

DRAFT PTA Constitution for Consultation with School Community

Wicklow Educate Together NS Parent Teacher Association Constitution

Wicklow Educate Together National School Parent Teacher Association is a voluntary group, which operates on a not-for-profit basis. It has been set up in accordance with the Education Act 1998, section 26 (1-4), and is affiliated with the National Parents' Council.

All parents and guardians of students in Wicklow ETNS are automatically members of the PTA, as are all members of the teaching staff.

The Parent Teacher Association Constitution included herein has been prepared in accordance with the Provisions for Parent Associations under Education Act, 1998 and with due regard to the guidelines issued by the National Parents Council.

Education Act, Section 26 (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.

The purpose and aims of the Parent Teacher Association

The purpose of the Parent Teacher Association is to provide a structure through which the parents/guardians of children attending Wicklow Educate Together National School (WETNS) can work together for the best possible education for their children. The Parent Teacher Association will work with the Principal, staff and Board of Management to build effective partnership between home and school.

The Parent Association is not a forum for complaint against an individual teacher, member of staff, member of the Board of Management, parent or pupil. The WETNS Complaints Procedure as set out in the WETNS Policies and Procedures is the appropriate mechanism for this. The Parent Teacher Association does not provide a means of communication between individual parents or groups of parents and the school, the Schools Communication Policy details the pathways of communication available to parents to communicate with the school.

The aim of the Parent Teacher 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 and fundraising events.

The Parent Teacher 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 Teacher Association will consult with the school Principal. Priority will be given to activities that enhance the school experience for students in the school.

The requirement for WETNS Parent Teacher Associations to undertake in fundraising is accepted as a result of significant Department of Education funding cuts to Primary Education in Ireland since 2007. Fundraising will be for specific purposes mandated by the Principal and the Board of management.

The Membership of the Parent Teacher Association

All parents or guardians of children attending Wicklow Educate Together National School will be deemed to be members of the Parent Teacher Association as are all members of the teaching staff in the school.

The committee of the Parent Teacher Association

An elected Committee of parents and teacher is responsible for making decisions in relation to WETNS Parent Teacher Association activities and resources, on behalf of the parent community and teaching staff. All of the PTA Committee's decisions are subject to the approval of the Principal and/or Board of Management

The members of the Parent Teacher Association will elect a committee with a maximum of **12** *and a minimum of **8****. This committee will have responsibility for representing the parents of Wicklow Educate Together National School and managing the activities of the Parent Teacher Association. Committee member numbers may change for each academic year, **the maximum number being determined for number purposes only, by the number of mainstream classes for that year and **the minimum being determined by number of mainstream classes minus 4.

Three positions on the PTA Committee in any given year will be held by the two Parents on the Board of Management and by the Teacher, this is included in the maximum number of PTA Committee Members.

For any given academic year, the group of class liaisons may from time to time be invited to attend committee meetings at the discretion of the Chairperson of the PTA Committee. They will form ex officio members* of the committee and but will not hold voting rights on decisions made at meetings. *Ex officio members are members by virtue of being Class Liaisons.

Committee members must be committed to attending all committee meetings, failure to attend three consecutive committee meetings will deem a parent no longer eligible to be on the committee. In exceptional circumstances the Committee may consider the reasons for absence where provided and may vote to retain the member on the Committee.

All committee members must be Garda Vetted in line with the requirements of Educate Together for all school volunteers.

Subcommittees and working groups

Subcommittees and work groups can be set up for particular tasks. Subcommittees may be formed for a medium to long term task (not exceeding the term of the PTA Committee) and working groups may be set up for time limited tasks. The subcommittees/ working groups may also co-opt people to assist in their work. The subcommittees/ working groups may not make decisions; they remain at all times accountable to the main committee.

All subcommittees must include a member of PTA committee. Communication back to main committee will be through the agreed PTA Committee member. All communications external of the subcommittee will be agreed with PTA committee in advance. Finance and resource expenditure to be by prior agreement of PTA committee.

The Election of the Parent Teacher Association committee

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. The committee will ensure 4 places are available for new members each year.

