

Guidelines for Parents' Associations with regard to Covid-19

August 2020



**Supporting Parents
Supporting Children**

More Important than Ever!

With so many changes and uncertainty over the last few months, and a return to school now imminent, it is now more important than ever for parents to be informed and engaged in their child's learning. Establishing a Parents' Association (PA) is still an effective way of achieving this and although there may be a few extra challenges due to Covid-19 restrictions, the key principals of operating a PA will remain the same but some creative thinking may be required to accommodate social distancing etc.

The main aims of a PA are:

- To work in partnership with the principal, Board of Management (BOM) and whole school community for betterment of all children in the school
- Support and empower parents to be active in the best interests of their children's educational lives
- Be inclusive of all parents.



Where do we start?

Many schools will have different procedures or requirements in place to protect everyone's health and it may not look the same for every school. Whilst it is still very achievable to form and operate a Parents' Association it will be important to familiarise yourself with your school's requirements so that your PA can function within those requirements. Each school is different in terms of size and availability of space etc. so the solutions may vary from school to school, working in collaboration with your principal and BOM will deliver the best solutions.

A step-by-step approach to setting up a PA can be found in our 'Working Effectively as a Parent Association' booklet which can be downloaded [here](#) or on our website www.npc.ie this can act as a starting point that can be adapted to suit your school at this time.





Frequently Asked Questions



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We don't have a PA at the moment—can we set one up during these circumstances?

Yes, of course, we believe that having a PA has never been more important than right now. Working with your Principal and BOM you could begin with some initial planning to write to parents or schedule a meeting of all parents in the school that could be attended in person (within school guidelines) or via an online platform (or a mix of both). Download a copy of our 'Working Effectively as a Parent Association' [here](#) Page 21 gives a step-by-step guide.

NPC trainers can facilitate a training session with parents (either in person or online) to help support parents to set up a PA. For more details please call 01-887 4475.

Can a PA Committee still meet in the school in the evenings?

If your school has an assembly hall it may be possible to accommodate a number of parents when socially distanced. Your principal and BOM will be able to provide guidelines that are specific to your school.

For various reasons some parents may still not be able to attend in person, so perhaps you might be able to set up a laptop and a projector and invite these parents to join the meeting via a link to an online platform such as Zoom, Skype or Teams.

What changes will there need to be when PA's are holding their AGM?

AGM's are a way of welcoming all parents and encouraging their involvement, presenting finances, illustrating the functions of the PA as well as electing a committee. A committee is elected by asking for nominations from those present; (either in person or online), nominations may also be requested, in advance of the meeting, by post (page 21 of the ['Working Effectively as a Parent Association'](#) booklet provides more details on this).

Again, working in collaboration with your principal and BOM can help to work out the practicalities for people attending the meeting.





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Can the Committee hold events in the school like a communion tea/coffee or a cake sale?

All events held in the school will, as always be organised in partnership with the principal and BOM and adherence to school guidelines around Covid-19 will need to be observed. Events that may attract large groups may not be advised but creative solutions for smaller or online events may need to be explored.

National Parents Council Primary have a range of trainings that can be delivered either in person (observing social distancing) or online, this can be a very effective way of keeping parents engaged with the school and supporting their child's learning. More details about our training programmes can be found on our website www.npc.ie

Perhaps an online survey of parents might bring a few suggestions for other events that may not involve large groups.

National Parents Council Helpline

For more advice about setting up a parent association or any other school related issue, you can call or email our confidential Helpline service.

The Helpline can be contacted by telephone Monday to Wednesday 10am - 4pm Tel: 01 8874477

Also contactable Monday to Friday by email: helpline@npc.ie 10am - 4pm

