

FURTHER INFORMATION ON OUR SCHOOL BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Functions of the board

The board's main function is to manage the school on behalf of the patron and for the benefit of the students and to provide an appropriate education for each student at the school. The board is accountable to the patron and the Minister for Education and Skills. The school principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school and is accountable to the board.

In carrying out its functions, the board must

- Act in accordance with Ministerial policy
- Uphold the ethos of the school and be accountable to the patron for this. The word *ethos* is not used in the Education Act 1998. It is described in the Act as the 'characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school'.
- Act in accordance with the law and with any deed, charter, or similar instrument relating to the school.
- Consult with and inform the patron of decisions and proposals
- Publish the school's policy on admission to and participation in the school, including its policy on expulsion and suspension of students, admission and participation by students with disabilities or with other special educational needs
- Ensure that the school's admissions policy respects the choices of parents and the principles of equality and that it complies with Ministerial directions, having regard to the school ethos and the constitutional rights of all concerned
- Have regard for the principles and requirements of a democratic society and promote respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in our society
- Have regard to the efficient use of resources (particularly the grants provided by the State), the public interest in the affairs of the school and accountability to students, parents and the community
- Use the resources provided by the State to make reasonable provision and accommodation for students with disabilities or special needs, including, if necessary, the adaptation of buildings or provision of special equipment

How boards of management operate

The role and method of operation of boards of management of primary schools was agreed by the Department of Education, the school managers, parents and teachers in 2003. [The Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure \(pdf\)](#), revised in 2011, sets out the key activities of the Board.

Essentially, the board manages the school. Among other things:

- It has responsibility for drawing up the school plan and for ensuring that it is implemented.

- It appoints the principal, the teachers and other staff.
- It must ensure that the school fulfils its functions as set out in the Education Act 1998.
- It must promote contact between the school, the parents and the community and must facilitate and give all reasonable help to a parents' association in its formation and its activities.
- It has overall responsibility for the school's finances. It is obliged to have comprehensive insurance cover for the school. It must keep proper accounts, which may be audited by the Department of Education and Skills and/or the Comptroller and Auditor General. Its annual accounts must be available to the patron and the school community.
- It must ensure that child protection and welfare are taken into account in all of the school's policies, practices and activities. The board must ensure that the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools are fully implemented by the school.
- It must ensure the school has a Code of Behaviour and an anti-bullying policy.

The board must have a procedure for informing parents about its activities – this could include an annual report. [More information on boards of management](#) is available on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

Who is on the board

The composition of the board of management for schools with more than one teacher is

- Two direct nominees of the patron
- Two parents of children enrolled in the school (one mother and one father) elected by the parents
- The principal
- One other teacher elected by the teaching staff.
- Two extra members agreed by the representatives of the patron, teachers and parents.

There are certain criteria set out for choosing the 2 community representatives on the board of management.

- The people appointed must have a commitment to the ethos of the school. For Church of Ireland schools, they must be members of that Church.
- They must have skills that are complementary to the board's requirements and be prepared to take on allocated roles (see below).
- They must be interested in education but normally should not be parents of students currently attending the school or teachers currently on the staff
- The need to maintain a gender balance must be a consideration
- The elected parents and teacher, once elected, do not act in a representative or communicative role.

The patron appoints the chairman of the board.

The Rules set out in detail how the parents' representatives are to be chosen, including the notice to be given to all parents, how replacements are chosen, etc.

In general, members of the board may not hold any interest in the school property or get paid for serving on the board. The Education Act 1998 explicitly clarifies that being on the board does not confer any property interest on a board member. Employees, other than the teacher representatives, may not be on the board.

The following people are not eligible for membership of a board:

- A person who is an undischarged bankrupt or was involved in a court procedure for settling with creditors in the previous 3 years or
- A person who received a prison sentence in the previous 5 years.

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities should be agreed, and the workload being distributed fairly amongst all board members. Roles should include:

- Chairperson
- Principal (who acts as secretary to the board)
- Treasurer
- Capital Projects Officer
- Maintenance Officer
- School Premises Officer
- Minutes Secretary

It is essential that confidentiality is respected with regard to all board business and meetings.

Term of office of the board and meetings

The term of office for a board is 4 years and members can hold office only for 4 years although members are eligible for reappointment when their term of office expires.

The board meets once a month at the school.