarian, and must be familiar with Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, and these Bylaws. In the absence of President-Elect at a meeting, the President will appoint a parliamentarian pro-tem for that meeting. The President Elect will become the President in the following year.

• Vice President of Operations

The Vice President of Operations will oversee procedures for all PA events in conjunction with event leaders, as well as administrators and other key staff at The School. These include school wide events, PA groups events, and grade or division events. The Vice President in conjunction with the Board shall organize the nominating committee.

• Treasurer

The Treasurer shall be responsible for overseeing the annual operating budget and maintaining the PA’s financial records in conjunction with The School at Columbia University. The financial records shall be open to examination by
any Executive Board Member, by any administrative officer of The School at Columbia University, and by the Provost, General Counsel and Treasurer of Columbia University and their delegate(s). The Treasurer will be responsible for writing checks and making reimbursements to parents. The Treasurer will give a regular and accurate accounting of PA funds at Executive Board and Membership meetings.

• **Communications Representative**
  The Communications Representative will keep an accurate and permanent record of all meetings. He or she shall send and maintain all correspondence, prepare and send all notices, agendas, etc. to the members of the Parents Association through the PA newsletter and on the website. The Communications Representative will coordinate all PA communications with the TSC communications team, as well as updates to the website. He/she will promote PA events to the general parent body. The Communications Representative will keep minutes. In the event of his/her absence, he/she shall request another member of the Executive Board to take the minutes.

• **Division Representatives:**
  **Primary Division Representative: K-2**
  **Intermediate Division Representative: 3-5**
  **Middle Division Representative: 6-8**
  Division representatives must have a child in the division they represent. They shall be the primary point person and communications liaison for class parents in their Division, run the class parent meetings, and distribute and update the Class Parent Handbook. They will be responsible with class parents and the proper TSC office(s) to schedule grade-wide events to build community.

  The Middle Division representative is also responsible for recruiting volunteers and helping to organize the three middle school dances.

  In addition to their roles with the class parents, these Representatives will bring their Division’s concerns and perspectives to the Executive Board meetings. Their responsibilities include meeting with their division head two to three times a year to keep the lines of communication open. The Division representatives must also meet with each other regularly for coordination purposes.
• **Members-at-Large (for Community Building):**
  Members-at-Large will work with the President and other Executive Board members on community building projects and will share specific ideas/objectives with the PA Executive Board. The roles of the Members-At-Large can either be general or targeted, depending upon needs in a given year.

• **PA Group Representatives**
  Each eligible PA group will have one seat to be filled by a chairperson of that group or their designee who will represent their group on the board, and coordinate activities and programs with the Executive Board. Eligible PA groups are defined in Article VIII Section 1.

**Article VI. Nominating Procedures, Elections, Voting and Leadership Transitions**

**Section 1 Nominating Committee**
There shall be a Nominating Committee made up of at least three current parent volunteers from eligible members of the PA and overseen by the Vice-President. There must be one member from each Division. Individuals should be identified before winter break, and approached upon returning from winter break. The Committee shall be established by the end of January. The Committee shall be composed of at least one parent who is not currently serving on the Executive Board, and none of the parents should be considering board membership for the upcoming school year. If the Vice-President is considering being a nominee for office in the coming year, they cannot oversee the Nomination Committee nor the nomination process. They will be replaced by the Executive Board with another Executive Board Member who is not considering being a nominee for a position in the coming year.

In a PA meeting in February, the Nominating Committee shall describe the officer positions and their responsibilities. Nominations may be taken from the floor. The nominations will remain open until the Nominating Committee reports the nominees at a regular membership meeting in March at which point the nominations are closed. A list of the nominees should also be made available to the General PA membership.

The Parents Association values the diversity of our community, and it is the expectation that the Nominating Committee will canvass members from as many facets of the community as possible. The Nominating Committee shall canvass the
membership in writing and by email to apply for open positions. Notice may be posted on the website.

It is the intention that each position is held by a single person. However, in the event that two Members desire to run jointly for a position other than President, President Elect or Treasurer, they must submit in writing their willingness to serve jointly and their proposed division of duties. This joint nomination for a position must be approved by the Nominating Committee and the Executive Committee.

If the Nominating Committee is unable to present a candidate for one or more positions, any eligible member of the committee may be considered, if said member immediately resigns from the nominating committee and their vacancy is filled.

Only those persons who have signified their consent in writing (electronic, US mail or handwritten note) to serve if elected shall be nominated for or elected to such office.

**Section 2  Elections and Voting**
The annual election of officers shall take place during the April General Membership meeting. Each member of the organization is entitled to one vote in the election.

The Nominating Committee shall be responsible for conducting the election. The names of candidates shall appear on the ballot under the title of the office for which they are nominated. Paper or e-ballots shall be distributed to all Members before the General PA Meeting in April. The voting period must last no less than *one week*. Each Member has one vote for each Officer position. The Nominating Committee shall receive ballots until 24 hours prior to the start of the General PA Meeting in April, at which results will be announced. Elections will by the majority of individual PA members voting. In case of a tie, a run-off vote will be held under the direction of the Nominating Committee within seven (7) days. The results of the election will be recorded in the minutes and posted on the website.

The PA should have in place a minimum of three officers including at least the President and Treasurer by the last day of classes for the academic year.

**Section 3  Vacancies**
A vacancy occurring in the office of President shall be filled temporarily by the President Elect until the annual election as referred to in Section 2.
The membership shall be immediately notified of any vacant Executive Board position. Any member interested in filling such vacancy must advise the Executive Board verbally or in writing. Such vacancies shall be filled by recommendation of the Executive Board and recorded in the minutes, and posted on the website.

