

# Partnership Schools Ireland



Partnership Schools Ireland is a joint initiative by National Parents Council Primary (NPC) and Irish Primary Principals Network (IPPN). Better outcomes for children are the main objectives of “a Partnership School”, achieved by the whole school community, planning and working together on agreed activities.

## WHAT IS AN ACTION TEAM PARTNERSHIP? (ATP)

Action Team Partnerships (ATP) is a research and evidenced-based approach\*. The Action Team Partnership model originated in America and is now used in other countries such as Australia, Scotland and since 2014, in Ireland. The approach seeks to encourage children, school staff, parents and community partners to work together, to form an effective partnership in their school for the benefit of the children.

This partnership can work extremely well. Principals and teaching staff are glad of the extra ideas and the practical supports which are organised by the Action Team Partnership members. The partnership does not interfere with, or change the school's programme of work, but often enhances it and brings about better outcomes for children.

The ATP group meets regularly and acts as a support to the work of the school. It has a totally different remit from the Board of Management and the Parents' Association, and works with both in achieving better outcomes for children in the school.

## WHAT DOES AN ACTION TEAM PARTNERSHIP LOOK LIKE?

The Principal usually selects the members of the first ATP. The ATP may be different in makeup in each school: often dependent on the school's local needs and size. The people selected for the Action Team Partnership need to be representative of the different stake-holders. They must be enthusiastic and supportive for the wide range of curriculum and extra-curricular activities present in the school. An ATP may have a membership of between 6-18 members.

\*(Reference: School, Family and Community Partnerships: Joyce I. Epstein and Associates, 2009)

The following is a list of representatives that could be represented on the partnership team:

- Children who are enrolled and attending the school
- Parents of children who attend the school
- Teachers
- School administrative staff
- Other professionals in schools – for example home school liaison officer, social worker etc.
- Community and local business representatives
- Principal (always a member) of the group but does not chair the group

## WHAT DOES THE ACTION TEAM PARTNERSHIP (ATP) DO?

- Write a one Year Action Plan for Partnership with activities linked to selected goals from the school's improvement plan (SSE). The plan will include two academic goals, one well-being and one partnership goal
- Review and monitor the progress of each goal and work together to overcome any challenges that may occur in achieving each goal
- Recruit and recognise other teachers, parents and community members when needed to achieve goals and to maintain the partnership on a year to year basis
- Evaluate how each goal has benefited the school and achieved better outcomes for the children who attend the school
- Report progress to the school Management Board, Parent Association and other key groups in the school
- Encourage and support children, parents and the local community to work closely with the school to bring about better outcomes for children

## HOW OFTEN DOES AN ACTION TEAM PARTNERSHIP MEET?

The ATP group should meet regularly to coordinate and review activities. Each school is different and each partnership group will reflect the needs of the school. It is useful to develop an outline of meetings of the group that is planned for the year.

## IS THERE TRAINING AVAILABLE TO HELP YOU DEVELOP YOUR ACTION TEAM PARTNERSHIP?

Yes, training will be provided by the National Parents Council Primary (NPC) for each school interested in setting up an ATP. The training consists of two sessions, lasting three hours in duration: usually delivered over a two week period (but flexible,

dependent on need). This training will enable ATP members in your school to establish a one year action plan (linked to the school's improvement plan). By the end of the training your school will have its first year action plan ready to go!

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO IF INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING AN ATP FOR MY SCHOOL?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of setting up such a partnership in your school please contact the Project Co-ordinator (see contact details below).

### WHAT SUPPORT WILL I RECEIVE FROM NATIONAL PARENTS COUNCIL PRIMARY?

In developing the model in Ireland, NPC have appointed a Project Co-ordinator to train and support the schools' partnership groups. The co-ordinator will be responsible for the co-ordination of all training, support and evaluation and will continue to develop ATPs for primary schools across Ireland.

Further support available through the Co-ordinator will include:

- A Helpline for ATP schools on a Tuesday afternoon
- Chairing and co-ordinating a national support meeting for ATP chairpersons twice a year
- Providing a newsletter for ATP schools, each school term
- Telephone advice and support for individual ATP when and if required
- A yearly report of the progress and ongoing evaluation of ATP across Ireland and internationally

If you are interested in learning more about the Partnership Schools Ireland project please call Liam McPherson Tel. 01 8874478 or email: [lmcperson@npc.ie](mailto:lmcperson@npc.ie)



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Partnership  
**SCHOOLS  
IRELAND**



National Parents Council Primary  
12 Marlborough Court, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1  
Tel: +353 1 887 4034 • Fax: +353 1 887 4489 • Email: [info@npc.ie](mailto:info@npc.ie)  
Information/Helpline:  
Tel: +353 1 887 4477 • Email: [helpline@npc.ie](mailto:helpline@npc.ie)  
[www.npc.ie](http://www.npc.ie)

# The Role of the Action Team Partnership