



Dear Parents,  
CAO Forms have been filled and lodged. Students are waiting to sit their Pre-leaving exams. They are aware that the number of applications for college places has risen by 50%. This means that points will go up next August. Between now and June when the "Change of Mind Forms" come out, it is important that students become very aware of their strengths so as to focus on filling out their forms accurately. We appeal to the Institutes of Technology and the Universities to increase the number of places that they are offering to students. It is also important that the Minister and the DES allow an increase in PLC Courses in the coming academic year. Please monitor how the work to rule by teachers is affecting your students. We appeal to the parties involved in this disagreement to sit, talk, negotiate and find a solution that will keep school life flowing normally. In April the NPCpp, NCCA and the DES come together to deliver a conference to parents. This is a model of partnership in action that will benefit all. Every blessing for 2010.

Rose Tully,  
PRO NPCpp.

## Parents & Legislation

Parents/Guardians should be aware of their rights as parents, and those of their children, as enshrined in the Irish Constitution and in legislation as enacted by Dail Éireann. This and future articles in NPCpp Newsletters will not attempt to address all legislation. Instead it is hoped to identify the more important aspects

of the Constitution and legislation on educational matters, as it impacts on Parents/Guardians. The following may be helpful in informing Parents/Guardians of their rights -

### **Education Act 1998 (extracts: Section 9 relates to the functions of a school –**

- (a) ensure that the educational needs of all students, including those with a disability or other special educational needs, are identified and provided for,
- (d) promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school,
- (g) ensure that parents of a student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, have access in the prescribed manner to records kept by that school relating to the progress of that student in his or her education,
- (m) subject to this act and in particular *section 15 (2) (d)*, establish and maintain an admissions policy which provides for maximum accessibility to the school.

### **Section 13 relates to The Inspectorate –**

- (3) the functions of an Inspector shall be:
  - (a) (i) shall visit recognised schools and centres for education on the initiative of the Inspectorate, and, following consultation with the board, patron, parents of students and teachers, as appropriate, do any or all of the following:

- (I) evaluate the organisation and operation of those schools and centres and the quality and effectiveness of the education provided in those schools or centres, including the quality of teaching and effectiveness of individual teachers;
- (II) evaluate the education standards in such schools or centres
- (V) report to the Minister, or to the board, patron, parents of students and teachers, as appropriate, and as

prescribed, on these matters or on any matter relating to the activities of those schools or centres and the needs of students attending those schools or centres,  
(ii) may conduct assessments of the educational needs of students in recognised schools and advise these students, their parents and the schools as appropriate in relation to the educational development of those students,  
(iv) shall advise parents and parents' associations;

- (4) Without prejudice to the generality of *subsection (3)*, an Inspector to whom *subsection (2)* applies shall have the following functions:
  - (a) in consultation with parents to assess the psychological needs of students in recognised schools and to advise as appropriate those students, their parents and the schools in relation to the educational and psychological development of such students;

### **Section 14 relates to establishment and membership of boards of management-**

(1) It shall be the duty of a patron, for the purposes of ensuring that a recognised school is managed in a spirit of partnership, to appoint where practicable a board of management the composition of which is agreed between patrons of schools, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations, recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers and the Minister,

- (4) The members of the board shall, except where articles of management otherwise provide, be appointed by the patron of the school.
- (5) When making appointments to a board established in accordance with *subsection (1)* the patron shall comply with directions given by the Minister in respect of appropriate gender balance and the Minister, before giving any such directions, shall consult with patrons, national associations of parents, recognised school management

To all Parents of Pupils attending Community & Comprehensive Schools. You are invited to attend the

**Parents' Associations of Community & Comprehensive Schools P.A.C.C.S Conference 2010**

**5th – 6th March,**  
**Tipperary Institute, Thurles,**  
**Co Tipperary**  
 Contact Tommy Walshe  
 @ 0868431118

organisations and recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers.

(6) The Minister, with the agreement of the patron, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations and recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers, shall prescribe matters relating to the appointment of a board.

