

# **York Down Syndrome Support Group**

(formerly known as York Down Syndrome Parents' Group)

## **Organisational Rules and Principles**

### **Group membership**

The group is open to any family whose lives are enlivened by a member with a little extra 21<sup>st</sup> chromosome (Down Syndrome).

The group primarily serves families living within a 25 mile radius of the City of York Local Authority boundary and as such Group activities will be mostly based in and around York. However we welcome any family who would like to join us and families are not excluded on the basis of their address.

In order to join the group, families are asked to provide basic contact details (address, email & phone) and information about their family members (names, children's dates of birth and any specific additional needs that family members have).

The group will not charge formal "membership fees" however it will ask for donations to group funds, especially to cover the cost of the activities that it organises or hosts.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The groups aims and objectives are:

- ⤴ To create and develop the conditions which will enable our children with Down Syndrome to attain their full potential.
- ⤴ To offer information, advice and support for people with Down Syndrome and their families, helpers and carers in the York area.
- ⤴ To organise local club meetings, training, social and fund-raising events to further these aims.
- ⤴ To encourage or facilitate appropriate and specialist local provision of therapy, health, education and social care services.
- ⤴ To publicise relevant events and training amongst our members, the local community and professionals.
- ⤴ To promote training and support for all who work with our children.
- ⤴ To develop positive links and facilitate relationships with relevant local voluntary groups and statutory sector organisations.
- ⤴ To promote positive images, perceptions and behaviour with respect to our children amongst the wider local community.
- ⤴ To support the development of high quality, robust research about all aspects of Down Syndrome.
- ⤴ To undertake any other charitable activities in connection with Down Syndrome in the York area<sup>1</sup> of England.

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<sup>1</sup> By "York Area" of England we include those living in small towns and communities within a 25 mile radius of the City of York LA boundary: eg. Selby, Tadcaster, Easingwold, Thirsk, Pocklington, Stamford Bridge, Howden & Goole.

## **Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting of the group will take place in October – or on a date as near to that time as can be arranged.

## **The Committee**

The committee comprises of 9 members, 3 of whom hold the formal executive roles of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The committee will be subject to re-election on an annual basis at the annual general meeting. A formal election will take place should more than 9 group members be nominated for committee membership (either by themselves or other members).

## **Committee meetings**

Committee meetings will take place every three months, with subject specific meetings taking place as required in between.

To be quorate, 4 committee members need to be in attendance.

In the event of a tied vote the Chair has the casting vote.

If a committee member or their representative fails to attend 3 consecutive committee meetings, failing to contribute to the business of the group, their committee membership can be reviewed.

The partner/spouse (or another close family representative) of a committee member may attend a committee meeting on behalf of the committee member if required.

Once approved, minutes of the committee meetings are to be placed on the web pages of our website on the non-public pages which are accessible to members of the group.

## **Downs Syndrome Association Affiliation**

The Group has sought and acquired formal affiliation to the national charity "*Down's Syndrome Association*" (DSA). As such the group is required to follow and maintain the rules associated with its affiliation status.

The Group is an organisation which exists independently from the DSA and as such is responsible for its own functioning and organisation.

## **Finance**

Authorised signatories for cheques drawn from Group funds will be members of the committee and will include the Group's Chair and Treasurer.

The Group require that at least two authorised signatories sign Group cheques.

In order to claim back funds from the Group for expenses incurred on behalf of the Group, an individual should provide the treasurer with receipts for said expenditure.

If a Group member anticipates incurring expenditure over £200 over the period of the year specifically in relation to their Group role, a budget for said expenditure should be submitted to the Treasurer.

Budgets should be made subject to approval by the committee.

Expenditure on items over £50 should not be incurred on behalf of the group unless prior agreement has been obtained from the Chair/Treasurer. Any expenditure over £200 should be specifically endorsed by the committee.

In the event that the Group's income is projected to reach over £5000 for the year, the group will begin the process of seeking formal registered charitable status.

In the event that the group is wound up, any group assets will be donated to another local (York or North Yorkshire) based group for families of those with Down Syndrome and/or learning disabilities or (if one can not be agreed upon by the retiring committee) the national Downs Syndrome Association.

## **Data**

Personal information (Names, contact information and children's names, dates of birth and additional needs) are held securely on a password protected computer file accessible to the Group's secretary.

This personal information will not be shared without specific permission.

Email address information is also held within the Group's "gmail" account which is password protected and accessible to the Group's Secretary, Chair & Treasurer.

Email "group mailings" (e.g. distribution of the newsletter) should normally be undertaken using the "blind copy" function (bcc) to prevent disclosure of personal email addresses.

Personal information pertaining to group activities (eg attendance lists, questionnaire data etc.) is also held on the group's gmail account in Google docs/drive section.

In return for free use of a City of York Childrens Centre, attendees to the 3-21 Saturday Club may be requested to provide their contact information at each attendance. This attendance information will be shared with the host childrens centre.

Any information of a personal nature (e.g. identifiable photos) will not be shared or displayed on group displays or on the group website without the specific permission of the parent or family.

The Group's website has two "faces". The public face contains openly accessible information. Members pages contain information of specific interest to members of the group.

Group members require a "google account" in order to access members pages of the website. They should inform the Group's Secretary with their google user name if they would like access to these members pages.

## **Policies**

The group will devise and follow policies that address their statutory responsibilities as an independently organised voluntary group.

Group members will be given access to and made aware of group policies and risk assessments pertaining to group activities.

## **Health and Safety**

The group has secured Public Liability Insurance (PLI) via the national Downs Syndrome Association.

The group will not undertake activity for which PLI is not in place (eg. Group events will not include bouncy castles – which are not covered on our PLI)

Risk assessments will be put in place prior to any group activity being undertaken.

The group will have a nominated Health and Safety representative who is trained in such matters. Their role is to advise and represent the group on matters relating to Health and Safety.

Original version: November 2012

Version 2: Sept 2014

## **Version/amendment log:**

Version	Date	Brief details of amendment
2	26 Sept 2014 – agreement via email circulation to committee	Amendment of name to York Down Syndrome Support Group. AGM date changed to October. Addition of paragraph about dissolution of funds under “Finance” heading. Addition of paragraph about data sharing with Childrens' Centres under “Data” heading.



Liz Allen

Honorary Secretary

26 Sept 2014