

Wednesday 22nd February, 2023

Ballinteer ETNS Board of Management Meeting

Agreed Minutes for Circulation to the School Community

Background: Agreed minutes are a redacted version of the minutes from the school's Board of Management meetings. They are also known as Community Minutes and are actively circulated and freely available to members of the school's community. They are censored as required under law to protect privacy. Items are also sometimes redacted if the matter is ongoing and further consideration by school governance is warranted. Community minutes are agreed to by all members of the school's board prior to their release.

Abbreviations: PTA, Parents and Teachers Association; BoM, Ballinteer Educate Together National School Board of Management; SNA, Special Needs Assistant; DE, Department of Education

Circulation: School staff, PTA, parents/guardians, Ballinteer ETNS website

Attendance: Colette Kavanagh (CK), Rory O'Neill (RO'N), Paul O'Dwyer (PO'D), Jim O'Leary (JO'L), Anne-Marie Cashman (A-MC), SJ Schramm, (SJS), Patrick Flynn (PF), Mary Carron via Zoom (MC)

Apologies: N/A

Topic	Decision / Action to be taken
1. Minutes and matters arising	<p>Voting by staff on the school calendar for the 2023-24 year has concluded. The calendar will be shared with the school community by Paul in the coming days.</p> <p>The Parent Complaints Procedure has been uploaded to the school's website.</p> <p>The Intimate Care Policy has been uploaded to the school's website.</p> <p>A meeting of the Critical Incident Management Team will be scheduled for next week. PO'D to action.</p> <p>Mason Hayes Curran (solicitors firm) will be doing whole-staff training on 27/02/2023 in relation to managing behaviours of concern.</p>

	<p>CK reported that an initial meeting for the formation of the school’s Celebration Committee took place on 20/02/2023. During that meeting, decisions were made on the structure and organisation of the day as well as division of roles and areas of responsibility.</p> <p>CK and P’OD corresponded with the PTA chairperson regarding PTA Communications about road safety and playground/yard/outdoor equipment.</p> <p>A motion to approve the minutes of the previous BoM meeting was moved and passed unanimously.</p>
<p>2. Principal’s Report</p>	<p>Current enrolment (02/02/2023) is 394 students (source: Aladdin).</p> <p>An update on the current staffing situation was provided by the Principal. All teaching and non-teaching (i.e. SNA) roles in the school are currently filled. Known vacancies arising in the coming months have already been planned for.</p>
<p>3. Treasurer’s Report</p>	<p>JO’L contacted the school’s accountancy firm (Upper Third) on 17/02/2023 to request review and preparation of the school’s annual accounts. It is anticipated that those accounts will be ready for review and signing by the Chairperson of the board in the next week.</p>
<p>4. Finance Policy</p>	<p>JO’L summarised ongoing work in the development of a finance policy for the school. The draft policy, which was circulated to all board members prior to the meeting, was taken as pre-read and JO’L reiterated the vital importance of the policy in protecting the school against fraud.</p> <p>Per regulations it is the responsibility of the BoM to ensure that the necessary structures and controls are in place as the BoM is responsible for all business carried out in connection with or on account of the school. The policy summarises our responsibilities under legislation and per Department of Education governance guidelines.</p> <p>The BoM approved other people within the</p>