**Section 15 relates to the functions of a board of management -**

(1) It shall be the duty of a board to manage the school on behalf of the patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents and to provide or cause to be provided an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility.

(2) (d) publish, in such manner as the board with the agreement of the patron considers appropriate, the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school, including the policy of the school relating to the expulsion and suspension of students and admission to and participation by students with disabilities or who have other special educational needs, and ensure that as regards that policy principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected and such directions as may be made from time to time by the Minister, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school and the constitutional rights of all persons concerned, are complied with,

**Section 20 relates to report and information –**

A board shall establish procedures for informing parents of students in the school of matters relating to the operation and performance of the school and such procedures may include the publication and circulation to parents, teachers and other staff and a student council where one has been established on a report of the operation and performance of the school in any school year, with particular reference to the achievement of objectives as set out in the school plan provided under section 21.

**Section 21 relates to school plan –**

(3) The school plan shall be prepared in accordance with such directions, including directions relating to consultations with the parents, the patron, staff and students of the school, as may be given from time to time by the Minister in relation to school plans.

(4) A board shall make arrangements for the circulation of copies of the school plan to the patron, parents, teachers and other staff of the school.

**Section 22 relates to functions of Principal and teachers –**

(2) (b) regularly evaluate students and periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents,

(c) collectively promote co-operation between the school and the community which it serves and

**Section 23 relates to the Principal –**

(2) (c) be responsible for the creation, together with the board, parents of students and the teachers, of a school environment which is supportive of learning among the students and which promotes the professional development of the teachers,

(d) under the direction of the board and, in consultation with the teachers, the parents and, to the extent appropriate to their age and experience, the students, set objectives for the school and monitor the achievements of those objectives, and

(e) encourage the involvement of parents of students in the school in the education of those students and in the achievement of the objectives of the school.

**Section 25 relates to school year, week, and day -**

The Minister may, from time to time, following consultation with patrons, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations and recognised trade

unions and staff associations representing teachers, prescribe –

(a) The minimum number of days in a school year during which a school shall be open to receive students and provide them with instruction

(b) The minimum numbers of hours instruction in a school day or in a school week, and

(c) Any matters relating to the length of the school year, the school week or the school day and the organisation and structure of such year, week or day.

**Section 26 relates to Parents' Association**

(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 the board, Principal, teachers and 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, as the case may be, 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.

**Section 28 relates to Grievance and other procedures –**

(1) The Minister, following consultation with patrons of recognised schools, national associations of parents,

To all Parent's of Pupils attending Vocational Schools and Community Colleges  
 You are invited to attend the  
**Parents Association for Vocational Schools and Community Colleges (N.P.A.V.S.C.C) Congress 2010**  
**12th – 13th March,**  
**Sheraton Hotel , Athlone.**  
**Co Westmeath**  
 Contact Jackie O'Callaghan @  
 086 1200113

recognised school management organisations and recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers, may from time to time prescribe procedures in accordance with which – (a) the parent of a student or, in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student, may appeal to the board against a decision of a teacher or other member of staff of a school,

(b) grievances of students, or their parents, relating to the students' school (other than those which may be dealt with under *paragraph (a)* or *section 29*), shall be heard, and  
 (c) appropriate remedial action shall, where necessary, be taken as a consequence of an appeal or in response to a grievance.

(2) In prescribing procedures for the purposes of this section the Minister shall have regard to the desirability of determining appeals and resolving grievances in the school concerned.

**Section 29 relates to Appeals to the Secretary General –**

(1) Where a board or a person acting on behalf of a board –  
 (a) permanently excludes a student from a school, or  
 (b) suspends a student from attendance at a school for a period to be prescribed for the purpose of this paragraph, or  
 (c) refuses to enrol a student in a school, or  
 (d) makes a decision of a class which the Minister, following consultation with patrons, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations and recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers, may from time to time determine may be appealed in accordance with this section,

the parent of the student, or in the case of a student who has reached the age of 18 years, the student may, within a reasonable time from the date that the parent or student was informed of the decision and following the conclusion of any appeal procedures provided by the school or the patron, in accordance with *section 28*, appeal that decision to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science and that appeal shall be heard by a committee appointed under *subsection (2)*.

