

**The Constitution
of the
Parents' Association
St. Kevin's National School Greystones,
Co. Wicklow
Version 2 – October 2020**

Proposed by: Jenny Smith, 20/10/2020

Seconded by: Crona Smith, 20/10/2020

Ratified at St. Kevin's AGM held on 20/10/20 by Zoom call.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The establishment of a Parents' Association related to a Primary School in the Republic of Ireland is accommodated by the Education Act 1998 ('the Act'). The Constitution, contained herein, ('the Constitution') is designed to embrace the provisions of the Act and any amendments thereto.

1.2 The relevant extract pertaining to the establishment and management of a Parents' Association is contained in Section 26 of the Act. 26.

(1) The parents of students of a recognised school may establish, and maintain from among their number, a parents' association for that school and membership of that association shall be open to all parents of students of that school.

(2) A parents' association shall promote the interests of the students in a school in co-operation with all stakeholders, including: the board, Principal, teachers, students of a school and for that purpose may-

(a) advise the Principal or the board on any matter relating to the school and the Principal or board shall have regard to any such advice, and

(b) adopt a programme of activities which will promote the involvement of parents, in consultation with the Principal, in the operation of the school.

(3) The board shall promote contact between the school, parents of students in that school and the community and shall facilitate and give all reasonable assistance to parents who wish to establish a parents' association and to a parents' association when it is established.

(4) (a) A parents' association shall, following consultation with its members, make rules governing its meetings and the business and conduct of its affairs.

(b) Where a parents' association is affiliated to a national association of parents, the rules referred to in paragraph (a) shall be in accordance with guidelines issued by that national association of parents with the concurrence of the Minister.

1.3 The Constitution recognises and respects that St. Kevin's National School, Greystones, Co. Wicklow ('the school') is a Catholic primary school for boys and girls from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

1.4 The Constitution further recognises the Archbishop of Dublin as the Patron of the school. The elected Board of Management (the body of persons nominated by the Patron and recognised by the Minister for Education & Science) is charged with the direct governance of the school.

1.5 The Constitution recognises and respects the Ethos Statement of St. Kevin's National School, Greystones, Co. Wicklow, which has been drafted and approved by the Board of Management;

St. Kevin's National School encourages and guides each child in developing fully their own gifts, while caring for one another in the way Jesus taught us. As a school community, it values the contribution of all its members, respects their uniqueness and responds to their individual needs in a caring and supportive way. It sees itself as an extension of the family. As a parish school, it encourages pupils to participate in parish activities appropriate for their age.

1.5.1 The school ethos describes the essential spirit of the school, the interaction between our beliefs, attitudes and values and the daily practices and traditions, which are maintained. The parents' recognition and appreciation of our unique ethos will grow as both the parents and their child experience it in operation on a day to day basis.

School Aims:

1.5.2 The community of St. Kevin's National School, Greystones comprises many different groups of people; pupils, parents, teachers, support staff, Parents' Association and Board of Management. As a school community, we promote partnership between home, school and parish and work together to achieve our aims;

- to provide a secure and happy atmosphere within a stimulating environment where children can learn effectively,
- to provide equal access for all children to a broad balanced curriculum, which takes into account curriculum prerequisites laid down by the Department of Education,
- to help children acknowledge that every person is uniquely created by God, is valued equally and is cherished for what he/she is rather than what he/she does,
- to inspire tolerance, confidence, respect, politeness and high standards of behaviour for all members of the school community,
- to build an inclusive, caring and respectful school community which promotes the participation of all members in lifelong education, where all children are valued, in a caring and inclusive manner.

School Values – STKEV

1.5.3 The school values, represented by the acronym STKEV were introduced into the school in 2019. All school children are encouraged to use these values every day.

S – Self-awareness; school children are encouraged to be aware of themselves and how they are feeling.

T – Teamwork; school children are encouraged to work together as a team.

K – Kindness; school children are encouraged to be kind to everyone.

E – Engaged in learning; school children are encouraged to focus on their work and participate in class.

V – Versatility; school children are encouraged to be able to deal with change and adapt, quickly and positively.

2.0 Name

2.1 The name of the Parents' Association shall be;

- St. Kevin's National School, Greystones, Parents' Association, ('the Parents' Association')

3.0 The Purpose of the Parents' Association

3.1 The purpose of the Parents' Association shall be to provide a framework through which the parents/guardians of children attending the school can work together for the best possible education of their children.

