



GRIFFEN COMMUNITY

COLLEGE

Parent Association

Welcome to our College!

Parents Booklet

2023/2024



Find us on

Facebook

Griffen Community College Parents

November 2023

Note from the Chairperson

As you know the college is only a short time in existence and back in 2019 parents were asked if they would form a Parents Association Committee. We started with nothing but were very willing to do whatever we could to support our college and to show the staff and students that they had our full support from the start.

We, and you, are very lucky to be involved in a school such as ours, a fabulous developing school and a growing student and staff community... and that is what it is, a community that you will now become a part of.

You will have spent time with the staff, understanding what being a parent of a student in second level means, all the changes you and your child will experience. But what you may not hear from the staff is how committed they are, giving up their time after hours to coach sports, encourage musical talents, and organise many extra-curricular events and projects.

Griffeen Community College has a wonderful staff team led by Mr. Kelly, and Ms. Morrow.

In fact, though they won't admit it now, your children will get every possible opportunity in Griffeen Community College, to set them up to make the best-informed career and life choices.

In the coming years you will find out what it means to be a part of this and no matter what commitments or time you may have available to get involved, you will always be welcome.

We owe it to our children to give them the best start in life and as a student in Griffeen Community College they are on the right track already!

Lynda Slater

Chairperson

In the following pages, we have provided some information, and tips that we have gathered from our experiences as parents of new students to secondary level, and hope you will find them useful too.

What is a Parents Association?

A Parent Association is a group of parents whose main concern is the educational development and educational opportunities of their children. It gives us the opportunity to voice our opinions and ideas. It shows the staff and students that we are interested not only in their academic progress but their personal development as well.

Examples of how a Parent Association can help is by assisting at, or organising events and functions for students and parents; collaborating with college management in policy making; fundraising for cultural, leisure and extra-curriculum activities and facilities.

It also gives us a forum for discussing and sharing our ideas and concerns with other parents. When our children were in primary school, we collected them, were given notes and were involved in every stage. In second level, it is all very different! They go and come home with their friends, don't want you at the school gate, and forget to hand up information notes! Welcome to the teenage world!

But no need to worry, if you get involved in the Parents Association you will have a backup system! You will have heard about the methods of communication used by the College like notes in journals, and text messages etc. but sometimes you need to discuss issues with other parents who may be experiencing the same difficulties or uncertainty as you, and others more experienced may be able to reassure you!

You can join at any time or submit your details by messaging us on Facebook:

Griffennccparents@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/share/iCAM1qiNMdkMHEJH/?mibextid=K35XfP>



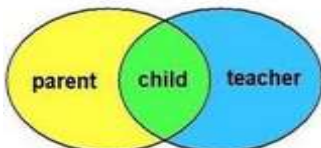
Just to be clear, we do not act as a complaints forum against teaching staff in areas which are the responsibility of the principal or board of management.

Objectives of the Griffeen Community College Parents Association

The Parents Association shall promote the interests of the students in the school in co-operation with the Board of Management, Principal, teachers, students and parents.

The Association aims to achieve this by:

1. Adopting a programme of activities which will promote the involvement of parents in the operation of the school in consultation with the principal.
2. Consulting with parents, so that parents can express their views on school policy matters relating to the school; to represent the views of parents on matters of local educational significance.
3. Cooperating with, and advising the Principal or the Board of Management on matters relating to the school, when requested. The association should choose two nominees for the School Board of Management (one female and one male representative)
4. Supporting the school in extra-curricular activities.
5. Providing access to education and training for parents as required.
6. Informing parents of developments in education and in the school.
7. Raising funds for the benefit of pupils.
8. Using our individual strengths collectively for the benefit of the school and for the students.



Our PA Committee

Our association committee was established in 2019 and works hand in hand with the staff of the College in many areas such as developing new policies, providing our ideas and opinions, and supporting the staff and students.

Our activities vary from fundraising for the College, to organising speakers and information evenings for parents on relevant topics.

We have a very strong committee of dedicated parents and are always open to new members and ideas to ensure that we fully represent the College community.

Any parents new to the College or who have first year students, and any parents who might now be interested, are welcome to come to our meetings at any time.

We meet once a month. If you feel you can't attend meetings we would welcome support in other ways, just make yourself known to any of the committee members listed below (you may see familiar names of friends or neighbours so please contact us at any time or via the College). Our Parents Facebook Page group is:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/iCAM1qiNMdkMHEJH/?mibextid=K35XfP>

You can also contact us by email:

Griffennccparents@gmail.com



The Parents Association Committee current members are:

Chairperson: Lynda Slater
Secretary: Anita Hogan
Treasurer: Patricia Wynne
Parents Association: Anita O'Neill
Clare Reynolds
Maureen Kelly-Fox
Tom Jackson
Denise Johnston
Michelle Lattimore
Suzanne Richardson
Mary Brien

When most of us started out as first-time parents of a second level student, we all had questions, needed clarity or understanding of the college policies, and the day-to-day routine of a second level student and their school day. Through word of mouth, chatting with other parents (especially of those already in the college) we learned more. Some might seem obvious or you may be aware of them already but in the section below, we have selected some of the more common questions – and their answers – that you might find useful in navigating through the maze!

