

parents representatives handbook

• This document is intended to be a guide to help Class Representatives to fulfill their roles. It is not intended to be a list of binding rules but a framework in which to operate. Class Representatives are chosen by the parents, and they are, together with the Form Teacher, the first ones that parents should contact if they or their children experience any concern about the school or classroom.

Class Representatives represent the class if there is a matter which affects the class as a whole.

The Class Representatives are not expected to represent parents on an individual level, concerning problems in relation with their individual children, the school or an individual Teacher. However, the Class Representatives should be prepared to deal with potential problems and mediate between the parents, the class and CLIP or any Teacher, should the situation arise.

A Class Representative, before making any contact with the teacher and/or CLIP.PA Executive Board (EBPA) on any important matter, is advised to get into contact with the parents concerned that he represents.

Any information they intend to send to a teacher or the school on behalf of the parents should be approved by all parents.

The Class Representative's role should also promote parent involvement in our school community. As a parent representative you are a valued member of CLIP community and your time and commitment are much appreciated.

Class Representatives can encourage parents to make a positive contribution to the life of the school.

Class Representatives are one of the better channels to share information: as they are close to parents and teachers, the information collected is often more effective and can be efficiently distributed.

As a Class Parent Representative, other parents might seek to discuss particular concerns/problems they have. If the Class Representative feels there is a need to discuss anything further or is uncertain how to deal with it, please ensure it is with the appropriate person who might be the Form Teacher, the school Director or EBPA, depending on the situation.

Class Representatives should:

- * support the activities of the school constructively.
- * secure and help strengthen communication between parents and the school.
- * promote an attitude of trust within the school.

Information shared with you might be of a confidential nature. Please be sure to maintain that confidentiality at all times.

If the Class Representative has any doubts about his/her role or how to perform it he/she/he should contact the EBPA to discuss it.
Enjoy your Class Representative role!

1

ELECTION OF CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

• Class Representatives are elected by parents, typically for a two year period, although they can be reelected.

However, rotation should occur for the benefit of all. Although it is usual for one of the Class Representative to stay for a transition year.

During the first class parent meeting at the beginning of each school year, scheduled by EBPA if not organized by parents, the parents of each class elect among themselves one class representative and one deputy class representative by majority of the parents present in the meeting.

In pre-kindergarten classes and new classes, elections of Reps will occur at the end of the first quarter or early second quarter, after a period of integration of students and parents into CLIP.

One of EBPA members may attend the first meeting to advise on the election procedures and to answer to any questions.

EBPA will inform CLIP of the name and e-mail addresses of the Class Representatives and will give the Class Representatives the names and contacts of each parent in their year group.

If a Class Representative is unable to continue he/she shall notify the other Class Rep and EBPA. The other Class Rep shall assume the representative functions and, in the next parents' meeting, parents will elect a new Class Representative.

2

ORGANIZATION AND MAIN TASKS OF THE CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

• Class Representatives will share out the various tasks according to their interests or skills and with CLIP's Vision and Mission "We are ONE" in mind.

* Welcome new parents and assist them in getting to know other parents and feel part of the school community

* Provide opportunities for parents to feel they are valued members of the school and class community and welcome to be involved in any way they are able

* Help promote the Vision, Mission and Values of CLIP, both internally and externally

Parents meetings ●

- * Class Representatives should call routine class meetings at least once per trimester, and more often if needed, to discuss any matters related to the class, the students, the school, etc.
- * Meetings are usually held in October/November, February/March and May/June, after the parents meetings with teachers
- * Minutes of the meeting should be drafted and sent to Parents and to the EBPA, who will forward them to the relevant Director, who will inform interested parties (a template is available at <http://www.clip.pt/en/clip-community/parents>)

Often, some of the issues raised by the Parents may be common to other Parents or may have been previously posted by other Reps and EBPA is likely to give a coordinated answer. EBPA may also assess whether a particular matter concerns only a class or if a situation is suggested a greater number of parents / Class Reps and/or Forms. Some Forms of the same year may prefer to meet together although in Lower School and early Middle School it is recommended to meet with the Parents of each Form. For the Upper School Forms, Reps should assess whether it is preferable to meet with Parents of each class or to meet with all the Forms of the same year.

Contact details ●

Class Reps should:

- * Gather and keep updated the contact details of their class parents; if a parent does not wish other parents to have access to her/his e-mail address she/he should expressly inform the Class Representatives
- * Organise a class contact list for families who would like to share their contact details
- * Encourage parents to inform Class Representatives of any changes to their contact details and if a Rep is aware that the address is incorrect the Class Representatives should call the parent to update it and send EBPA the updated contact.

