

NATIONAL PARENTS COUNCIL POST PRIMARY



ACTIVITY REPORT 2017

The National Parents Council Post Primary (NPCpp) is a voluntary group that gives national voice to parents of young people in Post Primary Schools in Ireland.

The Secondary Education System consists of schools under the patronage of Catholic Voluntary Schools, Religious Minority Schools, Schools run by the Christian Brothers, Community and Comprehensive Schools and Education & Training Board Schools.

Each of these sectors established a governing body, COMPASS, ETBsNPA, FEDCSSPA, PACCS, nominates four representatives to the National Parents Council post primary.

The National Parents Council post primary works as an umbrella group for Parents Associations in the secondary section of the Irish Education System.



Parents are the primary educators of their children as outlined by the Irish Constitution. NPCpp is named in the Education Act 1998.

We unite parents and ensure their participation and inclusion at all levels of the post primary education system.

The National Parents Council post primary has a Board of twenty members who work without remuneration on behalf of parents and their children.

OUR VISION

NPCpp aims to provide a forum that actively supports parents and guardians in their parenting role. We interact effectively with schools and other education partners on issues that impact on the education, development and general well-being of young people within the post primary education system.

OUR MISSION

NPCpp is the voice and advocate for parents and guardians of young people in post primary education. It serves and represents parents and guardians, principally through engagement with Parents Associations. In consultation with its Constituent Bodies, the NPCpp, offers co-ordinated training, interaction, information and engagement with parents and guardians.

OUR AIMS

NPCpp aims to:

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

OUR ACTIVITIES (2017)

NPCpp Spring seminar

Last spring, in St. Tiernan's School, NPCpp hosted a successful seminar on Cyberbullying and Parents Charter.

St Tiernans Community School, Balally, hosted the NPCpp, (National Parents Council Post Primary), Spring Seminar on the morning, 8th April, 2017. This seminar asked Parents – 'Do You Know?' - it was designed to create discussion and feedback between Parents on the current issues regarding the Parent and Student Charter and Cyberbullying.



Rose Callan, President of NPCpp opened the Seminar with an interactive discussion on the proposed Parent and Student Charter Bill inviting the parents to have their say. *'The National Parent Council Post Primary welcomes the positivity of the proposals in the Parent and Student Charter as it places students in the centre of school life and respects and values the role of parents in education. For that reason, we are collecting feedback from parents.'* Rose Callan would like to thank all who support the discussion and



feedback on the day. Parents still wishing to give feedback please do so at the following link:- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VHLGXH3> ... still open.



Dr Stephen James Minton, Director of Research, School of Education, Trinity College Dublin, gave his presentation on *'Cyber-Aggression: How Can Parents Support their Children / Teenagers?'* There is no doubt that social media, apps and the online world plays a big part in the lives of our young people. But what happens if things go wrong? Stephen Minton answered many of these concerns and invited further questions from the parents on the day.



Dr Mairéad Foody, National Anti-bullying Research and resource Centre, DCU gave her presentation on *'Cyberbullying and Mental Health'*. Mairéad Foody informed the parents of the existence of the many apps available to our young people. Many of these apps can be used for cyberbullying. Dr Foody gave tips on how to, from the parents' perspective, recognise signs of bullying and support our young people.

Information Stands hosted by Transition Year Ireland; Irish Association of Relationship Mentors; Accounting Technicians Ireland; Learning Revolution and iKydz were open throughout the Seminar



The morning finished amid more conversation in a communal atmosphere with lunch



National Exam Helpline

The National Exam Helpline is free service for both parents and students providing support, advice and guidance on Leaving Certificates results and CAO offers. NPCpp runs the Leaving Cert Exam Helpline in partnership with the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC). The project is supported by the Department of Education and Skills, The Irish Independent with the technical support provided by Eir.



The Helpline is in operation from the day the Leaving Cert results are released, during the CAO first round and it offers support around the points system, rechecks, repeats, CAO procedures, apprenticeships and further training options.

All in a professional and confidential manner.