Frequently Asked Questions and Tips

Copies/Hardbacks –As this year’s incoming first years will be using tablets this information is only relative to copies and hardbacks. The students will have their tablet with them in most classes.

Q- My son is in first year and always seems to leave a book or copybook in his locker, any suggestions to help him be more organised?

A- A good idea that some parents have found helpful is to buy B4 Ziploc /A4 plastic pouches – one for each subject with the notes, hardback, and copybook inserted, label it with the subject name and your student only has to grab the pouch and run to class!

Q- My daughter seems to have a very heavy book bag – is there any way of lightening the load?

A-One suggestion is to replace ‘hardback’ A4 copies with a soft/plastic cover version available in local stationery/book shops e.g. Easons.

Timetable

Q- My son struggled in the early weeks – leaving copies at home or in the locker, how can I help him be more organised?

A- Copy the timetable for home and enlarge one for inside the locker door – will help to get into a routine. In the first few weeks you can help by checking the timetable and be aware of days when they need their PE, Art or Tech Graphics bags etc. to have them ready.

Journal

Q-Are we supposed to check the journal each night?

A-It’s a good habit to start, you are expected to sign the journal when your child has finished homework each night, and it gives you the opportunity to observe any comments from the teachers or tutors. Sometimes there are notes

from the tutor for your attention that have to be acknowledged by your signature.

Communications to & from the College

Q- *How will I know if there is an event or school meeting?*

A-

The College will send messages through the VShare App and information will also be put on the school website <https://griffeecc.ie/> , on the twitter page, or tutor's notes in Journals. If you need to contact a teacher or tutor, you should write a note in the journal or email info@griffeecc.ie.

The Parents Association has a Facebook Page to keep you informed and provide more details or reminders. Check it out – Griffeen Community College Parents. and so you just need to "join the group".

Parents are encouraged to download the VShare App from the Google Play store or from Apple Store. Information on downloading the APP can be found on the website at this link:

<https://griffeecc.ie/Page/VShare-App/216676/Index.html>

The online link to vshare can be found here:

<https://griffeecc.app.vshare.ie/>

The link to VShare can be found at the QR code below:



Uniform

Q – *I know the uniform supplier is The School Wearhouse <https://schoolwearhouse.ie/> but apart from the crested uniform of jumper, tie, PE kit, skirts and jackets are there other items that are standard uniform?*

A – Yes, girl's shirts must be blue, boy's shirts are also blue, boy's trousers must be navy, all socks must be navy, and shoes black

Q – *My son always seems to come home either without his jacket or someone else's jumper. Any ideas?*

A – The school warehouse offer a name printing service, when ordering uniforms, for a small charge.

Q – *My child is starting first year, do they have to wear her PE uniform in school for the day?*

A Students can wear their tracksuit to school on the day they have PE

Lockers

Q – *My child keeps forgetting their locker combination – any suggestions?*

A – The school caretaker has a master key for all lockers. A student must go to their tutor and they in turn will ask the caretaker to open the student's locker and the code be reset

General information

Did you know that there are 'clubs' that your student might find useful or interesting? Chess, Choir, Environmental club, LGFA, GAA, Athletics, Maths Club, etc. there will be sure to be something for your young person

Supports for 1st Years provided by the school

First Day: First year students come in by themselves to meet their tutor and student mentors. They have an organisational session with their tutor, learning how to read their timetable and organise their tablet, copies, hardbacks and equipment, and learn about our everyday routines.

Students who do not know anyone: If a student does not know anyone, we give responsibility to 2/3 others in their class group to take care of them for the first few days until they settle in and make friends.

Prefects: All first-year students are allocated an older student as a mentor. This mentor has the responsibility of helping new students settle in. The mentor helps students interact and make friends. They are also available to answer any questions the new students may have. The mentor will also speak to staff about any first-year student who does not seem to be settling in well. Student mentors meet first year students every day to help with organisation. After midterm break, student mentors will organise activities for first year students.

SPHE: Our SPHE programme focuses in the first few weeks on issues and questions around settling in to post primary school. This class is taught by the tutor, who has responsibility for the care of the class group. This period gives students an opportunity to ask questions about our college and discuss any concerns they may have.

Regular Assessments: The school has a regular assessment policy. Teachers set regular class assessments, which support students in developing the habit of doing regular revision and study. The results of these tests are written in the journal. Parents are encouraged to check these results and sign.

Study Plans: Before the formal examinations held in November, February and May, Teachers take time to help students break down the revision into manageable sections. It helps students to focus on the skills to be examined, and develop an awareness of which areas of skills are the most important. Students are also helped prepare by timing questions and including marks for each question on the exam paper.

