



BOOKLET FOR PARENTS



INVOLVEMENT in EDUCATION

CONTENTS

1. Following the better way
3. Organisations in Education
4. Dialogue
5. Practical possibilities for Parent Association / Councils
 - Practical ways in which parents Association / Councils can assist
 - Meetings
 - Sample agenda
 - Officer rolls and duties
 - Sample Parents' Association / Councils constitution
6. The World of education
 - Selection Boards
 - Boards of Management
 - Management Body
 - Funding
 - PACCS
 - Education Act



“Following the better way”

It is a more life-giving and inspiring to follow the way of partnership than that of "This is how it is done. (Do as you are told) — get on with it".

The underlying philosophy of understanding why we do things the way we do them rather than blindly following what has gone before. The more supportive, caring and affirming of the methods, the more meaningful the learning

The methods used can be agreed on by having parents, pupils and teachers co-operate into the methods used in the workings of their school,

The methods used for the running of the school are more wholesomely adopted if they are owned by those whom they affect — reviewed by them and inspired by them. Real input from all those using and working the system of education makes for a supportive and co-operative school community which creates a climate of respect and affirmation for all its students.

The work done in the school community by any, and all of its members should assist young people feel valued, to grow in self worth, develop self discipline becoming responsible humans respecting the rights and dignity of other

Mixed with a heapful of reality, generous helping of the love of fun, a sprinkling of responsibility- you can't go wrong. With the sunshine of Enthusiasm- failures are simply the shit dealt out to fertilize the garden of life.

The difference education makes depends on an enthusiastic parent of two.

National Parents Council 5 constitute bodies

P.A.C.C.S	Parents Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools
C.S.P.A	Catholic Schools Parents Associations
N.P.A.V.S.C.C	National Parents Associations Vocational Schools and Community Colleges
C.O.M.P.A.S.S	Community of Minority and Protestants Religions Parents Associations for Secondary Schools
Fed C.B.S	Federation Christian Brothers Schools



Organisations in Education

A.C.D.L	Association for Children and Adults with Difficulties in Learning
A.C.C.S	Association of Community & Comprehensive Schools
A.H.E.A.D	Association for Higher Education Access & Disability
A.M.C.S.S	Association of Managers of Catholic Secondary Schools
A.S.T.I	Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland
D.E.S	Department of Education and Science
E.P.A	European Parents Association
I.G.C	Institute for Guidance Counsellors
I.S.P.C.C	Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
I.S.S.U	Irish Second Level Students Union
I.N.T.O	Irish National Teachers Organisation
I.V.E.A	Irish Vocational Education Association
I.W.A	Irish Wheelchair Association
J.M.B	Joint Managerial Bodies
N.A.M.H.I	National Association for the Mentally Handicapped in Ireland
N.C.C.A	National Council for Curriculum & Assessment
N.P.Cpp	National Parents Council post primary
N.A.P.D	National Association of Principal and Deputy Principal
P.P.E.F	Post Primary Education Forum
T.U.I	Teachers Union of Ireland
V.E.C	Vocational Education Committee



DIALOGUE HAS SIX STEPS

- I. YOU LISTEN TO THE OTHER.
- II. RESPOND VERBALLY TO THE OTHER
- III. CLARIFY THE OTHERS THOUGHTS, NOT YOUR CURIOSITY
- IV. VERBALLY ACKNOWLEDGE WHAT THE OTHERS HAVE SAID FROM THE OTHER'S PERSPECTIVE
- V. SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS, STATE THE AREAS OF AGREEMENT AND THEN TALK ABOUT THE DIFFERENCES.
- VI. CHECK WITH THE OTHER TO SEE IF YOU HAVE BEEN UNDERSTOOD

The Practical Possibilities of a Parents Association / Council

As a member of a Parents Association / Council parents will get to know more about the school:

- the people working in the school
- the everyday schedule
- staffing difficulties – availability
- the curriculum possibilities
- funding
- the extra needs



