

GUIDELINES

PARENTAL CONSENSUS

The parental consensus is a guide that class representatives and teachers can utilize to start a discussion on the role of parents in their children's upbringing and enhance understanding of the importance of cooperation and parental involvement in their children's education.

THE PARENTAL CONSENSUS HAS TWO GOALS

1. To increase awareness among parents and guardians of the importance of providing children and teenagers with care and active support while also setting clear boundaries for them.
2. To initiate a dialogue between the parents of children within specific school departments and get them to agree on certain standards of behavior. By signing the consensus, the parents confirm their desire to adhere to said standards as best they can.

Parents being involved in and supportive of the education and social lives of their children - making sure they arrive to school fully rested, do their homework and take part in class activities - makes the teacher's work that much more productive. For the same reason, it is invaluable for teachers to get to know their students' parents and establish positive and informal partnerships with them. Doing so makes it easier for teachers to settle disputes or other problems that may arise.

It is also important for parents to get the chance to mingle and share the various approaches to child raising that each household subscribes to, while also discussing the standards and attitudes that the Parental Consensus has to offer. If a consensus is reached on the Parental Consensus, it can become a powerful tool in the upbringing of a child. Parents can then introduce and discuss the content of the consensus to their children at home. Research shows that this approach produces results. The consensus is hung on the wall of the classroom and reviewed regularly, for example in a year's time.

The Parental Consensus is not a complete guide, and the guidelines below are only meant to provide an idea of how the consensus can be presented to parents.

The Parental Consensus can act as a guide for class representatives and class teachers to establish a conversation on the role of parents in child raising, encouraging parents to work together and get involved in their child's schoolwork.

1. Meeting Invites

It is advisable that class teachers and class representatives work together to extend invitations to the Parental Consensus meeting. The class teacher will usually run the meeting so that the class representatives don't have to be present in two capacities. The teacher's professional knowledge and experience can also serve to ensure that the discussion does not descend into negativity. The school counselor could also run the meeting or for example take care of running all meetings within a single year in the juvenile department.

- Decide upon a time and place for the meeting.
- Extend invitations with at least 2-3 weeks notice. Send out reminders.
- Meeting invites can be sent directly to parents' homes by post or email. Be conscious of parents' email access. To ensure the participation of as many parents as possible, the invitation can be reiterated through a personal phone call undertaken by a class representative.
- The meeting's purpose and length needs to be stated on the meeting invitation. Assume that the meeting may take 1-1½ hours, including a coffee break. The consensus can also be introduced when the coming school year is presented in the fall, in which case the consensus presentation should take less than an hour.

2. Execution

- Ensure a good layout of classroom or auditorium. Ideally, tables should be arranged in such a way that 4-6 parents sit together.
- Offer coffee or other refreshments if possible, having everything ready on the tables when the parents arrive.
- Start by welcoming people and explaining the purpose of the meeting (see introduction above).
- A good practice is to begin by telling guests that the signing at the conclusion of the meeting is intended to seal their consensus on the importance of the standards raised by the Parental Consensus, as well as their willingness to do their utmost to uphold those standards. Stipulate that it is not an official contract.

- To start with, it's best to let parents introduce themselves and indicate which child in the class is theirs. Ask those present to sign their names on the attendance sheet so that the class representatives can contact those not present at a later date and supply them with meeting documents.
- The Parental Consensus is distributed to all present. Class teacher/meeting presenter introduces the consensus and presents each section with the additional information listed below. Discussions on each section are encouraged. Meeting presenter will ensure that discussions are on point. At the conclusion of the presentation, the parents have 10 minutes to discuss the Parental Consensus with their group.
- Finally, the floor is given to guests to speak freely about the Parental Consensus. Guests are asked if they agree with the standards that the consensus puts forth and whether they are ready to do their utmost to adhere to those standards. Parents can indicate their acquiescence through, for example, a raising of hands and can then confirm their willingness to uphold the consensus with a signature.

3. Follow-Up

- A copy of the Parental Consensus along with additional information is sent to those who were unable to attend the meeting and they are invited to visit the school to sign the consensus.
- Parents and/or guardians sign the consensus, which is then posted in the school building. They can decide together whether to change or make amendments to the consensus.
- Parents receive a copy of the consensus's additional information to take home with them.
- At regular intervals, home teacher and class representatives can remind people of the consensus in connection with certain school events or classroom dynamics. When the days start getting longer in spring—as well as in the lead up to Christmas and Easter breaks—reminders should be sent out regarding juvenile curfew hours and children's sleep needs. It is also good to inform parents when issues regarding child raising or Internet use are being discussed by the larger society.