	<p>school community to raise money for school outside of Parents Association, provided there is prior approval by the BoM of the nature of the fundraiser and the purpose for raising the funds.</p> <p>CK thanked JO'L for months of hard work in relation to the school's accounts and the preparation of a Finance Policy. Board members agreed and reiterated their thanks to JO'L unanimously.</p> <p>The Finance Policy will be formally ratified at next month's BoM meeting.</p>
5. Staffing 2023-2024	<p>In 2023-2024, we will remain a P+16 school, with two special class teachers. Our SET allowance is 102.5 hours (4 full posts plus 2.5 hours per week). We have made an appeal for EAL supports. The school will receive one new permanent role due to the planned opening of our second autism class in September 2023.</p>
6. Outside School Hours Care Contract 2023-24	<p>PO'D advised that a survey (drafted earlier in the month in conjunction with SJS) may be of use in benchmarking and analysing the user satisfaction with the service provider (Kids Inc). This information would aim to assist the BoM in its review of rental agreed. Leases may only be granted by the BoM for a period of 12 months maximum at a time.</p>
7. Building Matters	<p>Building of the Wyckham Way pathway has commenced. The timeframe for the project will be communicated to families by PO'D shortly.</p> <p>PO'D advised that the installation of new GP Hall markings for basketball and 5-a-side football, as well as basketball hoops, will take place in approximately 8 weeks' time (early May).</p> <p>CK advised that she has acquired quotes for a stage and chairs for the school hall. There may also be a department grant available. CK will report back as new information comes to hand.</p>
8. Grand Opening and 10-year Celebration	<p>CK chaired the first meeting of the Celebration Committee on 20/02/23.</p>

	<p>Teachers have nominated Órla McCarthy as one of the two teachers on the committee. Órla McCarthy will arrange for the nomination of another teacher to the committee.</p> <p>CK clarified that the BoM will be responsible for a stage and chairs, invitations (will take advice on that from PTA), and (any) preparations for the Minister for Education, Norma Foley (should her attendance be confirmed).</p> <p>Teachers will prepare the children for the celebration. AMC spoke to the student council about sending on their suggestions for party ideas. The student council will provide their ideas to their teacher representative, Anna Crowley. AMC advised that the choir songs had been chosen.</p> <p>CK advised that Nina and Ciara would be the PTA members of the committee.</p> <p>Committee subgroups (BoM members, teachers, PTA members) will proceed with their tasks and RO'N (the Celebration Committee chairperson) will be responsible for calling the next meeting of that committee at the relevant time.</p>
<p>9. BoM meeting dates</p>	<p>Next meeting: 29th March 19.00.</p> <p>It was proposed and agreed that May's meeting of the BoM be moved to 17th May 2023 at 19:00.</p>

Board shorts...

This informal addition to the Community Minutes is intended as a helpful and instructive brief from the school's board to the broader school community. It aims to provide additional details on selected outcomes and/or work in progress by the school's board.

Education Events and Visits

- Code-breaking workshops, multiple classes (6th March 2023)
- 6th Class 1916 Walking Tour (deferred due to an electrical fault on the Luas line)
- School Art Exhibition (29th March 2023)
- Creative Schools Week (8th – 12th April 2023)
- Cumann na mBunscol Athletics (mid-May in UCD)
- 6th Class residential trip to Killary Adventure Centre (29th – 31st May 2023)
- Fifth Class (Jamie) Microsoft Dream Space visit (June 2023)
- Woolly Pet Farm visit to the school (28th March)

Ten-year Celebration Update

A celebration committee has been formed! It comprises two representatives from each of the teaching staff, the school's board, and parent's association.

Teacher, Anne-Marie, reports that the songs to be performed by the school's beautiful choir have been chosen and rehearsals are underway. The parent representatives have graciously accepted the sizeable task of catering for the official part of the day and we are also grateful that they will be helping to identify some of the VIP alumni we would be honoured to have in attendance. Our student council has begun brainstorming ideas for the children's party, which it is anticipated will take place outdoors on school grounds once the formal elements have concluded.

The date remains an open question as we patiently await to hear whether the Minister for Education can attend. Fingers crossed!

Outside School Hours Care

Many would already know that the school rents rooms to an outside school hours care service provider to deliver a convenient child-minding service before and after school, and to generate income for the school.

Under guidelines provided by the Department of Education the lease must be reviewed each year. Parent feedback about the performance and features of the existing service provider is an important consideration in the award or renewal of the lease. To that end, the school's board has created a survey for existing users of the service. The survey aims to monitor satisfaction as impartially as possible over time.