Practical ways in which the Parents Association / Council can assist:-

1. Meeting with other groups working in the school

•
Principal

•
Teachers

•
Students

2. Find practical ways to co-operate and support the work done by the teachers

- Transition Year
- Homework

- Concerts
- Sporting events
- Remedial work

3. Organising events for parents Information

- Transition Year information evening
- Curricular offered
- Drug and drink abuse
- Study
- Sex education programmes
- Religion in education

- Bullying - school policy and procedures
- School behaviour- uniform, smoking, vandalising, stealing, attendance, timekeeping,
- Funding ,
- Extracurricular activities
- Sports - sport facilities

4. Organising parent/teacher, teacher/student, parent/student/teacher etc,

- social events
- competitions
- quizzes

- special Masses/religious services
- exhibitions - local industries and transition year efforts

5. Organising extra facilities

- school support bus
- library – funding

- Computers
- Book rental Scheme



MEETINGS

Never hold meetings for the sake of it

Always have an agenda distributed in time for those attending to have input if they wish,

Always stick to the agenda with a time limit for each item - within reason and with some flexibility

Make decisions on action to be taken for each item.

Have reports on actions carried out since the last meeting. Ensure opinions of all who have one, are heard.

Individuals:

Be on time for the meetings.

If you have experience or an opinion on anything on the agenda make sure you express it-stick to the subject.

Do not take over the meeting.

Attend as many meetings as possible or make sure you find out what was discussed and what decisions were made.

Get involved in activities between meetings.

Sample Agenda:

Saturday 6th March 2011

1. Minutes of Previous meeting

2. Matters arising from minutes

3. Correspondence received

4. Treasurers Report

5. Public Relations' Officer Report

6. Main Business for discussion

•Newsletter

• Annual Dinner

• Meeting with Student Council

• Parenting course

• Christmas Concert

7. Any other Business

8. Date and venue for next meeting.



Chairperson

Calls meetings, decides on agenda, signs minutes, chairs/manages meeting, organise action to follow decisions of meetings, close meetings.

Secretary

Draw up agenda with chairperson; notify members of next meeting, record attendance, and record discussion main points in all meetings, read out any absentee apologies, read out minutes of previous meeting, read out correspondence received, write out any correspondence required by meeting decisions.

Treasurer

Keep accounts, pay petty cash to secretary for post etc., make sure receipts are kept, record all income and expenditure, make sure two signatures (self and Chairperson) are on cheques, pay bills, present accounts at meetings and AGM's

PRO

write 'reports' for media, have photographs of the group, events, school, keep record of publicity, keep contact name list for media, organise publicity and public relations for events, advise committee to thank people who have helped, inform and meet guest speakers.



SAMPLE PARENTS ASSOCIATION / COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

This body shall be known as name of your school Parents' Association / Council".

Membership shall be confined to Parents/Guardians of pupils attending the school.

Election of Committee members shall take place at the Annual General Meeting of all parents, to be held each September/October.

The committee members shall be elected on an area basis from each area catered for in the school and shall attend meetings regularly. The number of members may vary from time to time in order to give adequate representation. In such cases new members shall be co-opted to the committee.

The committee shall elect its own officers, consisting of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Public Relations Officer and/or Assistant Secretary, Assistant Treasurer.

Co-options to the committee shall be

- (a) The school principal
- (b) A member of the teaching staff (who will be elected by the staff) as non voting members.

At least 4 committee meetings shall be held during the school year. Such meetings will be opened with the reading of the minutes, treasurer's report and the business of the meeting.

Any two signatures from those of the chairman, secretary and treasurer shall be required to sign cheques drawn on behalf of the Association / Council.

An extraordinary meeting of all parents may be called

- I. On a majority decision of the committee
- II. At the written request of at least twenty parents.

Amendments to the Constitution may be made at a General meeting of parents provided they are passed by a two-thirds majority.

The Association / Council shall not have power to deal with complaints against members" of the school staff or Principal (such Complaints should be taken directly to the Principal by the parents concerned), and shall not interfere with the purely professional aspects of the school administration and work.



