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***Scoil Naomh Barra***

***Wilkinstown***

***Parent Association***

## **Introduction**

The Parent Association is the structure through which parents in a school can work together for the best possible education for their children. The Parent Association works with the principal, staff and the board of management to build effective partnership between the home and school. Partnership between the home and school is important because with positive and active partnership the child gets the best that primary education can offer.

### ***Membership of a Parent Association***

*The parents of students of a recognised school may establish and maintain from among their number, a parents' association for that school and membership of that association shall be open to all parents of students of that school. Education Act 1998 26.* - All parents of children in the school are members of the Parent Association. These parents elect a committee to work on their behalf from one year to the next.

### ***The role of the Parent Association***

Although the Parent Association may organise many activities, these activities should all assist the association to achieve its two main roles within the school:

- To work in partnership with the Principal, Board of Management and the whole school community for the betterment of the children in the school
- To support and encourage parents to be active in the best interests of their children's educational lives

The Parent Association committee, on behalf of parents, must ensure that it has good connections with all the other partners in the school community, so that there are:

- Shared goals and expectations for children and the school
- Shared understandings of one another's role and responsibilities

## **Partnership between the Parent Association and the Principal**

The Principal has a central role in the school. He is responsible for the day to day management of the school and plays a key leadership role. The Principal is also likely to best know the needs of the school; he has responsibility for encouraging the involvement of parents of students in the school, in line with the Education Act, 1998. It is imperative therefore that the Parent Association and Principal develop a good working relationship and develop a good system for communicating with each other. When a system of communication has been planned it will be important to review it together from time to time to make sure that it is working for both parties. Communication is, predominantly, between the committee of the Parent Association and the Principal

Ways the Parent Association may communicate with the Principal:

- Inviting the Principal to relevant meetings throughout the year to update the Principal on activities of the Parent Association and share information about school developments
- The Chairperson (and Secretary) of the Parent Association may meet with the Principal (and Deputy Principal) before and after each meeting that is not attended by the Principal

- The Principal attending an agreed relevant portion of the Parent Association meetings by invitation
- The Principal attending all of the Parent Association meetings by invitation from the Parent Association and in agreement with the Principal
- Giving written or verbal feedback of parents' views on aspects of school policy which the Parent Association committee has gathered for example, code of behaviour, anti-bullying, homework, school uniform
- Sharing information, such as the Parent Association calendar of events, with the Principal
- Joint working groups for particular projects, for example, sports days, Christmas fairs, sales of work  
Joint working groups for the development and review of particular school policies, for example: the code of behaviour, anti-bullying and education policies

### **Partnership between the Parent Association and the Board of Management**

Both the Parent Association and the Board of Management have a common interest in the running of the school. To fulfil their duties as set out in the Education Act, 1998, the Board of Management and the Parent Association need to have effective ways of communicating with one another. Any activities undertaken by the Parent Association have to have the prior approval of the Board of Management.

Ways of communicating between the Parent Association and the Board of Management may include:

- An annual meeting, early in each school year, with a jointly planned agenda, to discuss ideas for working together, to share information and to exchange views.
- The Parent Association's committee meeting agenda may include a report from the parents' representatives on the Board of Management. This works well if the Board of Management also includes a report from the parents' representatives about the parent association activities.
- Reports brought from the Parent Association committee to the Board and from the Board to the Parent Association committee must be agreed reports which have the approval of all committee and board members respectively. Confidentiality must be maintained.
- Meetings between the Chairperson of the Board of Management and the Chairperson of the Parent Association committee through parents' representatives on the Board of Management. (NPC advises that the parents' representatives should automatically be members of the Parent Association committee)

## **School Policies**

The Parent Association should work in partnership with the Principal and teachers in the development and review of school policies such as the anti-bullying policy, code of behaviour policy etc.

