

Partnership Schools Ireland (PSI)



Partnership Schools Ireland (PSI) is a joint initiative by the National Parents Council Primary (NPC) and the Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN).

Working together to achieve better outcomes for children is the main objective of “a Partnership School”. This is achieved by the whole school community planning and working in partnership on agreed activities. This work takes place within an Action Team for Partnership in the school.

WHAT IS AN ACTION TEAM FOR PARTNERSHIP? (ATP)

Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) is a research and evidenced-based approach^{*1}. The Action Team for Partnership model originated in America, but is now used in other countries such as Australia, Scotland and since 2014 Ireland.

The approach seeks to encourage children, school staff, parents and members of the local community to form an effective partnership in the school, for the benefit of the children.

When this partnership works well the ATP can give support to the school's plan of work set by the Board of Management, the Principal and teaching staff. The work of the partnership does not interfere with or change the school's plan, but enhances it and builds on supporting better outcomes for children.

WHAT DOES AN ACTION TEAM FOR PARTNERSHIP LOOK LIKE?

The Principal usually selects the members of the first ATP. The ATP membership may vary from school to school, often dependent on the school's local needs and size. The people selected for the Action Team for Partnership need to be representative of the different stake-holders and they must be enthusiastic and encouraging of a partnership approach that supports school activities and developments. An ATP may have between 6-18 members.

The following is a list of people that could be members of the partnership team:

- Children who are enrolled in the school and attending the school
- Parents of children who attend the school
- Teachers
- Other school staff e.g. Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator, Special Needs Assistant, Administrative Staff etc.
- Community and local business representatives
- Principal



WHAT DOES THE ACTION TEAM PARTNERSHIP DO?

- Write a one Year Action Plan for Partnership with activities supporting selected goals from the school's improvement plan. The ATP plan will include two academic goals, one behavioural/well-being goal and one partnership goal.
- Encourage and support children, parents and the local community to work closely with the school to bring about better outcomes for children.
- Recruit other teachers, parents, children and community members when needed to work on achieving goals and to maintain the partnership on a year to year basis.
- Review and monitor progress of each goal and work together to overcome any challenges that may occur in achieving each goal.
- Evaluate how each goal has benefited the school and achieved better outcomes for the children who attend the school.
- Report progress to the school Board of Management, Parent Association and other key school groups including the children in the school.

HOW OFTEN DOES AN ACTION TEAM FOR PARTNERSHIP MEET?

The ATP partnership group should meet regularly to coordinate and review activities. Each school is different and each partnership group will reflect the needs of the school. It is useful to develop an outline of meetings of the group that are planned for the year.

IS THERE TRAINING AVAILABLE TO HELP DEVELOP YOUR ACTION TEAM FOR PARTNERSHIP?

Yes, training will be provided by the National Parents Council Primary (NPC) for each school interested in setting up an ATP. The training consists of two sessions, lasting three hours in duration: usually delivered over a two week period, but flexible, dependent on need.

^{*1} (Reference: School, Family and Community Partnerships: Joyce I. Epstein and Associates, 2009)

WHAT IS THE TRAINING FOR?

This training will enable ATP members in your school to establish a one year action plan (linked to the school's improvement plan). By the end of the training your school will have its first year's action plan ready to go!

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO IF WE ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of setting up such a partnership in your school please contact the Project Co-ordinator (see contact details below).



WHAT SUPPORT WILL I RECEIVE FROM NATIONAL PARENTS COUNCIL PRIMARY?

In developing the model in Ireland, NPC has appointed a Project Co-ordinator. The Co-ordinator is responsible for the development of Partnership Schools in primary schools across Ireland, the training and support of the schools' partnership groups and the evaluation of the initiative.

Support available through the Co-ordinator includes:

- Initial training for your Action Team for Partnership
- A Helpdesk for Partnership Schools
- Co-ordinating regular national support meetings for ATP school leaders
- A newsletter for Partnership schools, each school term
- Telephone advice and support for individual ATPs when needed
- A yearly report of the progress and ongoing evaluation of Partnership Schools across Ireland

**Partnership Schools
Ireland Co-ordinator**

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Working together for Children in Primary Schools