

The Constitution of the Carrigaline Educate Together National School Parent Association

The Purpose of the Parent Association

The purpose of the parent association is to provide a structure through which the parents/guardians of children attending Carrigaline Educate Together National School can work together for the best possible education for their children, and to make the school a happy learning environment in which children are safe and secure. The parent association will work with the principal, staff and board of management to build effective partnership of home and school, in accordance with the ethos of Educate Together.

The Aim of the Parent Association

The aim of the parent association is to enable parents to play their part in ensuring the best possible education for their children, through the association's programme of activities.

The parent association will build strong communication between the school, the board of management and the parents, ensuring the best possible education for our children. Our goals include:

- Supporting the development of a social community for 1) our children, 2) our parents/guardians/carers within the school and 3) between parents and the teachers/staff of the school
- Informing parents of school policies and resources available to help them and their children
- Fundraising for school resources for our children, as necessary and agreed with the school

The parent association will promote the interests of the students in co-operation with the board, principal, teachers and students, in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998.

The Work of the Parent Association

The parent association will undertake a programme of activities which will promote the involvement of parents and which will support pupils, parents and school staff. In planning its activities, the parent association will consult with the school bodies.

In all its activities the parent association will respect and reflect the ethos of Educate Together.

The parent association may advise the principal and board on any matters relating to the school in accordance with the Education Act, 1998, 26 (2)(a).

The Membership of the Parent Association

All parents or guardians of children attending Carrigaline Educate Together National School will be deemed to be members of the parent association.

The Committee of the Parent Association

The members of the parent association will elect a number of members who will have responsibility for managing the activities of the parent association. This team will serve as the committee of the parent association.

The Work of the Committee of the Parent Association

The committee is the team that will manage the tasks of the association on behalf of the parent body (the members).

The committee will draw up a plan for the activities of the association, in consultation with parents and in accordance to their wishes.

The committee will be responsible for seeing that activities are run in an efficient and effective way. The committee will consult with the school bodies when planning the programme of activities for a particular year.

The committee will meet at least once a month during school term and all meetings will begin on time. These meetings may be committee-only; however a minimum of 2 meetings per year must be open to the general body of members.

Committee meetings will be chaired by the Chairperson, or in their absence, the Secretary. In the absence of the both the Chairperson and the Secretary, those members present shall elect a Chairperson for the meeting.

For all general meetings of the parent association committee a minimum of seven days notice will be given by the committee Secretary. The Secretary will set the agenda in advance of the next meeting. Any agenda items should be sent to the Secretary at least one week in advance of the meeting.

A quorum of 4 committee members, including at least 1 officer must be present at meetings. In the event that a clear majority is not forthcoming, the chairperson of the meeting will have a deciding vote.

The Secretary will keep minutes of all discussions and decisions agreed at the committee meetings.

The committee will arrange with the principal and board a system for ongoing communication.

In line with the democratic ethos of Educate Together, the parent association will endeavour to communicate clearly with parents/guardians at all times, and keep parents/guardians informed and involved in the decision-making process.

At the end of each school year, the committee will put in place a plan to ensure that the AGM and elections are organized and run efficiently at the start of the following school year. The AGM will be held before the 30th September and the committee will ensure all parents or guardians of children attending the school have been invited not less than one week before the AGM.

The committee will manage and account for any funds collected by the parent association.

Membership of the Committee

The members of the committee will be elected each year at the AGM of the parent association. Candidates can join the committee by volunteering themselves at the AGM. The officer roles will be decided following the AGM by the committee. The number of the committee will be a minimum of 6 people with no upper limit.

There will be 3-4 officer positions on the committee, consisting of Chairperson, Secretary, and one, or preferably two, Joint Treasurers. The roles are defined as follows:

The Chairperson

Lead and guide the committee in planning and delivering on their activities. This should involve:

- Chairing meetings
- Helping the committee to have a clear vision and clear goals
- Keeping the work of the parent association to agreed targets
- Ensuring all members are respected, listened to and are encouraged to have their say
- Facilitating people to work well together ensuring that the work of the committee is shared
- Reviewing the work of the committee
- Ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of their roles within the committee
- Delegate the work of the committee to ensure all work is not the responsibility of

