

Saint Michaels National School parents association (2019)



The legal background:

The parents of students of a Saint Michael school may establish and maintain from among their number, a parents' association for the school and membership of that association shall be open to all parents of students of that school. Education Act, 1998, 26 (1)

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. Education Act, 1998, 26 (3)

The parent association is the structure through which the parents/guardians in a school can work together for the best possible education for their children. All parents/guardians of children in the school are members of the association with a number of parents being elected to a committee.

The parent association works with the principal, staff and the board of management to build effective partnership between home and school. Educational research on the involvement of parents in schools shows that children achieve better outcomes when parents and teachers work together.

WHAT DOES A PARENT ASSOCIATION DO?

As per the Education Act 1998 “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 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”.

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 etc.

Parent associations can suggest and/or organise extra-curricular activities with the agreement of the Board of Management, such as dancing classes, sports activities, social events etc.

The parent association is a support for parents in the school.

The parent association can invite speakers to address the parents on issues which are topical or relevant.

WHAT THE PARENT ASSOCIATION DOES NOT DO?

The parent association is not a forum for complaint against either an individual teacher or parent. The Complaints Procedure is the mechanism .

How does it work?

Choosing a Chairperson for this meeting; this could be the Chairperson of the Board of Management, one of the Parents Representatives on the Board, the Principal teacher or any parent.

A committee is elected, by asking for nominations from the parent body, which should be as representative as possible of all parents in the school.

The committee at its first meeting after being voted in at the AGM will elect its officers, Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and any other officer deemed necessary.

One of the functions of the new committee will be to draw up a set of how we will best work together.. See “Working Effectively as a Parent Association” booklet available from NPC.

The constitution will be reviewed and passed by the new committee.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

NPC offers training for new parent associations on the role and functions of The Parent Association.

The Parent Association has an important role to play within the school and in supporting parents to be involved in their children’s education. The Parent Association is ideally situated to be the link between home and school and should be actively engaging with all of the parents in the school.

They should be information givers and information receivers for all of the parents on how to create positive parental involvement in the home and in the school.

The Parent Association should work with the teaching staff to identify ways to support and encourage parents to be actively involved in their children’s learning and to look at ways for parents to avail of opportunities to participate in family literacy programmes either in local libraries, VECs or in local community groups.

Roles within the school:

CLASS TEACHER

The person your child will spend most time with in school is their class teacher. This is the person you should contact if there is anything you need to talk to the school about. There may be a policy in your school which will outline how and when you should contact the teacher. If you have not been given this and you need to speak to the teacher ring the school and ask for an appointment or give the teacher a note at the beginning or the end of the school day.

PRINCIPAL

The Principal teacher has the responsibility for managing the day to day running of the school. In smaller schools the Principal has to also teach a class in addition to this responsibility.

If there is a serious situation which you need to discuss with the school you may need to contact the Principal. Please phone the school and ask for an appointment. In our school there is a deputy Principal who assists the Principal and takes on duties when the Principal is absent.

SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANTS

Special Needs Assistants (SNA) play an important role in assisting teachers to support children with special educational needs and significant care needs.

SUPPORT TEACHERS

Support teachers are allocated to all schools. These teachers help children access the curriculum as and when they are needed and are an additional teaching support for the school and class teacher.

SCHOOL SECRETARY

This person will often be your first point of contact when you get in touch with the school. They may answer the phone, take messages, make appointments etc.

CARETAKER

We have a Caretaker who looks after the day to day maintenance .

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Every school has a Board of Management who is responsible for the overall management of the school. The Board is put in place by the Patron of the school. (the Church of Ireland). The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring the rules for national schools are followed and the curriculum is adhered to. They are also responsible for the employment of teachers and a Principal and making sure the school building is safe, warm, insured etc.

PARENTS' ASSOCIATION COMMITTEE

The Parents' Association is the structure through which the parents/guardians in a school can work together for the best possible education for their children. All parents/guardians of children in the school are members of the association with a number of parents being elected to a committee. The Parents' Association works with the principal, staff and the board of management to build effective partnership between home and school.

St Michaels National School parent association:

The purpose of this committee shall be to provide every parent of an enrolled child with opportunities to assist in the development of activities that address their interests and needs and that support the education and healthy development of their children.

Officers on the Parent Committee

Chairperson

- Organizes and leads the Parent Committee
- Calls the meeting to order and chairs the meetings
- Works with other parents and appropriate staff in the center (or home-based option)

- **Learns about center-based / home-based policies and practices**
- **Encourages and motivates parents to get involved**
- **Gets involved in community events that impact Head Start/Early Head Start**
- **Keeps a positive attitude about the center (or home-based)**

Vice-Chairperson

- **Substitutes for the Chairperson in his/her absence**
- **Assists the chairperson as needed**
- **Becomes the chair in the event of resignation, etc.**

Secretary

- **Takes minutes of meetings, reads minutes from last meetings**
- **Helps the chairperson organize the agenda and sign-in sheets**
- **Posts Parent Committee minutes and or sends minutes home to parents**
- **Reminds parents about meetings and/or activities by mail, letters, postcards, e-mails, phone, etc.**
- **Assists with meeting logistics, room set up, etc.**

• **Treasurer**

- **Keeps a record of the Parent Activity Fund usage, policy and procedure**
- **Submits reports to Parent Committee as appropriate**

Fundraising

A Parents' Association is entitled to raise funds for the administration and activities of the association. They shall consult with the Board about any fund-raising for the school or school projects. The approval of the Board is needed prior to these funds being raised. The expenditure of these funds is by the Board of Management in consultation with the Parents' Association.

All monies raised or generated for an agreed project for the school should, as soon as is practicable, be lodged to the school account. Any funds raised must be used for the purpose(s) for which the money was collected. If in exceptional circumstances, it becomes unnecessary for the Board to use all of the funds collected for the purpose specified, the Board will communicate this to the Parents' Association and where appropriate, the local community. In any event the funds must be used for the school.

The Board in consultation with the Parents' Association committee will decide the change of purpose for which the funds are used.f