The survey design has taken into account the questions used in a similar survey generated by the PTA last year, so we thank them very much for that prior research and work in the matter.

The survey will be delivered to users of the service via an email from the school in the next week or two.

Building Works Update

Many will already know that the (very) long awaited Wyckham Way pedestrian and cycle pathway is expected to be completed within the next four weeks. Further to this good news, you may have observed that the 'hole in the wall' has been opened at Wyckham Way (hoarding is currently up). The old (inadequately sized) pathway has already been completely removed and the new 4m path is under construction.

This new pathway will provide two new points of access to the school, one of which is expected to be a 4m-wide pathway, allowing more comfort for all users. The northern end the pathway will connect into a laneway at the rear of the school and will allow through passage for many families in and around the Wyckham Point complex. At the other (eastern) end the pathway will connect to the Wyckham Way main road pedestrian-cycle greenway.

To access the school from Wyckham Place when the path is finished, follow the new pathway along a short way around the outside of the play areas and enter the school normally via the teacher-supervised front doors.

Keep your eyes peeled for the yellow cladding that will shortly be installed on the new design feature at the front of the school building.

Excitingly, the beautiful 'ribbon path' at the back of the school is now complete. Current works at the back of the school involve installing 4 benches along the route and raised beds at 2 other locations on the route. Crucially, we expect the soft pour surface to be poured in the dedicated autism class play area this week.

Finally, we thank the PTA for their advice that parents prefer to receive building updates directly from the school's principal, rather than from the school's board of management, so this will be the last update on school building matters in this newsletter.

Energy Matters!

Members of the school's board have initiated the development of an energy management plan for the school. The broad aim of the plan is for building users (students, staff, parents, and community and business groups) to understand and leverage the building's leading-edge energy saving features. Doing so will reduce emissions and keep the school's energy bills as low as possible.

A small team of teachers and parents has reached out to experts to invite them to share their vision and knowledge of our education space, and to advise us on its optimal use with respect to energy consumption.

Once that basic knowledge is in hand, the school's energy management team plans to distil and disseminate the information via student learning modules, teacher and caretaker checklists, and at various school events.

If energy management is an area of interest for you and you would like to be involved in the initiative, then you would be very welcome. Please contact the school for further details.

Bravo, bravissimo PTA!

News of the total revenue raised by families via the PTA in 2022-2023 – more than €10,000 after expenses – is simply marvelous! The school's students will be the direct beneficiaries of this income by way of film equipment, STEM equipment, PE equipment, library furniture, and a stage for the school's hall.

Thank you, PTA and families, for your ongoing support. Our students are in great hands.

Incidentally...

When is the best time for a school to receive an incidental (aka. *surprise*) inspection by our school inspector?

...first thing, the morning after the PTA quiz night, of course!

The inspector met with the principal to discuss organisational matters and issues around teaching and learning. Two mainstream class teachers were observed in practice and those teachers attended a meeting with the inspector afterwards. The inspector also met with Órla in her capacity as Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

The informal feedback was that the inspector reported being given a great welcome by everyone and really enjoyed the visit. There was lots of praise for the pupils' learning, the quality of our teaching, and the pupils' magnificent artwork through the building.

Specific feedback was provided to the principal around areas for improvement and these suggestions will be considered by the In-School Management team. Thereafter, a report will be provided to the school's board of management.

As this was an incidental inspection, no formal report is published by the Inspectorate (unlike a Whole School Evaluation).

Feeling Board...?

Did you know that members of the school's board of management (excluding the school's principal) are appointed for a period of 4-years?

The current 4-year term of office for boards of management of all primary schools started on the 1st December 2019.

This means that seats for *both* the male and female parent nominees will be opened to new candidates in or around September/October of this year. Elections for those positions will be held early in the new school year and parents of children who are enrolled and have commenced attendance at the school are entitled to put themselves forward as a candidate.

