

An Roinn Oideachais



The Department of Education

To The Management Authorities of Post-Primary Schools

**PARENTS
AS PARTNERS
IN
EDUCATION**

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CIRCULAR M27/91

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PARENTS AS PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

1 PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Partnership for parents in education is a stated policy aim of the Government. Through the Programme for Economic and Social Progress the Government and the Social Partners have formally recognised the promotion of parental involvement in the education of their children as an essential strategy of educational policy and practice. This Circular is concerned with ensuring that partnership for parents is positively pursued at a local level by each post-primary school.

The Department recognises that school/family relationships are particularly important. As the recognised primary educators of the child, parents have a right to be assured that the child's needs are being met by the school. It follows that parents should be given as much information as possible on all aspects of the child's progress and development. Parents, as a body, are also entitled to know whether the school and the education system are meeting children's needs.

2 PARENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

It is important that, where none exists, an active Parents' Association be formed for each individual school in order to promote and develop effective and positive participation by parents in education at the school level. When the National Parents' Council was established in 1985, the Department of Education urged school authorities to have a Parents' Association formed in association with every school. While much progress has been made since then, there are still schools which do not have a Parents' Association. The Department sees a Parents' Association as essential for

- *developing partnership for parents in education at the level of the local school, and*
- *supporting and encouraging individual parents to become more involved in the education of their children.*

The Minister for Education now requests post-primary school management authorities to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that a Parents' Association is formed in association with its school. Management authorities should actively promote all means of effective co-operation between the school and the Parents' Association.

3 FORMING A PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

As a first step, the management authorities should call a general meeting of parents for the purpose of the parents forming a Parents' Association where one does not already exist. It would be desirable that the Board arrange with the National Parents' Council Post-Primary to have one of its representatives, or a representative of one of its nominating bodies, present to advise the parents. The nominating bodies of the Council are:

- * Parents' Association of Vocational Schools and Community Colleges (PAVSCC),*
- * National Federation of Christian Brothers Schools Parents Councils (NFCBSPC),*
- * Parents Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (PACCS),*
- * Congress of Catholic Secondary Schools Parents Associations (CCSSPA)*

and other bodies representing Minority Denominations, Special Education, Gaelscoileanna and Scoileanna Gaeltachta.

It is in the best interests of the school that positive and effective communication exists between the Parents' representatives on the Board and the Parents' Association. To this end, parent representatives should be ex-officio members of the Parents' Association Committee.

4 NATIONAL PARENTS' COUNCIL

Each Parents' Association should strongly consider affiliating to the National Parents' Council, Post-Primary Tier through one of the nominating bodies listed at Section 3. Such affiliation affords parents the opportunity and the mechanism for having a voice in decision making on educational issues at a national level. The National Parents' Council provides representation for parents, as partners in education, on various Government-appointed educational bodies. Through its representative function, the Council is making a distinctive and valuable contribution to central planning and policy development in education.

C. N. LINDSAY,
SECRETARY.

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