

BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

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ESTABLISHING A BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Schools with more than one teacher:

- 2 direct nominees of the patron/patron body, one of whom shall be Chairperson
- 2 parents of children enrolled in the school, one mother, one father.
- The Principal and one other teacher in the school, elected by the teaching staff,
- 2 members from the community proposed by the six above at its first meeting.

For one teacher schools:

- 1 nominee of patron
 - 1 Principal
 - 1 parent (elected)
 - 1 other.



Patron

- Patron has a duty to appoint a BoM for each school to ensure that a recognised school is managed in a spirit of partnership (Education Act, 1998). The patron has ultimate responsibility for the school but may delegate much of that responsibility to the BoM.





Communication with Patron

- The Board will contact the patron on a number of specific issues: appointment to the Board, appointment, suspension or dismissal of teachers and finance. The patron is entitled to request reports or documentation from the school and minutes of BoM meetings.

Do the Board members represent various interest groups?

- Absolutely not.

The Board is a corporate body, meaning that all 8 members, once appointed, act together as a unit. Individuals do not act as representing various groups within the Board.



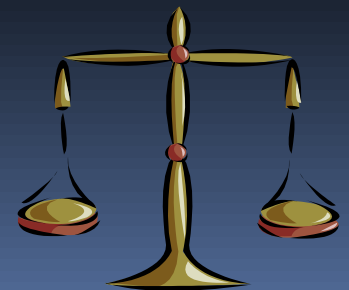
Confidentiality



- All members are required to keep confidential the matters discussed at meetings unless otherwise agreed by the Board. It is good practice at the end of a meeting to agree an agreed report which can then be reported back to staff or parents association. A violation of this rule can lead to dismissal from the Board (following proper procedures in relation to dismissal from the Board.)

Indemnity

- The Board and individual members of the Board are indemnified for any claims made against them under Section 14 (7) of the Education Act, (1998) provided they are acting in good faith and within the provisions of the Education Act, the Rules and Procedures for Boards of Management and the Rules for National Schools.



Function



- The Board is charged with the day to day management of the school so as to provide an appropriate education for each student in the school. All school policies must be approved by the Board. The Board as employer appoints the principal, the teachers and other staff and is responsible for contract issues. It has overall responsibility for the school's finances. It is obliged to have comprehensive insurance cover for the school. It must keep proper annual accounts which must be available to the patron and the school community.

Number of meetings

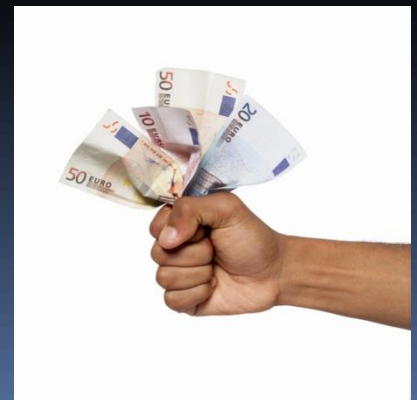
- 5 per annum is the minimum (Constitution of Boards and Rules of Procedure p. 13) but additional meetings may be arranged as needed.



Finance

- “A Board shall keep all proper and usual accounts and records of all monies received by it or expenditure of such monies incurred by it and shall ensure that in each year all such accounts are properly audited or certified in accordance with best accounting practice.”

Education Act 1998, s 18 (1)





- All expenditure by or on behalf of the Board must be approved by the Board. The production of a financial report at each meeting allows the whole Board make informed decisions in regard to spending, budgets etc. an annual report should be produced at the end of each school year and should be “properly audited or certified”. The annual audit/certification can only be done by a third party independent of the BoM. If there is an accountant on the BoM that person cannot do this work.

BoM and Parent Association finances



The BoM Information Manual (pg. 35) stipulates that:

- A Parents' Association (P.A.) is entitled to raise funds for the administration and activities of the Association
- Full accounts must be maintained and presented at the Annual General Meeting of the P.A.
- The P.A. should consult with the Board about fundraising for the school or school projects.
- The approval of the Board is needed prior to these funds being raised.
- The expenditure of these funds is by the BOM in consultation with the P.A
- The Board prepares a total account of income and expenditure at the end of each year and this is available to parents
- Any funds raised must be used for the purpose(s) for which the money was collected
- If, in exceptional circumstances, it becomes unnecessary for the Board to use all of the funds collected for the purpose specified, the Board will communicate this to the Parents' Association and, where appropriate, the local community.

BoM as employer

- When appointing staff, either permanent or part-time, it is imperative to follow to the letter of the law the procedures laid out in "Appointment of teachers". There will be an additional appendix in the revised Boards of Management Rules & Procedures book - to be re-published in the Autumn, covering this area specifically.

All BoM members should be given copies of BOM handbooks etc when they are delivered to schools and ALL members should avail of training when it is organised (not just Principal & Chairperson as often happens)


Dealing with complaints

- From parents: the complaints procedure to be used is outlined in CPSMA Handbook p.318
- From teachers: The Grievance Procedure for teachers s agreed between INTO and Management Bodies is outlined in CPSMA Handbook p. 208



Principal as secretary of BoM

- The Principal may, should he/she wish, act as secretary to the BoM. He/she is entitled to be paid an allowance for this. Principals wishing to avail of the allowance should complete the Application Form at Appendix 1, of Circular 0079/07 and have it signed by the Chairperson of the Board of Management. On receipt of a completed Application Form, payment of the allowance will be made on a fortnightly basis with salary.



The following is a broad outline of the duties of a Secretary to a Board of Management.

- Set the Agenda for meetings in consultation with the Chairperson.
- Issue notice of meeting and agenda to Board members.
- Record the minutes of Board meetings - to include issues discussed, decisions taken, including the numbers of those voting for or against a motion, and actions to be taken.
- Transmit Board decisions to relevant parties and follow up appropriately.
- Keep minutes of each meeting in an appropriate form and in a safe place.
- Deal with Board of Management correspondence.
- Liaise with Chairperson between meetings.
- Provide information to members concerning Board of Management rights and responsibilities
- Liaise with school management bodies on behalf of BOM and apprise BOM members of advice and guidance received.
- Advance development of school policies.

- The principal, if acting as secretary to the BoM, does **not** have to act as recording secretary at meetings. This duty may be delegated by another Board member.

Safekeeping of documents

The Principal should ensure that all record books – Minutes/Treasurers log books – are kept in a secure place on the school premises (should be part of schools Record Keeping Policy). The minute books should be treated as legal documents.



Principal's report

- The Principal's Report forms a part of the agenda of all meetings. There is a template in PIMS which may be helpful in this regard.



Roles


- Once the Board is fully constituted it should nominate from within its membership a Recording Secretary, Treasurer and Safety Officer. It may also wish to nominate a Maintenance/buildings Officer.







Getting the best people to act on BoMs

Generally people will join a BoM for one of the following reasons:

- They are civic-minded and are willing to volunteer for committees which will help their local community
 - They have an interest in education and are willing to contribute to the governance of their local school
 - They have a child in the school and believe that by acting on the BoM they can help make their child's school better
 - They feel that by being on the BoM their child will be given preferential treatment
 - They have "issues" which they feel they can advance through membership of the BoM
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- It is important that a school gets people from motives 1, 2 or 3 !!!!!



In considering possible candidates for the BoM from within the school community or locality it is important to consider the skills that could be useful: accountancy/finance, legal, building and construction, H.R. and to let it be known that the BoM needs such people.