



AISF Board of Directors Official Handbook



2020/2021

Welcome

The AISF's Board's focus, the focus of any international school Board, is on strategic issues and plans for the long-term well-being of the school. The responsibilities for the day-to-day administration of the School, including all aspects of the instructional program, are delegated to the school Director. The AISF Board expects the Director to run the School in accordance with the School's mission, vision and objectives as defined in this Handbook. The AISF Board maintains board oversight, strategic direction and governance of the School's programs and operations through monthly meetings, collaborative dialogue with the Director and a bi-annual formal evaluation of the Director's professional performance. While the board's role is to provide for the long-term viability of the school, it also is the final authority when appeals regarding administrative decisions are appropriately brought to it as a whole.

AISF Mission and Beliefs

Mission

AISF develops students' love of learning in an internationally recognized, safe, student-centered and interactive learning environment. Students develop a global perspective that fosters empathy and prepares them for success in an ever-changing world.

Beliefs

We believe that:

- Respect for everyone's progress, and care for their safety and wellbeing, are essential for a successful and interactive learning environment.
- The diversity of our community enriches our learning experience, and develops global perspectives.
- Each member of our community is both a teacher and a learner, participating in an ongoing process of self-realization.
- Collaboration and teamwork are vital for progress in an ever-changing, interconnected world.

The Structure of the School

The School is owned by the AISF Association. AISF is an official US Embassy sponsored school, eligible for US State Department assistance under the Office of Overseas Schools. The members of the Association include the parents of the AISF student body and full-time teachers at AISF. The Association operates under the terms of its Articles of Association, and is overseen by the Board, whose members are elected by the Association. The Board is responsible to the Association for activities at the school including the strategic vision of the school. AISF operates

in Sierra Leone under a Memorandum of Understanding between the governments of the United States of America and the Republic of Sierra Leone, signed in 2003 and most recently renewed on December 3, 2013.

The Board of Directors

The responsibilities of the AISF Board of Directors are to hire and evaluate the Director, oversee the finances of the School, and to safeguard the strategic vision of the School. The Board delegates the day-to-day operations of the school to the Director. However the Board remains responsible for ensuring that administrative decisions and actions fall within Board policy.

The Board shall consist of six members, five of whom shall be elected by the Association. The term of office for the Association elected members shall be two years. A Board member may serve a maximum of two elected terms. If a Board member is unable to complete their two years of service, they may resign at any time, by submitting a written letter of resignation to the Board Chair. The remaining voting Board members will select a person to fulfill the remainder of the term left vacant, through a Board process of discussion, identification and eventual selection of an appropriate candidate. Only parents of full or partial fee-paying students or full time residents of Freetown who would bring needed expertise to the school are eligible to be elected to the Board. Two members of the same family shall not hold position on the Board at the same time. A school employee, or a member of the immediate family of such an employee, or a student enrolled in the school, shall not be eligible for nomination, election, or appointment to the Board.

One Board member shall be appointed by the Ambassador of the United States of America, and shall serve on the School Board for an indefinite period. If the appointed Board member from the US Embassy is unable to complete their term of service, the United States Ambassador will select a replacement.

The Director of AISF is an ex officio member of the School Board, with a voice but not a vote.

The Board Officers appoint from among themselves the positions of Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Board Tenure

The tenure of a Board Member begins officially in July (following the AGM in May) and ends the following June. (See “Handover between Outgoing and Incoming Board Members” below).

AISF Board Overall Objectives

The members of the Board shall acknowledge that they have been placed in a position of trust by the Association, and they shall act with due care and diligence in dealing with the funds, property and operations of AISF. To this end, the Board member shall:

- Recruit, supervise, annually evaluate and, if need be, dismiss the Director;
- Provide a clearly stated job description for the Director, monitor performance against the job description and against agreed upon annual goals for the Director;
- Develop and monitor the School's Strategic Plan;
- Approve the annual School and Director objectives as laid out by the Director, and as based on the School's Strategic Plan.
- Determine and set School policies, only after consideration of the Director's recommendations;
- Provide protection for the school staff and students from community exploitation and criticism;
- Authorize and approve the annual operating budget of AISF;
- Establish annual tuition and associated fees of AISF;
- Review, approve and monitor the bookkeeping and financial procedures of AISF;
- Authorize the preparation of the annual report and annual accounts of AISF;
- Submit summaries of annual accounts and audit report to the General Meeting of the Association in May;
- Oversee the management of the property and finances of AISF, for the benefit of the Association, the students, the administration and staff of the School;
- Ensure that all income and profit from the operations of the school of the AISF shall be used only for the purpose outlined in the article of the Association of the AISF; and
- Conduct their duties in accordance with the Articles of Association of AISF.

Board Member Code of Conduct

- Embrace the Mission and Beliefs of AISF
- Maintain a "School focus" in all decision making
- Be responsible to the institution as a whole, not a single agenda or constituency
- Attend all Board meetings, and prepare in advance by reviewing the Board packet. (If a Board member misses two meetings in succession the other Board member may require them to step down if there is no valid reason for their absence.)
- Participate actively on the board and its committees
- Communicate honestly, listen actively, respect all opinions and differences, and remain objective
- Maintain absolute confidentiality of all issues discussed at the Board

- Maintain a mutually trusting, supportive relationship with other Board members and the Director
- Participate actively in Board discussions and then support the final decision, even if you voted against the decision
- Refrain from “supervising” or embarrassing another Board member or the Director at a Board meeting
- Become familiar with AISF Articles of Association and Board Policy Handbook
- Be supportive of the school administration and staff
- Act as internal and external advocate for the school
- Follow AISF Board guidelines for dealing with complaints from parents, staff, or community members. (*Guidelines can be found in Board Policy Handbook and in the Parent Handbook*)
- Participate in annual training sessions with the whole Board
- Be disciplined about participation in meetings, according to AISF Meetings norms
- Take responsibility for ensuring Board protocols are followed by colleagues and the Board Chair
- Maintain focus on the legitimate role of the Board, which encompasses:
 - Determining school policies in consultation with the Director
 - Maintaining long-term financial viability of the School
 - Developing financial and strategic plans
 - Developing and overseeing the implementation of the annual budget
 - Setting fees and tuitions
 - Setting salaries and benefits of administration, faculty and staff
 - Reviewing and approving the annual audit report
 - Hiring and evaluating the Director
 - Delegating the implementation of school policies and school management to the Director and the instructional and support staff
- Avoid raising personal matters/concerns, unless Board policy implications are involved.
- Bring personal matters/concerns to another Board member for the second Board member to address those concerns to the appropriate party.
- Keep discussions of Board business within the context of Board meetings or via email copied to all Board members.
- Acknowledge correspondence between Board members and the Director in a timely manner.

