

Parents Association Meeting

Date: Monday 09th Sept 2014

Venue: Junior School Time: 8pm

Present: BOM Rep: Ann Marie Kelly, Karen Carthy, Bernie Power, Sarah Mc Cormick, Mrs Dempsey, Rachel Lowe, Stephaine Synnott, Ann-Marie Elliott, Catherine Forde, Ruth Prenderville, Grace Garde, Sinead O Toole, Suzanne Breslin, Sandra Devlin, Bernadette Goff, Geraldine Keogh, Fran Tighe Clarke & Carol Malley. (Apologies if I have spelt any person's name wrong!)

Apologies: Gillian Gillan

Just a short note for the parents of our Junior Infants class who we welcome this new school year, we hope you enjoy your time in Newtown Primary School. **The Parents Association** works with the principal, staff and board of management to build an effective partnership of home and school. The Parents Association, with the permission of the the principal and board of management discuss policy issues and incidents that may require a review of school policy e.g. safety, homework, bullying, enrolment etc. Typically we meet on the second Monday of each month at 8pm in the Junior School. We discuss issues happening in the school with fund raising, dates to remember, new staff appointments, activities during school hours and after etc. New parents are always encouraged to attend to bring along ideas and suggestions.

Fund Raising:

Copper Friday: Ann Marie Elliott is a parent of one of our students who, once a month usually the last Friday of the month (which this month will be the 26th of September) attend s the school to collect loose change that you may like to send into the school with your child. It is then counted and lodged into our bank account and used for various different purposes. The scheme has worked very well over the past few years and funds were put to good use.

Talent Show: Thank you to all the children who took part in this year's talent show which raised just over €2,000. If you had ordered a DVD of the show can you please collect it before the end of the week? I understand that it was the end of the school year and some parents may have forgotten to collect them, so please do this asap. Thanks!

Bag Pack: Ann Marie Kelly has secured a bag pack in Dunnes Stores for the 11th 12th & 13th of December. It is thought that these dates will be extremely favourable. More information will be made available nearer the time. Thanks Ann Marie

iPads: As we all know technology moves so fast nowadays that our computer system in the school is extremely outdated and a lot of money has been spend trying to upgrade them. It is felt that we would be better advised to terminate the computers and upgrade to iPads. We have had a price of €350 per tablet which includes them being customised to our students needs. As many parents will already be aware our secondary school have brought tablets into classrooms this year and it is felt that in particular our 6th year class would benefit from their final year here being able to use the iPad's. We would love to be able to raise enough money to buy tablets for both the junior and the senior school so that all of the students will become familiar with tablets and that we could also purchase a docking station. (Anyone out there has any ideas, or connections let us know)

Principal's Report:

Code of Behaviour: Each family will receive a copy of the newly updated code of behaviour. There will no longer be individual class rules to follow, but 5 rules to be carried across the board. As soon as you receive your copy please read it with your child, sign the form which will be attached and return it to your teacher to confirm that you have read these rules, understood them and agree to follow them.

School Lunch: It has come to our attention that a small number of families are no longer happy with our Carambola Lunch. The subject will be discussed today at the teacher staff meeting. We are not tied to Carambola and are at present contacting a number of school lunch providers to compare menus. The majority of parents are happy to receive a school lunch, **but our aim is to please each child**, therefore for the moment if you decide against the Free Lunch Policy please write to Mrs Dempsey and let her know, also you will need to contact Carambola to cancel your order. Any food brought from home must comply with our Healthy Eating Policy. Please do not send crisps, fizzy drinks, cereal bars, chocolate etc. Fresh fruit and veg are always welcome. Extra lunch is a possibility especially for the senior students if they feel they have not had enough to eat. Please check this with Class Teachers.

Annual Report: Our annual report will soon be available. Parents will be able to read a review of the last school year. It has been agreed that the students in the senior classes, this year will sit the Irish Drumcondra Exams as IRISH will be the focus of School Self Evaluation. We are aware that children going into secondary are all at different abilities and levels and that this would be a good gauge for us maybe to improve or confirm that we are on equal par with other primary schools in our area.

School Books: As many parents may have noticed all school books were held back this year to resolve an issue of monies outstanding. At this stage we are pleased to announce that these parents have paid or made arrangements to pay for their children's school books and this issue has been resolved. You can start to pay for next year's book now, Mrs Keyes will be only too happy to take weekly payments from parents.

