

# **Constitution of the Parents Council/Association**

## **Scoil na Tríonóide Naofa**

In accordance with section 26 of the Education Act 1998, 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.

This body shall be known as the **Scoil na Tríonóide Naofa Parents' Association**.

**Scoil na Tríonóide Naofa Parents' Council Committee** will be formed through a Parent Self Nomination Process. All parents and guardians of pupils attending the school shall be eligible for election to the Council Committee. Parents and guardians will be circulated (Biennially) in advance of the election of a new council seeking nominations. Any parent or guardian who wishes to be a candidate for election must return the signed self-nomination form by the date specified by the outgoing council.

At the Committee's first meeting officers will be elected: Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. Candidates must be proposed and seconded by members present at the Parents' Council Committee first meeting. The Principal shall be invited to attend the meeting but shall not be entitled to vote.

The Committee will serve a **two year term**. When a member of the Council Committee no longer has a student attending the school their membership of the council shall cease automatically. In the event of a vacancy occurring in the role of Officer on the Parent Council Committee between elections it shall be filled by co-option by the other members of the Council Committee.

### **Objectives of the Parents' Association**

1. Promoting the educational and general welfare and social interests of the pupils of the school in consultation with the Principal.
2. Helping the pupils and staff of the school in any way it can.
3. Supporting the right of parents to consultation and information on educational policy and current educational trends.
4. To act as a conduit between the parents and the school.
5. Acting as an advisory body, representing the views of parents on school policies and activities.
6. Providing opportunities for discussion, information and consultation about matters of common or topical interest to parents, teachers and pupils of the school

7. Informing and consulting parents about the Association's plans and activities in consultation with the Principal.

### **Activities of the Parents' Association**

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

- to promote the interests of the students in the school in cooperation with the Board, the principal, and the teachers
- to promote and foster co-operation between home and school.

For these purposes the Parents' Association may

- adopt a programme of activities(information evening/Guest Speaker) which will promote the involvement of parents, in consultation with the Principal, in the operation of the school
- engage in activities, in consultation with the Principal, including fundraising, which shall support the school, the students, the parents and/or the teachers. The Council shall not interfere in the professional running of school.

**All activities and fundraising organised by the Parents Association must be authorised/approved by the Board of Management in advance.**

### **Annual General Meeting**

- The Annual General Meeting shall be held in the first term each year.
- Two weeks' notice of time, date and venue of the Annual General Meeting shall be given to all parents or guardians of a child in the school.
- The business of the AGM shall include:
  - Welcome by the Chairperson
  - Minutes of the last AGM - Secretary
  - Chairperson's report – Work of the Association over the previous Academic Year
  - Financial report - Treasurer
  - Principal's report
  - Close of meeting
  - Optional Address by Guest Speaker(Before or After the Meeting)

### **General Meetings of the Parents' Association**

1.The quorum for general meetings shall be at **least 5 members**, including a minimum of one officer.

2. General meetings shall be chaired by the chair. In the absence of the chair, the Parents Council Committee shall elect one of its members to chair the meeting.
3. The Council shall co-opt the Principal to the Parents' Association. The Principal shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Parents' Association.
4. Matters arising at general meetings will be decided by majority vote, unless otherwise stated in this constitution.
5. In the event of a tied vote, the chair has a casting vote.
6. A minimum of 4 Parent Association meetings shall be held during the school year. Such meetings will be opened with the approval of the minutes, treasurer's report and the business of the meeting.
7. Notice to members (parents) shall be given **seven days** in advance of all general meetings.
8. The association shall have an email address – [passociation@stn.ie](mailto:passociation@stn.ie)
9. The Association, if it so chooses, can put sub-committees in place for specific tasks. The sub-committees carry out the decisions of the Association and are accountable to them at all times.
10. All notices and communications from the Association may be posted, hand-delivered, transmitted electronically or given to a member's child. Any such notice shall be deemed to be duly delivered. A copy of the Constitution will be available under the Parents Association link on the school website [www.stn.ie](http://www.stn.ie)
11. The Parents' Council shall have the right to remove any member for conduct unbecoming a member of the Parents' Association or for breach of procedural guidelines.

### **Official Statements, Representations and Functions**

1. No member of the Association, other than the chairperson in consultation with the Principal, shall make any official or public statement or representation on behalf of the Association.
2. The Association shall not involve itself in the day-to-day running of the school or any contractual arrangements between the school authorities and the staff.
3. The Association recognizes that matters concerning the school curriculum and its implementation are the function of the school authorities.
4. The Association **shall not** be a forum for complaints against members of the school staff, students, the Principal or Parents. Complaints should only be dealt with through private discussion between pupils, parents and teachers.

