

UNITED SCHOOL OF TOKYO

PTA HANDBOOK

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Introduction

Welcome to our school!

This booklet has been compiled by the United School of Tokyo Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) with the aim to provide parents with information about its activities, current members, and goals.

Why do we have a PTA?

The purpose of the PTA is to support our school. The PTA wholeheartedly agrees to work in tandem with faculty and admin to create the best possible learning environment for all the children and their families.

The responsibilities of the PTA include:

- To work in close cooperation with the UST faculty and administration to help improve and enrich the children's school life.
- To raise funds to support specific curricular and co-curricular projects and initiatives to enhance the learning environment. In particular, the PTA understands that UST is a budget school, which means that it has a limited budget and may need additional funds to meet the needs of the school community.
- To foster a sense of community among UST parents and the outside community by organizing events such as family picnics, fundraising events, cultural events, etc.
- To help the school in its day-to-day life. Activities in this area include chaperoning a school trip or the bus service, helping out in the library or during lunch time, etc.
- To support the children's well-being, which include food and nutrition, health, school safety, and physical fitness.
- To provide a link between home and school and bring staff and families together socially.

PTA Membership

All families automatically become members of the United School of Tokyo 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 limited amount of time available.

The PTA is extremely conscious of the philosophy and diversity of our school, and we try very hard when organizing and planning events to respect this.

The Role of the Committee

Our PTA Committee consists of four Officers: President, Communication, Treasurer and Secretary. Overall, the PTA counts from 6 to 10 members, including the Principal and teacher representatives.

The teachers and 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.

The Committee meets once a month.

In addition, the Committee holds public open meetings where all major events are discussed and planned. Class parents will be directly invited to attend these meeting and take an active role in the organization of events. However, we encourage everyone to attend and participate!

Dates for the meetings as well as all information pertaining to PTA activities will be posted on the school's internal website, <http://united-school-tokyo.weebly.com/pta>

PTA's Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Our Annual General Meeting is held at the beginning of the school year and provides an opportunity for all parents to learn more about school events, fundraising, allocation of budget, etc.

This is also an opportunity to meet the current PTA officers face-to-face. Their names are listed in Appendix 1 at the back of this booklet.

PTA officers are elected at the end of the school year. If you are interested in joining the PTA, please please do not hesitate to contact the PTA Committee members in May or June for the school year 2017-18.

Fundraising

All families pay an annual membership fee which contributes to funding the events organized by the PTA. While the PTA membership fee is a great safety net, we still need to raise funds throughout the year to support the school's mission of providing high quality education at an affordable price.

Following a fundraising event, the collected money is banked straight away. Decisions on how to spend the funds are made by the PTA Committee. The funds will be allocated to:

- Resources aimed at improving a particular area of the curriculum or school environment
- "Extras" that do not fit in within our school budget, but that would contribute to making our children's school life and learning experiences so much more fulfilling and exciting
- The school's 'wish list' of items
- Requests coming directly from the children/parents or teachers. If you would like to apply for funds, please fill out an application form (Appendix 2) stating the purpose of the request, amount and how it is going to benefit the school

The PTA aims to spent the money raised in the year it was collected. In this way, you can rest assured that your child will benefit from your contribution.

Throughout the year, the PTA might also run fundraising activities in order to donate funds to selected charities. These will include our sister school in Cambodia.

Communication

Weebly: All information concerning our upcoming and past meetings/minutes/etc. will be posted on the PTA page of the UST internal portal <http://united-school-tokyo.weebly.com/pta> by our Secretary.

Emails: As needed, our Communication Officer will reach out to you via email.

Please watch out for our emails as they will contain important information about upcoming events, requests for volunteers, and updates on our fundraising activities.

Annual Report: Once a year, the PTA will compile and share an annual report of all our event and fundraising activities.

Surveys: PTA will also reach out to parents twice a year with a survey in order to ask families to give feedback and contribute ideas on PTA activities.

You will also receive a survey to fill out at the beginning of the school year. Please indicate which event(s) you are willing to volunteer and if you are open to take on the role of class parents.

How to contact us

Email: You can e-mail us at ustptajapan@gmail.com or email the individual PTA Committee members (see Appendix 1).

You can also communicate with us through your class parents or attend any of the PTA meetings. Please refer to the Weebly calendar for meeting dates.

How to get involved

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

Examples of how you could volunteer/help include:

- Devote just 30 minutes to one event in the entire school year. If all parents do that, we would have more than enough help to support all the events!
- Offer help before events or at other times. Many tasks can also be carried out from home. Some examples: wrapping gifts, preparing raffle tickets etc.
- Become a class parent.
- Take part in the PTA meetings and share your ideas.
- Offer your special skills. Artists, cooks, engineers, builders, interior designers, make-up artists are all very welcome!
- If you have special contacts in your network, please let us know. Do you know a good DJ, children's entertainer, somebody who looks good in a Santa Claus suit, etc.?
- Donate items for events, for instance toys for Carnival prizes, etc.
- Help maintain the school library by cataloging and organizing new books, which are received regularly.

List of events:

September	Family Picnic Library Volunteering
October	Halloween Library volunteering

November	Charity Read-A-Thon Library volunteering
December	School Decorations Winter Concert End of Year Party Charity Read-A-Thon Library volunteering
January	Japanese Culture Day Library volunteering
April	Easter Egg Hunt Sports Day/Carnival Library volunteering
May	Science/Art Fair Library volunteering
June	Summer Concert Library volunteering

What the PTA means to our school

Because our PTA involves the whole school community we thought you would like to know what others think about our PTA.

From the Principal:

Welcome to United School of Tokyo! School is a special place where we value every child. Not only do we want our children to receive an excellent education but also feel happy, safe and valued. With your help, we wish to nurture a love of learning, to equip every child with the tools they need to succeed in education and life, helping them to achieve their very best. UST is committed to providing quality education to our students and our goal is to make sure the curricular and extracurricular experiences we provide are in no way different to those at the other international schools. However, we are a budget school, which means we often need to rely on parents' help and donations to achieve this goal. At UST we work closely with all members of our school community to make the school the best it can be, especially with the PTA who support us throughout the year with events, fundraising and volunteers making them an integral part of everything we do.

We are fortunate to have a PTA that is, and has been, an integral part of the school community since its inaugural year. The PTA's relationship with our school community has been one of collaboration and cooperation between the parents, children and UST staff.

We highly appreciate all the assistance and support we receive from the UST parents and we look forward to working with the PTA more closely this year to build a stronger school community.

With best wishes

Natasha Dytham, Principal

Appendix 1

Diana Alberghini

(Co-president)

6th, 4th and 1st Grade Parent

diana.alberghini@gmail.com

Sachiyo Oiwa

(Co-president)

K2 Parent

sachiyooiwa@gmail.com

Moko Jacobs

(Communication)

K3 parent

royalstar1020@gmail.com

Kanae Kimura

(Secretary)

K2 Parent

colorsandparty@yahoo.co.jp

Emily Michel

(Communication)

K3 and G2 Parent

mlemichel@gmail.com

Linda Scheidel

(Secretary)

K2 and K3 Parent

linda.scheidel@gmail.com

Rhonda Murrell

(Treasurer)

K1 and K3 Parent

rhondaames@hotmail.com

Application for Funding

Date: _____

Name: _____

Name of the child: _____

Grade: _____

Email Address: _____

Amount requested: _____

Purpose of the Request: _____