The Board Chair Code of Conduct:

It shall be the duty of the Board Chair to preside over all meetings of the Board, including the Annual General Meeting. It is the duty of the Board Chair to appoint or remove Board Committee chairs in the event a Committee Chair is not fulfilling his/her duties, assign Board

members to committees, prepare Board meeting agendas, and to have the Director prepare and call all meetings of the Board.

The Board Chair will allow all Board Members to have their say on an issue to be discussed and to ensure that all views are heard and put forward, before a vote is called on a decision.

The Board Chair is responsible for summing up each agenda item to completion, prior to moving onto the next item. At the direction of the Board Chair, the Director shall give notice of all items requiring official signatures and conduct the correspondence of the Board.

The Director or the Board Chair are delegated the authority to sign contracts on behalf of the Board. In the case of absence of the Board Chair, the Vice Chair will be delegated signatory authority, the purpose of the delegation and the time period for such delegated authority just for the period the Chair is absent. In case the Chair and Vice Chair are both absent, the Chair shall provide written delegation of Signatory authority (copied to all Board members) to another member of the Board for the period of which the Chair and Vice Chair are absent.

The Board Chair shall:

- 1) be fully accountable to the full Board;
- 2) serve as the leader of the Board and external spokesperson for the Board or, when otherwise required, designate one person, usually the Director, to communicate with the broader community on specific school operational issues (see Communications Covenants)
- 3) be the primary focal point for the Board members' feedback to the Director and the administrative team;
- 4) plan the agenda for the Board meetings together with the Director, soliciting additional agenda items from Board Members prior to the finalization of the Agenda; and
- 5) conduct Board meetings with attention to:
 - a. Adhering to the pre-planned agenda
 - b. Maintaining appropriate Board roles
 - c. Keeping discussion focused
 - d. Balancing efficiency and effectiveness
 - e. Soliciting and supporting full participation of all Board members
 - f. Reminding Board members of their appropriate roles and behavior as needed
 - g. Serving as a mentor/partner to the Director
 - h. Providing advice and counsel to the Director on behalf of the Board
 - i. Promoting good open and effective communication among all school constituencies
 - j. Refraining from 'surprising' or embarrassing a Board member or the Director at a Board meeting

The Board Vice Chair shall:

Perform the duties of the Board Chair whenever the letter shall be absent or incapacitated, and the acts so performed shall be as valid and binding upon AISF as if performed in person by the Chair. In the event that the Chair permanently leaves the position office for any reason, the Vice-Chair shall automatically assume the position of the Chair of the Board for the remainder of that Board period (until the next May General Meeting- see Board handover below).

The Board Treasurer shall:

- 1) ensure a comprehensive financial report (that includes current cash flow, budget tracking, banking report) at monthly Board meetings for discussion;
- 2) assist and support the Director and Finance Officer in the preparation of the annual school budget
- 3) the Treasurer will have access to all necessary bank account information and passwords.

The Board Secretary shall:

- 1) ensure that accurate minutes are kept of all proceedings of the Board, including both regular and executive sessions of the Board;
- 2) ensure that official (approved by signature of all Board members present) minutes, including both open and executive sessions of the Board, are kept in an orderly, accessible archive (hard and soft copies) at school;
- 3) keep minutes of any executive sessions that exclude the Director in an orderly off-site archive (hard and soft copies) accessible to Board members. At the time of hand-over from one Secretary to the next, this special archive of executive session minutes will be publicly handed over to the new Secretary in the presence of the Board;

The School Director shall:

- 1) be supervised and take direction from the Board
- 2) implement and administer Board approved policies and programs;
- 3) provide accurate and timely information as well as advice to the Board to support pending decisions and respond in a timely manner to request for specific information (Board related);
- 4) promote consistent, comprehensive, and effective communications among all AISF constituencies (students, employees, parents community and Board);
- 5) provide information to and from the Faculty regarding the Board decisions;
- 6) maintain a student focus;
- 7) participate positively in Board discussions;
- 8) support and implement Board decisions;
- 9) assist the Board Chair with meeting agendas;
- 10) assist the Board Chair with the organization of annual training of Board members;
- 11) maintain confidentiality of Board discussions;

- 12) actively promote a sense of trust among Board members and between Board members, Director, faculty and administration.
- 13) promote a collegial Board working environment;
- 14) refrain from surprising or embarrassing the Board at a Board meeting;
- 15) keep the Board fully informed in good time of school events and activities;
- 16) inform (in a comprehensive manner) the Board of potentially controversial incidents at school.
- 17) pro-actively seek the Board's advice and counsel in making potentially controversial administrative decisions.
- 18) respond to all Board emails within 24 hours and all staff emails within 24 hours; and
- 19) respond to all questions prior to a Board meeting.

The Finance Officer shall;

- 1) attend all Board meetings unless otherwise directed by Board or Director, in a non-voting capacity;
- 2) work with the Director and the Treasurer in the compiling the monthly financial reports to be presented at the monthly Board Meetings; and
- 3) as needed provide operational clarification in support of the Director's report.

Handover between Outgoing and Incoming Board Members

The AISF General Meeting held in May, is the meeting during which new Board members are elected by the Association members. In order that a comprehensive handover is undertaken between incoming and outgoing Board Members, it is imperative that newly elected Board members attend the June Board meeting, together with existing Board members. During this June meeting, the existing Board will bring the incoming Board members fully up to speed on all key and outstanding Board business. In the Executive Session of the June Board Meeting, the new Board will decide on the position of Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. The new Board will then begin its work from July (and conclude the following June).

The outgoing Board Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary will have a handover meeting with their replacements prior to the June Board meeting. In this meeting all relevant material will be given to the new position holder.

General Board Meetings Norms

- 1) Attendance at Board meetings is mandatory, as it is important for the Board. If a Board member misses two or more consecutive meetings without a valid reason submitted 48 hours before the meeting, the Board has the authority to remove them from office and appoint an interim Board member;

