

GUNN HIGH SCHOOL PTSA
POLICY for the PARENT NETWORKS PROGRAM
Revised July 17, 2017

Gunn PTSA Parent Networks comply with the Palo Alto PTA Council's Guidelines for Parent Network Communications, which can be viewed on their web site (ptac.paloaltopta.org).

Please contact the Gunn PTSA President or VP Communications for any questions regarding this policy.

Requirements for All Gunn PTSA Parent Networks

1. The primary goal of the Gunn PTSA Parent Networks program is to build a supportive community of grade-level parents, and to enable the PTSA to provide grade-specific information to those parents.
2. There is a Gunn PTSA-managed Parent Network for each of the four grade levels, the name of which shall contain the year that class graduates. For instance, the name of the parent network for the Freshman class for the 2016-2017 school year is "Gunn Class of 2020 Parent Network".
3. Each of these four networks is managed by 2 or more PTA parent volunteers called Moderators. Moderators have two primary responsibilities:
 - Set up and run Parent Network in-person meetings every 4-6 weeks;
 - Manage an opt-out online group.(More details in the "Guidelines" section below.)
4. The platform for the opt-out online group must be approved by the Gunn PTSA and at a minimum must allow parents to unsubscribe, and allow Moderators to control posts (as of June 2017, WeChat does not enable controlled posts and cannot be used). Existing approved platforms are UpToUs and Google Groups (via Gunn PTSA's google account). *Moderators must configure their platform to enable all communications to be previewed and approved before posting to the online group.*
5. The opt-out online group is formed at the beginning of each year by the Gunn PTSA (falls under the responsibility of the Gunn PTSA VP Communications) when PAUSD sends the Gunn PTSA a list of approved parent emails. Each approved parent email address will be automatically enrolled in the appropriate grade-level parent network(s).
6. All members and Moderators of Gunn PTSA Parent Network groups must have identification; *anonymity is not permitted*. Moderator names and email addresses are listed in weekly Gunn PTSA eNews publications, and on the Gunn PTSA web site. Parents who are not automatically enrolled may send enrollment requests to Moderators; Moderators must send the request (including the name of the parent and the name of their student) to the Gunn PTSA VP Communications, who will then work

with Gunn administration to verify the information and provide approval or denial to the Moderator.

7. Moderators will allow Gunn PTSA executive board leaders to be members of the online group upon request. Students may not be members of these groups.
8. All Gunn PTSA Parent Network discussions, whether in person or online, must adhere to California PTA communication rules. Moderators should [read these rules at the CAPTA website](#), and observe the following key rules:
 - Maintain PTA's high standards of respect and courtesy: "do no harm" to an individual or an organization.
 - Observe the PTA's [nonpartisan](#), [noncommercial](#), [nonsectarian](#) policies.
 - Be knowledgeable about PTA positions.
 - Sharing of personal information of any individual is strictly forbidden, including sharing names of parents, students, and school staff without their permission.
 - Avoid issues that are sensitive, controversial, or emotionally charged.
 - Be cautious with censorship. If members are allowed to post, insure that all viewpoints are represented and that all posted information is factual.

Guidelines for Opt-Out Online Groups

The primary purpose of the online group is to inform parents of information that affects students and families in that grade-level. Examples of information are parent network meetings and event announcements, notes from those meetings, school information pertinent to that grade, etc.

Although not all parents authorize PAUSD to share their contact information with the PTA, historically around 90% of Gunn parents do. Hence the Gunn PTSA opt-out online groups are very large with memberships of over 700 parents/guardians. Gunn PTSA prefers opt-out groups to maximize parent inclusion; but because of this large size, *Moderators are required to preview all parent communication before posting to the entire group (see item 4 above).*

In addition to adhering to PTA rules for communication (see item 8 above), Moderators are strongly encouraged to ensure the opt-out group is managed as follows:

- Moderators must abide by the same rules that they enforce on their members. For example: if Moderators do not allow all members to post articles or topics they find interesting, then Moderators themselves must refrain from posting their interests.
- Take detailed notes of in-person meetings and publish them to the opt-out online group shortly after the meeting (within 1 week is best). Most of the parents cannot attend these meetings so having this information is extremely valuable to them and parents have great appreciation for Moderators who provide this valuable service.
- Avoid posting too often. Parents will unsubscribe if they get too many emails.
- Avoid re-posting notices that have been previously sent to parents via other communication channels, such as the Gunn Connection (eNews), PAUSD emails

(district or school), Schoology, etc. Parents will unsubscribe if they get too many duplicate emails.

- Avoid posting non-school-related items, particularly questions that could engender multiple replies with limited interest, such as: "Does anyone know of a good drivers ed program" or "Who would like to establish a carpool from X neighborhood". Guide parents to post these types of topics to non-Gunn PTSA networks such as a parent-run chat group (more info below), or the parent-run Facebook page "Gunn High School Parent Community".

While some Moderators run their group allowing members to post, there are some Moderators that find it difficult to enforce PTA rules and ensure neutrality with such a large group so they decide not to allow members to post. The latter approach can work very well if Moderators establish the following procedure with their members:

- Only pertinent informational posts will be allowed ("this will not be a chat group");
- Parents are invited to send Moderators (to their personal email address) questions or requests, which Moderators will investigate and post if appropriate;
- Parents may set up their own non-Gunn PTSA chat group, and Moderators will post an announcement that contains the group name, the parent owner, the link to subscribe, and a statement that the chat group is not affiliated with the Gunn PTSA. *Under no circumstances will the Gunn PTSA's PAUSD-provided parent email list be given to the non-Gunn PTSA chat group.*

Moderators should review which method works best for their team depending on the amount of time and energy they are willing and/or able to commit to the Moderator job requirements. Moderators should then notify their membership of these decisions.

