



Minutes of inaugural GETNS PA

October 4th 2011

Attended by:

Susan Battah, Peter Bishton, Catherine Boothman, Jane Browne, Barbara Campbell, Tanya Cawley-Leahy, Pat Cusack, Evan Furlong, Sarah Kernaghan, Niamh Mac Cárthaigh, Fiona McCarthy, Fiona NícChoiligh, Katarzyna Nikonowicz, Garrett Phelan

Apologises

Lynnea Connolly, Eimear McCarthy, Aran McMahan, Inga Muganga

Committee members election

Chairperson - Fiona NícChoiligh

Secretary – Peter Bishton

Treasurer – This position remains vacant until next meeting

Fundraising – Catherine Boothman

Sarah Kernaghan as second

PRO -This position remains vacant until next meeting

Dave Malone out-going treasurer has agreed to talk through the position with any interested parties.

ETHOS Program

The ETHOS Program was discussed – this was a ‘big’ topic at the AGM and generated a huge amount of interest. It is felt that we could provide additional information to parents around this issue.

Geraldine has volunteered to speak with parents and also provide some material which can be posted on the website. Barbara to tie down details and try and get an ETHOS program for each year – Senior Infants program has already been secured .

Communication

Parent Survey - Lynnea is working on a parental survey and will communicate the PA separately

Website

There have been wonderful developments on the GETNSPA website which are down to the incredible work of Katarzyna – the PA hope that the website will become an integral part of how we communicate with other parents as we go forward.

Parent /Teacher Communication

Communication between and teachers and parents was discussed at length – the smaller pouch which can be used to communicate to teachers was not known to some parents – it was discussed that it could be helpful for new parents to have a general tips section on the website.

Suggested lunches and portion sizes were also suggested for this section – Geraldine has agreed to put forward some ideas

TEXT to Parent

This has been discussed and agreed at the last PA meeting and funding has been assigned. Peter has agreed to supply a phone and Garret will purchase a new SIM card for the service. It is agreed that there will be no manning of the phone – i.e. we will not respond to any queries made in response to texts sent by the PA using the service – this will be clearly noted 'Queries via website only' at the end of initial messages.

It is proposed that we ask the school to send a message to their database with an opt out option; whereby if they do not opt out we can then take their number and add it to the PA database – Tanya has some experience of this and can advise if required.

Coffee mornings

Aran has very kindly agreed to continue manning these every second Wednesday (to be reviewed). It was noted that something to notify parents that it is being held that morning (other than via the website) such as a giant coffee cup might be an idea – to be progressed

Teacher Involvement

It is hoped that greater co-operation and involvement between the PA and teachers could be developed this year.

It was also noted that the teachers of the GETNS were incredibly supportive and involved with a recent 'Social Stories' event....

PTA vs. PA

Discussed at length at last meeting – it was agreed with the new committee to retain the current structure of the PA

ECA

It is felt that there are a number of fundamental issues that need to be addressed in the current document. There is a concern that the proposed structure would not be sustainable on an on-going basis.

The PA would like to clearly identify the goals of the ECA and build up criteria for choosing activities and how they should be run. A new sub-committee has been created to discuss this issue in further detail this will comprise of: Jane / Katarzyna / Sarah / Evan / Catherine.

Green School

Incredible work has been undertaken by Hannah and Sarah since the opening of GETNS – it is hoped that we can develop this program and make parents more aware of the all the work that has/and is taking place and hopefully get more parents and students involved.

Barbara has had initial discussions with Hannah about having an 'open day' so there would be an opportunity for the greater school population to see the great work that has been done, discuss plans and also help out. It is hoped that we can agree a 'GREEN DAY' at least once a term for everyone to get more involved.

Sarah also feels it would be great to create better signage for the Green Garden that is created from artwork from the students. A new sub-committee has been created: Sarah, Jane, Barbara and Niamh to join Sarah and Hannah.

Fundraising

Tesco Bag Back

Monies raised - €1365 – well done to all involved!

Some feedback; there were a number of queries about both our national school (GETNS) and also the second level campaign – those who volunteered also felt that those who queried gave larger donations as a sign of gratitude!

For future bag packs some feedback: a way of providing information to those who have queries would be very helpful – one suggestion would be stickers listing relevant websites and perhaps a fact sheet to be given to volunteers to help them answer FAQs.

Other comments were that staffing on Thursday and Friday could have been partially pared back – additional bodies on the Saturday would have been invaluable

Christmas cards

Upcoming events include the student 'Christmas' cards – Aideen has contacted Barbara to say that the school is happy to deal with this directly – Barbara to get updates so they can be updated on PA website

A Christmas social

It has been proposed that we name a location and ask parents to come along for a 'Christmas Night Out' – there will no admission or fundraising aspect to the event. The PA support such an idea and Aran is investigating possible venues and dates

ET Fundraiser

Catherine sent a list of suggestions created by the older classes for discussion by the PA. Our comments and suggestions are to be forwarded to Principal Catherine

Commercial / Corporate School Fundraisers

GETNS does not actively seek any commercial vouchers/tokens such as: TESCO Computers for Schools or NESTLE BoxTops4Education – but should such vouchers/tokens be given to the school they are happy to accept them. It has been suggested by GETNS staff that a general (non branded) box be set up so that parents/students can drop in token/vouchers.

Library committee

New sub –committee formed – members: Lynnea, Jo, Niamh, Eilish

AOB

Healthy Eating Policy

It has been raised by a number of parents that their children have come home querying why it is okay for teachers to eat biscuits and drink chocolate drinks when they are not allowed.

The PA would respectively like to make teachers aware that they are being 'watched' and are viewed as 'Role Models' by students. Happy to amend as I know wording is sensitive!

E-mail etiquette

It is requested that we keep the number of e-mails from the PA to a minimum, can we all endeavour to avoid using the PA e-mail other than when ALL members need to read/review that e-mail.

NEXT MEETING – NOVEMBER 8th 2011

Actions

Results of Bag Pack fundraiser to be posted on website	KW
Comments re suggestions for Bag Pak to be added to Fundraising file	BC
Barbara to get further information on the ETHOS program	BC
General info section on GETNS to be set up on website – e.g.: small pouch	
Get lunch and portion size ideas from Geraldine	BC
Healthy Eating Group to suggest lunch suggestions	
Peter to supply phone	PB
Garret to purchase new SIM card for TEXT Service	GP
Update from new ECA sub-committee at next meeting	
Update from new Green sub-committee at next meeting	
PA comments re ET Fundraising ideas to be forwarded to Catherine	BC
New SIM card to be purchased	GP
Opt in for new PA database to be discussed with Aideen	GP
Christmas social update	AmcM