To ensure greatest diversity within the committee, no two parents from the same family may hold positions on the committee in any given term. Where a parent is both teacher and parent, they may only hold a teacher position on the committee.

Officer positions to be filled will include Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer. No member of the committee will hold the same officer position for more than three consecutive years.

Nominations for the PTA committee will be sought in writing from the entire Association Membership two weeks in advance of the AGM. All nominees will be contacted in advance of the meeting and confirmation will be sought that they are interested in becoming committee members and they will be asked to confirm whether they are willing to hold officer posts. If an insufficient number of nominees are willing to hold officer posts then the outgoing officers may canvas the Association Membership to fill the officer posts. The AGM may be postponed until such time as willing and suitable candidates are found.

Election to the committee will take place at the AGM. There must be 20% attendance at the AGM from the Association membership* to hold the election. If this quorum is not reached then a postal vote will be called at the AGM and will take place within 2 weeks of the AGM.

*Parent Teacher Association membership where required to reached quorum will assumes two parents per school family and all teaching staff in the total membership number.

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

There will be one teacher position on the Parent Teacher Association Committee, however the teacher role may be shared by one or two teachers. Teachers will not hold officer positions in the Committee. The teachers will be selected by their peers by a democratic process overseen by the teaching staff. The term of the teaching staff on the committee will run concurrently with the term of the PTA committee. The total number of teachers in membership of the PTA Committee will be provided to the PTA at the start of each academic year.

The PTA Committee membership has a limit of one non-teaching employee of the school on the PTA Committee. This non-teaching employee must be a parent in the school and the route onto the PTA Committee by non-teaching staff is the same as for any other parent.

The Work of the committee of the Parent Teacher Association

The Parent Teacher Association committee will be responsible for ensuring that all parents are consulted on issues which are pertinent to the entire Association Membership. The Parent Teacher Association committee 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 Association Membership (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 PTA 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. A calendar of events from September to December will be agreed in late August and events from January to June will be agreed in December to enable school planning.

The committee will arrange with the Principal and Board of Management a system for ongoing communication. Upholding a system of effective ongoing communication between the Committee, the Principal and the Board of Management is critical to the effective operation of the PTA Committee. Communication must remain respectful of the role of each group and must have the interests of all children in the school at the centre of all communications. Communications will include but will not be limited to a monthly or bimonthly meeting between the Chairperson of the Committee or their nominee, the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management to discuss the pertinent issues on the agenda of the Committee and matters arising for the Principal of Board of Management.

At the annual general meeting (AGM) the committee will report to the Association Membership (the members) about its work.

The committee will manage and account for any funds collected or expended by the Parent Teacher Association.

Decisions made at committee meetings will be made by voting where required. Votes may only be taken from those Committee Members present at the meeting. Class Liaisons or meeting guests will not hold voting rights.

Roles within the PTA Committee

Chairperson

- Agrees meeting agendas with the Secretary
- Chairs Committee meetings
- Is the Committees appointed Point of Contact between the Principal and Board of Management
- Must agree all communications that the Committee send out externally of the Committee
- Is the appointed arbiter when there is dispute within the committee or between the Committee and the wider PTA. Will rule on disputes using the PTA Constitution and where the Constitution does not provide specific guidance will keep the Spirit of the Constitution in mind when making decisions.
- Will ensure that the work of the Committee is distributed between all members of the Committee

Secretary

- Will prepare and agree Meeting Agendas with the Chairperson
- Will issue meeting invitations to Committee Members
- Will prepare and circulate Minutes of Meetings to the members of the Committee
- Will ensure that the minutes are signed off at the start of the subsequent committee meeting

- Will assist the Chairperson in preparing the Bi- weekly PTA section of the Newsletter
- Will keep records of external correspondence
- Will manage the PTA email account or may at any time appoint a PTA committee delegate to substitute in this duty to ensure the account is checked on a minimum of a weekly basis

Treasurer

- Will maintain a simple accounting spreadsheet with all incomings and outgoings of the Committee
- Will be the main Point of Contact between the bank and the PTA Committee
- Will present the latest account summary at each Committee meeting
- Will ensure that adequate funds are maintained within the Committee's bank account to cover essential annual items e.g. Insurance, NPC membership, Parent training requirements, 6th Class Graduation
- Will present a report of the annual accounts of the PTA Committee at the AGM
- Will ensure that when a fundraising event is taking place that the fundraising objective is agreed with the Principal and is made clear to the school community
- When adequate PTA funds are available will arrange for transfer of funds to the schools account

Teacher

The PTA recognises the role of the teacher as a key stakeholder in the education of children at WETNS.

