

# St Felim's National School

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Charity No: 20109967  
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## Parent/School Partnership Policy

### **Introductory Statement**

The staff and Board of Management of St Felim's NS will endeavour to work in partnership with parents and families and to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other while supporting the education and development of pupils. We recognise that the family and home are central to the social and intellectual development of the child and the nurturing of good, moral values. We value the positive relationships we share with parents and guardians and we endeavour to create an open and welcoming atmosphere in the school.

This policy was developed in Term One 2019/2020, following consultation with staff, the Parents Association and the Board of Management. It was revised in January 2024. It outlines how the school community communicate and work in partnership. It also provides a framework where issues that arise can be resolved.

### **Rationale**

The Board of Management and staff endorse the following statement in the Primary Curriculum:

*Parents are the child's primary educators, and the life of the home is the most potent factor in his/her development during the primary school years. There is a continuing process through which the child's formal learning experience in the school interacts with the less formal developmental experience of the home and the family. It is widely recognised that significant educational, social and behavioural benefits accrue to the child as a result of effective partnership between parents and teachers. Close co-operation between the home and the school is essential, therefore, if children are to receive the maximum benefit from the curriculum.*

This policy was devised to acknowledge existing school practise in our school, and following a school self-evaluation in 2018/2019.

### **Aims**

The aim of this policy is to outline the systems in place to support pupils and the procedures in place in relation to communication within the school, including communication in relation to pupil progress and attainment. The policy also informs parents of the parental complaints procedure.

### **Parental Involvement**

Parents are invited, and encouraged to develop close links with the school, and become involved in the school community by:

- Participating in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of the staff and all staff members in the school
- Collaborating with the school in developing the full potential of their children

- Sharing the responsibility of seeing that the school remains true to its ethos, values and distinctive character
- Participating in school policy development e.g. Code of Behaviour, RSE, Healthy Lunch Policy etc.
- Participating in decision-making processes affecting them
- Serving on school bodies e.g. Parents Association, Board of Management
- Helping with/at school events e.g. sporting events, sponsored walks, etc.

### **Structures in place to facilitate open communication and consultation with parents:**

#### **Parents Association**

St Felim's NS has a supportive and vibrant Parents Association. Regular meetings are held throughout the year to which all parents are invited. The Parent's Association AGM is held annually in September/October. A Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and Vice Treasurer are elected. The Parents Association operate a bank account for all fundraising and expenditure and these accounts are audited annually. The Parents Association organise events throughout the year such as Christmas Draw, Santa Visit, First Communion Party with the support of the school community. The Parents Association fund the weekly recorder lessons for pupils' second class and upwards in the school. The Association also fundraise for equipment and facilities in agreement with the Board of Management.

#### **Board of Management**

The Board of Management manages the school on behalf of the Patron and is accountable to the Patron and the Minister of Education and Skills. The BOM is constituted of eight members. Two of the members are Parent Nominees elected following the Procedures and Guidelines for Boards of Management. A minimum of five meetings are held every year. The board issues an annual report to parents in Term One each year.

#### **Policy Consultation and SSE**

Parents are invited to take part in the review of policies in the school where appropriate. Parents are made aware that draft policies are available on our school website and parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies.

Parents are involved in the School Self Evaluation process through the use of questionnaires, surveys and focus groups. SSE Plans and School Policies are available on our school website.

#### **Infant Induction**

Parents /Guardians are invited to an Infant Induction Evening in Term Three each year. At this meeting, parents/guardians will have the opportunity to meet their child's teacher in their classroom. The Principal and the teacher inform parents of relevant information in relation to uniform, the curriculum, communication, tips on managing the transition to school etc.

Arrangements are made to provide opportunities for the child to visit the school in small groups in August a few days before the start of school. Pupils are encouraged to wear their school uniform, meet their teacher and a small group of their peers and play with some of the classroom toys.

An Induction Booklet is shared with parents/guardians each year after the Infant Induction Evening.

Mo Scéal Parent Forms are emailed to the parents/guardians of new Junior Infants inviting them to share information about their child's likes/dislikes etc. Parental Consent is sought on this form to gather information from Preschools in relation to supporting transition from preschool to primary. Once consent is received, Mo Scéal Preschool Forms are sent to the Preschool for completion.

#### **Website**

St Felim's NS have a school website [www.thevalens.com](http://www.thevalens.com). The website is updated regularly. Teachers share a selection of class activities during the year. In the gallery section, we share progress with school initiatives e.g.



Active Schools etc. School policies and documents, our school calendar, information on staff and Aladdin Connect are also available on the website.

### **Aladdin Connect**

St Felim's N.S. uses Aladdin Connect for administrative purposes. The Aladdin Connect portal gives parents secure access to messages from the school and to the details of their child's attendance, test results, report cards etc. via secure login from their browser.

