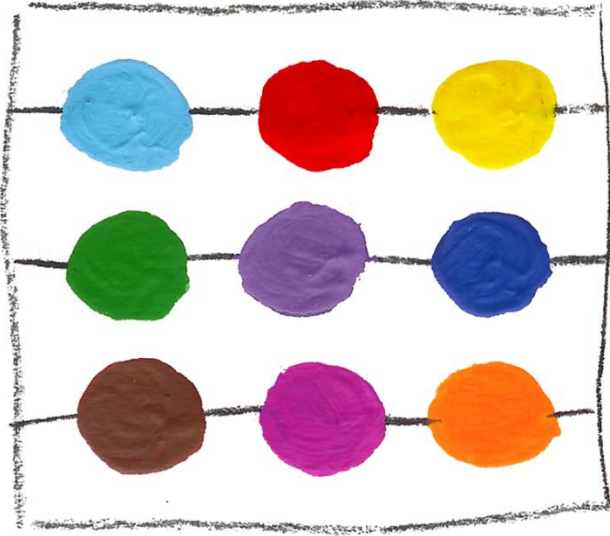


# Parental Involvement Policy



*Carrigaline Educate Together N.S.*

This document is intended to provide details of the main policies of Carrigaline Educate Together National School (CETNS) relating to Parental Involvement. It is intended to help the school community, including staff, parents, guardians and other relevant parties to understand the environment and approach of the school. This document is regularly reviewed. All feedback is encouraged and welcome.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Authors</b>
March-November 2014	Amalgamation of current policies relating to ICT & devising of one comprehensive document	Policy Committee, Policy Committee of half of the Board of Management
October 2016	Amendments to existing policy	Parents, Teachers & Board of Management
November 2018	Amendments to existing policy	Parents, Teachers & Board of Management

### **School Contact Details**

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**Board of Management Chairperson:** Eric Hurley

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# Parental Involvement Policy

## Introductory Statement

This policy was drafted as a collaborative exercise between Board of Management (BoM), staff and parents. A policy group was established in October 2009. The first meeting was in November 2009. We are formulating a draft for consideration and comment by other partners and the draft will be presented to the Board of Management for ratification. This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis. The Board of Management, teachers and Parent Association are responsible for the implementation of the policy. The policy was reviewed again in October by parents, teachers and Board of Management 2016.

## Rationale

It is necessary to have a Parental Involvement Policy because:

- Parental involvement benefits pupil learning.
- Promotion of partnership between parents, teachers and the Board of Management is vital to the health of the school community.
- The school was established in 2008 & parental involvement is central to the ethos of Carrigaline Educate Together N.S. (CETNS)
- It supports the *Education Act, 1998; Education Welfare Act, 2000*
- It supports *School Self Evaluation (Looking at Our School)*

## Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

Parental Involvement is central to the ethos of Carrigaline Educate Together N.S. All efforts are made to ensure that Parental Involvement supports and promotes the ethos of Carrigaline Educate Together N.S.

Educate Together aims to meet a growing need in Irish society for schools that recognise the developing diversity of Irish life and the modern need for democratic management structures. In particular, Educate Together guarantees children and parents of all faiths and none equal respect in the operation and governing of education.

The schools operated by the member associations of Educate Together are fully recognised by the Irish Department of Education and Skills and work under the same regulations and funding structures as other national schools. However, they have a distinct ethos or governing spirit. This has been defined in the following terms:

- **Equality-based** i.e. all children having equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds being equally respected
- **Co-educational** and committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities,
- **Child centred** in their approach to education
- **Democratically run** with active participation by parents in the daily life of the school, whilst positively affirming the professional role of the teachers (*Source: Educate Together Charter*)

Whilst the concepts of child-centeredness and co-educationalism are now widely accepted in Irish primary education, what distinguishes the Educate Together schools is their hard work in developing a culturally inclusive and democratic ethos. This has pioneered unique approaches to inclusion of minority opinions and faiths in the Irish context.

The schools have developed education programmes which open the eyes of children to the naturally positive contribution that social, religious and cultural diversity and difference of viewpoint and opinion make to society.

The other characteristic feature of these schools is that they are democratically organised and governed. This maximises the potential for building a genuine partnership between the professional, objective role of the teacher and the necessarily personal involvement of the parent in contributing to their children's education.