3.2 The Parents' Association shall work with the Principal, Staff and Board of Management to build effective partnership of home and school, while respecting the rights and responsibilities of each group, in accordance with the provisions of the Act and any amendments thereto.

4.0 The Aim of the Parents' Association

4.1 The primary aim of the Parents' Association shall be to enable parents to play their part in ensuring the best possible education for their children, through the Parents' Association's programme of activities, having due regard to the ethos of the school.

4.2 The Parents' Association shall promote the interests of the students in co-operation with the Board of Management, Principal, teachers and students, in accordance with the provisions of the Act and any amendments thereto.

5.0 The Work of the Parents' Association

5.1 The Parents' Association shall undertake a programme of activities, which will promote the involvement of parents and which will support students, parents and school staff. Before planning its activities, the Parents' Association shall consult with the school Principal.

5.2 The Parents' Association may advise the Principal and the Board of Management, when requested by the Principal and/or the Board of Management, on any matters relating to the school in accordance with the Act and any amendments thereto.

6.0 The Membership of the Parents' Association

6.1 Membership of the Parents' Association shall be open to all parents and legal guardians of children enrolled in St. Kevin's National School, Greystones and to all members of the teaching staff.

7.0 The Committee of the Parents' Association

7.1 The Parents' Association shall seek parents that wish to volunteer their time, in order to sit on the core Parents' Association committee.

7.2 Such members shall serve as the Committee of the Parents' Association ('the committee') for a period of 3 years. After this period, a PA member can put themselves forward again provided they have a child (Ren) in the school for that time-frame and that they have been an "active" member i.e. members are expected to attend at least 50% of PA meetings held during a school year or actively contribute to a core committee such a fundraising or catering.

7.3 Appointments of new members to the committee will take place at the AGM. If there are more applicants than seats available on the committee, an election will take place at the AGM. If there are less applicants than there are spaces available, applicants will be deemed elected (once proposed and seconded).

7.4 The number of the committee shall be a maximum of 25 and a minimum of 10 persons. If the number of volunteers exceeds 25, a waiting list will be compiled.

7.5 Towards the end of the school year, committee members will be asked to confirm their intention to remain on the committee or step down. Members at the end of their 3 year period should indicate if they wish to be re-elected. Any new positions that arise will be communicated to the school community for parents to volunteer.

7.6 Parents' nominees of the Board of Management shall be deemed ex-officio members of the committee and will remain on the committee for as long as they serve on the Board of Management in this capacity.

7.7 The school Principal shall be deemed an ex-officio member of the committee and shall continue to be a member of the committee for as long as he/she holds the post of Principal.

7.8 A representative of the teaching staff, shall be deemed an ex-officio member of the committee for 3 years. The staff representative will sit on the Parents' Association Committee, as a link between parents and staff/management. After 3 years, the teacher representative can put their name forward for re-election as representative of teaching staff.

7.9 The officers of the committee shall consist of the Chairperson, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer.

7.10 These officers shall be selected by the Parents' Association Committee for a period of up to 3 years and can submit his or her name for re-election (assuming their child will still be in the school or they indicate clearly that their term will be shorter than 3 years).

7.11 All selected members of the committee shall be entitled to vote at each committee meeting in the normal course, provided they attend that meeting. All committee members shall carry equal voting rights. The Chairperson shall carry a casting vote in the event of a tie on any motion.

7.12 The committee may use the school premises for committee meetings and other official business directly related to the activities of the Parents' Association, with the prior approval of the Board of Management.

8.0 The Work of the Committee of the Parents' Association

8.1 The committee shall be the team of people that manages the tasks of the Association on behalf of the parent body (the members).

8.2 The committee shall draw up a plan for the activities of the Parents' Association, with due regard to the wishes of the members of the Association.

8.3 The committee shall be responsible for seeing that activities are run in an efficient and effective manner.

8.4 The committee shall consult with the school Principal before planning the programme of activities for a particular year.

8.5 The committee shall be responsible for ensuring that it puts in place, in consultation with the school Principal and the Board of Management, arrangements for ongoing communications between them.