In 2017 the Helpline was open on:

Wednesday	16th August	10am – 7pm
Thursday	17th August	10am – 7pm
Friday	18th August	10am – 1pm
Monday	21st August	8am – 7pm
Tuesday	22nd August	8am – 7pm
Wednesday	23rd August	8am – 1pm

In addition to the Career Guidance Counsellors a representative of the grant awarding body, SUSI, was also available to answer queries.

In 2017 the National Exam Helpline received 1635 calls for a grand total of 4308 queries

Supporting Parents Associations

The National Parents Council Post Primary provides free training to Parents Councils/Associations nationwide. This very successful programme has empowered participants to know their responsibilities and rights and where to obtain the knowledge required to ensure that Parents/Guardians play their full role on Parents Councils/Associations in the post primary Education Sector.

This free training initiative to Parents Associations is constantly growing both in number of participants and in topics addressed. topics covered include:

- Parents Association remit
- Role of Officers
- Role of members
- Constitution of a Parents Association
- School Self Evaluation (SSE)
- Draft Agenda for meetings
- Teaching Council
- Antbullying Awareness
- Internet Safety
- Mental Wellbeing



Supporting Parents

The National Parents Council Post Primary also provides information and support to parents throughout the year. Guidance, support and information to parents on bullying, school policies, complaints procedures, Junior Cycle, Transition Year et al.

The Office can be contacted at 01 862 33 46 or by emailing manager@npcpp.ie

Our website offers information and useful resources for students, parents and parents associations.

The website is currently undergoing a deep retailoring and it is almost ready to have a new look studied to meet both the parents' and the students' needs. Of immediate and easy access conception, useful links, pictures and updated event information are only some of the major changes in progress.

NPCpp is also social! Follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

Representing Parents on a National Level

The National Parents Council post primary ensures that parents of post primary students are represented on a national level.

In 2017 NPCpp attended the following events and meetings and had speakers at the below events:

- Joint Board of the Oireachtas – Weight of School Bags – Paul Beddy - <https://www.kildarestreet.com/committees/?id=2017-01-25a.26>
- Joint Board of the Oiractas – Education – Parents Charter – Paul Beddy – <https://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/.../NPCpp-Opening-Statement.pdf>
- Student Grants Advisory Group Meeting - October 9th2017 – Paul Rolston, NPCpp Director – Anna Austin, NPCpp Office Manager
- Stakeholder Update Meeting - Retrospective Vetting – Nov. 15th2017 – Mai Fanning, NPCpp Director
- Board of Management Training Steering Committee – Drumcondra Education Center – Nov 15th2017 Paul Rolston, NPCpp Director – Anna Austin, NPCpp Office Manager
- Ongoing Reform of LC Curriculum – Leinster House 21st November – speakers: Geoff Browne, NPCpp President and Ross Mac Mahon, NPCpp Communications Director - <http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/media/committees/educationandskills/presentations/Opening-Statement---NPC-PP.pdf>
- DCU Antibullying Seminar – Shane Bennet, NPCpp Director – Dec 4th2017

We actively represented parents at the below groups and committees:

- The Joint Committee on Children and Youth Affairs – Weight of School Bags
- Transition Reform – Communications Sub Group – Department of Education and Skills
- Drumcondra Education Centre Board
- Digital Strategy for Schools 2015-2020 Enhancing Teaching Learning and Assessment - Consultative Advisory Group (Department of Education and Skills)
- Child Protection Working Group – Department of Education and Skills
- SNA / Resource Teaching Allocation Review Group – Department of Education and Skills
- Teaching Council
- NCCA Board for Junior Cycle
- NCCA Board for Senior Cycle
- NCCA - Modern Languages Review Group
- NCCA – Leaving Certificate Agricultural Science Review Group
- NCCA Council
- NCCA - An Mheitheal Forbartha don Ghaeilge ag an tSraith Shóisearach
- NCCA - Science Development Group – Junior Cycle

- NCCA - Special Education Needs Steering Group
- NCCA - Physical Education
- Tacklebullying.ie Advisory Committee Board
- SUSI Advisory Group
- College Awareness Working Group – College Awareness Week
- ISSU Board
- YPAR Youth Mental Wellbeing Working Group