The Parent Association can help with school policy by:

- Creating opportunities for parents to discuss aspects of policy with each other and with the Principal and Board of Management
- Gathering views about aspects of school policy from parents
- Giving information to parents on how they can contribute to school planning and policymaking
- Channelling parents' views into the policy making process

Examples of school policy issues where parents can make an essential contribution include:

- Home school partnership
- Homework
- Relationships and sexuality education
- Code of behaviour
- Parent teacher meetings
- Information and communication technology
- Special educational needs
- Enrolment
- Child protection
- Health and safety

- Anti-bullying
- To promote an ethos of equality throughout the school it is essential that all parents are given the opportunity to give their views. Parent Associations must be approachable and open to all parents.
- The Parent Association can advise the school Principal/Board of Management about ongoing issues and incidents that may require a review of school policy, for example:
  - Safety at the school gate
  - Behaviour on the school bus
  - Provision for children during wet/cold weather
  - Provision for children who arrive by school transport before official school opening time
  - Incidents of bullying or behaviour problems
  - The schedule of school events and closures during the year

### **The role of the Parent Association committee**

The committee manages the business of the Parent Association in accordance with the rules (constitution) of the Parent Association from one AGM to the next.

The Parent Association must:

- Communicate with the entire parent body
- Represent the entire parent body



## **The work of the committee/team**

The team has shared responsibility for:

- Planning for the future and developing a vision for the Parent Association
- Planning and managing the annual programme of activities for the Parent Association
- Communicating, consulting with and involving as many parents as possible in the activities of the Parent Association
- Communicating and consulting with the Principal and Board of Management
- Planning agendas and keeping records of meetings
- Managing the Parent Association finances
- Operates as per the rules of the National Parents Council (NPC)
- Communicating with National Parents Council Primary
- Valuing diversity and interculturalism and making sure parents who might find it hard to get involved are encouraged and supported to do so **Remember** - there may be many parents who do not want to be on a committee but who may want to help with particular activities. It is important to gather this information; this can be done at the annual general meeting or by sending out a questionnaire to parents.

## **HOW WE WORK AS A PARENT ASSOCIATION IN SCHOOL NAOMH BARRA**

**PARENT SUPPORT:** We are a support for Parents – we take parents concerns on board about safety, transport, expenses etc.

**FUNDRAISE:** Like every committee, we have to fund raise in order to support our activities for students in the school. We are conscious of the current economic climate and will be trying to organise small fund raisers on a quarterly basis – Witches Walk, Christmas Disco, Cake Sales, Non-Uniform Days, Cash for Clobber etc.

**SCHOOL WEBSITE:** We have our own section on the school website, which we update with relevant information. We also have a buy and sell section, which covers the sale of uniforms, school equipment and books. Email: [parents68@gmail.com](mailto:parents68@gmail.com)

**LIFTS:** The parents association normally organise lifts for school events and religious sacrament practices that may arise during the school year. A rota has been compiled of volunteer parents. On some occasions a flexi-bus may have to be hired at a small cost to parents.

**CELEBRATION of the Sacrament of Holy Communion:** We co-ordinate with the parents of 1<sup>st</sup> class, the decoration of the church, transport of the choir and hosting of a get-together after the ceremony.

**SCHOOL EVENTS:** The Parents Association are called upon to help with events that are organised within the school for example: School Sports evening, Grandparents day and Open Day for new parents.

**TRAINING/EDUCATION:** We can invite speakers to address the parents on issues which are topical or relevant – e.g. Parenting – your child’s relationships, Transition from Primary to Secondary, Internet Safety. The RSE (Relationship and Sexuality) talks to 6<sup>th</sup> class are organised and funded by the Parents Association.

**NEW PARENTS:** For new parents coming to the school, we are a point of contact for any query there may be about settling in and how the school runs.

**BOM:** Board of Management – we have two parents from the Parent Association to represent the school parent body and put forward our views and opinions to the Board of Management.

**GREEN FLAG COMMITTEE:** The Parent Association fully support the Green Flag programme in our school.

## **EVERYDAY TIPS FOR NEW PARENTS/GUARDIANS:**

- School bus tickets must be applied for before April each year at [www.buseireann.ie/school transport](http://www.buseireann.ie/school%20transport).
  
