

## **GUIDELINES OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION WITHIN SECTIONS**

These guidelines build on practices that proved to be a good way for cooperation and communication between parents, Class and Section Representatives in providing information, collecting views, striking the right balance of information to be passed on and avoiding communication overload.

Class and Section Representatives are encouraged to apply them, while remaining flexible in the way they want to organise communication within their sections.

The APEEE is available to support section communication by offering its APEEE Zoom account for hosting section meetings and helping access to parents' contacts or national representatives in system level bodies.

### **I. Cooperation of Section Representatives in the Education Council and APEEE Board**

- Close cooperation improves information sharing, helps in developing views and positions and ensures consistency of section's views. It is also a way to streamline communication and share the work.
- Cooperation between cycles (Primary and Secondary) and sites (Primary Berkendael and Uccle) allows Representatives to have broad understanding of issues and transfer of experience and knowledge (e.g. from Secondary to Primary parents).
- Continuity of team at all levels greatly facilitates work (e.g. knowing usual section concerns, hand-over of contacts).

#### **Guidelines and recommendations:**

- Consider working as one group, at least at cycle level or having regular exchanges between cycles; having chat group (e.g. WhatsApp/Signal) for quick exchanges and raising awareness about emails, and email group for sharing documents. If your section is present in other European Schools, especially in Brussels, consider creating network of section representatives across EU schools.

### **II. Contacts with Class Representatives and class parents – frequency of communication and sharing of documents**

- School and APEEE meetings take place at different intervals (e.g. monthly, every three months, twice a year etc). Sections' Representatives use different approaches to prepare/report from meetings – on regular basis or ad-hoc, based on the needs.
- Think what and how you inform Class Reps/parents. Sharing everything without explanation may create confusion. Section Representatives usually have better knowledge of issues and



the way the school and European School system works due to privileged access to documents and reports from school and system body meetings. Use it and explain/put issues in context when communicating with Class Reps/parents who have less information.

- Having regular contacts with Class Reps/parents keeps them updated and manages their expectations.
- Knowing contacts of Section Representatives helps Class Reps/parents to reach them if issues arise or if they want information.

#### **Guidelines and recommendations:**

- Consider providing contacts of Section Representatives to all Class Representatives. Agree on the approach to sharing information and inform Class Representatives at the beginning of the school year. Consider what and how to share information with Class Reps/parents to avoid communication overload. Contextualise/explain documents/information submitted to Class Reps/parents.
- Regularly share with Class Reps/parents at least common reports (e.g. Secondary CE flash reports).

### **III. Section positions and gathering of feedback from Class Representatives/parents**

- One of the challenges Section Representatives face is gathering views from Class Representatives or parents. Very often there are not many replies, views are thought under tight deadlines and the most vocal respondents may not represent the majority views.
- Regular contacts (meetings and email/messages exchanges) with Class Representatives help Section Representatives to have good understanding of section views. This can limit need for consultations and focus them on the controversial issues and not for every decision.
- Having a continuity of team – new Representatives and some with long-term experience – facilitates developing positions and supporting contacts with Class Reps/parents.
- It is often easier for Class Reps and parents to respond to concrete proposals/suggestions rather than to open questions “what do you think”. Section Representatives have good knowledge of issues due to privileged access to documents and meetings and are therefore in good position to propose to Class Reps/parents section a position with an explanation.
- "Opt out" or "silent procedure" approach can be a good way to develop well accepted positions, especially on non-controversial issues. Under this approach Section Reps formulate a position and ask all those who disagree to send response by certain deadline. Unless significant number of respondents disagree, proposal is accepted.

#### **Guidelines and Recommendations:**

- Agree on the approach about position/feedback seeking and inform Class Representatives at the beginning of the school year. Keep regular contacts with Class Reps/parents. Consider proposing concrete suggestions with explanation when consulting Class Reps/parents (e.g. silent procedure). Reflect whether consultation for every decision is needed, but seek section feedback at least for controversial issues.



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#### IV. Contacts with national representatives in the system level bodies

- Member States have their representatives in various Administrative Bodies of the European Schools: Board of Governors, Preparatory Committees (Joint Teaching Committees, Budgetary Committee) and in Board of Inspectors (<https://www.eursec.eu/en/Office/bodies>).
- National representatives have a key role in quality assurance of teaching at the EEB1 (e.g. inspectors in selecting and evaluating national seconded teachers and staff, evaluating locally recruited teachers, whole school inspections). Beyond that, they are involved in the system level decision making (e.g. syllabus, Bac, guidelines on distant learning, work experience, trips, rules governing recruitment and working conditions of teachers and staff etc).
- Regular contacts allow Section Representatives to inform national delegations on day-to-day experience in schooling as well as about general and section specific issues. They also allow national representatives to contact parents for their views on proposals discussed at various Administrative Bodies.

##### **Guidelines and Recommendations:**

- Consider establishing contact with national representatives and/or holding regular annual online/in-situ meetings of the EEB1 Section Representatives with national representatives in the system bodies. Good practice is to collect questions from parents and provide feedback after the meeting.