



Senior Cycle Review: **Gathering Parent voice**

**Theme for Senior Cycle Review:
Thinking about the future – the Purpose of Senior Cycle**

Parents' Objective:

1. Facilitate a focus working group to gather the parents' views on the research questions
2. Collate these parents' views and return them to the school contact person.

Gathering a Focus Working Group of Parents from your School.

As we heard from the workshop, in Athlone, this is a school based review and the school is the hub. As parents are stakeholders in the school community your voice is being included early in the review.

Role: Your role is to gather and collate the parent voice in your school. A member of your school management, whom you would have met already will be supportive in making sure that the school is made available to you when you request it, although do remember schools are busy places so some collaboration will be necessary before deciding on a date and time. A letter from the National Parents Council Post Primary (NPCPP) will have gone to your school and your Parent Association to promote the review and encourage parents to look out for the focus group invitation and to get involved and have their say.

The NPCPP will have contacted your constituent body informing them of your involvement and encouraging support. The **NCCA web page** provides links to research materials and supports for the review.



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Contacting parents:

The first phase is convening the parent group; this can be quite difficult. What have you found that worked or didn't work in the past?

- Communication: texting, emails, Facebook, Twitter, app, school website.
- Letter sent to Parents with the book list.
- Invite this year's LC Parents to come back for SC review discussion.
- School Assembly – inform the students of their involvement in the SC review and that of their parents' involvement. The students encourage their parents' involvement and in turn the parents listen to their students.

Note: It is found that repeating the message over and over works. Use whatever method of communication, including repetition, that is available to you in your school.



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The SC review has two cycles so the first cycle will be undertaken in September 2018, the second Cycle in November-January 2019. Contacting parents before the summer break, if possible, just to inform the parents that the SC review is happening and that the parents' voice will be heard would be advisable.

Cycle 1: September 2018

You will need to conduct your meeting as early as possible this September after the summer break. During this focus meeting you will need to record your parents' views on the research questions and then collate everyone's views expressed at the focus group meeting and give this feedback in the form of the Questionnaire to the School contact person so he/she can pass on to the NCCA. The NCCA will then send all the questionnaires from the forty schools to ERSI, who will produce a report for presentation at the national seminar in October.

Facilitating the Focus- Group with parents from your School

People:

- Facilitator, to lead the session
- Note-taker writes down the parents' views, use flip chart to take notes
- Timer? It can be easy for one or two questions to overtake the meeting. In an hour and a half session ten minutes per question will give each question equal weight. This will leave ten minutes at the start and end.

Seating:

Before you begin arrange the chairs in a semi-circle. Sitting like this gives participants a sense of ownership and belonging.



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Introduction: you could begin with...

Thanks for coming today [out this evening] to give us your views on Senior Cycle education.

The NCCA has recognised parents as equal stakeholders in the school community so your voice along with that of students and teachers is a really important part of this review.

We really do want to hear what you have to say. We understand that people will have different views and we want to hear all these views so please be respectful to others even if you disagree with what they have to say. We want you to feel comfortable to express your views so Chatham house rules apply here which means we will not attribute the views to any individual when we collate the emerging themes and report the views of parents at the national seminar.

[Note taker's name] is going to write down what you say on the flipcharts because we won't remember everything you say. Please hold her/him to task if you think she/he has not recorded your point accurately.

We have allotted ten minutes to each question and [Time keeper name] is going to keep time discipline.

So just to get things started what are your thoughts about your experience or your child's experience of senior cycle education. (10 mins)

Helpful prompts

- Has anyone any questions?
- Has anyone any different view on this?
- That is interesting can you tell me a little more about why you think this?
- Does everybody else agree with this? Or has anyone any other views?
- Drill down for clarity when someone expresses a view that is ambiguous
- E.g. If someone mentions a 'well-rounded' person ask
- What exactly do you mean by 'well- rounded'?