



International MOMS Club®
Fact Sheet

Introduction to the Local Chapter Bylaws

All MOMS Club local support groups operate under the same Bylaws. There are several very good reasons for this.

First of all, in the United States, the IRS (Internal Revenue Service) requires that all local chapters use identical Bylaws provided by us in order for our chapters to be covered by our nonprofit group exemption. Since the International MOMS Club is incorporated in the United States, we and our chapters must follow the IRS rules.

The reason the IRS requires all local chapters in the US to use the same Bylaws is that it wants to be sure that all groups receiving nonprofit status under a “parent” organization’s exemption will be operated in the same nonprofit way. Your chapter receives its nonprofit status from the International MOMS Club (your chapter’s “parent” organization), so your chapter must follow the same Bylaws as all the other chapters in the US.

But, even if the IRS didn’t require all local MOMS Club chapters use the same Bylaws, we’d still require it. It is imperative that all local chapters operate under a uniform set of rules.

Why? For one thing, having a uniform structure protects the MOMS Club goals and reputation.

Imagine you are a MOMS Club member in one state and you move to a chapter in another state. Wouldn’t you expect the MOMS Clubs in your new town to operate the same way the one did in your old hometown?

Or, say you’re a reporter – or a Senator – trying to get a feel for the needs of mothers who stay home. You’d expect the MOMS Clubs to represent a good cross sample of those mothers – and we do! But only because each chapter is united in its goals, principles and types of members. We couldn’t represent any particular group if the local chapters were each run in a totally different way, with different goals, ideals or even membership requirements.

With MOMS Clubs across the country standing for the same thing – with the same goals and purposes, anyone familiar with one chapter will automatically understand what any other chapter stands for.

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With our International chapters, we realize that sometimes local laws or customs may make it impossible to exactly follow the same Bylaws as are used in the United States or on US military bases abroad. If there is a legal or social reason why something in the Bylaws will hinder the development of your chapter in your home country outside of the United States, discuss the situation with your Coordinator. It may be possible to adapt parts of the Bylaws to conform with local laws and customs, or it may not. The important thing is to share the necessary information with your Coordinator so she can help you determine if the changes are truly needed and if they are possible within a MOMS Club framework.

Another reason for having Bylaws, is that having Bylaws makes sure that all members are treated fairly and equally.

Without a set of protections and rules to fall back on, differences of opinion about even simple matters can become a test of wills and arguments. Sadly, the winner in such battles is usually the person who is the most popular or the loudest – not necessarily the one who was right.

The Bylaws aren't complicated, but they are somewhat long because we've spelled out all the legal responsibilities and requirements of being a non-profit organization. We've also tried to predict any common problems your chapter may be faced with – and established safeguards to handle them in advance.

There is a complete copy of the Bylaws available on-line at the MOMS Club website (www.momsclub.org – look in the On-line Newsletter, under the "International" tab) and there is a copy in every local chapter manual.

There is also a Fact Sheet explaining the Bylaws, in case anyone has questions. That Fact Sheet gives valuable background on why various parts are written the way they are.

All members of your local group should read the Bylaws. Chapters that follow the Bylaws run more smoothly and fairly, and become our strongest, healthiest chapters.

*If you have any questions
about the Bylaws, or anything
with your chapter,
contact your Regional Coordinator.
She's here to help you!*