Officers who wish to resign their position must alert the President and turn over any records to the President.

Section 4 Transitions
Between the April election and the end of academic school year, Executive Board members voted into positions for the following year should attend Executive Board meetings as observers. The outgoing Executive Board members shall arrange for the orderly transfer of PA records and information to the incoming Executive Board.

Article VII. Executive Board
Section 1 Composition
The Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers of the Parents Association.

Section 2 Powers and Duties
The Executive Board shall conduct the business of the organization and shall plan and direct the work necessary to carry out the program and policies of the Parents Association. The Executive Board shall approve an annual budget for the expenditure of PA funds and can amend the same. The Executive Board shall consult regularly with the school leadership.

Section 3 Meetings
Regular meetings of the Executive Board shall be held monthly unless otherwise designated by the Executive Board. Board members are expected to attend Executive Board meetings. Special meetings may be called by the President, or shall be called at the written request of at least three (3) members of the Executive Board. The Executive Board will, for discussion purposes, have a closed session at the end of the meeting. The parliamentary authority of the Executive Board shall be the latest edition of Robert’s Revised Rules of Order, except as expressly stated herein, provided that it is consistent with laws, policies, rules, and regulations of The School at Columbia University, and Columbia University in the City of New York.
A typical meeting will include, but may be adjusted as needed.

- Welcome
- Review and approval of the minutes
- Treasurer's report
- Head of School report
- Committee reports
- Representatives reports (as needed)
- Old Business
- New Business
- Closed session
- Adjournment

Section 4 Quorum
A majority of the voting members of the Executive Board shall constitute a quorum.

Article VIII Committees/Activities
Section 1 Standing Committees and Activities
The President shall request the names of persons interested in serving as chair or co-chairs of a committee and shall appoint committee chairpersons with the approval of a majority vote of the Executive Board. The expectation is that someone other than the President will chair a committee.

At the first Parents Association meeting of the school year, and if necessary, at any time thereafter, the President and committee chairpersons shall recruit and solicit volunteers to serve on these committees and shall provide continuing opportunities for members to join committees.

It shall be the responsibility of the committee chairpersons to: schedule meetings as necessary; keep an accurate record of names, addresses, phone numbers, and email of all committee members, notify members of meetings and activities, keep attendee lists for all committee meetings, and organize and manage the expenses of the committee.

The current list of the general standing activities and committees shall be listed in the Parents Association’s Policies and Procedures Manual.

In addition, there may be special standing committees herein termed “PA Groups” that support community building. The current list of active PA Groups shall be listed in the Parents Association’s Policies and Procedures Manual.
A PA Group that meets the following criteria will automatically have one seat on the Executive Board in the following year:

- Meet, on average, at least every other month during the school year,
- Have at least 8-10 members at four (4) of said meetings
- Initiate or participate in a community-building activity such as event and/or speaker which ideally supports the objectives of the Parents Association

In the first year that a PA Group meets criteria the chairperson(s) should communicate with the Executive Board the PA Group’s desire to participate. This seat will be filled by a chairperson of the PA Group or their designee. The representative is subject to all terms and conditions as outlined for all Executive Board members.

Section 2  Ad Hoc Committees
When an issue or situation arises that necessitates the establishment of a committee, an ad hoc committee may be formed by the Executive Board to meet the need, and dissolved when the need no longer exists or turned into a standing committee, by majority vote of the Executive Board.

The President shall appoint committee chairpersons with the approval of a majority vote of the Executive Board. The expectation is that someone other than the President will chair a committee.

Article IX  Membership Meetings
Section 1  Regular Membership Meetings
PA Membership meetings shall be held a minimum of six times per year from September through June. A schedule of proposed meetings shall be listed in the annual calendar, posted on the website, and in any PA or school newsletter.

Section 2  Special Membership Meetings
Special membership meetings may be called by the President or upon receipt of a written request from twenty (20) members of the organization to deal with a matter(s) of importance that cannot wait until the next Regular PA meeting. A minimum of 48 hours notice is needed to provide email or written notice stating the topic and purpose of the meeting.
Section 3  Order of Business
A typical meeting will include, but may be adjusted as needed.
• Welcome
• President’s report
• Head of School report
• Committee reports w/ guest speakers if needed
• Elections if scheduled
• Old Business
• New Business
• Adjournment

Article X  Amendments to These Bylaws
Section 1  Amendments
These By-laws/guidelines may be amended or modified, provided that:
• The Executive Board adopts proposed modifications and changes.
• The proposed amendments or modifications shall be distributed to the members at least two weeks prior to the meeting at which the same is to be acted upon.
• The proposed amendment or modification shall be approved by the majority of individual PA members present and voting.

Amendments or modifications are effective immediately unless otherwise stated in the motion.

Section 2  Bylaws
A thorough review of these bylaws shall be conducted at least once every three years. Copies of the bylaws shall be available upon request from the President and may be posted on the website.

Section 3  Current Status
The above bylaws/guidelines were adopted by the Executive Board in May 7, 2014 and on May 9, 2014 by the General PA.

Date: 5/9/2014

The mission of the Parents Association (PA) of The School at Columbia University (TSC) is to build a sense of community among families, faculty, and staff at TSC through thoughtful programming, by acting as a voice for families, and by providing support for TSC in achieving its educational goals.