### **Parents' Nominees to the Board of Management**

- The Association shall, at the request of the Board of Management, nominate two representatives, one female and one male, to the Board of Management. All Parents of children enrolled in the school at the time are eligible for nomination and are entitled to vote should an election be required whether they are members of the Parents' Association or not.
- Notice for nominations shall be given at least 14 days before the due date for receipt of nominations and consents to be nominated. If, following closing of receipt of nominations, an election is required, notice of election shall be given to parents 7 days in advance of the date of the election.
- If either post has more than one Nominee, a postal ballot of all parents shall be held for that post and the ballot shall be returned to the Secretary of the Board of Management. The votes are counted in cooperation with the Secretary of the Board of Management. The successful candidates are decided by the highest vote received.
- Parents' Nominees shall serve for the term of the board to which they are appointed. Vacancies for parent Nominees during the term of the Board shall be filled in accordance with the procedures detailed above.
- Parents' Nominees shall automatically be members of the Parents' Council Committee but shall not be officers. They will report back an agreed report (in consultation with the Principal) on their work on the Board of Management.

## **Appendix A - Roles of the Officers & Minutes Form**

### **Role of Chairperson**

- Familiar with procedures, Education Act, etc.
- Knowledge of constitution.
- Official public representative of Parents' Association.
- The contact person with Chairperson Board of Management, Secretary Board of Management/Principal.
- Presides over meetings.
- Consults with Secretary and the Principal on the agenda for Meetings
- Supports Secretary.
- Aware of when to refer to others.
- Aims for consensus.
- Ensures compliance with the Constitution.
- Elected Biennially.

### **Chairperson should:**

- Chair impartially.
- Set time for meetings (standing orders).
- Stop repetition.
- Exercise patience and encourage participation by all.
- Keep meeting focused on the Agenda.

- Not allow strong personal beliefs to influence course of meeting.
- Ensure consultation and respect the contribution of all members.
- Establish a communications pathway with all the school's partners (clear reporting structures).
- Ensure that all decisions are taken following adequate consultation.
- Ensure that no personal attacks are made against any member of staff, students or parents.

### **Role of Secretary**

- Convenes all meetings in consultation with the chairperson.
- Liaises with school management, parent body as need arises.
- Acts as recording secretary.
- Only minute decisions taken and record who acts upon these decisions.
- Deals with all communications arising from Parents' Association via the parents' association email [passociation@stn.ie](mailto:passociation@stn.ie). (Group texts through any social media group, for example WhatsApp is strictly prohibited)
- Collates and retains Parents' Association members contact details in accordance with GDPR protocol. All emails should be Bcc to members in accordance with GDPR protocol.
- Is accountable for the ongoing running of the Association and will be the only person who will be responsible for establishing contact with Parent Association members regarding the business of the Association.
- Chairperson and Secretary need to act and support each other and act on behalf of the Association between meetings.
- All records should be kept for a minimum of seven years.

### **Role of Treasurer**

- Transparency and accountability.
- Treasurer's report – agenda item for each meeting and the Annual Report for the AGM.
- Keep accounts: Income and Expenditure.
- Reconcile with bank account.
- Bank: minimum two signatories (no pre-signed cheques).
- No payment without invoice.
- Issue receipts for all monies received.
- Audit annual accounts for AGM and Board of Management.

**In line with FSSU guidelines all monies collected and all financial transactions of the Parents Council must be processed through the school bank account. However, separate financial records shall be maintained to manage and control these funds from activities of the Council previously authorised by the Board of Management.**

**With the Board of Management approval the Parents' Association may maintain its own bank account. The level of funds retained in the Parents' Association bank account should be sufficient only to meet its on-going day to day costs and activities as approved by its members and by the Board of Management.**

**All bank accounts opened in the name of the school must have at least two signatories approved by the Board of Management, one of whom should be the School Principal and the other nominated by the Parents' Association.**

**The Parents' Association is required to be self-financing and should not be supported by or dependent on school funds**

**The bank statements for the Parents' Association should be addressed to the Parents Association treasurer at the address of the school. A financial report should be submitted to the school's Board of Management at the end of each school year and all financial documentation should be made available to the school's external accountant for inclusion in the annual accounts of the school**

#### **Role of Committee & Association Members**

- Receive and read minutes/documentation.
- Keep informed of developments in education and the school.
- Understand implications of decisions taken.
- Value transparency and accountability.
- Value and respect opinions.
- Be a good listener and exercise patience.
- No decisions without full information/knowledge.
- Keep in mind what is best for the students and school.
- Follow the GDPR Protocols of the school