



St Francis National School

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Parents Association Policy

The NPC document "Working Effectively as a Parents Association" is our key reference document used to prepare this document.

This policy has been written by our Parents Association (PA), in collaboration with school staff.

The Purpose of the Parent Association (PA)

The purpose of the PA is to provide a structure through which the parents/guardians of children attending St Francis NS can work together for the best possible education and educational experience for their children. The PA will work with the principal, staff and Board of Management (BoM) to build effective partnership between home and school.

The Aim of the Parent Association

The aim of the PA is to enable parents to play their part in ensuring provision of the best possible education for their children and that this is achieved through the Association's programme of activities. The PA will endeavour to emulate the core values of the St Francis NS ethos and will promote the interests of the students in co-operation with the BoM, principal, teachers and students, in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1998.

The Work of the Parent Association

The PA 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 PA will consult with the school principal and BoM.

The Membership of the Parent Association

All parents/guardians of children attending St Francis NS will be deemed to be members of the PA.

The Committee of the Parent Association

The members of the PA will elect a committee with a maximum of 16 and a minimum of 8. Additional committee members can be co-opted to the committee if necessary and will have the same rights and responsibilities as elected members. This committee will have responsibility for representing the parents of St Francis NS and managing the activities of the PA.

Subcommittees

Subcommittees can be set up for specific tasks. The subcommittees may also co-opt people to assist in their work. The subcommittees may not make decisions beyond their specific purpose; 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 (not necessarily to specific roles) each year at the AGM of the PA to stand for 1 year. At the AGM all committee members step down, but can be re-elected as long as they continue to be a parent or guardian of a child in the school. The committee will ensure 2 places are available for new members each year. As per the National Parents Council (NPC) guidelines, Parent nominees elected to the BoM are automatically members of the committee as long as they are on the BoM but will not hold an officer position on the PA committee. No member of the committee will hold the same officer position for more than three consecutive years. At the first meeting of a newly elected committee the following Officer roles will be appointed: *

- * Chairperson
- * Vice-Chairperson
- * Secretary
- * Assistant Secretary
- * Treasurer
- * Assistant Treasurer
- * Communications Officer
- * National Parents Council Representative

Committee Meetings

Meetings will be held monthly during term time, or as required. The date of meetings will be agreed in advance with the school principal/secretary, and a notification sent to all parents via Aladdin. The quorum for any meeting is 50% of the elected committee plus one.

The Work of the Committee of the Parent Association

The PA committee will be responsible for ensuring that all parents are consulted on issues which are pertinent to the entire parent body. The PA committee may advise the principal and BoM on any matters relating to the school in accordance with the Education Act, 1998, 26 (2)(a) (Ref 1). The committee is the team that will manage the tasks of the PA on behalf of the parent body (the members). The committee will draw up a plan for the activities of the PA, in consultation with parents. The committee will be responsible for ensuring that activities are run in an efficient and effective way. The committee will consult with the school principal and BoM when planning the programme of activities for any particular year. The committee will arrange with the principal and BoM a system for ongoing communication. At the 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 PA. All Financial Statements, Insurance details etc. are sent directly to the school and the school is the main address for all communications. The accounting year runs from September to August. At the end of the financial year, the treasurer to the PA will send the year end accounts

to the (treasurer of the BoM) for audit, as required by the Dept. of Education Governance Manual for Primary Schools.

Finance/Fundraising for the School

The PA committee will finance the activities of the PA through fundraising. Fundraising for the school by the PA will be done with the prior agreement of the BoM. The PA committee will agree with the BoM as to the specific purposes for which funds are to be raised by the PA.

A treasurer will be appointed from among the committee members and will be responsible for keeping account of the income and expenditure of the PA 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 BoM for their information.

Membership of National Parents Council Primary

The PA will maintain membership of National Parents Council Primary by annual subscription.

Changing the Constitution

Changes to the constitution can be made at the AGM or, if for an urgent reason, an EGM can be called for that specific purpose. Proposals to change the constitution must be submitted in writing to the PA committee. The PA 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.

OPERATING GUIDELINES

Committee Roles

A comprehensive description of the roles of Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer are set out in the NPC document "Working Effectively as a Parent Association". The PA will adhere to these and in addition the following:

- Chairperson: will ensure meetings are scheduled to suit the majority and to maximise attendance and participation of all committee members.
- Vice-Chairperson: will assume the role of Chairperson in the event of absence.
- Secretary: as per the above referenced document.
- Assistant Secretary: will assume the role of Secretary in the event of absence.
- Treasurer: as per the above referenced document, with the exception of any activity which relates to a bank account. See special notes on finance below.
- Assistant Treasurer: will assume the role of Treasurer in the event of absence.
- Communications Officer/PRO: will be responsible for communicating on behalf of the committee to the wider parent body via database for email/hardcopy distribution, social media, text messages or by any other means with due consideration for GDPR regulations and within the boundaries of the schools parent Communication Policy.