- 2) A quorum shall consist of a meeting with three or more voting Board members present;
- 3) Meetings always operate with a clearly defined and agreed upon agenda – items which are appropriately allocated to the Board. The final deadline for the submission of agenda items is one week prior to the coming meeting.
- 4) Agenda items should be realistically timed and to the extent possible without prematurely cutting off debate, the Chair will adhere to the allotted time.
- 5) Association concerns should be brought to the Board through a letter to the Chair and the items will be placed on the agenda if appropriate.
- 6) Agenda items pertaining to guests present will be addressed first.
- 7) Board members will, to the extent possible, remain throughout the Board meeting.
- 8) Unless required for emergency purposes, cell phones will be turned off during the meeting;
- 9) Members should strive to be clear on the desired outcome of a discussion;
- 10) All Board discussions will take place in an open, mutually supportive and collegial manner
- 11) Board members will value and respect diversity of opinion
- 12) Board members will not interrupt while others are talking
- 13) To the extent possible, Board packets will be delivered to Board members electronically no less than 3 working days prior to the Board meeting.
- 14) Board members should read through the packets, make notes and, if needed, get clarification on agenda items and issues arising from the Director's report prior to the Board meeting.
- 15) Notes to accompany executive session agenda items will be summarized to preserve confidentiality.
- 16) Executive sessions will take place immediately after regular Board meetings. Minutes for executive sessions will be taken by the Board Secretary or designee.
- 17) The Director will attend all Executive sessions of the Board unless the session is dedicated to discussing the Director's employment status.
- 18) Executive session discussions will remain strictly confidential;
- 19) Board meetings will begin and end on time. Members should attempt to arrive a few minutes early for chatting time before the meeting starts;
- 20) All Official Board decisions must be authorized by vote of all Board members present at the meeting.
- 21) Once decisions are made, all Board members will support the decision in terms of its presentation and communications to the community.
- 22) A vote will not be taken until all members have had the opportunity to speak to the issue and a complete discussion has been held.
- 23) Once a vote has been taken, members will move on to the next agenda item;

Committee Meeting Norms (Board Committees will be formed as needed):

Committees should be ideally 6 people maximum and represent a balance of various interests.

1. Each committee will have a Chair and a recognized Secretary in order that the meetings are properly conducted and detailed minutes of each meeting are taken. All Committees report to the monthly Board meeting, through the respective Committee Chair. The Committee Chair will be a Board member;
2. Committee members should possess skills sets relevant to the work of the committee, which means that some people who express an interest in serving on a committee may be better suited for another Board committee, the PTO, or one of the administrative committees open to parent participation;
3. Committee meetings will operate with a clear agenda and background materials will be circulated in advance to all members;
4. All committee discussions will take place in an open, mutually supportive and collegial manner. All committee meetings will be held on the AISF premises;
5. A vote will not be taken on a recommendation until everyone has the opportunity to speak on the issue. The Chair will not vote unless there is no clear conclusion to the vote;
6. The end result should be a report with recommendations that the Committee Chair can bring to the entire Board. The report should outline what was considered, the rationale for the recommendation made and cost implications if there is a cost involved;
7. Individual details and opinions expressed during the Committee discussions should remain confidential within the Committee, although minutes should be available should they be requested;
8. Summary minutes should be attached to the monthly Board meeting packet, particularly supporting any committee action items placed on the Board's meeting agenda.
9. Committee meetings are private meetings held in public. However, members of the Community may be invited to participate if they contribute to the process or items within a specific meeting.

Board Communications Protocols

Internal:

If Board members have a discussion about a Board issue between meetings, the discussion normally occurs via email. Discussion among members about significant Board issues occurring outside of scheduled meetings should be copied to all Board members for their information in order to ensure trust and transparency. Board decisions may be taken by email upon Board vote or consensus to do so. Board decisions taken by email should be formally recorded in the minutes at the next Board meeting.

External:

Faculty and Staff: The Board communicates with the Faculty through the Director. Teachers who contact a Board member to have a discussion about an issue should be re-directed to the Director. The Board will hear teacher complaints and concerns only through appropriate channels as outlined in the handbook and not directly unless there is a formal challenge to an administrative decision which has already worked its way through channels and is being considered as a grievance. In this instance the grievance is sent directly to the Board Chair and the Director. The Board Chair will copy this grievance to the remaining Board members for their information.

Students: Student concerns should be brought to the Board through the Director.

Parents: The Board welcomes parent attendance at Board meetings. Parents may submit agenda items for discussion at Board meetings provided the issue or issues are of a policy nature and have been submitted through the Board Chair or Director at least 10 calendar days in advance of the next scheduled Board meeting. Items submitted may be referred to an appropriate Board committee in some cases, but the item and action in such cases will be reported at the upcoming Board meeting. Administrative concern or concerns about a teacher or school issue must be taken up with the school administration before it will be heard by the Board. The Board will communicate formally with Association members at the October and May Association Meeting and in community forums as needed. The Board will submit regular articles to the school newsletter, Awoko, to keep the wider Community abreast and informed of Board business.

Community: The Board may, at times, wish to communicate with the broader community through the use of flyers, letter, or press releases. To prevent confusion, the Board Chair should delegate one person to communicate with the broader community on specific issues. In most cases, this would be the Director.

Board Members Should, When Handling Complaints:

- 1) Listen with interest
- 2) Refrain from agreeing or disagreeing, arguing or sympathizing;

- 3) Restate and clarify the complaint. This serves two purposes. First it insures you have understood it correctly, and secondly it notifies the complainant that he or she is being taken seriously;
- 4) Ask (gently) probing and clarifying questions
- 5) Refrain from taking on the problem or agree to act as the complainant's agent;
- 6) Refer the complaint to the lowest level at which the problem can be solved (e.g. a teacher, or the Director);and
- 7) Inform the Director and other Board Members of the complaint

Guidelines for Decision-Making in Special Circumstances:

When the Board is operating under extraordinary circumstances which involve time pressure, a controversial or sensitive situation such as an emergency, security, or other issue, the following guidelines will apply:

- 1) If a decision has sensitive implications, e.g. school closure for security reasons, all meetings/briefings with advisors on security issues (such UN or US Embassy Security Officer) should be attended by at least one Board member not affiliated with the organization represented by the security advisor. The preferred option is to have the Board Chair and at least one other Board member join the Director at such meetings.
- 2) The issues should be brought to the Board in the form of an objective written briefing paper which outlines the issue(s), provides the key facts and presents the possible decision alternatives.
- 3) The Board should meet in two separate sessions (even if only a few hours apart) when deliberating over "high stakes" decisions: a quorum of at least 3 members should be present at each of these sessions. The justification for having two separate sessions is to allow Board members time to digest the available information and to think through alternatives before a decision is made.
- 4) The briefing paper should be presented to the Board (by the sponsor) at the first session with time made available for questions and decisions for clarification, not decision-making. Decision criteria (weighted and prioritized if appropriate) should be developed and agreed at this first session.
- 5) The second session should be convened later that day or the next. The purposes of this session is to make the decision and to develop an appropriate communication piece, e.g. position paper/Q & A, for use in communicating the decision to the school community. Every Board member present (including the Director) should be given ample opportunity to speak, and comments should be pertinent to the agreed decision criteria. Once adequate time has been given for comment, the decision should be put to the vote, and must be properly recorded.
- 6) Once the vote is taken, the Board must take time to prepare and agree on a communication strategy/plan, along with a written position paper or Q/A.

General Meetings

The Board shall convene a minimum of one Association General Meetings each school year. Additional meetings may be called to inform the parent community and/or to solicit their feedback. For all such meetings the Board should take every possible measure to ensure broad attendance by Association members.