The aims of the Association / Council shall include:

- (a) The promotion of the educational and general welfare and social interests of the pupils of the school.
- (b) Helping in any way it can, the pupils and staff of the school.
- (c) Vindicating the right of parents to consultation and information on government educational policy.
- (d) Keeping the parents of the pupils attending the school informed of problems in running the school and of current educational trends.
- (e) Acting as an advisory body, representing the views of parents on school policies and activities.
- (f) Helping to make school life more complete by organising various activities.

The committee shall not directly concern itself with fund-raising activities, unless that fund raising is secondary to a project enhancing facilities, equipment or services offered by the school for the benefit of the students/teachers/management. Such fund raising activities shall be organised by separate committees of parents, at least two of whom shall be committee members.



The World of Education

Awareness of the World of Education and the World of the School helps the Parents Association / Council to co-operate more effectively with the other groups for the benefit of the school community. Your child's daily environment

Therefore you should know about:

* Partners in education -

Department of Education and Science; Principals Association; Teachers Union of Ireland; Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland; National Parents Association / Council post primary.

* School types -

Community and Comprehensive Schools; Vocational Schools and Community Colleges; Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools; Christian Brothers Secondary Schools; Protestant and Minority Religion Secondary schools; Gael scoileanna

* School structures

* Examinations - Junior Certificate, Junior Cert. School Program, and Second Level Support Services, Leaving Certificate, Leaving Certificate Applied, Leaving Certificate Vocational Program.

* Finance

* Codes of discipline

* Professional ethics/boundaries

SELECTION BOARDS

C and C SECTOR

Selection Boards in this sector comprise of

- ❖ 2 religious nominee's,
- ❖ 2 V.E.C. nominee's,
- ❖ .
- ❖ a Department Inspector
- ❖ The Principal who acts as Secretary

No parent representative can serve on a selection board in this sector



BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

B.O.M.'s in Community schools are made up of nominees:-

3 religious who are nominated by the bishop or by the order of nuns or brothers which may represent one of the parties in an amalgamation

3 V.E.C. Nominees can be local Association / Councillors or the C.E.O. or the parent representative on the V.E.C. (see Management Body)

2 Teacher nominees usually one from each of the teacher unions nominated by school staff.

2 Parent Nominees these are elected by differing formats; general meeting with nominations from i.e. floor and all present voting; postal vote for nominees from different catchment areas; or nominations from the parents association.

The principal is usually secretary to the board and has no vote. Sometimes the vice principal with the permission of the board can act as recording secretary and has no vote and does not participate other than to record the minutes.

All nominees have equal rights and voting powers. The chair is appointed at the first sitting of the board and their term runs for the life of the board which is three years. In some cases the chair is stated between members on an annual basis.

There is a process by which all members can report to their respective groups on matters discussed at BOM meetings, except issues deemed to be confidential by the chair. Issues relating to some aspects of finance; or sanctions for misconduct, by individual students or personal matters relating to students teachers may be deemed to be confidential vacancies which may arise on the board may be filled by the respective groups during the life of the board.

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

BO.M.'s in Comprehensive schools are made up as follows:-

- ❖ 1 Religious nominee appointed by the bishop
- ❖ 1 V.E.C. nominee usually the C.E.O. of the local V.E.C
- ❖ 1 Department nominee, usually an inspector.
- ❖ The C.E.O. is usually the chairman
- ❖ The Principal of the school the secretary

In some areas parents and teachers have been invited onto the board, but with observer status only.



MANAGEMENT BODY

A.C.C.S

ACCS is the official representative body for 92 Community and Comprehensive schools throughout the country.

The first Community schools opened their doors in 1972 in Tallaght and Coolmine.