- one or two people
- Work closely with the Secretary to plan the agendas and meetings
- Ensure that the minutes are approved, signed, dated and kept safely
- Encourage the committee members to be prepared for the meetings
- Ensure meetings start and finish at the agreed times
- Make sure that, as each item is finished, the group is clear about what has been decided
- Ensure that all decisions are taken democratically and with respect for everyone's opinions
- Check on responsibilities taken on by members of the committee and make sure they have been clearly understood and allocated
- Summarise all decisions at the end of the meeting
- Ensure that at the end of term of office all relevant documentation is passed on to the incoming Chairperson

The Secretary

- Take minutes at each meeting
- File all correspondence and minutes safely
- Minutes should be brief and should be a record of decisions made and actions to be taken; they may also record a brief outline of issues discussed
- Agree the agenda for committee meetings with the Chairperson. It is important that all committee members have a right to have items included on the agenda, therefore they must be given adequate time to pass these items on to the Secretary
- Make sure all committee members have the agenda prior to the meetings so they can be adequately prepared
- Make sure all committee members receive a copy of the minutes of meetings, including committee members who had been unable to attend
- Appropriately administer incoming and outgoing correspondence
- Ensure the minutes are approved at each meeting. It is important at committee meetings that the minutes are agreed by those that attended to be a true and accurate record of what happened. Once this has been agreed by the committee the Chairperson should sign the minutes for the committee's records. This process is especially useful if there is any confusion in the future regarding any decisions made.
- Assist the Chairperson with clarification of decisions made at meetings
- Ensure that at the end of term of office all relevant documentation is passed on to the incoming Secretary

The Treasurer

- Lodge and record all financial transactions
- Manage and maintain books/record of income and expenditure
- Give monthly reports on the parent association finances to the committee
- Issue receipts for all financial transactions
- Ensure that the committee has the necessary information to understand the Parent Association's financial needs
- Advise on how the resources can best be used to fulfil the aims and work plan of the committee
- Liaise with a bank or other financial institutions on behalf of the parent association
- Present a full account of the year's income and expenditure at the parent association AGM.
- A copy of these records should also be submitted to the board of management for their information
- Ensure that at the end of term of office all relevant documentation is passed on to the incoming Treasurer

Parent representatives elected to the board of management are automatically members of the committee, but will not hold an officer post. Parent representatives are not required to represent the parent association to the board of management, or vice versa.

Each member will be elected for one year. There is no limit to the number of times a member may go forward for re-election, providing they have a child in the school; however it is preferable to maintain a balance of both new and experienced members on the committee.

The maximum term on a committee without taking an officer role is 3 years, with one exception: parent representatives should wait 1 year after leaving the board of management before taking an officer role in the parent association. Departing Board of Management members will stay on the PA Committee until the next AGM.

It is advisable that the members of the parent association committee should not hold officer positions for more than 3 years, with the goal of keeping a balance of experienced and new officers.

Any member of the committee including an office bearer who is absent for more than two consecutive meetings of the committee and without apologies will be deemed to have resigned from the committee. Any member wishing to resign from the committee will inform the Secretary in writing.

The schools NPC representative should be on the committee to ensure continued information flow from that organisation.

Co-options and Sub-committees

The committee may co-opt people onto the committee to assist in their work. Sub-committees can be set up for particular tasks. The sub-committees may also co-opt people to assist in their work. The sub-committees may not make decisions unless mandated to do so by the committee. They are accountable to the main committee.

Finance

The parent association will finance its activities through fundraising specifically for the work of the parent association.

The treasurer(s) will be responsible for keeping the accounts of the parent association finances in an open and transparent manner. One treasurer will give a statement of income and expenditure at each committee meeting. The treasurer(s) will make the accounts available to the committee on their request.

A written statement of income and expenditure will be given at the AGM.

The parent association will keep a bank account in its name. The officers of the committee will be signatories on the account, and any two of these may sign cheques drawn on the account.

Fundraising for the school

Fundraising for the school by the parent association will be done with the prior agreement of the board of management. The parent association committee will agree with the board as to the specific school projects for which funds are to be raised by the parent association.

The treasurer(s) will arrange with the treasurer of the board of management a system of accounting for and transferring funds raised for specific school projects.

Membership of National Parents Council Primary

The parent association will affiliate to the National Parents Council Primary annually.

Changing the Constitution

Changes to the constitution can be made at the AGM. Proposals/motions to change the constitution must be submitted in writing to the parent association committee. The parent association committee will then circulate these motions to all parents before the AGM. All parents of children of the school at the meeting are eligible to vote on the proposals.