

# STANDING RULES



## Standing Rules—Your PTA’s Guide beyond the Bylaws

Sometimes your PTA runs into an issue that no one has seen before or knows how to handle. You’ve checked your bylaws, but they don’t seem to address the issue directly. Your next step should be to turn to your PTA’s standing rules.

Standing Rules relate to the details of administration and operation of the PTA, rather than to parliamentary procedure. Standing Rules can be considered the PTA’s procedures. They are usually adopted as a need for them arises. Adoption requires a majority vote without previous notice having been given.

If your PTA was an appliance, your bylaws would be the assembly and installation guide, while your standing rules would be the operator’s manual. Standing rules are often guided by bylaws, but are not appropriate for the bylaws. For example, your bylaws have the following in Article IV—Basic Polices:

*“No part of the net earnings of the association shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, directors, trustees, officers, or other private individuals except that the association shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the ARTICLE— PURPOSES as contained herein.”*

This basic policy is required by the IRS and basically means that PTA members and officers cannot be paid for their work for the PTA unless it is reimbursement for a purchase for the PTA. However, this also means that when a student, teacher, parent, or PTA member becomes seriously ill or passes away or a school family loses their home to a fire, the PTA should not make a monetary donation to the family (though they are often asked to do so). Your PTA can develop a standing rule to cover this situation, perhaps making a donation of books to the library in the deceased’s memory. This meets the PTA’s legal requirements, serves all of the children of the school, and recognizes the loss.

Other areas where your PTA may find standing rules to be helpful include:

- Procedures for gifts to staff members who are retiring or who make a presentation to the PTA at no charge. Be sure to check your school district’s policies as well.
- Guidelines for presenting Illinois PTA Scholarship Fund awards to PTA members and paying for meals at Founder’s Day events or district or region annual meetings.
- Rules for how the PTA will choose delegates for district or region annual meetings, the Illinois PTA convention, or the National PTA convention.
- Guidelines for committee chairpersons on developing plans of work, getting approval for activities, and submitting annual reports, receipts and expenses.