Interaction with Form Teachers ●

- * Class Representatives should meet with Form Teacher at the beginning of the year to get to know them and foster cooperation which is of major importance in case there is an important question to discuss during the course of the year
- * Class Representatives should also meet with Form Teacher if an important question is raised by any parent
- * Class Representatives can also raise questions, ideas and concerns with the Form Teacher
- * Class Representatives should provide help and support to Form Teachers

when appropriate or requested

* In case of any problem with a student(s) / family the Class Representative may suggest to schedule a meeting with the Form Teacher, after consulting the EBPA

* If a Class Representative has not been able to sort out a serious issue relating to teaching, class or the contents of the syllabus with the Form Teacher, they should get in touch with the EBPA

Information ➔

Class Reps should:

* Forward e-mails sent by the Teachers or information passed by the Teachers that is relevant to all parents

* Forward e-mails sent by EBPA or at request of CLIP

* Inform parents of any events and send reminders of events that will occur

* Inform parents that they can access to information on Clip website (www.clip.pt)

* Forward queries to the EBPA when the Class Representatives are questioned by parents on a specific subject (school trips, health and safety, canteen, etc and they are not able to answer

* Inform EBPA of any problem when they do not feel able to resolve it, to see if it can be sort out at EBPA level or if it is necessary to send it to the school Administration

Events ➔

* Class Representatives may organize social events to foster contact amongst families

* Class Representatives should encourage parents to be involved in school life (school events, such as, meetings and workshops, Open Day, Carol Service, Commencement, etc)

* Class Representatives should encourage parents also by asking for “helpers” whenever needed to organize or help in any event

Some classes organize a yearly picnic on the end of the year; some organize dinners with or with no children.

Rally Papers and bike tours were also organized. For some events teachers are also invited.

When families who get to know one another better it facilitates the socialization of the children and this climate of trust has a positive effect on their school and personal lives.

PARENTS COUNCIL

• The Parents Council consists of all the Class Representatives, from Pre-Kindergarten up to Form 12.

The Parents Council should meet at least once per trimester and meetings are called by the EBPA or at request of quorum of the Parents Council members or of the EBPA.

The Parents Council is a consultative body of EBPA and it should:

- * Help promote the Vision, Mission and Values of CLIP, both internally and externally.
- * Encourage collaboration between Parents, Students, Teachers, CLIP Leadership Team and other employees of CLIP for the development of the educational project
- * Promote and participate in activities of pedagogical, cultural, social, sporting, recreational and other, seeking to encourage the participation of CLIP's wider community
- * Advise and assist the EBPA in carrying out its functions
- * Propose amendments to the Articles of Association
- * Approve the amount of the annual financial contribution
- * Elect a Class Representative to fill any vacancies that may occur in the EBPA

EXECUTIVE BOARD OF PARENTS ASSOCIATION (EBPA)

• The Executive Board of CLIP's Parents Association (EBPA) is composed by 5 to 9 members elected by the Parents Council for a period of 2 years.

It is desirable to respect the following guidelines for the election of the EBPA members:

- * Elect Class Representatives from the Lower School, Middle School and Upper School
- * Members of EBPA should have a gender and nationalities balance, when possible

EBPA elects the President among its members.

If any EBPA member is not available to continue, a Parents Council meeting shall be called within two weeks for the election of a new member.

EBPA should:

- * Help promote the Vision, Mission and Values of CLIP, both internally and externally
- * Provide information and support to Class Representatives and their families
- * Answer or get the answer from the school on any policy, teaching, administrative or social matter which has not been possible to sort out with the Form Teacher or EBPA
- * Promote and participate in activities of pedagogical, cultural, social, sporting, recreational and other, seeking to encourage the participation of CLIP's wider community CLIP.
- * Call for Parents Council meetings at least once per trimester, usually to meet in October/November, February/March and May/June, and when input from parents' is needed, in particular to:
 - * address / discuss issues/concerns that arise and possible solutions
 - * plan and co-ordinate class involvement in school activities
 - * give feedback on its activities
- * Ensure the preparation and distribution of agendas and minutes of meetings of the Parent Council
- * Organize at least one meeting per year with the Head and the Parents Council
- * Promote events in and outside the school in order to establish communication between the school and local community
- * Inform Parents Council on its activities
- * Represent the Parents Council
- * Ensure liaison with Teachers, Students, Alumni, CLIP Leadership Team and the Board of Directors
- * Participate in Board of Directors meetings when requested
- * Create Focus Group of parents when the occasion arises
- * Ensure that new members of the Parents Council are aware of the objectives of the Parents Council

● FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

● What to do if:

A parent informs you that there is a specific problem concerning his/her child in a class and that problem is specific to this child.

* Recommendation:

Advise the parent to speak directly to the Form Teacher. The Class Representative may also attend for support if the parent wishes it. If the parents are not satisfied with the outcome of the meeting, then they should speak to EBPA for assistance, advice and support. The details of the situation will be kept in strict confidence. In any case, it is advisable to inform EBPA.

● What to do if:

A parent informs you that there is a problem concerning her/his child in a class and this impacts other children as well.

* Recommendation:

Speak privately with each of the parents of the children involved and try to assess the seriousness of the situation. Arrange a meeting with the parents involved and the Form Teacher to discuss the issues and to try to find a solution that is satisfactory to all. If this is not successful, inform the EBPA of the situation and suggest a meeting. In any case, it is advisable to inform EBPA.

● What to do if:

A number of parents inform you that there is a serious problem concerning the whole class in some way.

* Recommendation:

Ask parents individually if they are aware of the situation or if they support the complaint. This should be done sensitively and Class Representatives should compile the answers of parents and inform EBPA that an issue has arisen concerning the class as a whole. EBPA should advise on how to proceed and if it is the case, approach the School (the relative Director), with the support of the Class representatives, with the concerns of the parents.