

## **VPSO Handbook**

### **Vision**

Support our children and school activities by embracing diversity  
to build a strong Verdala Community.

*The new VPSO will have a wider remit than its predecessor - covering both the traditional VIS events/fundraising role and a more formal role within the School's governance structure.*

### **Guiding Principles**

The Verdala Parent Staff Organization (VPSO) plays an important role in community life. VPSO members act as ambassadors of the school supporting the policy and the governance of the school as an advocate and as such build strong relationships among the Leadership, teachers, staff, students and the community at large in support of student learning.

The VPSO is a not-for-profit body whose goal is to support the school, encourage parent involvement, support teachers and organize events that will enhance the students' learning experience. The VPSO raises funds through various events. The funds raised are used for initiatives that support the fun and well being of VIS students.

All parents/guardians of children attending VIS as well as all staff employed by the VIS are considered members of the VPSO.

The VPSO is led by VIS board members, school representatives (typically Principals and/ or teachers), homeroom parents, and all parent volunteers. One of the key responsibilities of the VPSO board and school representatives is to develop and update the VPSO policies and procedures that will guide the day-to-day activities and mandate of the association.

The VPSO at VIS is a volunteer organization, which supports the school community in several ways.

### **Objectives:**

1. **To support the governance of the School** through:
  - Advocating the School's values, mission and educational philosophy.
  - Promoting close co-operation and communication between the School Leadership, teachers/staff and parents.
  - Encouraging parent involvement in the School's governance.

2. **To enhance relations and foster links across the School community** through:
  - Organising social events.
  - Welcoming new parents and community members.
  - Supporting School events and activities
  
3. **To raise funds for School activities / resources through various events.**
  
4. **To act as a parent representational body** by:
  - Bringing general and specific school issues to the attention of the School through the appropriate channels.
  - Advising and guiding parents on the correct procedures for raising individual and classroom/educational issues with the School.
  - Supporting the class parents in channeling appropriate information to the School/Board

### **(Initial) Governance & Structure**

- VPSO Steering Committee Composition
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Ad Hoc Committees (
- Decision Making

The VPSO will sit within the School's governance structure. Initially, an Extraordinary Sub-Committee of the Board will act as a VPSO Steering Committee, with a Board Parent Director & Staff Director as Co-Chairs.

the Steering Committee will be composed of:

- 2 Co-Chairs: one parent and one teacher taken from the board.
- 8 x Parent Representatives (2 each from amongst the class parents for Lower ES/ Upper ES/MS/HS - acting as Class Parent Co-ordinators)
- 3 x Staff Representatives (1 each from ES/ MS/ HS)

*Secretarial duties will be rotated to avoid seeking a separate volunteer. Given the VPSO will not be a separate legal entity, financial matters will be dealt with by the School's finance team and a representative from the team invited to meetings only as and when necessary.*

If the number of volunteers allows, the following roles should be considered: Vice Chair (to support the Chair); an Events/Fundraising Co-ordinator.

The Steering Committee will be the body which runs the VPSO and will report to the Board on the VPSO progress and activities. Membership of the VPSO itself will be granted automatically to all parents/guardians of students enrolled at VIS and to all staff.

The VPSO is not a decision-making body, it works with the School to support the School and as such liaises with the School on any matters arising.

*NB: After the Extraordinary Year the Steering Committee will organise a hand over to a new VPSO made up of Staff and Parents. The process of this will be developed by the Extraordinary Steering Committee and added to the VPSO Handbook.,*

### **Roles & Responsibilities**

- **Chair** - co-ordinate & drive forward VPSO activities; set & circulate meeting agendas; preside over all Steering Committee & wider VPSO meetings; act as primary liaison for VPSO with Board
- **Parent Reps** - represent parent views (seeking views through class parent network ahead of meetings and feeding back as necessary afterwards); encourage parental involvement in VPSO and its activities
- **Staff Reps** - represent staff views (this is not to be confused with “staff welfare” which is the internal staff concerns forum) related to the VPSO to support VIS activities and events and encourage staff involvement in VPSO and its activities
- **Events Secretary** - advises each Events Champion on the how/where/who? For each event, ensures continuity of aspects that are repeated.
- **Event Champion** - Organises individual events for whole school/section/ activities. This person organises the Volunteers and assigns their roles. Guided by the Events Secretary.

