

Gleneely National School, Killygordon

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION OF GLENEELY NATIONAL SCHOOL

Issue: Version 1, 12th May 2015

Introductory Statement

This Constitution for the Parents' Association of Gleneely National School was developed by the members of the Board of Management during 2015 following a review of best practice and using a template from the National Parents' Council (Primary). The draft document was then reviewed by the Parents' Association Committee. The document was made available to all parents on 28th April 2015. The constitution will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting of the Parents' Association on 12th May 2015.

The Purpose of the Parent Association

The purpose of the Parents' Association is to provide a structure through which the parents/guardians of children attending Gleneely National School can work together for the best possible education for their children. The Parents' Association will work with the Principal, staff and Board of Management to build an effective partnership between home and school.

Under the Education Act, 1998 Section 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 the 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, who 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) (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.

The Aim of the Parent Association

The aim of the Parent Association is to enable parents to play their vital part in ensuring provision of the best possible education for their children and to help parents realise their importance within the school. This is achieved through the Association's programme of activities.

The Parent Association will promote the interests of the students in co-operation with the Board of Management, 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 Principal and Board of Management.

The Membership of the Parent Association

All parents or guardians of children attending Gleneely 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 committee with a minimum of **6** members. Although a maximum number will not be set, our recommendation is to keep the committee numbers in the region of **8** members. This committee will have responsibility for representing the parents of Gleneely National School and managing the activities of the Parent Association.

Sub-Committees

Sub-committees can be set up for particular tasks. The sub-committees may also co-opt people to assist in their work. The subcommittees may not make decisions; they remain at all times accountable to the main committee.

The Election of the Parent Association Committee

The members of the committee will be elected each year at the AGM of the Parent Association.

Each member will be elected for one year. At the AGM **all** committee members step down, but they can be re-elected as long as they continue to be eligible to serve, that is as long as they continue to be a parent or guardian of a child in the school.

The committee will ensure **1-2** places are available for new members each year.

Parents' nominees elected to the Board of Management are automatically members of the committee, but will not hold an officer position on the Parent Association committee.

No member of the committee will hold the same officer position for more than three consecutive years.

Where a committee member is absent from 3 consecutive meetings, he/she will step down and the position will be filled by another parent.

The Work of the Committee of the Parent Association

The Parent Association committee will be responsible for ensuring that all parents are consulted on issues which are pertinent to the entire parent body. The Parent Association committee may advise the Principal and Board of Management on any matters relating to the school in accordance with the Education Act, 1998, 26.- (2)(a).

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

The committee will meet a minimum of 4 times during a school year on a Tuesday at 8pm for 1 hour (each new Committee can review the day and time).

The committee will draw up a plan for the activities of the association, in consultation with parents and in accordance with 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 Principal and Board of Management when planning the programme of activities for any particular year.

The committee will arrange with the Principal and Board of Management a system for ongoing communication. The committee will communicate with parents via the Principal (including text-a-parent and the school website).

At the annual general meeting (AGM) the committee will report to the parent body (the members) about its work.

The committee will manage and account for any funds collected or expended by the Parent Association and report all necessary details to the Board of Management quarterly.

Finance

The Parent Association committee may finance the activities of the Parent Association through fundraising.

A Treasurer will be appointed from among the committee members and will be responsible for keeping account of the income and expenditure of the Parent Association finances. The Treasurer will give a statement of income and expenditure at each committee meeting.

A written statement of income and expenditure will be given at the AGM and a copy will be forwarded to the Board of Management for their information and inclusion with school records.

The Parent Association will keep a bank account/post office account/credit union account in its name. Each cheque or withdrawal transaction requires two signatures, comprising the Treasurer and at least one other assigned member of the committee.

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 of Management as to the specific purposes for which funds are to be raised by the Parent Association.

Membership of National Parents Council Primary

The Parent Association are advised to liaise with the National Parents Council (Primary).

Changing the Constitution

Changes to the constitution can be made at the AGM or, if for an urgent reason, an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) can be called for that specific purpose. Proposals to change the constitution must be submitted in writing to the Parent Association committee. The Parent Association committee will then circulate these proposals to all parents before the AGM/EGM. All parents of children in the school at the meeting are eligible to vote on the proposals. Motions for change can only be carried where there is at least a 60% majority.

The Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Annual General Meeting is important as it ensures openness and accountability and it is essential that all parents of children in the school are invited and welcomed. Invitations should be extended to the Principal and Board of Management. At the AGM the Parent Association committee, to ensure openness and transparency, must:

- Account for the work of the past year
- Account for money received and spent
- Hold elections for the Parent Association committee

Planning the AGM

The AGM can be held at anytime during the school year, many Parent Associations hold their AGM in September/October. At least 10 days written notice of the AGM should be given to all parents of children in the school.

It is important to encourage parents to attend, therefore there needs to be items on the agenda of interest to parents. These could include having a speaker, opportunities to meet others from the school community and exhibitions of the children's work.

Accounting for the Work

This is done through the following:

- Minutes of previous AGM
- Chairperson's report on the work of the Parent Association
- Update on NPC activities
- Report from subcommittees e.g. Social committee, Fundraising committee, After-school Events committee

Accounting for the Money

The Treasurer must make a financial report of the Parent Association's financial activity at the AGM. This will include a report of the income and expenditure of the Parent Association for the year.

Holding the Parent Association Elections

At every AGM the Parent Association committee for the previous year steps down and a new committee is elected. It is important to acknowledge and thank outgoing committee members. The procedure for electing committee members can be found in Chapter 4, step 4.

Other business which may take place at the AGM includes:

- Welcoming new parents
- Having an opportunity at the AGM for parents to meet each other Getting feedback on events planned for the year Asking parents what activities would be useful to them Arranging a talk on a topic of interest to parents
- Offering opportunities to parents to discuss and ask questions about the work of the Parent Association
- Encouraging parents to become active members of the Parent Association Celebrating the work of the past year
- Inviting the Principal and/or Chairperson of the Board of Management to speak to the members of the association.

It is important to keep the agenda precise and to the point so that people don't get bored. Start the meeting on time and don't let it go on for too long.

Implementation

This Constitution will take effect immediately after ratification. The Chairperson of the Parents' Association and the Chairperson of the Board of Management share responsibility for its implementation.

Communication

Notification of the availability of this and other school plans and policies is displayed on the Parents' Noticeboard inside the school entrance hallway and on the school web site www.Gleneely.com

The full text of the constitution will be made available on the school web site.

Ratification

This constitution was ratified on _____ (date)

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management

XXXXXXX, Chairperson, Board of Management - Signed on behalf of the Parents' Association