

Newton Chinese Language School Bylaw

Article I Mission

1. Newton Chinese Language School (NCLS) is an educational and community cultural organization, established as a nonprofit corporation (Newton Chinese Language School Incorporation), and registered as a 501(c) non-profit organization in the State of Massachusetts. NCLS shall be a non-political, non-sectarian, non-religious organization, operated and managed by its members. Its mission is to provide programs and activities to benefit its members and the mainstream society at large. It's mission shall include:
 - i. Providing sustained and systematic programs and courses in the Chinese language and Chinese culture to enhance Chinese language learning and to promote the awareness and appreciation of the Chinese culture.
 - ii. Promoting and encouraging cultural diversity to enhance mutual appreciation of the differences between the Chinese culture and other cultures.
 - iii. Promoting and engaging in cultural exchanges and civil activities at different levels: governments, government agencies, public schools, corporations, and community-based organizations to strengthen the communication and participation of local Chinese communities in mainstream society.

Article II Organization Membership

2. Any family with a member registered in any NCLS class, or any NCLS sponsored activities, and who abides by the bylaws of and regulations of this school, shall be a member of this organization. Any school staff and board director shall be a member of this organization as well. Families are the basic units of membership in this school.
3. Honorary membership shall be awarded to those individuals who have made significant contributions to the school, such as former principals, former board directors, and other special individuals recognized by the school board. Membership fees shall be waived for all honorary members.
4. NCLS admits students of any race, color, nationality or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. NCLS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, and other school-administered programs and activities.
5. While attending NCLS, the parents or legal guardians of each member family bear full responsibility for:
 - i. All personal property and personal safety during non-class time of all members of their family.
 - ii. Any damages of private or public property caused by any member of their family.
 - iii. Any personal injuries caused by any member of their family.
6. All member families have the responsibility to provide parent-duty service (as parents, legal guardians, or as adult students) to school through the arrangements made by the Parent Council. The parents or legal guardians of each member family are responsible for their children's compliance with all NCLS student rules and regulations during school time.

Article III Organization Structure

7. NCLS management shall consist of the General Assembly, Board of Directors, School Administration, and Parent Council.
 - i. The General Assembly (GA), which consists of all members of this school, holds the ultimate authority that every member of this organization shall obey.
 - ii. The Board of Directors (Board) is the highest policy making body. It is also the highest decision-making body in the school while GA is not in session.
 - i. The school Administration, which shall report to the Board.
 - ii. The Parent Council, consisting of representatives of school parents and representing all school parents, shall report to the Board.

Article IV Board of Directors

8. The Board has overall responsibility for the present and long term well being of the school. It shall follow its operation guidelines in conducting its activities. It is responsible for school bylaw changes and holds the ultimate power to interpret these bylaws. It shall approve all school policies and regulations, school budget, tuition adjustment requests, textbooks and all other new initiatives and proposals.
9. Board directors shall be elected, except the Principal and the Parent Council chairman, who automatically shall be Board directors while serving in their respective positions. A board director normally shall have one or more years of prior experience participating in school teaching, management, or parent activities. However, one non-member Board director may be elected.
10. Election of Board directors shall be open to all school members with sufficient time for campaigning if desired. A board director shall be elected by a majority vote of the Board, which takes effect immediately unless a pre-defined date is specified at the time of election. A board director may resign in writing at least 30 days prior to the effective date. A board director may be removed from office if petitioned by more than 1/3 of the full Board of directors and is subsequently approved by no less than 2/3 of full Board of directors. Each year, a maximum of two vacancies from the Board can be filled by immediate runner-ups from the previous election. If more than two vacancies occur within a year, additional seats shall be filled via election the following year.
11. By a majority vote, Board directors shall elect the Board chairman who shall serve for a two-year term. The chairman shall be eligible to be re-elected for a second two-year term but shall not serve as chairman for more than four years. The chairman shall have at least one-year of prior experience as a Board director at the date of appointment as chairman. The time served as Board chairman shall be counted as part of the time served on the Board. In the event of resignation of the chairman or death or termination for any other reason, the Board shall elect a chairman who shall serve the rest of the term of the resigning chairman and up to two additional two-year terms. In the event that there is, at the time of any Board vote, a tie in the number of votes cast for and against a resolution, the chairman shall have the right to cast an additional vote to break the tie. By a vote of two-thirds of the directors, the Board shall have the right to remove the chairman from the board in the event of any serious misconduct by the chairman. The chairman shall not vote on his or her own removal.
12. The Board shall consist of no less than seven (7), but no more than nine (9) directors. Each elected director shall serve for a two-year term. A board director is eligible for a maximum of two additional 2-year terms. However, under extenuating circumstances, the Board may consider allowing the retiring chair to be re-nominated to serve one additional year if his/her tenure is over, in order to ensure the continuity of leadership.