The Association's Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held in May of each year. The Board Chair shall facilitate this meeting, with the Director and Board members, in particular the Treasurer, presenting annual reports as appropriate. The purpose of this meeting is:

- 1) Share the school's successes and challenges during the current school year.
- 2) Share the Board's and the school's goals for the coming year.
- 3) Elect new members for the AISF Board as needed
- 4) Present and consider the Board annual report including the account and balance sheet of the School and the report of the auditors for the previous 12 months
- 5) Transact any other business which under these articles ought to be transacted at an Association General Meeting.

Electing the Board of Directors:

Vacancies

The Board will announce the number of vacancies that will become open on the AISF Board through a formal announcement in the school newsletter. This announcement should take place a minimum of 10 days prior to the AGM and will include an election calendar, Board candidate bio-data and statement, and the rules governing the election process.

Eligibility Criteria to be a Candidate:

Potential Board candidates will be sought for a period of up to two weeks before the fixed date for the AGM. Potential candidates will be asked to submit a photograph, a short biography introducing themselves and a brief explanation (maximum two paragraphs) of what attributes they would bring to the Board. Following a special executive session of the Board, the Board will review the candidates to determine the eligibility to run for the Board, and distribute the bios and pictures of the approved candidates at least ten days before the date of the AGM. This will be done through a special edition of the school newsletter, the Awoko.

The Board will appoint a Board member as the lead Election Officer for the elections. The Election Officer will lead the review of potential candidates. Candidates must fulfill the following criteria.

- Association Parent Member
- Of good moral character
- Will not have served more than four years at the end of the potential upcoming term of service

- Able to devote the necessary time to Board activities
- Have a general knowledge of mission, goals, and objectives of the School

Voting by Proxy:

Each Association member is allowed to carry up to two proxy letters authorizing them to vote on behalf of absent association members. The standard proxy letter formats will be prepared by the Board and will be available for collection from Reception and will also be sent by email to Association Members. These letters must be signed and dated, and a paper copy must be produced at the AGM by an Association Member for the proxy voting to be allowed.

Voting Process:

Each Association Member eligible to vote will be given a ballot plus a ballot for each of the valid proxies in their possession (maximum two). Each ballot can contain votes equal to the number of open positions up for election on the Board. A ballot that contains more votes for candidates than there are open positions up for election will not be a valid ballot and the entire ballot and the associated votes will be thrown out. A ballot may contain fewer votes than open positions and still have the votes be considered valid. The candidate(s) with the highest number of votes will be considered the winner of the vote.

Electoral officers should be appointed among the community:

- 2 board members
- 2 teachers
- 2 parents

Run off process

If, after the tabulation of votes there is the same number of votes between two or more candidates, a run-off vote will immediately be held between the candidates with same number of votes. The candidate(s) with the highest number of votes will be considered the winner

AISF Board Member Covenant

I confirm I have read and understand the attached documents, listed below:

- Articles of Association
- Board Handbook
- Board Member Code of Conduct
- Board Chair Code of Conduct
- Meeting Norms
- Communication Covenants
- Conflict of Interest Declaration

I agree to abide by both the spirit and letter of the attached in order to maintain the integrity and impartiality of the Board and the high standards expected of those elected and appointed to serve on it.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

AISF Board of Directors- Annual Conflict of Interest Disclosure and Agreement

Board members are appointed or elected to serve AISF and all its constituencies. The men and women who accept this position are expected to carry out their duties in a manner that inspires and ensures the confidence of the school and the broader community.

Board members shall exercise the utmost good faith in all transactions touching upon their duties to the school and its property. They shall not use their positions as Board members, or knowledge gained therefrom, so that a conflict might arise between the school's interest and that of any individual Board member.

A conflict of interest arises in any situation in which a Board member (and/or their immediate family) is involved in an activity that could adversely affect his/her objective judgment with respect to the business of the school, or otherwise diminish the interest of the school.

Potential conflict of interest related to fee decisions:

This information will not require the Board member to recuse him/herself from fee deliberations, but it is a reminder that each Board member has an implicit conflict in such decision if any fees are paid by the family.

- ____ My children's fees are paid entirely by my family.
- ____ My children's fees are partly paid by an organization, and partly by my family.
- ____ My children's fees are paid entirely by an organization.

(Please provide details of the breakdown and the name of the organization):

Other potential conflict of interest:

- **Business** in which I, or any family members, have an interest or in which I/they work serve:

- **Non-profit organizations** with which I, or any family members, are involved:

- **Government agencies** with which I, or any family members, interact in the course of our

Work:

_____ * This form is to
be completed and signed by Board members at the beginning of each school year,
including re-signing by returning Board members.

**The Articles of Association
of
The American International School of Freetown
as amended May 26, 2011**

I Name of the Association

The Association shall be known as the Association of the American International School of Freetown, hereinafter referred to as the Association. The School shall be known as The American International School of Freetown, hereinafter referred to as the School.

II Location

The School is located in the city of Freetown in the country of Sierra Leone. The Association is located at the School.

III Purpose

It shall be the purpose of the Association to provide through the School as nearly as possible a U.S public school facility and educational program for children of U.S. Government employees and other children in Freetown seeking an American education.

IV Membership

- a) Membership in the Association shall be voluntary and shall be composed of parents or legal guardians of full-tuition-paying children who are registered for attendance at the School, and full-time professional School employees. Each and every parent and/ or legal guardian is defined for the purpose of these articles as a member of the Association.
- b) Membership in the Association shall cease when a parent or guardian no longer has a child registered at the School or the employee ceases to be employed by A.I.S.F in a full-time capacity.

V Non-Profit Character

The Association shall be exclusively educational, charitable, scientific and literary. It shall be non-profit, with no part of its earnings benefiting any private shareholders. No part of its activities shall be carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation; and it shall not participate in, or interfere in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. It shall, through education, disseminate learning and further cultural and international understanding, and it shall have no political or religious aims.

VI Perpetuity

It is the intention of the Association that the School continue in perpetuity as set forth herein.

VII Governing Body

- a) The Association shall be governed by a Board of Directors, hereinafter called the Board, the Membership of which shall be informed in the manner set forth through the school policies...
- b) The terms, rules, and authority of the Board shall be set forth in the School policies...

VIII Meetings of the Members

The Board shall convene a minimum of one Association General Meetings each school year. Additional meetings may be called to inform the parent community and/or to solicit their feedback. For all such meetings the Board should take every possible measure to ensure broad attendance by Association members.

