

Cairde Parent Association of Gaelscoil Mhainistir Na Corann Constitution

1 The purpose of the Parent's Association

The purpose of the Parent Association is to provide a structure through which the parents/guardians of children attending Gaelscoil Mhainistir Na Corann (GSMNC) can work together for the best possible education for their children. The Parent Association will work with the Principal, staff and Board of Management to build effective partnership between home and school.

2 The aim of the Parent Association

The aim of the Parent Association 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 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.

This will be achieved as follows:

- Be a visible presence in the school.
- Run functions of educational and social value for the school community and pupils.
- Organize events that will provide funds to improve facilities in the school.
- To liaise with the Principal, teaching staff and Board of Management.
- To provide support for parents, especially new arrivals in the school.
- To provide practical help when required in the school.
- To promote the GSMNC ethos and a positive inclusive school culture.

The Parent Association shall not:

- Interfere with matters concerning curriculum or teaching methods.
- Discuss matters in relation to individual pupils, parents, staff or Board of Management.
- Be a channel for complaints for other parents.
- Make decisions on management issues in the school.

3 The Committee of the Parent Association

The members of the Parent Association will, at the AGM, elect a committee. This committee will have responsibility for representing the parents of GSMNC and managing the activities of the Parent Association.

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

The Committee shall consist of the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the PRO and other parents.

The officer roles are defined as follows:

3.1 The Chairperson

The Chairperson should:

- 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 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

3.2 The Vice Chairperson

The role of the Vice Chairperson of the Parent Association committee is to

- Deputise only in the absence of the Chair to ensure meetings are conducted in line with the Chairpersons responsibilities

3.3 The Secretary

The role of the Secretary of the Parent Association committee is to:

- 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
- Make sure the Principal receives a copy of the minutes of meetings
- 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.

3.4 The Treasurer

The role of the Treasurer of the Parent Association committee is to:

- 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 Parent Association 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. National Parents Council Primary (NPC) recommends that 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
- The Treasurer must complete and submit a form to the bank to validate the names of those who are entitled to sign cheques; customarily, this must be done each year when there is a change of personnel on the committee

3.5 PRO (Public Relations Officer)

The role of the PRO of the Parent Association Committee is to:

- Promote the activities of the Parent Association on Social Media
- Publish advertising and information on behalf of providers who wish to promote on site childcare or after school activities in the school

Before parents are elected as officers of the committee the roles of the officers should be clarified.

Ideally a member of the committee who has served for one year shall hold the role of Chairperson.

Should a committee member miss more than three consecutive meetings during the year that committee member shall step down, unless with prior agreement with the Chairperson, and the PAC may co-opt a member of the association to fill in the vacancy until the next Annual General Meeting.

3.6 Class Representatives

Each class has two parent/guardian representatives on the Parent Association Committee. The Class Representative role is primarily a communication link between parents and guardians and the PAC.

The role of the Class Representative is to:

- Communicate information from the PAC to their class Parents and Guardians
- Communicate information from the class teachers
- Maintain communication with parents in their class regarding issues they would like brought to the PAC
- Welcome new parents and guardians to the class
- Promote good relations among the school community
- Promote the Cairde 'Whatsapp Parent Group Good Use Guidelines'

Parents and guardians should be aware that certain issues that may be raised should be referred directly to the Class Teacher, Principal or Board of Management as they are beyond the remit of Class Reps or the Parent Association. These may include such matters as complaints, policy matters and concerns around individual children.

If Class Reps are ever unsure about any aspect of their role at any time, they shouldn't hesitate to contact the Chairperson or another member of the Parent Association Committee.

3.7 Subcommittees

Subcommittees can be set up for particular tasks, such as organising fundraising events. The subcommittees 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.

4 The Election of the Parent Association Committee (PAC)

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.

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

Families shall be limited to one member in one of the main positions on the committee, e.g. Chairperson, Secretary, but two members of the same family can be PAC members.

