



Supporting Parents  
Supporting Children



# Parents as Partners

## Children, Schools & Communities

National Parents Council Primary Strategic Plan 2018–2022

# Foreword

National Parents Council Primary (NPC) was established over 30 years ago as the representative organisation for parents of children attending primary school. Now in 2018, we face a very exciting period for parents and children as partners in Primary Education with the anticipated Student and Parent Charter. NPC is driven by a commitment to working in partnership with all members of the school community with the focus being on better outcomes for all children. Over the last five years NPC has sought to fulfil this commitment through implementing its Strategy: **Supporting Parents Supporting Children**. In NPC's new Strategic Plan; Parents as Partners – Children, Schools and Communities, we have set ambitious goals which seek to build on our previous strategy and work towards our ultimate Vision, that Ireland is a country where every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

This strategy reaffirms our commitment to empowering parents to support their children's learning and educational experiences and it builds on NPC's commitment to ensuring that the child is at the centre of all education matters. We are confident that in partnership with parents, our members, other key education stakeholders and through the commitment and initiative of our staff and the Board the objectives of this strategy will be achieved.

**Robert Grier**  
Chairman

**Áine Lynch**  
CEO





# Parents as Partners with Children, Schools and Communities

**Parents as Partners, NPC's new Strategic Plan 2018-2022 has been developed to build on our resolve to seek the best possible outcomes for children in primary education.**

Over the last number of decades there has been a wealth of research which shows the difference that partnership between home, school and communities can make in the educational outcomes for children. As the National Parents Council for parents of children in primary school this research is of vital importance to us in charting our way forward over the next 5 years. The National Parents Council Primary is committed to an evidence based approach in setting its strategic direction and this strategy is built on that

evidence and NPC's experience over the last thirty-three years.

One of the major goals of this strategy is to ensure that the child's involvement is more central to their own education. Developing a new national structure and more effective Governance systems are also important aspects within this strategy and the future of NPC.



# Introduction

National Parents Council Primary (NPC) is the representative organisation for parents of children in primary or early education. NPC was established in 1985, under the programme for Government, as the representative organisation for parents of children attending primary school. It received statutory recognition in the Education Act 1998.

National Parents Council Primary was established to contribute to the advancement of the early education and primary education of all children, in order to improve and enrich the education of each child and to support the involvement of parents in all stages of education.

NPC has four main activities:

## **1 SERVICE DELIVERY**

NPC's Helpline and Training services are aimed at empowering parents so that they can support their children in all aspects of education.

## **2 ADVOCACY**

NPC engages in awareness-raising activities and campaigning and lobbying at a national level on the objectives of its Strategic Plan.

## **3 REPRESENTING PARENTS**

NPC represents the voice of parents through representation on external bodies and other mediums. NPC consults with parents and brings parents' views to bear on education policy.

## **4 BUILDING PARTICIPATION**

NPC builds participation strategies and activities to ensure parents and children are an integral part of the work of NPC.

# Key Achievements 2013-2017

## TRAINING

39,231 people attended an NPC training course

## MEMBERSHIP

1,579 Parents' Associations are members of NPC

## HELPLINE

8,783 people contacted our helpline service

## PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS

Seventeen schools have become Partnership Schools

## SURVEYS

40,895 adults and children completed an NPC survey

## GOVERNANCE

NPC has achieved full voluntary compliance with the Governance Code for Community, Voluntary and Charitable Organisations; the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) for financial and activity reporting

## LEGISLATION AND ADVOCACY

Successful campaign to strengthen parental engagement in the Education Act

## WEBSITE

The NPC website was accessed 257,882 times





# Developing the Strategic Plan

NPC's strategic plan has been developed with the knowledge that its successful implementation will rely heavily on the ownership that our members and key supporters have of the goals and aspirations contained within it. With this in mind, NPC undertook an extensive consultation exercise during the process of developing the key themes of this strategy.

The process for the strategic plan consultation and the subsequent development of the draft strategic

plan was carried out by the Board and members of the Executive team.