13. Board directors are volunteers. There shall be no cash or equivalent compensation for the services rendered as Board directors. However, reimbursement of material costs incurred by Board directors while performing board duties shall be considered.
14. The quorum for conducting Board business shall be no less than 2/3 of the whole Board. Majority vote is defined as more than 1/2 of active Board directors.
15. The Board chairman is responsible for coordinating all board functions and chairing board meetings. In case of his/her absence, the chairman shall designate one board director to chair the meeting. Any director may so suggest, but the chairman shall decide whether to invite non-board directors, who have no voting power, to attend Board meetings, if deemed necessary.
16. The Board shall hold no less than two meetings in each of the two semesters and one meeting in the summer for each fiscal year. Special meetings may be held if petitioned by a majority of the directors, or called by the Board chairman. The Board chairman shall arrange the meeting dates and the meeting agenda. Any director may submit proposals and motions before or during meeting. The Board chairman shall arrange a time at the meetings to discuss those proposals and those motions, which are seconded by another director. The minutes of Board meetings shall be recorded, documented and saved, and a summary thereof shall be published and made available to all school members.
17. The Board is responsible for recruiting, appointing, and training the school principal.
18. The Board shall approve and award honorary memberships by a majority vote. The honorary memberships can be for one year or for a lifetime. The Board may revoke any individual honorary membership under circumstances it deems necessary.
19. The Board shall work with the school administration through the principal for implementation of any Board policies and regulations. The Board shall not interfere with the school's normal day-to-day operations managed by the school's administration team.

Article V School and School Administration

20. The fiscal year of NCLS is from July 1st to June 30th of the following year.
21. NCLS shall teach Mandarin and Chinese phonetic transcription *Pinyin*, using both simplified and traditional Chinese characters. NCLS shall develop its curriculum and programs based on the needs of its members (students and parents).
22. The school shall have a Principal. The Principal shall have at least one-year of prior experience serving NCLS in any school capacity. The Principal, as the chief executive officer of the school, is responsible for the overall normal day-to-day school operation, management, curriculum, and finance for the entire school year.
23. The Principal is appointed for a one-year term. During the school year, the Principal may submit his/her resignation in writing at least 60 days prior to the effective date; and the Principal's term may be terminated if petitioned by more than 1/3 of the full Board directors and is subsequently approved by 2/3 of the full Board directors.
24. The Principal shall follow the financial policy and the administration guidelines, and shall report to the Board regularly and seek Board approval for any new initiatives and proposals, and any changes of the existing policies and practices.