The Association's Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held in May of each year. The Board Chair shall facilitate this meeting, with the Director and Board members, in particular the Treasurer, presenting annual reports as appropriate. The purpose of this meeting is:

- 1) Share the school's successes and challenges during the current school year.
- 2) Share the Board's and the school's goals for the coming year.
- 3) Elect new members for the AISF Board as needed
- 4) Present and consider the Board annual report including the account and balance sheet of the School and the report of the auditors for the previous 12 months

- 5) Transact any other business which under these articles ought to be transacted at an Association General Meeting.
- a) Special meetings of the Association shall be held at such times as the School Board shall direct, or at the request of twenty-five (25) percent of the total membership of the Association.
- b) Written notice of all Association meetings, and the agenda, shall be given to all Members at least two weeks in advances of the date of such meetings.
- c) The number of Association Members attending such a meeting shall constitute a quorum.
- d) The Chair of the Board shall be the Chairman of any Association General Meeting.

IX Voting by Members

- a) At any meeting of the members of the Association, each Member shall be entitled to only one vote.
- b) All questions at Association General Meetings shall be decided by a majority of those Members present, except as otherwise provided in the Board Handbook.
- c) There shall be voting by written proxy. The School Board shall define voting by proxy in the Board Handbook.
- d) Elections to the School Board shall be written ballot. For other matters put to a vote by Association Members at a General Meeting, voting may be by voice, by show of hands, or by written ballot at the direction of the Chairman of the Meeting or at the request of a Member present carried by a majority vote. In the case of voting by written ballot, the Chairman of the meeting shall appoint a committee to collect and count votes.

X Property and Finance

The Association may use the following means to accomplish its goals:

- a) Collect funds and control their investment and expenditures for the stated purpose of the organization.

- b) Purchase, take on lease, exchange, hire or otherwise acquire any interest in lands, buildings, easements, privileges, concessions or moveable and immoveable property of any kind or tenure, necessary or convenient for carrying out the object of the Association and to construct, provide, maintain, repair and alter any buildings, works, stores, plants and things which may from time to time be deemed requisite for any of the purposes of the Association, and also to sell, lease, mortgage, dispose of, turn to account, or otherwise deal with the whole or any part of the property and rights of the Association.
- c) Receive and accept donations, endowments and gifts of money, land, buildings stocks, funds, shares, securities and any other property of any organization, whether incorporated or not, carrying on work similar to any work being carried on by the Association and provided these donations, etc. do not carry provisions contrary to these Articles of Association and the school policies.
- d) Grant, maintain, continue and pay such wages, salaries, gratuities, and contributions towards provident funds or other sums in recognition of services.
- e) Devote all or a part of the income and any or all the principal of any property, real or personal, to the furtherance and support of projects which are exclusively educational.
- f) No part of the net earnings of the Association shall inure to the benefit of any individual or Member except as reasonable compensation for services actually rendered to the Association.

XI Amendment of Articles of Association

These Articles of Association may be amended at a General meeting of the Association or at any special meeting called for that purpose, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Members present and voting, except that Article III, Article V and Article XII shall not be amended in such manner as to impair or alter either the non-profit nature or the purpose of the institution. The text of the proposed amendment shall be furnished to the school Board at least three weeks prior to the meeting at which it is to be considered. The Board shall ensure that the text of the proposed amendment is made readily available to each member of the Association at least two weeks before the said meeting.

XII Dissolution

- a) This Association may be dissolved and its activities terminated only if approved by three-fourths (3/4) of all Association Members present at any meeting, provided, that notice in writing of such proposed dissolution shall have been given to the Members by the Secretary of the School Board when notifying them of the date of such meeting.
- b) In the event of termination and dissolution, the assets shall be distributed as decreed by the governing body of the Association, provided that none of the assets of the Association shall be distributed to or made available in any way to any individual or corporation, except to a corporation or other organization itself organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational or scientific purpose, no part of the net earnings of which inures to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual; no part of the activities of which is carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation; and which does not participate in, or interfere in (including the publishing or distributing of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

These Articles of Association of The American International School of Freetown were duly approved by the membership of the Association at a meeting of the said membership on March 11, 1986 and amended by the said membership on May 28, 2011 and May 26, 2011.

American International School of Freetown

Board of Directors' Policy Manual

Mission

AISF develops students' love of learning in an Internationally recognized, safe, student-centered and interactive learning environment. Students develop a global perspective that fosters empathy and prepares them for success in an ever-changing world.

Mission Revised January 2017

The Board of Directors of the American International School of Freetown (the "Board") has adopted the following policies for the American International School of Freetown ("AISF" or the "School"):

PART I

STRATEGIC POLICIES

- A.** All Staff, whether internationally or locally recruited, shall consistently support, promote, and apply the mission and vision of the School.

As part of the policy:

1. Performance standards and a process for appraising faculty and support staff shall be identified.
2. An organizational staffing plan that promotes appropriate achievement for each student shall be maintained and continuously reviewed.
3. An effective professional development program that supports the educational strategic plan shall be maintained.
4. The Board shall approve any changes to the salaries and benefits of the faculty staff.

- B.** The educational program shall be designed, reviewed, and assessed to promote high achievements for all AISF students within the parameters of the School's mission and vision.

As part of the policy:

1. A challenging, engaging, and coherent written curriculum and monitoring process that addresses the needs of all learners shall be maintained.
2. A comprehensive plan for assessing student learning shall be an integral part of the academic program.
3. Educational programs and their implementation shall reflect the principles of enduring understanding, inquiry, and an emphasis on educating the whole child.
4. Students shall be accepted without discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, race, or nationality.

5. Students shall be admitted based on the School's evaluation of the potential of the applicant to benefit from the educational services available at the School and the School's capacity to meet the educational needs of the applicant.
 6. Diversity and balance of host country nationals and expatriate students shall be maintained in the classroom.
 7. Accredited status with the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and/ or a reputable US accrediting agency shall be maintained.
 8. The School year shall consist of no less than 180 student contact days insofar as possible.
- C.** The School's learning environment shall be safe, secure, healthy, and supportive of the mission and vision.

As part of the policy:

1. The campus shall be smoke-free on both the interior and exterior, within 500 feet of the perimeter.

- D.** Financial planning and resources allocation procedures shall be adequate to ensure the long and short-term financial security of the School.

As part of this policy:

1. Financial statements shall be approved in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards.
2. Financial statements shall be audited by an independent firm on an annual basis, the auditing firm will change every three years insofar as possible.
3. The Board shall approve a projected budget for the School by March in the year prior to the coming school year. The Administration and the Board will review the current year budget again in October, in order to approve it as the final budget.
4. Financial procedures shall be maintained in a Business Procedures Manual, which is to be reviewed annually by the Board Finance Committee.

- E. Strategic goals for the long-term development of the School shall be established and periodically reviewed by the Board in collaboration with the Administration.

As part of the policy:

1. Plans to achieve AISF's strategic goals shall be developed and/ or reviewed annually.
2. The Board shall periodically evaluate the School's effectiveness in achieving the mission and vision.

- F. Development, advancement, and fund raising programs shall support the mission and be consistent with the School's values.

