

**Launch of the Funding Programme  
for the Establishment of the  
NPCpp Permanent Secretariat –  
(€1 per pupil per annum)**

**Overview:** The National Parents' Council Post-Primary (NPCpp) was inaugurated in June, 1985 by Ms. Gemma Hussey, T.D., Minister for Education and has contributed enormously to the development of a spirit of partnership in our post-primary schools. The Education Act, 1998 established the legal framework for schools to conduct the business of managing the school in a spirit of partnership. This is outlined as a partnership between school, patrons, students, parents, teachers and other school staff, the community served by the school and state. The collaborative model outlined in the Education Act, 1998 challenges all the partners to act in a corporate manner to ensure the success of the school.

The Education Act, 1998 states that the National Parent's Council (Post-Primary) Limited is the recognised body, being recognised by the Minister for the purposes of the Act. The responsibility conferred on NPCpp by the Education Act, 1998 provides the affiliated associations (**Compass + CSPA + FEDCBS + NPAVSCC + PACCS = NPCpp**) with many challenges. Many of these challenges have been recognised and are a work in progress.

The NPCpp, which is a voluntary association, recognises the challenges it faces in responding and interacting with the other education partners and the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and in, also, promoting an effective Parents' Association in every school, and promoting the wellbeing of young people within the post-primary system.



**The National Parents' Council  
Perspective from the President:**

The Board of Directors at its meeting on Saturday, 5th November, 2011 agreed unanimously that it would put structures in place for the establishment of the permanent Secretariat and the collection of €1 per student affiliation fee from September, 2012. This process of collection will be repeated for each academic year thereafter.

Ms. Jackie O'Callaghan, P.R.O. will deal with the benefits of having an NPCpp permanent secretariat in her article.

**Letter from the Department of  
Education and Skills (DES)**

As President of NPCpp I am delighted to share with you the contents of a letter received from the DES. This letter recognises the status of the National Parents' Council Post Primary as provided under the Education Act 1998. The letter, also, enables the NPCpp to proceed with the collection of the affiliation fee as outlined. We the NPCpp welcome this letter and would like to thank the DES for issuing it to us. (See copy of letter on inside page of this Newsletter)

**The Permanent Secretariat:**

The Permanent Secretariat will consist of –

- A fulltime Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director
- A part-time Research and Development Officer
- An Administrative Officer
- A Secretarial Assistant

The Permanent Secretariat will have responsibility for the day-to-day running and management of the Association and will report and be accountable to the Board of Directors at all times through the President, the Secretary and the Executive.

**Framework and delivery:** It is agreed that the NPCpp will be requesting €1 per student affiliation fee from all Boards of Management / School Authorities for the academic year 2012/13 and in subsequent years. The timeframe from 1st November, 2011 to the 30th April, 2012 is being used by the NPCpp to prepare for the introduction of the €1 affiliation fee per pupil contribution in all second-level schools in September, 2012.

**Conclusion:**

As President of NPCpp, I would like to appeal to all our partners in education to endorse and support this initiative so that NPCpp will be able to fulfil its obligations as outlined in the Education Act 1998. I look forward to a continued good working relationship with you the partners:

- The Department of Education and Skills
- The Trustee Associations
- The Management Associations
- The Teachers Unions
- The National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals

Finally, I would ask you the parents and Parent Associations to promote your approval of this venture with your Principals and Boards of Management.

*"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire"*

W.B. Yeats

**Tommy Walshe  
President NPCpp**

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna**

Corr na Madadh  
Baile Átha Luain  
Co. na hIarmhí



**Department of Education and Skills**

Cornamaddy  
Athlone  
Co. Westmeath

Mr. Tommy Walshe  
President  
National Parents' Council – Post-Primary  
Unit 5  
Glasnevin Business Centre  
Ballyboggan Road  
Dublin 11.

13 March, 2012

Dear Tommy,

As you are aware, the Minister for Education and Skills recognises the National Parents' Council Post-Primary as a national association of parents to which parents' associations within schools can affiliate to as provided for under section 26 of the Education Act, 1998.

Following consideration of representations made by the Council to the Department I am directed to inform you that where a school's parent association is affiliated to the National Parents' Council Post-Primary, the school management authorities in those schools may meet the cost of affiliation fees paid on behalf of the parents' association in their school to the National Parents Council, Post Primary. While any such payment is at the discretion of the school authorities the Department would consider the payment of this affiliation fee is an appropriate charge on school funds.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'B. Brogan', is written over a horizontal line.

Brian Brogan  
Principal Officer  
Schools' Division



**Launch of the Funding Programme for the Establishment of the NPCpp Permanent Secretariat – (€1 per pupil per annum)  
From the Public Relations Officer:**

I would like to deal, in this article with the many benefits that parents and pupils will get from the setting up of an NPCpp permanent Secretariat. As the national profile of the NPCpp is increasing more and more demands are being made on our Directors who are acting in a voluntary role. It is obvious that NPCpp will not be able to fulfil its future role in supporting and promoting the well-being of parents and pupils on the many national boards and committees without a permanent Secretariat being in place.

The National Parents' council will have to concentrate on a development programme that will include:

- having an effective, trained, parents' association in every school
- assisting parents as the primary educator of the child
- playing an active role in influencing policy at a national level
- communicating with parents on any changes that happen in education
- developing the NPCpp as one of the most significant partners in education with approximately 500,000 parents and 360,000 pupils.

The permanent Secretariat will concentrate on developing policies and working with the Department of Education and Skills and other partners in areas such as:

- the pupil teacher ratio
- guidance provision in schools
- special Needs
- child Protection Guidelines
- school transport
- school ethos
- school books, eBooks etc.
- formal submissions to the Department of Education and Skills and other agencies involved in education
- liaising with and supporting the five constituent bodies
- developing additional training programmes
- all other relevant issues as they arise.