8.6 The committee shall report to the parent body (the members) about the work of the committee at the Annual General Meeting of the Parents' Association.

8.7 The committee shall manage and account for any funds collected by the Parents' Association.

8.8 The committee shall attempt to identify members of the Parents' Association, having skill-sets and/or experience, which may be of value to the activities of the committee.

8.9 At the discretion of the committee, sub-committees may be established in order to focus attention on particular tasks or projects. Participants in any sub-committee(s) need not be members of the main committee. Representatives of the main committee must be included in any sub- committee.

8.10 The committee shall encourage and support members with the required skill-sets and/or experience to assist in the development and completion of projects identified by the committee, in consultation with the Principal and the Board of Management.

8.11 Sub-committees shall be, at all times, accountable to the main committee and shall submit recommendations to the main committee for consideration and approval.

8.12 The constitution should be reviewed every 3 years and revised as appropriate to ensure it is up to date. The review should be initiated by the either the chair or the secretary.

9.0 Fund Raising and Finance

9.1 Fundraising and receipt of monies on behalf of the school, by the Parents' Association, shall be carried out with the prior agreement and the prior approval of the Board of Management.

9.2 The committee shall agree with the Board of Management as to the specific school projects for which funds are to be raised by the Parents' Association.

9.3 The expenditure of these funds shall rest with the Board of Management, in consultation with the Parents' Association.

9.4 The Honorary Treasurer, in consultation with the other officers on the committee, shall be responsible;

- for keeping the accounts of the Parents' Association's finances
- for administering all monies of the Parents' Association including transfer of agreed monies to BOM account at end of school year
- for preparing a budget of proposed expenditure
- for paying all expenses and for presenting accounts at the conclusion of the year to the Annual General Meeting of the Parents' Association.

9.5 The Parents' Association shall maintain a bank account in its name. The signing authority on such an account shall be any two of the following: The Honorary Treasurer, the Chairperson and the School Principal.

10.0 Records

10.1 Records and accounts of the business matters of the Parents' Association shall be documented and retained for a period of at least 7 years.

10.2 The Honorary Secretary shall keep a record of all meetings of the Parents' Association, both general and committee, and shall be responsible for all correspondence of the Parents' Association.

10.3 In the Honorary Secretary's absence, one of the officers, or failing that, another member of the committee may be asked to assume the secretary's role, pro tempore.

11.0 Meetings of the Parents' Association

• General Meetings

11.1 General Meetings shall be held at least annually and the Honorary Secretary shall give all members at least 21 days' notice in writing. Each member of the Parents' Association present at the Annual General Meeting shall have an equal vote on any proposal put before that meeting.

11.2 The quorum for the Annual General Meeting shall be deemed to be 20 members of the Parents' Association.

- **Committee Meetings**

11.3 Committee Meetings shall be held regularly and at least twice per term during school terms and adequate notice of the meetings shall be given by the Honorary Secretary.

11.4 The quorum for a Committee Meeting is 5.

12.0 Membership of the National Parents' Council-Primary

12.1 St. Kevin's National School Parents' Association shall seek affiliation to, and maintain membership of, the National Parents' Council - Primary.

13.0 Class Representatives

13.1 At the beginning of each school year, a parent within each class can put themselves forward to act as a class representative.

13.2 Class representatives act as a communication channel between the committee and parents within that class and vice versa.

13.3 Class representatives set up a class what's app group adhering to GDPR regulations and can invite parents to join understanding that their information will be visible to other parents within the group.

13.4 It is voluntary for parents to join the class what's app group.

13.5. At the beginning of each school year, the class representatives will share the PA what's app guidelines to remind all within the group of their responsibilities;

- 13.5.1 It is stated at the top that the closed group has been setup for the class and is not an official school social media site.
- 13.5.2 The WhatsApp class group's intended use is as a forum to communicate on general class queries (e.g. reminder of upcoming events) as well as a method for sharing information from the Parents' Association quickly and effectively. There should be no personal references about children or any other individual in the group.
- 13.5.3 Please keep class group communications appropriate and respectful. Alternative groups can be organised for party invitations, playdates, etc. to avoid confusion and unnecessary notifications.
- 13.5.4 No posts should be put up which could be deemed as 'poor taste'. What one person may see as funny can be insulting to others.