As part of the policy:

1. The School's diversity, values, and academic standards shall be communicated by the Board and the Administration.
2. Fund-generating programs to provide for the security and prosperity of AISF, including such purposes as financial aid, facilities enhancement, and future growth, shall be established, monitored, and reviewed.
3. An up-to-date marketing plan shall be maintained.

PART II

GOVERNANCE PROCESS POLICIES

1. Each member of the Board will participate in Board training and development in accordance with the Board's adopted practices, as they may be updated from time to time.
2. Each new Board member shall receive a copy of AISF's Articles of Association, Board Handbook and Policy Manual promptly upon being elected or appointed to the Board.
3. The Board will maintain an up-to-date Board calendar.
4. The Board will follow such procedures as it may adopt from time to time regarding the setting of agendas for its meetings.

5. The Board will follow such procedures as it may adopt from time to time regarding evaluation of its work on an annual basis.

PART III

POLICIES REGARDING BOARD / DIRECTOR RELATIONSHIP

1. The Board will maintain a co-operative and effective working partnership with the Director.
2. The Board will develop and maintain a clear, written description of the duties and responsibilities of the Director.
3. The Board will maintain a written procedure on the evaluation of the Director and evaluate the Director on an annual basis; the Board will work with the Director to set his/her goals for any School year no later than the October Board meeting, conduct a mid-year assessment in December and prepare a written evaluation report in May.

PART IV

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

American International School of Freetown

Child Protection Policy

Child abuse and neglect are concerns throughout the world. Child abuse and neglect are violations of a child's human rights and are obstacles to the child's education as well as to their physical, emotional, and spiritual development. The American International School of Freetown endorses the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, of which our host country, The Republic of Sierra Leone, is a signatory.

Schools fill a special institutional role in society as protectors of children. Schools need to ensure that all children in their care are afforded a safe and secure environment in which to grow and develop, both at school and away. Educators, having the opportunity to observe and interact with children over time, are in a unique position to identify children who are in need of help and protection. As such, educators have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children who are in need of help and protection and to take steps to ensure that the child and

family avail themselves of the services needed to remedy any situation that constitutes child abuse or neglect. As well, educators have a professional and ethical obligation to identify children in need of protection within the school staff and student body. Educators must be vigilant in raising awareness of possible abuse by staff and recognition of student on student abuse.

All staff employed at the American International School of Freetown must report incidents of child abuse or neglect whenever the staff member has reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered or is at significant risk of suffering abuse or neglect. (Possible examples of abuse and neglect may be marks on a student's body, dirty and unkempt appearance, lack of dental care, unusual exhaustion, onset of unusually withdrawn or aggressive behaviors, obvious anxiety.) Reporting and follow up of all suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect will proceed in accordance with the administrative regulations respective to this policy. Furthermore, cases of suspected child abuse or neglect may be reported to the appropriate employer, to the respective consulate in Freetown, to the appropriate child protection agency in the home country, and/or to local authorities.

The American International School of Freetown seeks to be a safe haven for students who may be experiencing abuse or neglect in any aspect of their lives. As such, the American International School of Freetown *will distribute this policy annually to all parents and applicants, will communicate this policy to students, will provide training for all staff, and will make every effort to implement hiring practices to ensure the safety of children.* In the case of a staff member reported as an alleged offender, the American International School of Freetown will conduct a full investigation following a carefully designed course of due process, keeping the safety of the child at the highest priority. For detailed information on the Convention on the Rights of the Child see the following link: http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30160.html.

Policy Approved by AISF Board: May 30, 2017

PART V BOARD AGREEMENTS

Guiding Principles of the Board of Directors

All members of the School Board of the American International School of Freetown shall:

1. Be motivated primarily by an earnest desire to serve AISF and the Children it educates;
2. Maintain a student focus in all decision-making;

3. Be accountable for the financial well-being of AISF.
4. Be responsible to AISF rather than any individual group or agenda;
5. Establish, in partnership with AISF's Director, priorities and policies for AISF which are consistent with AISF's Mission and Vision;
6. Recognize that legal authority rests with the Board, not any individual member;
7. Shall adhere to the Code of Conduct and Communication Covenants.
8. Shall sign and adhere to the "conflict of interest" document found in the Board Handbook.

PART VI

INFORMATION ITEMS PROVIDED TO THE BOARD

The Board will periodically review information relating to all aspects of AISF, including information regarding:

1. School finances;
2. Significant curriculum developments;
3. Issues related to personnel;
4. On-going projects;
5. Student enrollment;
6. Student, parent and other surveys;
7. Professional development.

Adopted: December 15, 2011

APPENDIX 1

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF FREETOWN BOARD APPROVED FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

OVERVIEW

The quality of education at AISF depends on the availability of funding for its educational programs. The transparent and efficient management of school funds contributes to the availability of adequate funds for school programs.

It is the Director's responsibility to ensure that the financial assets of the school are managed to best achieve the goal of excellence in education and in accordance with good accounting practices.

The School Board, with leadership from the Treasurer, oversees and annually reviews school financial and business practices to assess compliance with the policies set forth herein.

ACCOUNTING

Accounting at AISF, as in all educational institutions, has three objectives:

1. To fulfil the obligation of financial stewardship and accountability for the funds entrusted to the school.
2. To disclose as fully and understandably as possible the results of operations and the financial position of the school.
3. To provide financial information as an aid to decision-making and budgetary control.

The Director is responsible for ensuring that an accounting and fiscal management system that corresponds to accepted business practice is maintained at AISF. The system should ensure that the proper checks and balances exist between those who are authorized to prepare and sign for payments, those who maintain the financial records, those who authorize expenditure and procurement, and those who receive the items procured. The system should also ensure that proper separation of reserve funds is maintained, and that separate accounting of funds is done where required. QUICK BOOKS accounting software is currently the computerized financial management tool used at AISF. Any change in the accounting software requires Board approval.

REPORTING AND RECORD KEEPING

The Director, working with the Finance Officer, shall be responsible for maintaining the financial books and records of the school in proper form. The Director is responsible for ensuring the timely preparation of all fiscal reports and financial statements.

The Director shall submit through the Treasurer to the Board a monthly financial statement which shows monthly and cumulative receipts and expenditures for all budget line items; cumulative receipts and expenditure versus budgeted receipts and expenditures; accrued expenses; and a comparative balance

sheet that includes all reserve fund activity and balances. Other reports shall be prepared at the request of the School Board.

Regular monthly financial reports shall be sent out no later than four (4) days in advance of the monthly Board meeting.

- a. The Finance Officer shall be responsible for preparing the reports and sending to the School Director.
- b. The Director will first circulate the reports to the Treasurer for review.
- c. Upon the approval of the Treasurer, the Director shall send the Board the reports showing budget vs. actuals to date.
- d. The first monthly report shall be sent out in September and the last in June. The month of July will be reported, along with the month of August, at the September Board Meeting.
- e. In case of necessary delay, every effort shall be made by the Director to inform the appropriate parties.

