

## Parents Association Constitution

### **1. The Purpose of the Parent Association**

The purpose of the Parent Association is to provide a structure through which the parents/guardians of children attending Rochestown Educate Together National School (RETNS) 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.

The Association shall be called "The Rochestown Educate Together National School Parents Association (PA)". Membership shall be open to all parents/guardians with children presently enrolled in (RETNS).

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.

(4)

(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.

### **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 Educate Together ethos and a positive inclusive school culture.

The PA 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 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.

### **4. The Committee of the Parent Association**

The members of the Parent Association will, at the AGM, elect a committee with a maximum of 10 and a minimum of 6. This committee will have responsibility for representing the parents of RETNS 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 Secretary, the Treasurer and the Sub-Committee Co-ordinator and PRO, and other parents.

The officer roles are defined as follows:

#### **The Chairperson**

- Lead and guide the committee appropriately in planning and delivering on their activities. This should involve:
  - NPC Representative; bring best practices forward to the PA.
  - Chairing meetings
  - Co-ordinates the AGM
  - 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.
  - Ensure that items outside the remit of the PA are not discussed at PA regular monthly meetings and are forwarded to the relevant person or group.
  - 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; this included a week advanced notice of meeting agenda's.
  - Ensure that the minutes are approved, 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.
- Organising the canvassing on school grounds for active participants leading up to events.

### **The Secretary**

- 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. Copies of minutes should be circulated with the agenda prior to the meetings. The Principal on behalf of the Board of Management should also receive copies of the minutes and agenda's.
- 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. A Week's notice of the agenda is promoted.
- 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
- 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 onto the incoming Secretary.

### **The Treasurer**

- 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 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.
- A copy of these records should also be submitted to the board of management for their information prior to the AGM.
- Meet as/when required with the Treasurer of the Board of Management.

- Ensure that at the end of term of office all relevant documentation is passed on to the incoming Treasurer

### **Vice-Chairperson**

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

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

The PA shall endeavor to maintain an even gender balance amongst its committee members. The PA committee should reflect each class within the school. Ideally one parent per class should be present as part of the committee to ensure equal representation throughout the school (minimum one parent per year group).

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.

### **5. Subcommittees**

Subcommittees can be set up for particular tasks. 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 with the exception of the fundraising subcommittee who will be directly accountable to the Principal and the Board of Management.

### **6. 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.

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.

### **7. The Work of the Committee of the Parent Association**

The PAC will be responsible for ensuring that all parents are consulted on issues which are pertinent to the entire parent body. The PAC 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 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.

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.

## **8. 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 will keep a bank account in its name. Each cheque issued requires two signatures. The Treasurer and at least one other assigned member of the committee must sign all cheques drawn on the account. The Treasurer shall also have access to the PA Bank account online along with the Chairperson.

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

## **9. Fundraising for the School**

### **Exceptional Fundraising Needs**

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

### **Fundraising Targets**

The PA shall discuss target amounts prior to each AGM.

## **10. Membership of National Parents Council Primary**

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

## **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 APPOINT A PERSON (NOT ON THE PRESENT COMMITTEE OR BOARD) TO OVERSEE THE ELECTION OF THE NEW COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS AND OVERSEE ANY VOTING IF REQUIRED.