25. The school shall have a Vice Principal. The vice principal shall be nominated by the Principal and approved by a majority vote of Board for a one-year term. The Vice Principal shall assist the Principal in the overall school operation and management following the administration guidelines. The Vice Principal shall become the Principal should the Principal position become vacant during the school year.
26. The sitting Vice Principal shall be considered by the Board as the primary candidate for the Principal position for the following school year.
27. The school shall have an administration team, appointed and managed by the Principal, serving the same one-year term, renewable annually without a term limit. The administration staff shall work effectively following the administration guidelines in their respective positions, and fully support the Principal.
28. The school shall have teachers and teaching assistant staff necessary to carry out the school teaching activities. The teaching staff is hired by the Principal and by the school administration, serving the same one-year term, renewable annually without a term limit. The teaching staff shall follow the teacher conduct guidelines.
29. The basic compensation for both the school administration and the school teaching staff, except the compensation to the Principal, shall be decided and budgeted by the Principal following the school financial policy. The Principal's compensation is to be determined by the Board and shall be included in the school budget.
30. The school shall have students, defined as those who pay tuition in any of the classes offered by the school. All students shall sign the liability and responsibility agreement and have it signed by their parents, or legal guardians, and shall pay tuition prior to taking class, and shall obey the school bylaw and follow the Student Conduct Guideline and other school regulations and procedures.
31. The Principal shall have the power to terminate any student who has violated the school regulations. In the event of an expulsion, the student can appeal to the Board for reinstatement and shall be considered as suspended from school during the appeal.
32. The Principal is the official spokesperson for the school. Any use of the school name for any activities outside of school requires the prior permission of either the school Principal or the school Board Chairman.

Article VI School Finance

33. The school shall have an annual budget. The school budget shall be proposed by the Principal and approved by the Board in accordance with the school financial policy. The budget shall be itemized and submitted to the Board no later than one month prior to the beginning of the fall semester. The Board shall respond to the proposal in two weeks. Upon rejection, the principal should submit a revised budget within two weeks. Upon the 2nd rejection, the Board shall propose and subsequently approve a mandatory budget.
34. The Principal shall operate the school based on the Board's approved budget. The Principal and the school administration are responsible for all school financial records and keeping all the receipts for tax filing and auditing.
35. All non-budgeted discretionary expenditures shall be pre-approved by the Principal or his/her designated staff following the administration guideline.
36. A summary of the school financial report shall be made public to all members at the end of each fiscal year and the accounting book shall be made available for all members to inspect upon request in accordance with applicable laws.

Article VII Parent Council

37. The Parent Council shall be a volunteer organization, representing all school member families. The Parent Council shall consist of a chairman, a vice chairman and a number of representatives. The Chairman shall coordinate all Parent Council activities following the parent council operation guidelines.
38. The Parent Council shall organize and manage parent school duty assignments and their execution. The Parent Council shall work closely with the school administration to adjust and provide the level of support for satisfactory school operations in order to create the best possible environment for teaching and all other school sponsored activities.
39. The Parent Council shall be responsible for all non-school sponsored parent activities during the school time. Working closely with the Principal, the Parent Council Chairman shall seek permission from the Principal before granting any school facility to such activities.

Article VIII General Assembly

40. The Parent Council is to host the annual end of school year member meeting. The Parent Council shall call and host a General Assembly meeting within 60 calendar days when petitioned by at least 1/3 of members, or by a majority of the active Board of directors. The Parent Council shall arrange the meeting and publish the meeting agenda and notify all school members at least two weeks in advance.
41. Each member shall have one vote. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum, including absentee votes on paper or on-line write-ins within two weeks of the GA meeting.

Article IX Indemnification

42. Any board director or administration officer who is involved in litigation by reason of his or her position as a director or officer of this organization shall be indemnified and held harmless by the organization to the fullest extent authorized by law as it now exists or may subsequently be amended (but, in the case of any such amendment, only to the extent that such amendment permits the organization/school to provide broader indemnification rights).

Article X Amendment

43. The Board may amend the bylaw by a majority vote at any regular or special meeting.
44. The school's bylaws in English are the ultimate legal official document, superseding its bylaw in other languages and all other NCLS regulations, guidelines, and documents. These bylaws shall be followed in accordance with state and Federal laws and regulations governing non-profit organizations in the commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Bylaw Revision History

Initial document passed by June 1998 school parent meeting.

First revision passed by board of directors at October of 1999.

Second revision (major) passed by June 2005 school parent meeting.