Media and Press

- Junior cert results coming out – Shannonside FM
- Lack of secondary school teachers for key STEM subjects – Pat Kenny Show
- The value of feeder school tables – Irish Times
- Helpline constant Coverage – The Independent – <https://www.pressreader.com/ireland/irish-independent/20170815/281797104100648>
- The Independent also featured NPCpp on the cost of school trips – <https://www.independent.ie/.../parents-are-already-pinned-to-their-collar>
- Other press interviews on the Helpline and other topics:
 - Clare FM – Cost of school Trips - www.clare.fm/blog/morning-focus-wednesday-011117/
 - Morning Ireland • Today FM • Kerry FM • Highland Radio • Midwest Radio • KFM
 - South Midlands • Dundalk Radio • I Radio

NPCpp CLG Governance

The Board engaged the services of the Carmichael Centre early in 2017 to assist in a strategic review of the operations and structure of the Council so as to move towards the production of a Strategic Plan to guide the organisation over the coming years.

The process led by Carmichael’s Senan Turnbull commenced in April and involved engagement not just with the Board and the Constituent Representative Bodies but also with a range of external stakeholders and an examination of historical documentation in the Council’s office

The Carmichael Centre Report was made available to the Board of the NPCPP at the end of July 2017. It was considered at a Board meeting on September 9th when it was agreed to re-engage with the Carmichael Centre to assist the Council to deliver on the Report’s Recommendations.

During November and December, a series of meetings of a Constitution Panel, a sub-committee of the Board, were held to consider a range of new documents;

- a) Terms of Reference of Standing and time-bound Committees
- b) Standing Orders to apply to meetings of the Board, Standing Committees and generally to other committees.
- c) Policies and procedures regarding the appointment of representatives to sit on external Boards and Committees and the selection of members to speak at or attend other fora.
- d) Roles and responsibilities of the Board and its officers.
- e) A schedule of matters reserved for Board decision only and matters which are delegated to staff for implementation subject to Board direction and oversight together with a job specification for a General Manager.

It is hoped that these documents can be developed such that plans can be made for an EGM of the Council in April/May to adopt a new Constitution and other key policies and procedures which will guide the future governance, management and operation of the Council.

The key task will then be to undertake the process of developing a Strategic Plan to guide the work of the new Board to be elected in October 2018.

NPCpp Constituency Reports

The National Parents Council is made up of four constituency bodies and there were their activities



PACCS Annual Report:

The main work of the Executive is being available to all parents in the Community and Comprehensive Sector. This entails telephone and email queries, communication with the schools, and communication with the Education Partners and of course representing PACCS on NPCpp through our nominees. Currently, we have four nominees to the Council.

We meet the Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools (ACCS) - our management body at least once per term and attend their Annual Convention and any Regional meetings that are relevant to parents.

Meetings are also held with the State Examinations Commission and the DES.

PACCS Representatives also attend Teacher Union Conferences.

PACCS endeavour to deal with all calls/queries in a friendly, informative and supportive way. If we do not have the answer we will make the necessary enquiries and get back to the parent.

The issues which arise for parents and that are responded to by PACCS are on the Agenda of each Executive meeting and listed anonymously.

The Regions are an integral part of PACCS. The benefit of having a good working Region is that it gives the parents from its schools a voice to raise the issues which may occur and be of concern to them between Conferences. They are then brought to the Executive at the meetings by the Representatives from the Region

Contacting new parents is also an ongoing issue as is the continuing support of the Parent Associations in our schools. This is not only time consuming, it is also costly as we attend any school or Regional meeting to which we get an invitation.

From Conference 2017 to Conference 2018 the Executive met six times, all of them in Dublin. We had planned to travel out of the city to hold some of our meetings but since most of our members come from close to Dublin, we felt it was more cost effective to continue to meet in Dublin, where we have the use of the Offices of NPCpp. We would like to thank them for this facility. However, we may have to revise this in the coming year as our members are coming from Cork, Longford and Tipperary as well as Dublin.