**Section 30 relates to Curriculum –**

(1) The Minister may, from time to time, following such consultation with patrons, national associations of parents, recognised school management organisations and recognised trade unions and staff associations representing teachers, as the Minister considers appropriate, prescribe the curriculum for recognised schools, namely –

- (a) the subjects to be offered in recognised schools
- (b) the syllabus of each subject
- (c) the amount of instruction time to be allotted to each subject, and
- (d) the guidance and counselling provision to be offered, in schools.

**Important 2010 Dates for Parents/Guardians and Examination Students**

- February 1st:** Deadline for CAO applications.
- April 12th to 23rd:** Leaving Certificate oral examinations.
- May 1st:** Closing date for receipt of late CAO applications.
- May:** CAO applicants will receive a Statement of Application record showing details of their individual application (recommend student review)
- June 9th:** Leaving and Junior Certificate examinations begin
- June 24th:** Junior Certificate examinations end
- June 25th:** Leaving Certificate examinations end
- July 1st:** Final date for receipt of change of mind CAO applications
- August 18th:** Leaving Certificate examination results are released by State Examinations Commission
- August 18th:** Launch of the NPCpp Leaving Certificate Helpline (Telephone No: 1800 265165)
- August 23rd:** CAO round one University/College offers released
- August 30th:** Closing date for acceptance

of CAO round one University/College course offers

- September 1st:** CAO round 2 offers posted
- September 8th:** Closing date for acceptance of round two University/College course offers
- September 8th:** closing date for receipt of 2010 Leaving Certificate Examination appeals (subject/grade) by State Examinations Commission.
- September 13<sup>th</sup> (during week):** Junior Certificate examination results are released by State Examinations Commission
- October 1st:** closing date for receipt of 2010 Junior Certificate Examination appeals (subject/grade) by State Examinations Commission.

**Confusion, CAO applications, Change and Future Options**

Nothing brings focus like the deadline for the completion by students of the CAO application form. Future employment patterns will no doubt have influenced many students in their course choices while completing their CAO application. Questions arise as to whether the students picked correctly and in the long run are 3rd level qualifications important to the future employability of graduates. Be under no doubt, qualifications matter more than ever, as the employment crisis continues in Ireland and internationally. Employment opportunities do arise as the labour market is not static. Even in recessionary times job opportunities arise and 3rd level graduates are more employable than those who have completed a second level educational qualification alone.

The Expert Group on Future Skills Needs confirmed in the National Skills Bulletin 2009 that shortages have been identified in the specialised high skills areas of IT, Science, Sales/Marketing, Health, Accountancy, Engineering and Management. Demand for vacancies in these areas of endeavour will normally be confined to those with third level qualifications and with specific expertise and experience.

Parents/Guardians/Student concerns as to whether the 2010 Student CAO application choices were the correct choices often arise. In many areas of

To all Parent's of Pupils attending Minority Religion & Protestant Schools you are invited to attend the

**Co-operation of Minority Religion & Protestant Parents Association (C.O.M.P.A.S.S)**

**A.G.M. 2010**

**27th February 2010,  
Alexandra College (Lecture Hall), Milltown,  
Dublin 6**

**10.00am - 1.00pm**

Contact Pat O'Malley @  
0877807809

academic endeavour at 3rd level there are a multitude of programmes and courses and concern arises as to whether the Student CAO choices were the correct choices. CAO applicants may use the change of mind facility up to July 1st, 2010 and so Parents/Guardians should reassure their son/daughter that they can change their CAO course choices, up to that date.