Thanks to Mrs Keyes for securing an excellent deal with our school book supplier. A lot of children will have got notes home to say that there had been an overpayment made in some cases and that this money can be returned or paid against photocopying and art and crafts.

Teaching Staff: We welcome back our teaching staff and wish them well for the coming year. Please remind your child to be respectful of teachers and class mates alike. We had appealed to the Department of Education for extra teaching staff but have been refused as we have 279 students but would have needed 286 to qualify for an extra teacher.

Class Meetings:

Notes will be sent home this week with students to arrange a class meeting with your child's teacher. *Not to be confused with Parent/Teacher Meetings.* Your child's class teacher would like to meet parents as a group and discuss their teaching programme for this school year.

Parent/Teacher meetings will be held in **November**.

It has been suggested that this year we might use a system where each parent has 10 minutes with the teacher. After this time a buzzer might sound, so that everyone knows that their assigned time is up. If you are not happy with the length of time you have had to discuss your issues then you can of course make another appointment with your child's teacher. This may help with time being spent waiting to see teachers. We will also be holding the meetings in the community centre this year so that parents do not have to go between both schools.

School Uniform: Thank you to parents for the excellent turnout of students. Please insure that full school uniform is worn everyday and the tracksuit is only worn on days designated to swimming and P.E. For our female students it has come to our attention that large over stated hair bands are being wore, it seems to have become a competition in some cases please tone down on this as plain and simple is sometimes more effective.

School Calendars: A class photo of your child's class has hopefully been taken and will be put together as your school calendar. The price of the calendar was included in your book list but if you have bought your own books €5 can be sent into the school to cover the price of same.

Walk to School Wednesday: For our new parents we try to encourage walking to school on every Wednesday. If your child has a high visual jacket they are encourage to wear them. Shortly the school will arrange selected days to walk home from school. This does not mean they should walk unsupervised. If you cannot walk with your child please take them to the meeting point and make sure they you speak to a responsible adult and ask that your child might walk with them, maybe you would be available to walk the next week. If another parent has agreed to walk with your child please bring it to your child's attention, so that they recognise who is in charge. It has been noticed that children are being dropped off at points and are making their way to school without adult supervision.

Website: Our new web site is www.newtownprimary.ie

Ms Daly: Whole school assembly took place on Monday where Ms Daly's official retirement was celebrated. We wish Ms Daly well and thank her for her many years of service to our school.

Other News:

Kilcoole Feis will take place in Oct-Nov. Ms Keane will return for Speech & Drama classes.

Sinead Finnegan will take the Junior School children for Music Generation.

School choir will be held on Wednesday's for 4th & 5th Class lead by Ms Mahon

Ms Murphy is preparing after school activities in Computers & Science.

Lift off to Literacy will be taken from Senior Infants to 2nd class.

Dates to Remember:

12th September last day of early closure for Junior Infants and 1st Class

Week of 15th September Class Meetings

16th September Swimming for 2nd /5th and Ms Lennon's Class

24th September Mass to start the new school year

26th last day for payment of Insurance

Election of New Committee

Karen Carthy

Chairperson

Bernie Power

Deputy Chairperson

Suzanne Breslin

Secretary

Grace Garde & Ruth Prenderville

National Parents Council (NPC Rep's)

Ann Marie Kelly

BOM Rep

Thank you to Joan Flynn and Gillian Gillan for all their help last year.

Other Business:

We are looking for parents to volunteer to help at break time 12.30 for yard duty. A number of our parents have been successfully Garda Vetted and anyone offering to help in the school will need to apply for same. If you can help out please let Karen or Fiona know. Please leave your telephone number so that you can be contacted; also please ensure that you have another parent's telephone numbers who may be able to cover for you if you cannot attend on your designated day.

Reminder:

Car park: Give way to children trying to cross over from the road to the avenue, as it is extremely dangerous! and do not park in the bus section until the children using this service have been collected. For our new parents the bus parks in the first 4 car parking spaces on the left hand side. Again we remind you that the playgroup car park is not for parents it is for the use of teaching staff. Please use main car park. Thank you.

No dogs on school grounds.

Next Meeting, Monday October the 13th 2014 in the Junior School at 8pm. Everyone Welcome.

We wish all of our students and teaching staff well for this coming school year.