It's a few months away yet but here a few notes for parents who may be interested in supporting the school in this vital and voluntary governance role.

*People from all walks of life have something to offer the school's board.

*Diversity in membership (professional, experiential, gender, cultural, among others) is key to a robust, efficient, and successful board.

*Duties include financial oversight of the school's budget including approval of any spending, policy review and ratification, staffing and recruitment matters, and leadership and communication across the school's community.

*The time commitment varies; the current school board meets approximately every 5 weeks and there is an uptick in activity in the few days before, and week after, a meeting.

*Extraordinary meetings are occasionally required (several times a year) for recruitment or other ratifications – they are usually short meetings facilitated via video link.

*Ongoing training (which is free and regularly available) is an integral part of the role.

*Some parts of the work are challenging (even confronting), particularly matters that relate to child protection issues and/or policy discourse but there is support and information available both within and outside of the board itself.

*The best interests of the school's children must be at the forefront of all decisions by all members.

*Board members may (and, indeed, should) debate fervently and disagree (pro tip: it's not a high-quality board if its members agree with each other all the time) but when a decision is arrived at (a quorum is 5), the board acts as a single unit in the face and execution of that decision.

*Ambassadorship and outreach within the school's community is usually considered an important part of the role.

*For parents who may be on parental leave, time spent on the school's board may help to re-connect them with the workplace and build their confidence before a resumption of paid work.

*Reading the Community Minutes (and its concomitant 'Board Shorts' publication) is a great way to get your eye in on what the role entails.

*Note that a parent nominee on a board of management can be a member of the parents' association committee but should not hold a position of office on the parents' association committee.

*For detailed information see the [Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2019-2023](#).

If this role sounds like it may be something you would thrive in, whether your child is in Junior Infants or sixth class, then your candidacy will be most welcome. No action is required at this time; the school's principal will initiate the relevant procedures for election in the new school year.

Car Line Safety

We want to continue to implore our whole school community to be leaders together in road safety.

So...

1. Keep **vigilant** (drive very slowly, consider windows down);

2. Keep **left** (at all times to allow traffic to flow around the roundabout);
3. Keep **kids off the road** (do not let children alight before you are directed to a drop off space by the school's traffic monitor);
4. Keep in touch (**stay with your car** at all times when in the car line); and,
5. Keep connected (communicate kindly with community members who may not be aware of the safety tips above).

Thank you to the PTA for a detailed and valuable communication to the board (dated 11/01/23) highlighting ongoing work that might help build a leading road safety culture within the school.

There are plans afoot for a Road Safety Awareness Week. Details to come!

Lamington Drive Fundraiser

The school's Lamington Drive has raised €1,285 to date.

As a result the school has been able to install 6 pairs of [Horizontal Climbing Boards](#), purchased a [giant outdoor Connect 4 game](#), and is presently reviewing [Topline Markings](#) as another option for play and learning.

All suggestions for types of outdoor equipment – from smaller sensory experiences to sports equipment and larger ticket items – are most warmly welcomed. Please submit your idea for the equipment to Paul via email and it will be enthusiastically considered!

In the meantime, continue to head to the flag poles around pick up time on Fridays for more tasty treats. Ingredients and time are donated so 100% of the donations gets converted into outdoor play equipment for our students.

Do you have a delicious treat from your country of origin that you would be willing to donate to the Friday fun? If so, please contact SJ on 089 603 5440.

School Board Training

A member of the school board has completed the Energy in Education workshop run by the [seai](#) and the [Department of Education](#).

Members of the school board attended training in Child Protection for Boards of Management, delivered by Educate Together.

Upcoming training for board members is scheduled in the areas of:

- *Data Protection for Boards of Management
 - *Recruitment & Appointment of Staff
 - *Board Finances and the Role of the Treasurer
- Reviews and Ratifications*

Up to date policy documents are available on the school's website [here](#).

Feedback on the school's policies is always welcomed.