- **Secretarial duties** will include: taking, distributing and archiving minutes of all meetings (in line with the the Governance Master Policy minute taking protocols) centralises documentation for VPSO.
- **Financial Team** ( 2 members) - will work with the Accounts Department to ensure all monies are collected appropriately and ensure the criteria for allocation of funds is followed.

### **VPSO Steering Committee Meetings**

- The VPSO will meet at minimum 4 times per year. Minutes are stored in the School Team drive and then posted on the VIS Portal for the community to access.
- An agenda will be kept using the VIS minutes template which shows a running account of all meetings for each year.
- Action items are assigned to the appropriate people and followed up at the next meeting.
- The Steering Committee will run this in the first extraordinary year, after which the VPSO Executive will take over.
- The HOS and FCO are always invited to these meetings, where appropriate other guests (parents/staff may also be invited).

### **VPSO Comms**

The VPSO will have its own Verdala email address which is sent to the four members on the executive committee (steering committee). If a member leaves then they are removed and replaced and so on.

The HOS will relay any all staff/all parent messages via school email and Managebac. Class Parents will support the VPSO by passing on any information through their channels of communication.

The VPSO will send out a summary of activities to the whole community via Managebac.

### **Data Protection/GDPR**

The VPSO will remain aligned and work according to all the GDPR School Policies as outlined in the Master Policy Manual 2020 B7.

## **Membership**

Membership of the VPSO itself will be granted automatically to all parents/guardians of students enrolled at VIS and to all staff. Class parents are automatically eligible for VPSO Steering Committee membership.

Anyone can volunteer to be an Events Champion or volunteer for events.

## **Running Events**

An Events Calendar will be formed by the VPSO and a Champion assigned to each event who will ensure

The Events Secretary will develop a check list - how, who, rules, role of finance team, engaging volunteers during the first extraordinary year.

The size of the school (530+ students) means that we have approximately 750 parents - this affects the size of events that can be organised.

Events may take place at school or off-campus if appropriately managed and the reputation of the school is not at stake. All events are passed by the Head of School for approval and a calendar check.

All events should be mindful of the school's Parent Code of Conduct and Student Code of Conduct.

## **Fundraising**

Decisions about how funds are spent are made at the VPSO meetings, which are minuted. A member of LT is notified beforehand for approval by email in case the school has already allocated these funds.

A vote will be taken, no decision can be made unless at a minimum the Chair, one Parent Rep, one Staff rep and member of Leadership Team, Finance representative are present.

### **Examples of VPSO Activities**

The VPSO is open to new ideas and creating new types of events, here are some examples of events and activities they get involved with, support or organise themselves, each of these can be supported/led by an **events champion**.

- New Family pack & welcome station at orientation
- School Sports Days
- School Performances
- Raising funds for school trips (to reduce costs)
- Welcome gatherings for New Parents
- Nationality Meet-Ups
- Coffee Mornings for cohorts
- Back to School BBQ (this has now become the Start of the year section BBQ)
- Halloween event
- Winter Festival
- International Night
- Collections for Staff Thank You Gifts (Dec/ June)

### **Examples of VPSO Fundraising Initiatives**

- Funding Special Event keepsakes eg. Leavers T-shirt, VISMUN T-shirt,
- Outside Chessboards for MS & HS
- Picnic Tables for HS
- Playground materials for ES & MS
- Free Pizza lunches (made by VPSO staff) for students - 1 per section
- Sportskit for VIS Sports Teams
- ES Playground
- Shade for Playground
- Gardening Tools for Community Garden