- Provide the Committee with guidance as to the most prevalent fundraising needs of the school that will benefit the educational needs of the children in WETNS
- Provide the Committee with guidance as to what events and initiatives work best for all children in the day to day running of the school
- Provide the Committee with balance when considering the needs of their own children with the needs of all children in the school, acknowledging that the teaching staff have the best knowledge of the range of needs of the full and diverse community in the school
- Provide the Committee with ideas from the teaching staff as to how the Committee can help to run educational events to enhance the educational experience of the children in school e.g. Engineers Week, Science Week, Seachtain na Gaeilge.

Parent on the Board of Management

- Provides updates from the Board of Management where relevant to the work of the PTA Committee
- Provides updates from the PTA Committee on their work where relevant to the Board of Management

- Provides a link of communication between the PTA Committee and the Board of Management

Finance

The Parent Teacher Association committee will finance the activities of the Parent Teacher Association through fundraising.

A Treasurer will be appointed from among the committee members and will be responsible for keeping account of the income and expenditure of the Parent Teacher 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 Teacher 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.

Procurement

The PTA Committee will at all times endeavour to manage the money of the PTA with the utmost of transparency. Required expenditures exceeding €300 to be approved by PTA Committee prior to expenditure. Where expenditure in excess of €300 is required then the Committee will seek a minimum of two written quotations from separate suppliers but will endeavour to find three quotations. All received quotations must be considered in terms of both financial merit and the quality of the service/product being offered prior to placing an order.

Communication

Communication between PTA committee and PTA will be through bi-weekly newsletter and regular networking events. The PTA will also work with the School and may from time to time request that text messages and emails are sent to the full School Community by the School on the PTAs behalf.

Parental involvement in Parent Teacher Association Activities

All parents are members of the PTA and the PTA committee will ensure that all parents have the opportunity to be involved in PTA events by inviting volunteers from the full Association membership for each PTA event. All parents will invited to join subcommittees and working groups where it is decided by the PTA committee that a subcommittee or working group is required for a specific purpose.

Fundraising for the School

Fundraising for the school by the Parent Teacher Association will be done with the prior agreement of the Board of Management. The Parent Teacher Association committee will

agree with the Board of Management as to the specific purposes for which funds are to be raised by the Parent Teacher Association. The Board of Management will provide a list each year of initiatives that fundraising by the PTA Committee is desired. The Committee may offer an opinion on their preferences from this list but the ultimate decision on the initiatives requiring fundraising remain with the Board of Management who are acknowledged by the Committee to have the oversight required to provide the most accurate interpretation of the schools financial needs in any given year.

Membership of National Parents Council Primary

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

Insurance for PTA Committee Activities

The Parents Association Committee will ensure that valid and appropriate insurance is in place to insure the activities of the Parents Association. This will be funded by the Parents Association.

Amendment of the Constitution

No amendment of the constitution shall be made unless such amendment has the approval of not less than two thirds of those present and eligible to vote at and A.G.M or an E.G.M and the quorum of 20% of total membership is reached.

A resolution for amendment of the constitution may be proposed by the Committee, or alternatively, such a resolution shall be signed by not less than 60 members of the Parent Teacher Association and received in writing by the Secretary of the Committee at least 28 days in advance of the General Meeting at which the resolution is to be brought forward. Proposed amendments of the constitution shall be circulated at least 21 days in advance of such a meeting.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held each year in January or early February.

The agenda will be limited to the following:

- Outgoing Chairpersons annual report
- Outgoing Treasurers Financial Report
- Election of new members
- Any other business

Any other business must be sent in writing by email or post to the committee two weeks in advance of the AGM. This is to ensure that the content is appropriate to the business of the AGM and to ensure the AGM is run in a timely fashion.

