

Role of the Parents Association in St Oliver Post Primary 2010 - 2011

Provision is made in the Education Act 1998 to allow parents of students of a school to set up a Parents Association. The Act states that:

The parents of students of a recognised 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.

The parents association in a school works with the principal, staff and board of management to build effective co-operation and partnership between home and school.

The role of the parent's association is set down in the Education Act 1998 as follows:

A parents association shall promote the interests of the students in a school in co-operation with the board, principal, teachers and students.

The Education Act also sets out two broad tasks for a parents association which are:

- To advise the Principal or the Board on matters relating to the school*
- To adopt a programme of activities which will promote the involvement of parents in the operation of the school, in consultation with the principal.*

To operate effectively as a Parents Association you need to have mechanisms in place whereby you can establish the views of the parents and pupils on matters relating to the school. In this way you can select activities that will promote parental and student involvement.

While all parents of pupils of a school are members of the parents association, the majority do not need to be involved in the day-to-day activities of the association. Usually the parents association will elect a committee who manage the responsibilities of the parent association on behalf of all the parents. The size and formation of the committee is usually determined by the size of the school and the amount of activities to be undertaken

The following are some of the activities in which Parents Associations might be involved:

- Organising information/social events for new parents to the school
- Organising welcome events for new students to the school
- Arranging talks on topics of interest to parents, e.g. guest speaker on parenting/discipline etc
- Preparing school handbooks/calendars
- Providing support/organisational input to major school events, e.g. communions, confirmations, debs etc
- Channelling parents views on school policy issues to the Principal/Board
- Contributing to school newsletter
- Helping to organise and supervise extra curricular activities
- Organising Fund Raising Events for the school

Fund Raising

Parents Associations are entitled to raise funds for the administration and activities of the association. A Parents Association is expected to consult with the school board, which includes the Principal, about fund raising as the approval of the board is normally needed prior to funds being raised. Any funds raised must be used for the purpose for which the money was collected. Full accounts should be maintained and presented at the Parent Association AGM.

Whilst setting up or being involved on a Parents Association Committee for the first time can be a bit daunting, there is help available. The National Parents Council - Primary (NPC) and The National Parents Council – Post Primary offer considerable support for Parents Associations.

The National Parents Council- Primary is the nationwide organisation for parents of primary school children and is recognised by the Education Act 1998. Membership of the NPC provides Parents Committees with access to support systems and training programmes. For more information click on this link www.npc.ie

The National Parents Council – Post Primary (NPCpp) is an association representing all parents associations in post-primary schools in Ireland. It can be contacted at Unit 5, Glasnevin Business Centre, Ballyboggan Road, Dublin 11. Tel: (01) 8302 740