The rationale behind the Community school system was:

- ❖ To bring together in a single institution the academic style education of the traditional Secondary school and the practically orientated programme of the Vocational school. In this way pupils would be able to sample both the practical and academic in a broad general curriculum, so that each would be offered an educational structure suitable to his/her needs abilities and interests.
- ❖ To bring second level education into the fast developing urban housing estates and to the remote rural areas where previously it was unavailable.
- ❖ To amalgamate existing small secondary and Vocational schools so as to ensure equality of educational opportunities for both boys and girls regardless of background or social status.
- ❖ To be leaders in the area of curriculum development and change.
- ❖ To make provision for the provision of Adult and Community education facilities in their areas.

Funding

COMMUNITY AND COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

Funding for this sector is paid in total by the Department of Education and Science by way of, a grant which covers pay and non pay sections, Permanent whole time. Temporary, whole time and eligible part time teachers are paid directly by the department Part Time Staff are paid directly from the school. Secretarial, care-taking and cleaning staffs are paid by 3 departments at agreed rates. Non pay sections are paid to the school on a budget submitted by the principal in June based on projected running costs for the coming year.



PARENTS ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY AND COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

This Association represents parents of students in 92 community and comprehensive schools. The association at local level is made up of representatives from areas feeding into the local school. There is a regional structure comprising of seven regions. Each school nominates two parents to attend regional meetings. At regional level an officer board is appointed to carry out the duties.

The National Executive comprises delegates from each of the seven regions:

Dublin Region	6 reps
South East Region	2 reps
Southern Region	3 reps
Midland North	2 reps
Midland South	2 reps
The Western Region	2 reps
The Northwest Region	2 reps
The Northeast Region	2 reps

Policy is vested in the annual conference at which members from each of the regions are elected to form the National Executive and the national President is elected from members of the incoming executive.

P.A.C.C.S. Appoints a general secretary paid an honorarium each year.

The executive meets on a monthly basis with officer meetings as required.



Education Act 1998

AN ACT TO MAKE PROVISION IN THE INTERESTS OF THE COMMON GOOD FOR THE EDUCATION OF EVERY PERSON IN THE STATE, INCLUDING ANY PERSON WITH A DISABILITY OR WHO HAS OTHER SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS, AND TO PROVIDE GENERALLY FOR PRIMARY, POST-PRIMARY, ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING; TO ENSURE THAT THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IS ACCOUNTABLE TO STUDENTS, THEIR PARENTS AND THE STATE FOR THE EDUCATION PROVIDED, RESPECTS THE DIVERSITY OF VALUES, BELIEFS, LANGUAGES AND TRADITIONS IN IRISH SOCIETY AND IS CONDUCTED IN A SPIRIT OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOLS, PATRONS, STUDENTS, PARENTS, TEACHERS AND OTHER SCHOOL STAFF, THE COMMUNITY SERVED BY THE SCHOOL AND THE STATE; TO PROVIDE FOR THE RECOGNITION AND FUNDING OF SCHOOLS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT THROUGH BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT; TO PROVIDE FOR AN INSPECTORATE OF SCHOOLS; TO PROVIDE FOR THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS; TO ESTABLISH THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION / COUNCIL FOR CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT AND TO MAKE PROVISION FOR IT, AND TO PROVIDE FOR RELATED MATTERS.

Parents' Association

- 26.—(1) 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.
- (2) A parents' association shall promote the interests of the students in a school in co-operation with the board, Principal, teachers and students of a school and for that purpose may—
- (a) advise the Principal or the board on any matter relating to the school and the Principal or board, as the case may be, shall have regard to any such advice, and
 - (b) Adopt a programme of activities which will promote the involvement of parents, in consultation with the Principal, in the operation of the school.
- (3) The board shall promote contact between the school, parents of students in that school and the community and shall facilitate and give all reasonable assistance to parents who wish to establish a parents' association and to a parents' association when it is established.
- (4) (a) A parents' association shall, following consultation with its members, make rules governing its meetings and the business and conduct of its affairs.
- (b) Where a parents' association is affiliated to a national association of parents, the rules referred to in paragraph (a) shall be in accordance with guidelines issued by that national association of parents with the concurrence of the Minister.