Target Setting: Following each set of formal examinations, Tutors take time to meet each student and review their results and set individual targets for improvement.

Student Journal: Parents/Guardians are strongly encouraged to look at the journal every day. Subject teachers use the journal to note work well done, in class test results, project grades, and any incidents of homework not done or forgotten books etc. The class tutor collects the journals every week and comments on the student's progress and work for that week.

Extra-Curricular activities: There is a large range of extra-curricular activities available – something for everyone! The school strongly encourages all students to take part in at least one activity – to make new friends and perhaps learn a new skill.

People who support the students:

Class Tutor

Year head

Guidance Counsellor

Learning Code

Merits/Postcards

Awards

Student of the Week/Month

Prefects

Leadership Initiatives: Student Council; Wellbeing Captains

How to keep cool and support your child during exam times

According to helpline sources many students feel that the greatest pressure at exams time comes from their families. The following tips were sourced from www.nspcc.co.uk, www.schooldays.ie an article in the Irish Independent 23 May 2011 as well as parent's general experience

- Watch out for signs of exam stress – irritability, not sleeping well, losing interest in food, headaches and stomach pains - a balanced diet can help them feel more energetic during exam periods (high-fat, high-sugar foods and drinks leads to hyperactive, irritable and moody episodes).
- Encourage sleep – this will improve concentration (teenagers need between 8-10 hours' sleep a night)
- Help them to study and revise by providing a comfortable area to work – no distractions with electronic devices which should be banned during study/homework time.
- Planning a study schedule can ease the panic.

- Talk to them about feeling nervous, that it is normal, and encourage them by reminding them of how much work they have done, to help them feel confident.
- Be flexible – when your child is revising all day, don't nag them about chores or tidying their room, allow some down-time to watch TV or hang out with friends, and encourage them to go out for walks in the fresh air – remember, exams don't last forever!

If it's getting too much – have a break – both of you!



Recommended Reading



David Coleman - *Parenting is Child's Play – the teenage years*

Karen Sullivan – *You want to do what?*

Padraig Lawlor/Philip O'Callaghan – *Make It Happen – a success guide for teenagers*

Julie Casey M.Ed - *Going to secondary school 101 tips for parents - Find sample pages on*

<http://www.futurelinkpublishing.co.uk/publish/publications/secondary-school.html>

Links:



Griffen Community College Parents

<https://www.facebook.com/share/iCAM1qiNMdkMHEJH/?mibextid=K35XfP>

www.griffeencce.ie www.schooldays.ie www.askaboutireland.ie

www.scoilnet.com www.skool.ie

www.focal.ie

Useful Sites:

www.education.ie Department of Education

www.ncca.ie information on junior/senior cycle curriculum

www.examinations.ie State examination commission for exam papers and marking schemes

www.npavscce.ie National Parents Association for Vocational Schools

www.hse.ie health services, family support, healthy eating etc

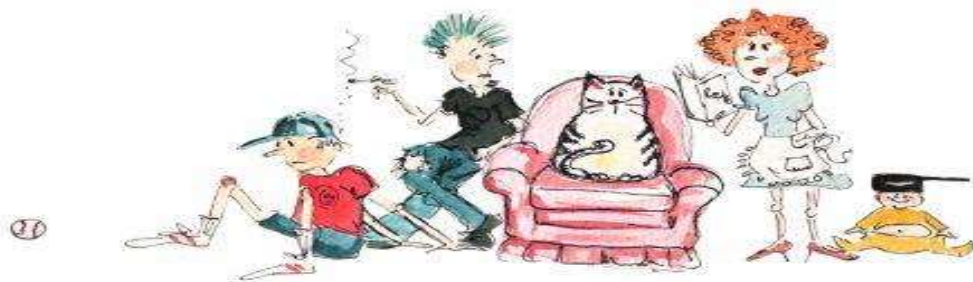
www.rsa.ie Road safety Authority pedestrian and cyclist info

www.abc-tcd.ie Anti-bullying Centre, Trinity College

www.webwise.ie all aspects of internet safety

<http://www.gotateenager.org.uk> – includes a 'teenglish' jargon buster!

Parenting : The delicate, persistent, evolving dance, to stay one step ahead of the wool being pulled over your eyes!



Parenting Quotes!

Children grow up to be adults.... but Parents are Parents forever!

Parenthood is the art of bringing your children up without putting them down....

Before I got married, I had six theories about bringing up children; now I have six children, and no theories. John Wilmot

Your children need your presence more than your presents. ~Jesse Jackson

Don't worry that children never listen to you; worry that they are always watching you. ~Robert Fulghum

Parents often talk about the younger generation as if they didn't have anything to do with it. ~Haim Ginott

The trouble with learning to parent on the job is that your child is the teacher. ~Robert Brault

If you have never been hated by your child you have never been a parent. ~Bette Davis

Good luck on your journey!