During the consultation phase NPC sought input from members, non-members, strategic stakeholders, children, the general public and the NPC staff and Board. In total, over 2,500 people's voices and opinions were heard and have contributed to developing a strategy that will drive all NPC activities over the next five years.

# Our Vision

NPC want to see an Ireland where **every** child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

# Our Mission

NPC exists to ensure that all parents are supported and empowered to become effective partners in their children's education. NPC will work to increase the capacity and capability of the primary education sector, to achieve true partnership and deliver better outcomes for all children.

# Values

NPC knows that when parents and schools work together, children do better. Therefore, NPC believes that in order to achieve this:

- 1 Parents must be actively engaged in the education of their children.
- 2 Parents' involvement in children's education must be supported by the attitudes, beliefs and practices of all members of the school and broader education community.
- 3 Parents must be viewed as partners in facilitating children's learning and be supported in this role by the school and broader education community.
- 4 Parents should be viewed as full partners in the decisions that affect their children and their family.
- 5 Parents should be welcome in the school, and their support and assistance sought as a valuable resource to support children's education in the school.
- 6 All communication and dialogue with parents must be regular, open, two-way and meaningful.





# The Plan

## OUR KEY ACTIVITIES 2018–2022

- 1 **Representing the Parents' Voice in Primary Education**
- 2 **Advocacy**
- 3 **Building Participation**
- 4 **Service Delivery**

### 1 **Representing the Parents' Voice in Primary Education:**

Over the next 5 years NPC will continue to represent the voice of parents through its representation on external bodies and other mediums. It will continue to develop policy by consulting with parents. It will increase its capacity to consult with and represent parents' voices through better and increased use of information technologies, social media platforms and building on the NPC website as its main communication hub.

### 2 **Advocacy:**

Over the next 5 years NPC will focus its advocacy and campaigning activities on the objectives of this strategy; parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community.

### 3 **Building Participation in NPC:**

Over the next 5 years NPC will focus increased efforts on building the participation of parents and children in the activities and work of NPC.

### 4 **Service Delivery:**

**NPC Helpline:** Over the next 5 years NPC will continue to run its national confidential helpline supporting parents and partnership with parents in education. The helpline will continue to develop its evaluation mechanisms to ensure that it builds on its high standard of service delivery.

**Training and Development:** Over the next 5 years NPC will continue to provide a national Training and Development programme to parents and schools. It will expand its training programmes and continue to build on its evaluation mechanisms to ensure a continued high standard of service delivery.



## OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

NPC's Mission is to ensure that all parents are supported and empowered to become effective partners in their children's education and that NPC will work to increase the capacity and capability of the primary education sector, to achieve true partnership and deliver better outcomes for all children. Building on NPC's Strategy 2013–2017, NPC will continue to shape its new strategy based on the existing strategic objectives. These objectives were developed using an evidence based framework for Parental involvement.<sup>1</sup>

### 1 PARENTING

**NPC will support parents to support their children's education by:**

- Providing supports to both Parents' Associations and individual parents in primary education through training support, the provision of a Helpline service and through on-line supports.
- Developing new services for parents of children in the Early Years sector to support them to support their child's learning. These will seek to build on NPC's existing services and supports extending them to parents of children in early years settings on a phased basis.

### 2 COMMUNICATING

**NPC will develop effective two-way communications to ensure it is delivering quality information to its stakeholders and is able to hear the voice of stakeholders in matters that affect them by:**

- Restructuring its representation structure in the development of five Regional Hubs. The Regional Hubs will provide the structure for NPC's service provision, advocacy and representation.