PACCS hold an Annual Conference. The venue for this is one of our schools. Again, the preparation and running the event is not only time consuming but also costly – again we rely on a Grant from NPCpp to help defray the cost. Conference Address and the Open Forum has proved not only worthwhile but popular.

Connie Carolan, Honorary General Secretary. 19th May, 2018.



National Association of COMPASS

Co-operation of Minority Religions & Protestant
Parent Associations (Post Primary)

Secretary's Report Compass A.G.M. 26th May, 2018

- 1. 29th May, 2017 – Forum on the Role of Religion in Primary Schools** hosted by the Mr. Bruton the Minister of Education. This forum came as a result of the Departments requests for submissions in response to the proposed Admissions Bill. A Compass working group had been formed to submit a report (available on our website) and as result were invited to attend this Forum and Compass were very well represented. The main topic centred around which of the four proposals by the Minister were most likely to work. Attendees were then divided into about 9 discussion groups. This Forum and the discussions which followed fed into the deliberations ahead of the admissions to schools' bill which was recently introduced. We are pleased that our input during the consultation process assisted towards the protection of the rights of Compass schools in their admission of children of minority ethos.
- 2. 28th September, 2017 - General Synod Board of Education of the Church of Ireland (RI) Second Level School's Service.** Executive Committee Members attended this event where the address was given by Joanne O'Riordan – Youth Advocate and attended also by the Minister of Education – Mr Richard Bruton.
- 3. Executive Committee** held four meetings during the year. Our four members that act as Directors on Npcpp also attended monthly Npcpp Executive and Directors meetings. They are also part of sub-committee groups within Npcpp i.e. Parent and Student Charter, Communications, Constitution, HR, Events and Finance. As mentioned Compass set up a subcommittee to focus on the Admissions to schools Bill – This group will continue in place to monitor the ongoing situation and any developments in the area of ethos based education and as well as admissions. Our executive and created a Constitutional working group to examine our own corporate governance in conjunction with proposed changes at Npcpp. Another sub-committee was formed to contact all our schools to get up to date contact information for their Compass Reps and other PA officers to enable better two way communication with parents in our schools and the dispersion of relevant information and events.
- 4. Interactive Meeting in The High School Dublin on 10th March, 2018 on Cyber Safety – How Can Parents keep their Children and Teenagers Safe by Dr Stephen Minton** - Doctor in Psychology of Education at the School of Education at Trinity College, Dublin. (More information available on our website). This is an area much in the news currently and of significant relevance to us and our teenage children. The session was very informative and interactive and was much appreciated by all who attended.
- 5. Updated Website** – our website www.compassparents.org has been revamped to create a more vibrant source of information and assistance for parents. It is created and managed to ensure that we can regularly post current and relevant information promptly which can also be linked to social media. We continue to populate the site with information for parents and encourage you to visit the site, to pass your comments on content and to submit articles and information which you think relevant and worth sharing. We look forward to continuing the development of the site with your help and feedback.
- 6. National Parent's Council Post Primary** – This has been a busy year for Directors in Npcpp as they have been working with Senan Turnbull, Carmichael House, on Corporate Governance, constitutional change and moving Npcpp forward. The process being worked through and the emerging framework will identify staffing

requirements in the NPCpp office which, once filled, will also be of significant assistance to us COMPASS. We are aware however that, while this process is underway the office has not been fully staffed. This has created an extra work load for Directors but we will, hopefully, see developments and resolution of this situation in the near future.

Along with the day to day queries from parents/guardians and the organising of Seminars, Training & Support and the, by now very important, Leaving Cert Helpline our directors with Npcpp have represented post primary parents through meetings and discussions with Government Ministers, Oireachtas Committees, the Department of Education and Skills, other national bodies involved with the education, health and well-being of secondary school students.

Some of the areas this representation has covered includes: –

- Cost of School uniforms and other schools costs
- Admissions to schools Bill
- Parents and Student Charter
- Numerous Submissions – to Oireachtas Joint Committees for Education and Skills and Children and Youth Affairs including:
 - School transport
 - Weight of school-bags
 - Sexual health and relationship education
 - LC Reform
 - Childhood Obesity
- Keeping an eye on the industrial action by teachers’ unions that may affect our children
- Media interviews etc. on all educational issues
- Teaching Council
- DES Board of Management committee
- Various NCCA working groups

Generally representing parents on various educational and parental events and meetings.



