



Roll No 19433M

Parent/Staff
Communication
Policy

Ratified by Board of Management

On

9th November 2020



Parent/Staff Communication Policy

Introductory statement

This policy was developed by the staff of Holy Family School, the Board of Management and the parents association in the school year 2020/21.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and parent/staff communication in Holy Family School. The family and home are central to the social, emotional, and intellectual development of the child. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other so that the child's education can be effective. All the stakeholders aim to work for the benefit of the child and their learning.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with the school
- Participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of the staff and all staff members in the school
- Collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their children
- Share the responsibility of seeing that the school remains true to its ethos, values and distinctive character
- Become actively involved in the school/parent association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with Parents

- Individual Education Plan meeting held in October/November each year.
- I.E.P. review meetings in February each year.
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in May/June each year.
- Parents receive school report of each pupil at the end of each school year
- Meetings with parents whose children require extra support.
- Consultation throughout the year
- Written communication
- Through the parents' council, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of all school policies. Decisions taken to change current policies and procedures or to introduce new ones will be made known to all parents.
- Regular postings on the school website keep parents up-to-date with school events.
- Home/school diary, used to relay messages between parents and teachers.
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Christmas concert, school masses etc.
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Green flag day etc.

Parents of new pupils are also welcome to make an appointment any time throughout the year.

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the school secretary to arrange a suitable time.

It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to your child and therefore may adversely affect his/her education In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians named on the enrolment form will be consulted by staff.

Parent/Teacher meetings

Holy Family School



Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes generally in May/June. They will be initiated by the school staff and details regarding time, etc. will be worked out by the class teacher, in consultation with parents. Parents will be given the opportunity to select preferred times on a note from the class teacher. The school will attempt to co-ordinate times where siblings are concerned. Meetings will generally take place in classrooms, or communally in the G.P. Hall. The teachers use prepared guidelines for the meetings and collaborate in advance about the progress of individual children. A short written record of the meeting is maintained by each teacher.

The purpose of the Parent/Teacher meeting is:

- To establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents
- To let parents know how their children are progressing in school
- To help teachers/parents get to know the children better as individuals
- To meet demands for accountability
- To share with the parent the problems and difficulties the child may have in school
- To review with the parent the child's experience of schooling
- To learn more about the child from the parent's perspective
- To identify areas of tension and disagreement
- To identify ways in which parents can help their children
- To negotiate jointly decisions about the child's education

Circular 56/2011 Initial Steps in the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy Strategy has been adopted by the Board of Management. References to parent/school communication are:

Reporting to parents

Parents have the primary responsibility for their children's learning and development. Schools can strengthen the capacity of parents to support their children in this way by sharing meaningful information with parents about the progress that children are achieving in the education system. This information needs to draw on the different sources of evidence that staffs use, such as conversations with the learner, data-collection and documented progress on objectives and milestones reached in their short and long-term planning, examination of students' own self-assessment data, documented observations of the learner's engagement with tasks, outcomes of other assessment tasks and tests, and examples of students' work. In turn, parents will often be able to enrich staffs knowledge of their students' progress through providing further information about the students' learning at home.

Report card .

Schools should help parents to understand fully the evidence of learning that the school reports to them.

The report cards provide for reporting in four key areas:

- The child's learning and achievement across the curriculum
- The child's learning dispositions
- The child's social and personal development
- Ways in which parents can support their child's learning

Holy Family School uses a template for reporting to parents on students' progress and achievement at school.

Formal Meetings



Formal timetabled parent/teacher meetings take place in May/June. However, if a parent wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by prior appointment.

- All communication sent from the school will be sent to the child's home address as given on the enrolment form, unless otherwise requested by parents
- In the case of separated parents, requests can be made by both parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for parent/teacher meetings.

Formal Meetings-IEPs

Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings on the subject of the **Individual Education Plan** will take place in October/November. However, if a parent wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by prior appointment.

Informal Parent/Staff Meetings

1. The School encourages communication between parents and staffs.
2. Meetings with the class staff at the class door to discuss a child's concern/progress are discouraged on a number of grounds:
 1. Staff cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent
 2. It is difficult to be discreet when other children are standing close by

Occasions occur where a parent needs to speak to a staff member urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The Principal will aim to facilitate such meetings making every effort to ensure that the children in the class do not lose out on any of the teaching/learning time.

If parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, gear etc, this can be done through the secretary's office as it is important to keep class interruptions to a minimum.

Parents are strongly discouraged from taking pupils out of school during term time in order to facilitate family holidays.

While Holy Family School promotes positive home/school contacts, and endeavours to enhance the esteem of everyone within the school community, The Board of Management acknowledges that there are occasions when a parent may wish to make a complaint.

Complaints Procedure

Complaints are infrequent but the school would wish that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. The following is the agreed complaints procedure to be followed in Holy Family School.

The purpose of the procedure is to facilitate the resolution of difficulties where they may arise in an agreed and fair manner. The agreement lays out in five stages the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed at each stage.

Introduction

Only those complaints about teachers which are written and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the Board of Management, except where those complaints are deemed by the Board to be:



- (i) on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
- (ii) frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
- (iii) complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.

Unwritten complaints not in the above categories may be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

Stage 1

- 1.1 A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.
- 1.2 Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher she/he should approach the Principal with a view to resolving it.
- 1.3 If the complaint is still unresolved the parent/guardian should raise the matter with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving it.

Stage 2

- 2.1 If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further she/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- 2.2 The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3

- 3.1 If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board and except in those cases where the Chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the Board to be required:
 - (a) supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint; and



(b) arrange a meeting with the teacher and, where applicable, the Principal Teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 4

4.1 If the complaint is still not resolved the Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1(b).

4.2 If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within three days of the Board meeting.

4.3 If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:

(a) the teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage; (b) the teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;

(c) the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint;

(d) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the Board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;

(e) the board may arrange a meeting with the complainant if it considers such to be required. The complainant would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting; and

(f) the meeting of the Board of Management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1(b).

Stage 5

5.1 When the Board has completed its investigation, the Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within five days of the meeting of the Board.

5.2 The decision of the Board shall be final.

5.3 This complaints procedure shall be reviewed after 3 years.



In this procedure 'days' means school days.

Behaviour of all Stakeholders in the School

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This not only extends to the children but to all of the stakeholders e.g. the staff, parents and the wider community. Anyone entering our building should feel safe to do so. While the behaviour of children in our school is of vital importance, adults in the school community also have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children.

It is important that all stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviours in the school. Examples include:

All stakeholders are expected to speak to each other with respect. Shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If a stakeholder displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building. In certain cases, the Gardaí must be called

- All stakeholders will treat our children with the utmost respect while on the premises
- Staff should not be asked to speak about another parent's child. The staff of the school will respect your child's right to privacy so it is asked that parents respect other children's rights to privacy
- When stakeholders meet, it is important to respect that the time of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected
- Staffs are generally available to listen to a quick issue over the phone. However, should a parent/guardian need to have a discussion or meeting, an appointment should be made at a convenient time for both parties. This ensures that issues can be resolved quickly. Classes begin at 9:00 am and finish at 2:40pm and parents/guardians should avoid interrupting during this time except in urgent circumstances. While teachers wish to be available outside of recognised meeting times, to deal with a query from a parent/guardian, parents are asked to be cognisant of the need for teachers to be available to pupils for teaching during the school day.

This policy is designed to promote a positive open relationship between parents and school staff, to better the experiences of our school community.

Ratified by the Board of Management on : _____

Signed : 
Eamon Mc Carthy - Chairperson BOM