- Due to very limited parking, the school operates a drop off and pick up at school gate system. The inside lane must be kept free for the school bus at 3.00pm. The bus lane can be used for 2.00pm pick up only. For this to work traffic must keep moving. (If you need to park, you can park at Community Centre and walk down to school).
  
- Parent/Teacher meetings normally held before October mid-term break.
  
- School Tour and School Sports evening are held on alternate years.
  
- Non-uniform days are held on the last day of term at Christmas and summer holidays. Also on these days, a toy can be brought from home and no school bag is required.

- The school operates a book rental scheme – for main text books. A book list is normally issued in early June for next school year; this list covers workbooks and stationery requirements to be purchased.
- If your child is out sick it is necessary to ring school on first day of absence and a follow-up note must be issued on return to school. This can be written into School Homework Diary. It is also necessary to notify school of any contagious illness your child may have or have come into contact with.
- Remember to keep baptismal candle as this will be required for sacraments of 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion and Confirmation.
- Healthy school lunches are required during the week. On Friday one small treat is allowed i.e. crisps, small bar.
- For the Witches Walk – children wear school uniform under costume.
- For smaller children it is good practice to check school bags for notes/correspondence from School and Parent Association. If more than one child in the School the note(s) are given to the eldest child.

**Remember** - there may be many parents who do not want to be on a committee but who may want to help with particular activities. It is important to gather this information; this can be done at the annual general meeting or by sending out a questionnaire to parents.

**The Parent's Association A.G.M.**, normally takes place in November each year. This is an opportunity for you, as parents, to come forward, join us, and continue the work of the Parent's Association, helping us to grow and develop, like our children in their school lives.

## SCHOOL UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS

- Uniform** Navy v-neck jumper (available from high street stores) with school crest (iron on crest available for purchase from school), blue shirt, school tie (purchased from school) and navy trousers. Girls have the option of wearing pinafores, skirts or trousers. **Plain** navy shorts can be worn during the summer months and can be purchased in sports shops for boys/girls.
- Winter jacket and Fleece jacket with school crest (available from Little Folk, McGarry's Wilkinstown).
- P.E. Gear** Navy round or v-neck jumper (available from high street stores) with school crest (iron on crest available for purchase from school), blue or red polo shirt and navy tracksuit bottoms. **Plain** navy shorts can be worn during the summer months and can be purchased in sports shops for boys/girls.
- Footwear** Dark shoes and/or dark runners. During the winter months all children will be required to have either plimsolls or slippers for use in the school.
- Jnr/Snr Infs** P.E. Gear is worn every day. (School track suit available from Little Folk, McGarry's Wilkinstown)
- 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> Class** Full uniform must be worn every day. P.E. gear is worn on P.E. days, swimming days and sporting event days.

## **Committee 2012**

Verona Bowens Chairperson

Charlotte White Secretary

Carol O'Neill Treasurer

Joe Matthews Liaison Officer

## **Parents Association 2012**

Parents have children in the following classes:

Carmel Brecknell (Snr Infants & 2nd Class)

Carol O'Neill (4th & 6th Class)

Charlotte White (6th Class)

Dolores Gorman (5th Class)

Doreen Smyth (5th Class)

Joe Matthews (Snr Infants, 2nd & 4th Class)

Kieran McKeever (3rd & 6<sup>th</sup> Class)

Lisa Kenny (5th Class)

Margaret McKeever (Snr Infants, 3rd & 5th Class)

Margaret Moore (4th & 5th Class)

Martina Quaile (5th Class)

Michelle Boyle (3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Class)

Michelle Finney (2nd & 6th Class)

Orla O'Reilly (5th Class)

Sharon Carroll (3rd & 5th Class)

Tina Halpenny (1<sup>st</sup> Class)

Verona Bowens (3rd & 4th Class)