- The development of the NPC representative role in our member Parents' Associations. The newly named NPC Delegate role will be better defined and better supported to ensure that NPC members are fully involved and assisted to provide an effective structure for parents in their schools.
- The establishment of a Children's Participation Unit. This unit will provide a structure by which NPC will seek to both include the child's voice in the work of the organisation and strengthen the voice of the child within primary education.
- Developing new ways to communicate with its stakeholders through redevelopment of its existing website and through the development of appropriate social media platforms.
- Hosting two annual conferences for parents and others who are interested in supporting parents in their partnership role in their child's education. The conferences will provide information and support to all parents, with one of the conferences having a specific focus on special education needs.

<sup>1</sup> Joyce Epstein's Framework for parental involvement (Joyce L. Epstein, Ph.D., et. al., Partnership Center for the Social Organization of Schools) has also informed NPC's parental involvement policy in "Education for Tomorrow The Parents Vision".



### **3 VOLUNTEERING**

**NPC will deliver added value to the Vision and work of the NPC through an ethos of volunteerism within NPC by:**

- The development of an NPC Ambassador role. NPC Ambassadors will be members of the communities within the Regional Hubs who play an active part in promoting the NPC's Vision, Mission, Values and activities.
- Providing a comprehensive training and support programme to NPC Ambassadors to enable them to fulfil their role effectively.

### **4 LEARNING AT HOME**

**NPC will provide information and assistance to parents at home and in schools so that they can give increased support to their children and help provide for the best possible outcomes in their children's educational lives by:**

- Providing on-line supports and activities for families of children in early years and primary settings in the area of learning at home.
- Holding the NPC Annual Innovation Award competition (Fred O'Connell Award), recognising schools and/or Parents' Associations who are showing leadership and innovation in supporting partnership with parents.
- Ensuring that NPC service provision is designed to support both Parents' Associations and individual parents.

### **5 DECISION MAKING**

**NPC will continue to strengthen parents' role in decision making at home, school and national level by:**

- Conducting research that builds on our understanding of the importance of learning in the home and home school partnerships.
- Working in collaboration with our partners in education to ensure the Student and Parent Charter becomes an effective mechanism for change.
- Continuing the development of new models of Parents' Associations to accommodate the differing needs of parent bodies in different schools.
- Continuing to strengthen the voice of parents on issues affecting parents and children in primary education through the redevelopment of the NPC Assembly through the new Regional Hub structure.

### **6 COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY**

**NPC cannot achieve its Vision alone and is committed to working in partnership with others who share NPC's aspirations by:**

- Developing new partnerships with the Early Years sector to support NPC's new work and services for parents of children attending early years settings.
- Seeking strategic partnerships whenever appropriate and where there is clear added value in the delivery of this Strategy.
- Ensuring that working in partnership is always focused on better outcomes for children.



## INCREASING NPC'S EFFECTIVENESS

NPC is committed to delivering on the key activities and six objectives of its strategic plan over the next five years. To be able to deliver on these objectives, it is important that NPC continues to increase its effectiveness as an organisation. It will do this by developing in the following areas:

### Structure, Capacity and Resources

NPC will continue to be a transparent and accountable organisation and will seek to enhance its effectiveness in these areas by:

- Restructuring NPC's Board recruitment and election process to ensure maximum access and participation of its members.
- Maintaining its compliance with the two relevant good practice standards for charities currently in operation in Ireland: The Governance Code and the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) for finance and activity reporting.
- Ensuring that up-to-date organisational information is easily found on our website including Annual Review, Annual Audited Accounts and organisational structure and contacts.
- Its commitment to training and developing its Board, staff and volunteers to support the delivery of this Strategic Plan.

### Involved and Connected Membership

Our members form the largest community of parents in primary education in Ireland. This gives strength to NPC's mandate and influence in the education sector. NPC commits to creating enhanced relationships with our membership in every county in the Republic of Ireland by:

- Increasing our regional presence and activities to support members through the development and resourcing of our five new Regional Hubs.
- The development and support of two key new roles in NPC; the NPC Delegate and the NPC Ambassador. Both roles will support involvement and connection of parents of children in primary school and in particular NPC member Parents' Associations.
- Conducting annual member surveys to ensure NPC is providing relevant communications, supports and services.



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