Fed-CSSPA

Federation of Catholic Secondary
Schools Parent Associations

Representing Parents in the Catholic Voluntary Secondary Schools Sector since 1985

Fed-CSSPA - Annual Report from August 2017 – May 2018	
Meetings & Conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fed-CSSPA met with the following trustee bodies during the year – Le Cheile, Loreto, Ceist and ERST. We also met twice with JMB to discuss common issues such as funding and affiliations. • Fed – CSSPA attended the conferences of LE Cheile, Ceist and JMB • Fed- CSSPA attendee the Irish Catholic Education Conference. • Established a working body between management, parents and trustees

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Met with ICMclass to work with them to develop a parent's module for inclusion with the current website they offer to schools.
NPCpp policy documents – Internal Submissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fed –CSSPA completed the preliminary report on the Parent Charter Survey and submitted that report to NPCpp Fed- CSSPA completed the preliminary report on the updated guidelines for Parent Association – new PA book – and submitted that report to NPCpp To NPCpp - Fed –CSSPA Position paper on HPV vaccination To NPCpp – Digital Age of consent – research paper – in preparation of developing an NPCpp policy Fed-CSSPA participated actively in the strategic planning for NPCpp
External Submissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fed-CSSPA were actively involved in following submissions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Children and Youth Affairs - Reform of the Leaving Certificate Curriculum To the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Children and Youth Affairs - School Bag Weight Issue To the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Children and Youth Affairs - Cyber Security To the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Children and Youth Affairs-Submission of NPCpp policy on School Transport To the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Education and Skills on the topic of on sexual health and relationship education, including matters relating to contraception and consent To NPCpp - Review of career guidance under the National Skills Strategy 2025
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Committee Members attended a number of Parent Association AGMs during the year. A cyber security talk took place in Galway in November From September to end of November 12 schools received direct support in the form of training or talks. Our AGM was organized for March 3rd but was cancelled due to bad weather – rescheduled for November 10th 2018
Parental Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the school year Fed-CSSPA managed queries from individual parents on topics of exclusion, suspension, voluntary fees, subject choice, bullying and many other topics.
Affiliation Program	<p>Fed- CSSPA are working with the trust bodies, the JMB and NAPD to improve the rate of affiliations in the voluntary sector. The low number of affiliations has been put down to the lack of money in the voluntary sector but further research into this has shown that a lack of knowledge on the role of a national body is the main reason.</p> <p>None of the PA's spoken to were aware of the provision to pay the affiliation fee from the capitation. Information being sent by both NPCpp and Fed-CSSPA is NOT getting to parents.</p> <p>A request for the affiliation fee sent by NPCpp in October resulted in 27 schools affiliating by the end of December. A direct invoice in April resulted in a further 26 schools in the following 6 weeks. Fed-CSSPA believes that a direct invoice should be sent early each school year.</p>
Funding Campaign	<p>Fed- CSSPA put together a funding campaign to inform parents of the inequality of funding in the secondary sector. Leaflets were</p>

	<p>printed and distributed to schools. Material and information was published on Facebook and the website. This campaign was promoted actively at the Ceist and JMB conference. Letters and articles were submitted to newspapers.</p>
<p>Fed – CSSPA Committee Meetings</p>	<p>Fed- CSSPA held the following committee meetings in the school year Sept 2017 – May 2018. 3 meetings were held by Skype to evaluate if this would be a viable form of meeting going forward.</p> <p>29th August 29th September 10th October – Skype meeting 7th November 5th December 15th January – Skype meeting 24th February 15th March – Skype Meeting 17th April 19th May</p>
<p>Face book</p>	<p>In the past 5 months 177 posts with education news have been posted to Facebook.</p>
<p>Website</p>	<p>In the past 5 months our website has appeared in 12,800 searches and been selected 490 times</p>