5 The Work of the Committee of the Parent Association

The team has shared responsibility for:

- Planning for the future and developing a vision for the Parent Association
- Planning and managing the annual programme of activities for the Parent Association
- Communicating, consulting with and involving as many parents as possible in the activities of the Parent Association
- Communicating and consulting with the Principal and Board of Management
- Planning agendas and keeping records of meetings
- Managing the Parent Association finances
- Drawing up the rules (constitution) by which the Parent Association operates in collaboration with the entire parent body
- Communicating with National Parents Council Primary (NPC)
- Valuing diversity and interculturalism and making sure parents who might find it hard to get involved are encouraged and supported to do so

6 Finance

The PAC will finance the activities of the Parent Association through fundraising.

A Treasurer and Vice-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.

The Parent Association bank account is a sub-account of the GSMNC main bank account. Each cheque issued by the Parent Association requires two signatures. The two signatories are the Principal and the Parent Association Treasurer.

The Parents Association accounts shall be prepared and presented for school financial audit in conjunction with the Board of Management accounts.

The Parent Association will endeavour to maintain a modest surplus at the end of each financial year.

7 Financial Transparency and Accountability

Gaelscoil Mhainistir Na Corann is a registered charity and is obliged to comply with the Charities Regulator with regard to fundraising.

In order to maintain compliance with the Charities Regulator Guidelines for Charitable Organisations on Fundraising from the Public, the PAC undertake to follow the procedures set out below:

1. Cash collections will be counted and recorded by a minimum of two unrelated individuals.
2. Wherever possible, cash collections will be counted in a secure environment.
3. Cash and cheques will be banked as soon as is practicable. Cash not banked immediately will be placed in a secure location. Unsecured cash will never be left unattended.
4. Deductions will not be made from cash received. Expenses will be met (where previously agreed) by Cairde after receipt of the cash.
5. At the earliest possible date, cash banked and income summaries will be reconciled. Where practical, this will be undertaken by a person independent of the counting and cashing up of the money.
6. Records will be made of donations for specific purposes (to certain appeals or projects) to ensure that the terms of donations are complied with. Cairde will endeavour to ensure that accepted donations are used to support the purposes in accordance with the conditions attached to the donation.
7. All funds raised by Cairde will be used reasonably and prudently in the interest of Gaelscoil Mhainistir Na Corann.
8. Cairde will make it clear to all volunteers that anyone raising money must ensure that Gaelscoil Mhainistir Na Corann receives all that money. Volunteers will have only their out-of-pocket expenses reimbursed, on the basis of receipts provided.
9. Cairde will implement a culture of zero tolerance to theft or fraud and any suspicions relating to such matters will be immediately raised with An Garda Síochána.

8 Fundraising for the School

8.1 Annual Fundraising

The Parent Association shall discuss and agree annual target fundraising amounts prior to each AGM.

8.2 Exceptional Fundraising Needs

In times of extra need that there is an expectation that Parent Association would help with larger campaigns, with the formation of a subcommittee, for the purpose of that campaign.

9 Membership of National Parents Council Primary

The Parent Association will maintain membership of National Parents Council Primary (NPC) by annual subscription.

10 Parents Council Insurance

The Parent Association will maintain insurance to cover it's activities and members in event of claims.

11 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 Parent Association committee. The PAC 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 at the AGM.

12 AGM

The Association shall hold an Annual General Meeting once each calendar year in the month of October. Notification of the AGM will be given not less than 28 days prior to the meeting. Agenda should be available 1 week prior to meeting.

The AGM shall:

1. Receive an annual report from the Committee
2. Present a Statement of Accounts to attendees
3. Elect officers and Committee members
4. Vote on any amendments to the constitution
5. Consider any resolution put forward by members
6. Make any changes to the constitution prior to the election of the officers.

Prior to the AGM each year, a person (not on the present committee or board of management) will be appointed to oversee the election of the new committee and officers and oversee any voting if required.