- 13.5.5 Please respect the timing of posts; very early in the morning or late at night is not encouraged.
- 13.5.6 The WhatsApp group should never be used to voice grievances about teachers, the school or drive personal agendas. If there are any grievances about teachers, these should be taken directly with the teacher and /or principal.
- 13.5.7 It is the responsibility of all those involved to ensure that the atmosphere of the class WhatsApp group is respectful and informative.

13.6 If the what's app guidelines are not being followed, it is the responsibility of the class representative to remind all within the group of these guidelines and address any issues. If the class representative is not comfortable in doing this, this should be raised to the chairperson of the PA promptly.

14.0 Facebook Page

14.1 St. Kevin's PA also operate a Facebook page which is a closed group open to parents of children within the school.

14.2 Parents wishing to get access to the page must answer 3 questions before granted access by the administrators.

14.3 No commenting is allowed on any posts and it is the administrators responsibility to turn of commenting at the time of posting.

14.4 Prior to any pictures being posted, pictures must be shared with the principal for approval (to ensure children whose parents have explicitly stated they do not want pictures of their children shared are shared).

14.5 Parents who no longer have children in the school will be removed (unfortunately) from the Facebook page.

15.0 Amendments to the Constitution

15.1 Amendments to the Constitution should be proposed in writing and formally seconded. Both the proposer and seconder should be current members of the Parents' Association.

15.2 Such proposals must be received in writing by the Honorary Secretary at least 14 days in advance of an Annual General Meeting of the Parents' Association. Members of the Parents' Association should receive notice from the Honorary Secretary of any proposals for amendments to the Constitution prior to the Annual General Meeting of the Parents' Association.

15.3 In order to be carried, proposals for amendments to the Constitution require the approval of a two-thirds majority of members present at the Annual General Meeting of the Parents' Association.

16. Constitution History

Version 1 2001 to Oct 2020

- St. Kevin's PA Constitution generated and approved.

Version 2 Oct 2020 –

Amendments below approved.

- Inclusion of School Values – STKEV in section 1, Introduction, 1.5.3.
- “Each committee member shall be elected for a period of 1 year. Members may submit their names for re-election” to be replaced by

“7.2 Such members shall serve as the Committee of the Parents’ Association (‘the committee’) for a period of 3 years. After this period, a PA member can put themselves forward again provided they have a child (ren) in the school for that time-frame and that they have been an “active” member i.e. members are expected to attend at least 50% of PA meetings held during a school year or actively contribute to a core committee such a fundraising or catering.
- Inclusion of “7.3 7.3 Appointments of new members to the committee will take place at the AGM. If there are more applicants than seats available on the committee, an election will take place as the AGM. If there are less applicants than there are spaces available, applicants will be deemed elected (once proposed and seconded).
- Inclusion of “7.5 Towards the end of the school year, committee members will be asked to confirm their intention to remain on the committee or step down. Any new positions that arise will be communicated to the school community for parents to volunteer.”
- “The Staff representative shall be elected for a period of 1 year and may submit his / her name for re-election for a further 1 year period” to be replaced by
“7.8 A representative of the teaching staff, shall be deemed an ex-officio member of the committee for 3 years. The staff representative will sit on the Parents’ Association Committee, as a link between parents and staff/management. After 3 years, the teacher representative can put their name forward for re-election as representative of teaching staff.”
- “Officers shall serve for a period of 1 year and may submit their name for re-election for a further 1 year period” to be replaced by
“7.10 These officers shall be selected by the Parents’ Association Committee for a period of up to 3 years and can submit his or her name for re-election (assuming their child will still be in the school or they indicate clearly that their term will be shorter than 3 years).”

- “The quorum for the Annual General Meeting shall be deemed to be 25 members of the Parents’ Association” to be replaced by “The quorum for the Annual General Meeting shall be deemed to be 20 members of the Parents’ Association”.
- Inclusion of 8.12 “The constitution should be reviewed every 3 years and revised as appropriate to ensure it is up to date. The review should be initiated by the either the chair or the secretary.”
- Inclusion of Section 13 – Class Representatives.
- Inclusion of Section 14 – Facebook Page
- Inclusion of Section 16 – Constitution history.

Version 2 of Constitution was posted to all parents and guardians, was adopted at the A.G.M. of the Parents’ Association on 20/10/2020.