Communication Policy.

The PRO will be responsible for liaising with the NPC Primary on membership, NPC correspondence/surveys/events and NPC supported training/speakers for St Francis NS events.

Meetings/Agendas/Minutes

- We welcome all school staff participation and attendance at committee meetings.
- An AGM will be held every year, ideally in October but as soon as practical once children and parents have settled into the new school year.
- Committee meetings will be held twice a term as a minimum and as required after that.
- Committee meetings will be scheduled according to the maximum availability of committee members and can be held on different days/times to ensure flexibility.
- Sub-Committee meetings will be held as necessary.
- Agendas will be prepared for all regular committee meetings and the AGM.
- Attendance for all regular committee meetings and the AGM will be recorded.
- Minutes will be recorded/distributed/retained by the Secretary for all committee meetings and the AGM.
- Agendas and minutes will be issued in soft copy and stored in soft copy and hard copy.
- In the event a meeting is not quorate, no decisions may be taken, however in case of an urgent decision being required, proxy voting will be permitted.
- In all meetings, events and correspondence our PA members are expected to be courteous, respectful, punctual and to work together as a team for the greater good of our children in St Francis NS.

Sub-Committees

Sub-Committees will be established and tasked with specific projects/purposes which will be agreed by the committee.
Any decisions required, which deviate from the scope of the original sub-committee project/purpose, must be referred to the committee for approval.

Class Representatives

The PA will have a class representative from each class who will set up and maintain a WhatsApp Group for the parents in that class.
Every September, at the start of the school year, the school will provide each class representative with a list of pupils and their parents' contact details, provided that parents have given consent to their contact details being shared.
The Class Representatives will act as a liaison between the parents and the PA Committee.

The class representatives will pass on any messages from the PA Committee to the parents in their WhatsApp group.

The class reps are encouraged to connect with their class teacher when necessary.

The class representatives will give feedback from their WhatsApp chat to the committee where appropriate, whilst respecting the confidentiality of the

individual parents in the group. Concerns should be communicated to the class teacher or principal in the first instance and not shared on WhatsApp chats.

Any Class Rep or WhatsApp Group Administrator has the right to delete any content and/or comments that he/she feels are inappropriate.

Specifically they must adhere to the Parent/ Staff Communication Policy: "Guardians/parents must sign up to a user's code of behaviour for school social media when accepting a place for their child in St. Francis NS (WhatsApp groups, our Facebook page, Aladdin messaging and school email etc.). Any unkind or defamatory comments or comments in breach of Child Protection (e.g. naming a pupil in a post) will be removed. (Repeated instances will result in a user's removal from the group). Failure to accept these protocols will result in the user's removal from the group or Facebook page.

Electing Members and Co-Option

At the AGM committee election, the first two places will be automatically filled by the BoM nominees. The subsequent 14 places will be elected by proposing and seconding. Any additional volunteers/nominees for the committee will be proposed and seconded for co option.

The committee or sub-committees may recruit parents with specific skills/expertise when required and may bring them on board by co-option also.

Activities

The PA activities may include, but are not limited to:

1. Providing support and organisational input in to school events/projects/activities
e.g. First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Annual Book Fair, School Concerts and Plays, St Patrick's Day Parade, Easter Bunny visit, Santa visit, Inter-Cultural Day, Grandparents Day, etc.
2. Policy development – giving feedback on school policies to the BoM as they come up for renewal and channeling parent's views on school policy issues to the Principal and the Board of Management
3. Arranging talks on topics of interest to parents,
e.g. guest speaker on parenting/discipline etc.
4. Supporting parents
e.g. welcoming new parents of children coming to the school
5. Encouraging meaningful parental involvement in our children's education.

Finance

- Monies raised by the PA will be counted by two committee members and at the earliest opportunity will be lodged to the PA bank account.
- The treasurer will keep an account of all monies raised and all monies spent, as will the principal/school secretary and accounts will be reconciled every year in advance of the AGM.
- Annual accounts will be sent to the schools external accountant for audit purposes, as per the FSSU guidelines.
- Any fundraising efforts must set out, to the wider parent body, the specifics for which monies are being sought.
- All expenditure must be approved in advance by the committee.
- All expenditure must be receipted.

- A petty cash float (maximum €200) may be kept in the school for sundry purchases, all of which must be approved by the Treasurer.

Communication

This policy will be available in the Plean Scoile and on the school website.

Responsibility for Review:

All members of staff, Parent Association, BoM.

Timeframe for Review:

This policy will be reviewed in June every 4 years.

Next review: January 2028

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Ratified by the Board of Management on 13/2/2024

Signed: 
(Chairperson, Board of Management)