In the interim Students should continue to become as informed as possible on specific third level courses available to them in the 2010/2011 academic year. Parents/Guardians must encourage students to continue to discuss their college options with their parents, their teachers, the School Guidance Counsellor and anybody else who can inform them on the programmes available. Questions arise as to whether the Student has the aptitude, capacity or ability to undertake a specific course of study. Where do students see themselves working in the future? They must do their research to help them become as informed as possible. Reassure your son/daughter that there is plenty of time for changing one's mind about specific courses chosen, deferring programme choices where necessary, re-applying for new programme choices in a future CAO application year, securing relevant work experience that may be helpful in assisting the student make a more informed third level programme choice.

The Irish Times, the Irish Independent and Irish Examiner all provide regular 'Going to College' advertisement features at timely intervals that are very

informative and helpful to second level students reviewing their career and third level options. Also, actually visiting Universities/Colleges of Technology/PLC Colleges of Further Education to discuss programmes and courses of study with Professors/Lecturers is very helpful. All Universities/Colleges of Technology also publish informative publications outlining the programmes/courses of study available, syllabus content and student opportunities.

Finally, it is always possible for a student to take 'a year out' or a 'gap year' while becoming more informed about the third level career options they might wish to choose for themselves. Many students postpone going to college until they are mature enough to cope with the pressures, financial, social and academic, that will face them in University/College of Technology/PLC College. Maturity and clarity of mind are essential assets for any student contemplating going to University/College/PLC College. A student does not have to go to University/College of Technology/PLC College in the year immediately after completing their Leaving Certificate. *Remember when the Lord made time, he made plenty of it.*

**Dyspraxia Association of Ireland**

69a Main St, Leixlip, Co. Kildare  
Tel No: 01-2957125  
[www.dyspraxiaireland.com](http://www.dyspraxiaireland.com)

**Dyslexia Association of Ireland**

1 Suffolk St, Dublin 2  
Tel No: 01-6790276  
[www.dyslexia.ie](http://www.dyslexia.ie)

**NPCpp In-service Programme  
"Training the Trainers"**

NPCpp is anxious to ensure representatives of all Parents Associations in post primary schools have the opportunity to be familiarised and trained on their responsibilities and obligations. Accordingly, NPCpp has commissioned a national training initiative to address this training and knowledge deficit.

It is planned that each county/area will have a minimum of two parent volunteers from each post primary sector (Community and Comprehensive Schools, Secondary Schools, Vocational Schools and Community Colleges) who

will be trained to deliver a training programme to individual members from each Parent's Association within that county/area. NPCpp will communicate with each Parent's Association seeking willing and enthusiastic parent volunteers to avail of these training initiatives. Contact will also be made with Parent's Associations and individual parents by the constituent bodies affiliated to NPCpp.

NPCpp appeals to every Parent's Association in the Post Primary Sector to encourage and select a parent or two to attend one of the scheduled days (9.45am – 3.30pm) outlined below:

- Sat:** 20/02/10 Crescent College, Limerick
- Sat:** 27/02/10 Beaufort College, Navan
- Sat:** 06/03/10 Colaiste Cholmille, Ballyshannon, Co Donegal
- Sat:** 10/04/10 St. Brendan's Secondary, Killarney, Co Kerry
- Sat:** 17/04/10 Community College, Athlone, Co Westmeath
- Sat:** 24/04/10 St. Joseph's Secondary School, Castlebar, Co Mayo
- Sat:** 01/05/10 St. Pauls Community College, Waterford
- Sat:** 08/05/10 Community School Ballieboro, Co Cavan
- Sat:** 15/05/10 Vocational School, Carlow
- Sat:** 22/05/10 Bishopstown Community School, Cork City
- Sat:** 05/06/10 St Calasanzius College, Oranmore, Co Galway
- Sat:** 12/06/10 Beaufort High School Rathfarnham, Dublin 14

Application forms and the details of this training initiative will be circulated to each Parent Association in each Post Primary school nationwide. Applicants may attend the venue that best suits them.

**National Parents Council pp**

Unit 5 Glasnevin Business Centre, Ballyboggan Road, Dublin 11

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Website: [www.npcpp.ie](http://www.npcpp.ie)

Charitable Status No:

CHY 12800

Open: Monday – Friday,  
10.00 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.