FISCAL YEAR

The School's fiscal year extends from August 1 to July 31. Final accounts of the previous fiscal year will be prepared and presented to the Board for review no later than 30 September each year in preparation for preliminary approval for external audit.

AUDIT

An independent firm shall be selected by the Board to audit all accounts after the close of each fiscal year to be completed by the end of October, and to prepare an audit opinion on those financial statements and accompanying management letter for the School Board. The School Board shall review the auditor's report no later than 31st December of the audited year. The audited financial statements will be presented to parents at a General Assembly for approval at a meeting each year.

The Board will develop the terms of reference for the auditing firm. Final approval of the terms of reference and of the auditing firm lies with the School Board. The audit firm shall also be expected to provide counsel to the administration, as necessary. The Board should consider changing the auditing firm after three years of service.

BUDGETING

GENERAL PRINCIPLES - the budgeting process should be a collaborative, school-wide endeavour, which follows the principles of zero-based budgeting. The Director, assisted by the school's Finance Officer, is responsible for preparing a preliminary draft budget and a reserve fund plan for the school year. In the preparation of the preliminary budget the School Board expects the Director to work closely with the professional staff. They should jointly formulate the costs of achieving the goals of the educational program. All budgets presented to the Board must be balanced.

The proposed budget should ensure that:

- the school's programs shall endeavour to meet the needs of the entire student body;
- staffing arrangements are adequate for the programs proposed;
- the school's equipment and facilities will be adequately maintained;

- the school's expenditures are economical and its staffing patterns efficient;
- all practical sources of income are utilized.

It is the responsibility of the Director to recommend to the Treasurer the priority of the different funding requests for inclusion in alternative budget scenarios. The Treasurer and the Director assure that the proposed scenarios are fiscally probable and sound, and accurately reflect the educational goals and priorities recommended by the Director.

BUDGET PROCESS AND TIMELINE - the Director is responsible for initiating the budget process in line with the goals established by the Board. The Treasurer will review the draft budget and submit it to the School Board.

Normally, the school will endeavour to follow the steps and the timeline below:

- a. Estimation of enrollment for the following school year. (November)
- b. Determination of the Instruction Program. This phase should involve both teaching staff and administration. (November)
- c. Determination of actual staffing needs at all levels. (November)
- d. Determination of salaries and benefits at all levels. (November)
- e. Salary and benefits for next school year approved by the Board. (November)
- e. Determination of operating expenses and capital levels. (December)
- f. Review by the Treasurer and final proposal (January)
- g. Board Approval of full Preliminary Budget (February)
- h. Presentation of budget at May General Meeting of the AISF Association

BUDGET REVISIONS

Unanticipated circumstances may cause actual revenue and expenditures to vary substantially from the original budget. When this occurs, the Director, upon the recommendation of the Treasurer, may propose a revised budget to the Board. The Board shall review and approve as appropriate.

NON-BUDGETED EXPENSES - non-budgeted expenses of up to 10% of the line items to a maximum of \$2,000 in total may be adjusted only WITHIN the two major categories, Operating Expenditure and Capital Expenditure, by the Director under the following conditions:

- That the Director ensures that all contractual obligations of the school can be met during the year, i.e. salaries, benefits, purchase orders, etc.
- That the budgeted total operating expenditures and capital expenditures remain in balance with expected income.

Non-budgeted expenses in any one line-item that represent over 10%, or more than \$5,000, of that line item should be considered as exceptions and must be approved by the Board.

SOURCES OF REVENUE

AISF has the following sources of revenue:

- Tuition Fees
- Annual Capital Fee

- Development Fee (one time only only)
- Office of Overseas Schools Annual Grant
- Donations and other grants

The Director may decide, with the approval of the Board, to pursue additional revenue streams such as an annual fund or alumni fund.

FUND RAISING, GRANTS, DONATIONS - to assist in meeting the funding needs of the school, the School Board and the administration shall, whenever possible and appropriate, seek outside sources of funding for the school. The objectives and independence of the school may not be placed at risk by the acceptance of outside sources of funds. In determining the suitability of a donation or grant, the School Board shall assure that the following requirements are met:

- The donation must not compromise the independence or basic mission of the school in any way.
- the donation must not obligate the school in its future commitments of resources, personnel, materials, or enrollment;
- the donation must not imply endorsement of any kind by the school of a product, service, individual, or group without the approval of the School Board.

GRANTS - the school shall seek assistance from the US Department of State, the Office of Overseas Schools. The Director is responsible for ensuring the accurate completion and timely submission of all necessary grant applications and reports.

Other grants may be sought but must be evaluated by the Director to ensure that they are in line with the school mission and values.

FUND RAISING - solicitation of funds in the name of the school or any of its organizations, for example by the Parent-Teacher Organization, must have the prior approval of the Director. Significant new fundraising campaigns must be approved by the School Board.

BORROWING - from time to time, it may be necessary for the school to borrow money. The Director may not seek a loan for the school until the Board has given its approval. The final loan contract must be reviewed by the Treasurer and approved by the School Board.

RESERVE ACCOUNTS – the School Director and the School Board must ensure sufficient reserves in order to ensure the long term operations of the school. Operating Reserve and Capital Reserves may therefore be established. No expenditures may be made from any reserve or capital fund without the approval of the School Board. The School Board shall also approve the amounts invested in each fund and with each institution. The school’s target for the operational reserve will be an amount representing six months of school operations. Reserve funds may not be invested in speculative ventures. The School Board may

establish a special capital reserve fund if the Board has committed the school to a significant capital project such as the purchase of land and/or the building of a purpose-built campus.

TUITION AND FEES

SETTING TUITION FEES - The Board, in consultation with the Director, shall set tuition based upon projections for the budget year so that the estimated total tuition income shall cover or exceed the School's operating budget. The Board shall set all fees, and shall consider changes to such fees upon recommendation by the Treasurer

PAYMENT - all invoices and subsequent tuition payments shall be in U.S. dollars.

Tuition and fees are to be paid on an annual basis and all tuition and fees must be paid within the scope of the school year in which they are assessed. Tuition and fees must be paid by the dates established in the Tuition Fee schedule as approved annually by the School Board or within one month of enrollment date during the school year, unless enrolled in the School's trimester payment plan. The annual Capital Fee and the one-time Development Fee should be paid with the trimester 1 payment.

The School Board will annually review its tuition fee policies. The Director, at his/her discretion, may allow for an alternative payment schedule for families who have demonstrated need. In such cases, the Director will inform the Board Treasurer of such arrangements.

If required payments are delinquent by more than 30 calendar days the student will not be allowed to attend class until all outstanding payments have been cleared. In the event that special circumstances exist, parents or guardians may make special written application to the Director for consideration of a waiver of these policies.

