

Hello to all parents/guardians,

Just to keep you up to date with the progress of the forming of the parents association. The committee members (see below) , with some of the board and staff attended National Parents Council training on the setting up and running of a parents association. This was held on Friday 5th March. It was very useful and a copy of the presentation is available from Anna or any of the committee members.

We held our first committee meeting on the 12th March, the minutes of which follow. We welcome any input and suggestions from all parents especially at this early stage of setting up the committee. As a first step we will be putting a suggestion box in the school or feel free to speak to any of the committee members with ideas.

Our next meeting is on Thursday 25th March so if you have suggestions please make them beforehand to a committee member.

We are in the process of drafting a constitution which we will post on the school website for your consideration. A copy will also be posted on the noticeboard.

The constitution can be ratified by the parent body at an AGM in the third term.

Meeting of Parents Association Committee 12/3/2010

Members present: Maeve McManus, Cindy Lund, Louise Kinlen, Helen Van de Beek, Naoise Dunne, David Stewart, Lisa Murphy, Gwenn Vanier. Apologies Robbie Pope.

We were looking at the drafting of a constitution, referring to the NPC booklet and a copy of the Carrigaline Educate Together's constitution.

1. Should we be PTA or PA?

It was decided to constitute the association as a Parents Association initially. The Association will however work closely together with the teachers and the board. A teacher will be invited to attend at least once a term and whenever either the PA or teachers feel it appropriate.

Decision: We should be a PA. (This can be reviewed in the future)

2. What constitutes a quorum for a committee meeting to go ahead? (A quorum is the minimum number of people required to hold a meeting)

Decision: 50%+1, in our case 5/9 until next AGM.

For a decision to be made on an issue we will aim for consensus but will accept a minimum of 50%+1 with the chairperson having the casting vote.

3. Number of committee members shall be 6-12 (the number recommended by the NPC)

4. What is our purpose?
Decision: Keep it similar to the NPC model including references to the Educate Together ethos. It was noted that we should include the fact that the word 'parent' in this document includes any legal guardians.
5. What is our aim?
Decision: Again we will refer to NPC example and other Educate Together examples.
6. What is our structure?
Decision: Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer
Other subcommittees can be set up as decided.
7. When to have the AGM and disband? It was thought that we need time to get set up.
Possibility of having it sometime in the first term of next year, maybe November. In order to ensure continuity, there should be a minimum of two new members joining the committee each year. A parent can be re-elected for as long as they have children in the school, except for the officer positions which should be held for a maximum of 2 years. After that a 1yr break would be necessary before re-election to an officer position. Parents reps cannot be officers.
8. We are affiliated to the NPC and waiting for the new book to arrive with the latest updates.
9. Ratification of constitution by the parent body.
Q: When should we do this? A: Meeting should be held before the end of term. This decision was changed later on when we decided we don't really need EGMs (extraordinary general meeting) and the constitution can be ratified at an AGM in May.
Decision: Constitution will be ratified at AGM in May.
10. Funds. How would funds be raised? There is some confusion about raising funds specifically for the parents association and raising funds for the school. The school/board is ultimately in charge of where funds go. How would this work –if the PA has a fundraiser for a particular thing then does the money just get put into the 'float' and may not necessarily go towards what it was intended for? We need to talk to Anna or Melinda about this to clarify. Also the book may give suggestions when we get it.
The board are giving us €500 and there's circa €40 left from a BBQ from last year. We are only allowed to hold €300 in our account but we have to pay for insurance out of this. (If we are affiliated to the NPC we get cheaper insurance.)
11. Other parents can be co-opted onto the committee to assist in their work.
12. Should the meetings be open or closed?
Decision: Have one open meeting per term, perhaps at the beginning of a term to get some idea of issues or suggestions from parents.
13. Communication: Via email, noticeboard, txt. For the constitution, again refer to NPC and Carrigaline models. We could ask all parents to sign up to email.

It would be a good idea to have a PA page on the website and minutes of all meetings will be posted on the website.

A suggestion box for the PA will be placed in the school.

14. Changing of the constitution would be at the AGM. Q: What is the % for a majority?

Decision: 2/3 of parents present.

15. How often to meet?

Decision: Once a month, maybe more often in the beginning just to get it set up. We will have an AGM once a year and an open meeting once a term.

16. Activities– we would like to invite a teacher to the next meeting to suggest activities. It was discussed whether we should meet first with our own ideas as to what our activities should be. We could communicate with the principal by email if she can't make a meeting.

Suggestion- we should come up with ideas for the next meeting.

Suggestion – conduct a survey among parents as to what our role should be. For the purposes of the constitution we don't have to decide specifics.

17. Next meeting will be on Thursday 25th March at 7.30pm. We should try and fill the officer positions. Maeve won't be able to attend but she can't be an officer as she is a parents rep. Louise, Cindy and Gwenn will get together to begin a rough draft of the constitution before the next meeting.