Guidelines for In-Person Meetings

Parent Network meetings can be held at any time to discuss various topics, within Gunn PTSA guidelines. Topics can range from informal parent discussion, or more formal topics with guest speakers such as school staff, professionals on specific topics, etc. See table below for a list of past topics. Moderators planning for their upcoming year find it helpful to meet with the Moderators of the grade level above theirs to get tips and tricks on what their parents found interesting and valuable.

Meetings are often held at the school so that guest speakers from the school (administrators, coaches, teachers, etc.) can attend. Due to limited space, Moderators must work with the Gunn main office admins to reserve a room (usually the Staff Lounge or Bow Gym PE Classroom). Moderators may choose to provide coffee/tea and/or snacks. Many parent networks like to have periodic social events at a parent's home, or at a rented venue such as Mitchell Park Community Center, Esther's Bakery, Eichler Swim Club, etc.

Each parent network is given an annual budget which can be used to reimburse Moderators or parent members for the cost of coffee, snacks, venue rental fee, etc. Alcohol can be served at non-school meetings if provided by attending parents; *however*

due to insurance restrictions, the Gunn PTSA can not provide, serve, or pay for the cost of, any alcohol at these events.

If Moderators anticipate a sensitive or controversial topic will be discussed at a meeting, Moderators should consult with the Gunn PTSA VP Communications or President to determine how to handle the topic (if at all). Some solutions include insuring the meeting is attended by a mental health professional, and/or a school or district employee, and/or a Gunn PTSA exec board member, etc.

It is important for Moderators to take detailed notes of in-person meeting discussions and publish those notes to the online group. Most members of each parent network can not attend the in-person meetings and sending notes from meetings is a highly effective way to keep parents informed and create a sense that they belong to the parent network community.

Historical Topics for In-Person Meetings

Year	Month	Topic/Idea
Freshmen		
Freshman	August	Parent Social before "Freshman Parents Night" Presentation
ALL GRADES	August late	Principal's Coffee
Freshman	September	Meet Lisa Hall, Student Activity Center Director (Pre-Homecoming)
Freshman	October	Parent Ed for Freshman/Sophomores: YES! Stress Reduction & Wellness Presentation
Freshman	October	Parent Meetup @Hobbee's, no agenda
ALL GRADES	November early	Principal's Coffee
Freshman	December	Meet w/Heidi Trilling, PTSA Health & Wellness Coordinator
Freshman	January	Parent Meetup @Hobees, no agenda
ALL GRADES	Feb early	Principal's Coffee
Freshman	February	Meet w/Heidi Trilling, PTSA Health & Wellness Coordinator on Sexuality
Freshman	April	What is Sophomore year like? (Tara Keith, sophomore parent network, etc.)
Freshman	March	Meet w/Linda Kirsch Re: New to US Colleges, Intro to College & Career Process
ALL GRADES	May early	Principal's Coffee
Freshman	May	Year-End Social an evening parent-only event (Eichler swim club)
Sophomores		
ALL GRADES	August late	Principal's Coffee
Sophomore	Sept	Tara Keith, Assistant Principal, Department Head - Counseling
Sophomore	October	Darlene Feldstein (GunnTech staff) and/or Chris Bell (TOSA for Technology) will talk about the the Future Ready Learning Program
ALL GRADES	November early	Principal's Coffee

Sophomore	November	PM @ Ester's German Bakery
Sophomore	January	class selection for the junior year w/David Leftwich from the Guidance department
ALL GRADES	Feb early	Principal's Coffee
Sophomore	March	Introduction to Gunn College and Career Center (2 sessions to choose from)
ALL GRADES	May early	Principal's Coffee
Sophomore	May	Year-end Social @ Mitchell Park
Juniors		
ALL GRADES	August late	Principal's Coffee
Junior	October	Vicki O'Day: "College Affordability: How to find colleges that fit your finances" (Invite PALY, Mitchell Park)
ALL GRADES	November early	Principal's Coffee
ALL GRADES	Feb early	Principal's Coffee
Junior	March	Heidi Trilling, PTSA Health & Wellness Liaison; Consent (schedule before Prom)
Junior	April/May	(before prom): joint meeting with junior parents: Q&A on "What to Expect Senior Year"
ALL GRADES	May early	Principal's Coffee
Junior	May	Year-end Social @ Mitchell Park (or someone's home) - or defer to early fall
Seniors		
ALL GRADES	August late	Principal's Coffee
Senior	September mid	Welcome to the year! Review the Year's events, topics planned for meetings, Counseling Dept slides, etc
Senior	October mid	Overview of College Application Process, led by Gunn Counselor Department (Tara Keith/staff)
ALL GRADES	November early	Principal's Coffee
Senior	November late	Leighton Lang: Financial Aid Overview for College (can invite junior parents too)
Senior	December early	evening social event
ALL GRADES	Feb early	Principal's Coffee
Senior	march	Evening meeting with paly sr parent network: Alumni talk about their college and career experiences
Senior	April early	"Handling College Rejections" with Linda Kirsch; review grad-related events through end of year
Senior	April/May	(before prom): joint meeting with junior parents: Q&A on "What to Expect Senior Year"
ALL GRADES	May early	Principal's Coffee
Senior	April/May	"How to Help Yourself and Your Student Transition to College"
Senior	May	end-of-year family social (parent home or Mitchell Park)