*Information taken from the Educate Together website [www.educatetogether.ie](http://www.educatetogether.ie)*

Carrigaline Educate Together N.S. makes the distinction between denominational education and moral/religious education. The ethical curriculum followed by the school is called the Learn Together Curriculum. It is comprised of four strands: *Morality & Spirituality, Equality & Justice, Belief systems, Ethics & the environment.*

Carrigaline Educate Together School is to be democratically run with active participation by parents in the daily life of the school, whilst positively affirming the professional role of the teachers (*Source: Educate Together Charter*)

Carrigaline Educate Together School is democratically organised and governed. This maximises the potential for building a genuine partnership between the professional, objective role of the teacher and the necessarily personal involvement of the parent in contributing to their children's education.

## **Aims**

The aim of this policy is

- To build a school community committed to supporting all its pupils
- To establish procedures for the sharing of information in relation to pupil progress and attainment
- To enrich and extend the educational opportunities provided for pupils by accessing the skills and talents of parents

# Guidelines for Parental Involvement

## ***Parent Association***

(Refer to *Appendix 1* for full version of CETNS Parent Association Constitution)

### **Role of the Parent Association:**

- To promote the interests of the students in **co-operation** and **consultation** with the board, principal, teachers and students
- To develop **partnership** and open **communication** between the parents, teachers, principal and Board
- To advise the principal and Board on matters relating to the school
- To represent the views of parents, *e.g. by having input into school policies*
- To run activities that involve parents, children and teachers, *e.g. end-of-term party*
- To support parents to become involved in the operation of the school
- To support parents, *e.g. networking with other parents, organising workshops on parenting & curriculum*
- To raise money for specific purposes in the school
- To work as a team, have a yearly plan & hold an AGM
- To inform parents of changes in the education system when necessary
- To network with other PA's, *e.g. by joining the National Parents' Council*

The Parent Association *does not* get involved in:

- Individual complaints
- Decisions about the day-to-day running of the school
- Curriculum
- Appointment of teachers

## ***Board of Management***

- Two parents are parent nominees on the Board of Management.
- The role and responsibilities of the parent representatives on the Board of Management is set out in the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2015-2019

## ***Parents' contribution to the Vision / Mission and Aims of the Carrigaline Educate Together N.S.***

Parents contribute to the vision/mission and aims of the school in the following ways:

- The Parent Association has at least two meetings per year which are open to the entire membership at which parents can contribute their vision and ideas for the future of the school.
- The Parent Association committee members are always available to take suggestions from parents and will pass those on to the Principal where appropriate.
- The Parent Association aims to reflect and uphold the ethos of Educate Together in all its activities.
- The Parent Representatives on the Board of Management contribute their own vision as parents
- Parents/guardians can support the aims of the school by:
  - Involvement in the Parent Association
  - Curricular contributions, for example sharing their skills or culture with the children
  - Good homework practices
  - Reinforcing the Educate Together ethos of inclusiveness in the home
  - Offering extra-curricular activities congruent with the ET ethos
  - Fundraising for particular needs in the school
  - Serving as Parent Representatives on the Board of Management

## ***Organisational Policies***

This is a consultative process which involves parents/guardians in policy formation. This is to involve consultation with the parent association, policy committee and/or representatives. Parents are invited in the school communication email each year to express their interest in becoming involved in devising/reviewing/proofreading policies. All parents have a role and responsibility in relation to the successful implementation of all policies.

Parents may be asked to be involved in activities such as:

- Book Fairs
- Environmental Awareness
- Excursions
- Fundraisers
- School communication email
- Open Days
- Sports Day
- Reading in the classroom
- Sharing their own cultures with the students, e.g. celebrating festivals, etc.

*This is not an exhaustive list.*

## **Curriculum Plans**

Parents/guardians are consulted in relation to curriculum plans through involvement in the policy committee and the Board of Management.

There is a parental role in supporting the child's learning in each class.

Parents with particular knowledge or skills in each curriculum area are encouraged to let the class teacher know.

Examples include:

- Language: poet/author, member of drama group, etc.
- Mathematics: architect, builder, carpenter, accountant, engineer etc.
- Arts: artist, actor, musician, dancer, etc.
- SPHE: district nurse, dietician, guard, etc.
- SESE: laboratory technician, historian, town planner, etc.
- P.E.: sportsperson, representatives from local sports groups, etc.

