

Volunteer Role Description Patron Nominee

Purpose of the role

- The Patron Nominee role is a key position on an Educate Together School Board of Management.
- The overall context of the role and key activities of the Board are listed in the role description below.
- Patron Nominees act as the specific point of contact and communication person between the National Office of Educate Together and the Board of Management of the local school. Any information, memo's, requests and enquiries from the National Office must be promptly shared with the relevant parties in the school community.

In most (but not all) instances, a Patron Nominee may be appointed Chairperson. This position plays a key role in the governance and management of the school. The Chairperson ensures that the Board of Management functions properly, that all board members take part during meetings, all relevant matters are discussed and that effective decisions are made and carried out. The Chairperson is formally appointed into the role by Educate Together.

Overall context of the role

There are 8 members on the Board of Management of a National School. It is made up of two staff nominees (the Principal and an elected teacher) two parent nominees elected by the Parent body, two community nominees and two patron nominees appointed by Educate Together. Under the Education Act, the Board of Management must undertake to run the school according to the ethos determined by the Patron. *The Patron Representatives do not necessarily have any connection with the school community and it is important to recognise that new members bring fresh ideas, new thinking and new experiences!*

Key Relationships

- The Principal of the School
- Other members of the school's Board of Management
- The Department of Education and Skills
- The Educate Together National Office

Keys activities of the Board of Management

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

- 1 It has responsibility for drawing up the school plan and for ensuring that it is implemented.
- 2 It appoints the Principal, the teachers and other staff and provides a direct line of support to the Principal
- 3 It must ensure that the school fulfills its functions as set out in the Education Act 1998.
- 4 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.
- 5 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.
- 6 The Child Centred aspect of the Educate Together Charter ensures that all decisions are taken with the best interests of the children in mind! More information about this charter is available in the 'What is an Educate Together School?' booklet, available for download on the Educate Together Website

What you give

- Experience
- Time
- Commitment
- Opinions and Ideas
- Support to school Community
- Acting collectively as management

What you get

- Learning new skills
- Knowledge of Education system
- Understanding of group dynamics
- Influence on national educational policy (through involvement with Educate Together)
- Empowerment

Hours of Work: Overall approximately 6-10 hours per month

- The Patron Nominee will attend the Board of Management meeting once a month. These meetings are usually up to two hours long.
- Occasionally there may be issues that need to be supported by the Patron Nominee, which may include meetings outside of the monthly Board of Management meetings.
- The Patron Nominee would be expected to read all reports in advance of Board of Management meetings - distributed 1-2 weeks before.
- Depending on what role of the Patron Nominee may take on, on the Board of Management, there may be some work between meetings e.g. if appointed Chairperson etc.

Length of commitment: The current term of office is until December 2015 when the Board of Management is reappointed and re-elected. This takes place every 4 years.

Support: The Function and role of Board members is directed by the Rules as outlined by the Department of

Skills

- Excellent Interpersonal Skills
- A competent decision maker
- Excellent communications skills
- Ability to deal with conflict
- Positively engaged and motivated
- Open minded and easy to get along with
- Confidence to question
- Ability to build consensus
- Thorough and detail orientated (policy development/research etc.)
- Ability to not take things personally, or to let things be taken personally

Knowledge

- Knowledge of the general area in which the school is located
- A good understanding of the Educate Together ethos (or willingness to learn)
- Understanding of the Irish Primary-level system, rule and regulations (or willingness to learn)

Experience

- Experience of Human Resource/General Business Management
- Experience of chairing Committees (not necessarily in a school context) however experience at Board of Management level would be an advantage

Personal Qualities

- Personal and professional Integrity
- Objective and Non Judgemental
- Commitment to the ethos of Educate Together
- Strategic thinker

Benefits of Volunteering in this role

- All board members will receive Educate Together Induction Training
- An opportunity to engage leadership skill-set within a school governance setting
- Facilitating and continuing development of a school of excellence, within the Educate Together ethos
- A chance to expand professional networks
- A chance to contribute to Educate Together National policy through the school's membership to the National Office.

Should you have any queries regarding this position, please contact Jessica Simpson, Governance and Patronage Assistant on 01 4292500 or email jessica.simpson@educatetogether.ie