Finally the NPCpp is committed to developing and fostering a holistic approach to education in a caring, safe and welcoming environment for all. It is through this approach that we will ensure that we are Equal Partners in Education both in word and deed.

**Jackie O'Callaghan  
Public Relations Officer**

**The Challenge of Change – Strategic Development of the National Parents' Council Post-Primary (NPCpp)**

**Introduction:** Since December, 2006 the NPCpp has been working with Newmarket Consulting on a strategic review of the organisation. This process has culminated in a comprehensive final **Strategic Review Findings** document and a final **Strategic Plan**, both of which have been signed off by all **Constituent Bodies – July, 2007.**

**General:** The strategic review findings show that the education sector wants and needs an effective parental representative organisation working at a national level and supporting and guiding local **Parents' Associations**. While this has always been the vision and expectation of the NPCpp, this has not materialised as the organisation has to date been

resourced on a purely voluntary basis.

The organisation has not developed to its full potential due to the implications of a voluntary structure, the transitory nature of involvement and internal frustrations that have at times caused fractures in the organisation.

What is hugely positive about the NPCpp at present is the appetite to reinvigorate the organisation and enable it to exert the influence that it could have if it were to become more professional and be a focused, coherent representative body effectively articulating policies consistent with the needs of the group being represented i.e. parents and guardians of children in second level education.

An adequately resourced full-time **Secretariat** is unquestionably a prerequisite in developing the NPCpp to reach its potential. All the other stakeholders i.e the school management bodies and the teacher unions, have a full-time Secretariat and this significantly weakens the level at which the NPCpp can interact by comparison.

Implementing the **Strategic Plan** which demonstrates the steps the NPCpp intends to take in making itself **an equal partner**, with the capability of inputting effectively into the education agenda is required for a number of reasons:

- to instil confidence in member organisations that the NPCpp can achieve its full potential and potentially integrate all issues, both common and specialist, under one professional representative entity
- to demonstrate to the education sector and partners that the organisation has a defined strategic direction
- to effectively represent parents of second-level students
- to provide a feasible option to the Department of Education and Skills who will only

consider dealing with a national organisation.

The NPCpp has chosen over the last number of years to concentrate on a number of areas such as – representation on national bodies, examination helpline, training etc. rather than spreading its limited resources too thinly and achieving very little. While the NPCpp has achieved a lot by focusing on a number of key areas, it is very conscious that there are many other areas in which it must be active in order to fulfil its remit effectively. A strategic approach has been agreed and key areas have been identified by the organisation for immediate and additional attention. These key areas are identified as the **NPCpp aims** and are listed hereunder.

#### **The NPCpp aims to:**

- have an effective Parents' Association in place in every school
- communicate with all parents and guardians of students in post-primary education
- support parents and guardians in being active partners in education
- challenge parents and guardians to participate as partners
- provide a structure through which parents and guardians can inform and influence policy development
- take a pro-active role in influencing policy at a national level
- build strong partnerships with key stakeholders.

#### **Conclusion:**

The NPCpp took a joint step forward towards achieving its stated aims and objectives at its Board of Directors meeting on Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> November when it was unanimously agreed to proceed with an affiliation fee of €1 per student per annum from the 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2012. This affiliation fee is deemed necessary so that the NPCpp can establish a Secretariat who will progress and deliver on its agenda for all parents

and guardians in the post-primary sector.

The strategic review findings show that the education sector needs an effective parental representative organisation working at a national level and supporting and guiding local parents' associations. While this has always been the vision and expectation of the NPCpp, this has not materialised as the organisation has to date been resourced on a voluntary basis.

The organisation has not developed to its full potential and it is hoped that the findings of Newmarket Consulting and the development work that followed at board level will inform our many strategic developments in the coming years.

***The NPCpp wishes to acknowledge the work and direction given by Newmarket Consulting Ltd in preparing the - Business Case for the Strategic Development of the NPCpp.***

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***The NPCpp has had representation on the following Boards/Associations down through the years:***

- Blackrock Ed. Centre,
- Carlow Drugs Committee
- DES Child Protection Guidelines
- Children's Rights Alliance,
- DES Commission on School Accommodations
- The Dept. of Health Consultation Body on Nutritional Guidelines
- Drumcondra Ed. Centre - Training Of Boards Of Management,
- HEA Access Group,
- HSE Crisis Pregnancy Agency
- DES Communications Technology Implementation (ICT) Board,
- Irish Second-Level Students' Union
- National Anti-Bullying Coalition
- National Adult Literacy Agency
- Integration of Minorities in the National Education System

- Dept. of Children and Youth Affairs National Children's Strategy
- DES National Cross-Sectoral Consultative Group
- National Education Welfare Board
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Religious Education Subcommittee
- NCCA – Special Education Steering Committee
- NCCA Council
- NCCA Guidance Committee.
- NCCA Junior Cycle
- NCCA PE Committee
- NCCA Senior Cycle Committee
- NCCA SPHE Committee
- The National Council for Special Education (NCSE) – Advisory Group on Children with emotional and behavioural disorders
- National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE)
- Post-Primary Education Forum
- State Examination Commission Committee
- Teaching Council
- The National Educational Psychological Service

***The NPCpp wishes to acknowledge, with special thanks, the hard work and professionalism of our voluntary members who dedicate so much of their time and energy to representing the parent's point of view on these national/boards Associations.***

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Further information on the Funding Programme will be issued to Schools and to Parents' Associations in the coming months. We would appeal to all Boards of Management, Parents' Associations and Parent Nominees on each Board of Management to support us as we establish a permanent Secretariat.

#### **National Parents Council Post Primary**

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