Where quorum for the AGM is not reached the meeting will be cancelled and the business of the AGM will be presented to all members of the Parent Teacher Association in written format by email or hardcopy offering a week after the original AGM date.

As mentioned above in relation to the election of new committee members and changes to the constitution a quorum of 20% of Parent Teacher Association membership must be

present to make any decisions requiring voting. Where the quorum is not reached postal voting will be arranged within 2 weeks of the AGM.

Extraordinary General Meeting

An Extraordinary General Meeting may be called by the Committee or by a requisition signed by not less than 60 members of the Parent Teacher Association. This requisition shall state the reason for the E.G.M. and which shall relate to the specific objectives or business of the Parent Teacher Association. The requisition shall be delivered to the secretary of the Parent Association, who shall, in turn, arrange for such a meeting to take place within 28 days of receipt of such a requisition.

Only the business stated in the requisition may be debated at the Extraordinary General Meeting, and details of the said business shall be included in the notice of the meeting which shall be sent to all members of the association 14 days in advance of the meeting.

Dissolution of the Parent Association

The Parent Association shall not be dissolved except at an Extraordinary General Meeting convened for that purpose, and by a resolution carried by not less than two thirds of those present and eligible to vote at an A.G.M. or E.G.M and the quorum of 20% of total membership is reached. An audited financial report shall be presented at such meeting. The dissolution shall not be effective until the liabilities discharged and the assets are disposed of.

Appendix I – Role of the Parent Liaison

What is a Parent Liaison?

A Parent Liaison is a parent of a child in a class year. For example if there are one, two or more classes in for example Junior Infants, there will be one Parent Liaison for all Junior Infant Classes.

There will be a maximum of 9 Parent Liaisons in Wicklow Educate Together NS. The ASD pupils and their parents form part of their mainstream classes, however if a parent of a child in the ASD wishes to become a Parent Liaison for the ASD then this would also be welcomed.

What is the role of the Parent Liaison (PL)

The Parent Liaison is the primary means of communication between the Parent Association Committee and the Parents in the school. The role of the PL is to support the Parent Association where possible and to promote the events and fundraising efforts of the Parent Association. The Parent Liaison is also the “Social Butterfly” of any given class. This means they develop the class parent lists and enable networking among parents and families. If there is a class specific requirement for a school event the Parent Liaison will facilitate this event on behalf and with the support of the PTA. For example class specific coffee morning or family gathering, picnics etc. The role of the Parent Liaison in 6th class is to lead the Parent input in the 6th Class Graduation ceremony. The role of the 5th class Parent Liaison is to work with the 6th class Liaison to deliver the Graduation Ceremony. The Parent Liaison should be the Parent best placed to approach parents with regard to volunteer requirements within the school as they are likely to know the strengths and general availability of the Parent Body.

The Parent Liaisons will be invited from time to time at the discretion of the PTA Committee to attend Parent Association Committee meetings, however their attendance is not obligatory and they do not hold voting rights at committee meetings. The Parent Liaison may from time to time be invited to meetings prior to important fundraising or networking events for information purposes. The Parent Liaison form ex officio members of the Parent Teacher Association Committee.

Parents will be invited to volunteer for the role of Parent Liaison in September each year. Where more than one parent puts their name forward, a name will be drawn from a hat by the PTA Committee. If there is more than one parent interested and any of the Parents interested have been in the role previously then their name will not be included in the hat unless all have held the role previously.

Limitations of the role of the PL

Parent Liaisons have no mandate to make representations to the school or class teachers on behalf of other parents or groups of parents. The Parent Liaisons’ only channel of communication is to the PA and this is only with regard to the business of the PTA. However,

from time to time the Class Teachers may request help from the Class Liaison for example looking for Parent Volunteers to help with school trips or reading with the students.

Class Lists and Communication

Class Lists are to be stored carefully, this is important Parental Information that is circulated only to those who have signed a consent form and is only for use by those who have signed the consent form. All Parents are requested to use the information sensitively and remain respectful in all communications.

To protect the privacy of children in our school, social media and networking apps for example Whatsapp or Facebook, may not be formed from Class Lists produced by the Parent Liaison in conjunction with the Parent Teachers Association.