Learning Support, Resource & English as an Addition Language: Parents/guardians are consulted about children receiving learning support. Parents are included in devising an IEP. They are supported in meeting their child's learning goals through in-class activities and one-to-one teaching. In the case of Resource, parents are met regularly. In the case of Learning Support and English as an Additional Language, parents are met if deemed necessary by the Learning Support Teacher, the English as an Additional Language Teacher or the parent/guardian.

Extra-Curricular Activities can be organised by parents such as Drama, Science, Homework Club and religious education.

## **Communication**

- Parent Teacher Meetings: These are organised on an annual basis. Additional meetings and incidental meetings can be facilitated throughout the year.
- Parent/guardian requested meeting: The procedure to follow, if parents/guardians need to meet with the class teacher, learning support/resource teacher, principal, are laid out in the welcome booklet. Parents / guardians are also made aware of this procedure on the information night.
- Teacher requested meetings: The parent/guardian will be contacted by phone, in person or by a note in the child's journal. Decisions and matters arising are recorded in the teacher's notes and if necessary, in child's file.
- School Report: A written report is issued for each child in June.

- School communication email: The Parent Association may contribute to this and it is a vehicle for the PA to communicate with its members with regards to its activities and school life and events. The Principal approves the content and also contributes to content.
- School Brochure: This is available to all parents, prospective parents and interested parents.
- School Website: This informs parents and prospective parents of ethos of the school. It is used to communicate upcoming events in school.
- Notes Home: Notes for younger children are handed directly to the parent/guardian. All other notes are given to the children or recorded in the child's diary.
- Homework Journal: Parents/guardians are required to sign the journal. Comments are welcomed.
- Open Days: arrangements for enrolment, class open days, displays etc. will be communicated through notes home, website, local media, text, email and/or other relevant means.
- Notices at the school entrance: this is to be used as a means of communicating with parents e.g. displaying notes, competitions, upcoming events (drama productions, adult education classes, club notices, etc.)
- All fundraising goals and activities are agreed upon at the afore-mentioned joint meeting of the PA and BoM. These are then communicated to the parent body via the school communication email. For each event, the purpose of the money raised is clearly stated in advance. When the money has been spent, that is also communicated to the parent body and the Principal issues a thank you.
- Texts are sent via Aladdin or the school phone
- Phone call: Parents may ring the office if they wish to contact the school

### **Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**

Parents are to be made aware of the role of Education Welfare Officer in communicating with parents whose children have missed more than 20 school days. This will be communicated to parents through information nights and the welcome booklet. On reaching 15 days, parents will be informed by letter that their child has been absent for 15 days and that the EWO will be informed at 20 days.

### **Guest speakers**

The Principal and the Parent Association are responsible for selecting and inviting guest speakers to address the parents of the school.

## **Success Criteria**

The practical indicators of the success of the policy include:

- Benefit to pupil learning
- Parental involvement throughout school activities
- Feedback from parents/staff to be given through a meeting of the Parent Association and the Board of Management on an annual basis

## **Roles and Responsibility**

The Board, Parent Association, parents and teachers have been responsible for supporting, developing, implementing and evaluating this policy.

## **Implementation Date**

The plan will be implemented from April 2010. The review of this policy took place in October 2018. Amendments will be implemented immediately.

## **Timetable for Review**

The operation of the policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended on a regular basis.

## **Ratification & Communication**

The plan was circulated to the members of the Board of Management prior to the meeting in November 2018. It was formally ratified on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

Notification that the plan is available for viewing will be communicated to the parents in the next School Communication. It will be available for viewing by appointment in the office.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

CHAIRPERSON of the BOM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Reference Section**

- Education Act, 1998
- Education Welfare Act, 2000
- National Parents Council: Working Effectively as a Parent Association, 2004
- Boards of Management of National Schools, Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure, DES, 2007
- Looking at Our School, An aid to self-evaluation in primary schools. Evaluation Support and Research Unit, 2003
- Your Child in the Primary School. Tips for Parents. INTO. [www.into.ie](http://www.into.ie)
- The What, Why and How of Children's Learning in the Primary School (DVD), NCCA, 2006
- Curriculum - suggestions for involving parents

## *Appendix 1*

### **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 hold meetings every 6 weeks (a minimum of 6 meetings per year) 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 30<sup>th</sup> 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.

All members of the committee will abide by the schools Code of Behaviour. Any Committee member who brings the committee into disrepute or negative light will be asked to resign or a vote of no confidence will be made.

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.