Should families owe any fees to the school, no transcripts, attendance certificates or other school records will be released.

TUITION REFUNDS FOR FULL PAYMENT

In cases where a full year's tuition payment has been made and early withdrawal becomes necessary, a partial tuition refund may be made upon receipt of a written request. In cases where the full year's tuition payment has been made at the beginning of the school year refunds will be as follows:

- Two trimesters attended + one trimester not attended = 20% of annual tuition refunded.
- One trimester attended + two trimesters not attended 40% of annual tuition refunded

Note: Attendance in any part of one trimester shall be construed as attendance of the entire trimester insofar as payment of tuition is concern

Additional fees for the expense of processing overseas payments of tuition and fees must be paid by the families or their auspices.

When a situation occurs whereby AISF must be closed due to factors beyond its control (force majeure) no refunds will be given.

BAD DEBT - it is the responsibility of parents to ensure that school fees are paid on time regardless of whether the fees are paid by the parents individually or by their employers. Efforts will be made to collect the debt for a period of eighteen months following the due date after which the debt is written off. The school reserves the right to pursue bad debts under the appropriate provisions of Sierra Leonean law. Appropriate follow up on late payments shall be promptly executed by the Finance Officer. Individuals or legal entities with accounts in arrears may be notified by telephone, electronic and hard copy. Adequate records of these communications shall be kept. Information on the amount in arrears shall be given them in these communications. The Finance Officer must report late payments to the Director.

Payments of arrears are expected to be made in full prior to commencement of a new academic year. Students with accounts in arrears will be barred from enrollment.

FIXED ASSETS

AUTHORIZATION FOR PURCHASE OF FIXED ASSETS - the overall authorization for purchasing new property is incorporated in the capital budget by the School Board. During the fiscal year, the Board may also authorize new purchases.

DISPOSAL OF THE SCHOOL'S FIXED ASSETS - the School Board must approve any kind of disposal of the school's fixed assets that exceed \$5,000 per item in current value.

FIXED ASSETS REGISTER

The Director and the Finance Officer will ensure the custody of furniture, equipment and other non-consumable materials at the School. The School shall maintain a Fixed Assets Register in accordance with sound business and accounting practices.

- a. A register of fixed assets, including their location, shall be maintained under the supervision of the Finance Officer. The record of fixed assets shall be kept in both electronic and hardcopy formats throughout the year.
- b. Depreciation for each category will be assigned to the appropriate account in the accounting system at the end of the fiscal year.
- c. Each item will be assigned a unique asset number and that item included in an asset group.

HANDLING OF FUNDS

PETTY CASH – the School Board authorizes a petty cash account for the use of the school. The Finance Officer administers the account. No more than \$700 shall be kept as petty cash at any time. Petty cash

shall be used to purchase any item or pay for any service not exceeding a value of USD 2001. Cash advances for authorized purchases can be issued. No purchase shall be reimbursed through petty cash without receipt. Purchases not authorized in advance are reimbursable at the discretion of the Finance Officer or the Director. The petty cash account will be reconciled at the close of each week for inclusion in the monthly financial report. Periodically the director will conduct unannounced reconciliations. Note: all petty cash expenditures must apply to an established budget line.

CASH IN BUILDINGS - all money collected at school, either cash or checks, shall be turned in to the Finance Office daily for receipt and accounting. It shall be deposited within no more than three business days into the proper facility. The school may retain up to USD \$2500 and up to 5 million Leones in cash in the school safe as an emergency cash reserve. In no case will cash or checks be left overnight in the Business Office without being properly secured in a safe provided specifically for the safekeeping of money or valuables. No money is to be left overnight in classrooms. The school may hold cash and/or checks for other school-related organizations but reserves the right to place an upper limit on the amount it will hold.

SIGNATURE AUTHORITY AND LIABILITY OF THE SCHOOL - for all contracts or payments regularly budgeted up to US \$2,000 [or equivalent in Leones], the Director may sign alone. In the absence of the Director, two Board members, one of whom is the Treasurer, who have been appointed as signatory may co-sign.

For all contracts or payments regularly budgeted over US \$2,001 the signatures of both the Director and one of the Board signatories is required. Should the Director be unavailable, the signature of three Board signatories will be required.

For all unbudgeted expenditures of over US \$2,001 the Director must inform the Board and receive the approval as per Board procedures.

For all contracts not budgeted, the signatures of both the Director and one of the Board signatories are required. Budgeted contracts may be signed by the Director alone.

The following Board members will normally be signatories: the Board President; the Board Vice-President; the Treasurer; the Secretary; the School Board may, however, decide to appoint other signatories from its membership by a majority vote of the Board.

The authorization of the Treasurer or the Board President should the Treasurer be unavailable is needed to open bank accounts. Such accounts shall be maintained so that they provide the maximum income compatible with safety and with liquidity requirements.

The School Board may choose to change the limits of the signatory authority from time to time to meet immediate needs.

Should any of the above persons intentionally not follow these directives, the school will be entitled to claim reimbursement of any loss incurred.

PURCHASE PROCEDURE -

- Purchases can be made if duly authorized only (Budget or Board decision).
- All local purchases over \$3,000 (or equivalent) per order will be supported by at least three quotations where possible. Where more than one source of supply exists, any deviation from purchasing from the lowest bidder will be briefly noted on the concerned quotation. Quality is an important consideration so the concept of “best value for money” will be applied rather than simply the least expensive quotation.
- For imports, the Director will procure, via a recognized consolidator most educational materials. For other items over US\$3,000, quotations will be required. Any deviation from purchasing from the lowest bidder will be briefly noted on the concerned quotation.
- Advance payments made for the purchase of materials and supplies to be used in the following school year shall be recorded as an asset. These costs shall be charged to expense in the year in which the materials and supplies are budgeted.
- To control school’s assets, a fixed-assets inventory will be maintained, and will be updated at least annually. The inventory will be subject to periodic and annual audit.
- The Finance Officer will report to the Director any deviation from the present regulations.
- The Director is responsible for implementing these rules.

DISBURSEMENT PROCEDURE - the overall authorizations for disbursing funds of the school are the operational and capital budgets. No funds can be disbursed if not budgeted or if the Board has not decided to authorize the non-budgeted expenses. The funds will be disbursed in accordance with:

- The contracts signed.
- Sierra Leonean financial laws.

All salaries are paid on a monthly basis, on or before the 28th of each month. All salaries are paid over 12 months.

The following documents will be attached to all disbursement vouchers:

- Original and valid receipt or indication of check number.
- Original bill or invoice.
- Original airway bill or bill of lading for imported material.

The Finance Officer is responsible for presenting these documents and for making sure that authorization for disbursement is there.

Approved June 10, 2017