Aladdin Connect has greatly enhanced our school's communication with parents and it enables parents to keep informed about their child's education by

- Ensuring schools have their most up-to-date contact information
- Keeping parents apprised of their child's attendance
- Keeping parents up-to-date on school and classroom news via noticeboard messages
- Allowing parents to view their child's approved report card and standardised test results
- Allowing parents to enter absence reasons for their child

### **Homework Diaries**

Pupils begin using a homework diary in First Class. Homework diaries can be used as a communication tool in relaying messages between the class teacher and parents/guardians. Parents are responsible for signing their child's homework diary nightly thereby acknowledging that homework has been completed.

### **School Events**

Parents and Guardians will be invited to school events as they arise. Christmas Concerts are normally held every two years. We celebrate Grandparents Day in the school and Infants usually host a Grandparents event in the school annually.

### **Advice for Parents/Guardians on Information sharing**

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to

- Communicate with the school about factors likely to affect the behaviour of their child in school.
- Provide the school with all the necessary background information about their child(ren), including promptly informing the school about any concerns they have or any significant change in their son or daughter's needs or home circumstances,

### **Meetings with Parents**

#### **(a) Meetings**

Parents/Guardians may request a meeting to discuss matters relating to their child at any stage. However, meetings with school staff must be arranged by prior appointment at a time that suits both parties. Classes begin at 09:00 am and end at 02:40 pm. Teachers are responsible for the supervision of pupils in classrooms from 08:50 am until 02:50 pm. Therefore, this time cannot be interrupted as teachers cannot adequately supervise and teach while speaking to a parent.

As meetings take place outside of school hours, it is important that these be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Start times and end times will be agreed upon beforehand and should be respected by all parties. Meetings with teachers and the Principal are by appointment only. Supervision and teaching cannot be interrupted. A staff member cannot adequately supervise children while at the same time speaking to a parent. Every effort will be made to facilitate a meeting as soon as possible. If a parent/guardian has an urgent message for a teacher, the message can be passed on by phoning or emailing the school secretary. Parents/Guardians are requested not to go into the teacher's classroom in the mornings.

### **(b) Parent Teacher Meetings**

Formal Parent Teacher Meetings will be held annually in Term One for all classes in accordance with Circular 0014/2004. The purpose of a parent-teacher meeting is

- To inform parents how their child is progressing in school (academically, socially, behaviourally). Teachers will share and discuss problems and difficulties children may have in school in order to identify ways in which parents can help their children.
- To help the child realise that home and school are working together in their interests

The dates of PT meetings are shared in October via the Aladdin Connect Noticeboard. Parents are advised in the message that in the case of separated parents, both parents will be facilitated with an individual slot if necessary. However, it is the parent's responsibility to contact the school to advise them of this so that an appropriate number of meeting slots can be created. The Principal sets up ten-minute meeting slots.

Parents are invited to book a meeting slot via Aladdin Connect. We stagger the release of PT meetings. Parents with three or more children will have the option to book first, followed by parents with two children before slots are released to the entire school community.

Class teachers and SET will meet parents/guardians in their classrooms. Parents are requested to knock on the teachers' door at their allocated time.

In the event that parents/guardians cannot attend the scheduled meeting, they will be offered an alternative date or the option of a phone call.

### **(c) School Support Plus Meetings**

Special Education Teachers and Class Teachers will be available to meet parents/guardians of children who are on School Support Plus Plans in Term One annually.

### **Telephone & Email Contact**

Parents may contact the school office on 042 9665605. Teachers cannot take telephone calls during the school day, as they are required to be in their classrooms teaching and supervising their classes. A parent may pass on information via the school secretary and teachers will return calls if necessary outside class time.

The school may on occasion need to contact parents by phone. Parents provide contact phone numbers on the enrolment form. They also nominate an alternative contact in cases where they are unavailable. It is the responsibility of each parent to ensure contact information and phone numbers are up to date.

### **Report Cards**

Report Cards are issued to parents/guardians two weeks in advance of the summer closure. We use the NCCA report card templates, which provide for reporting in the following 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

Approved report cards will be available to parents on Aladdin Connect.

Standardised test scores are reported to parents/guardians of pupils in Second, Fourth & Sixth Classes. The NCCA provide information for parents around interpreting standardised test scores and these will be issued with a noticeboard message stating that report cards are available to view on Aladdin Connect.

### **Education Passport**

In Sixth Class, we use the education passport materials to support the sharing of some information about pupils' learning with the post-primary school. The Education Passport involves a three-phase process

- My Profile- Completed by the pupil
- My Child's Profile- Completed by parents/guardians

- Sixth Class Report Card- Completed by the teacher

St Felim's N.S. will only share this information when we have received a formal request for this information from the Principal of the post-primary school and only after the post-primary school has confirmed your child's enrolment.

#### **Written communication with parents**

Written communication will be sent to the child's home address as provided on the enrolment form and stored on Aladdin Connect. Parents/guardians are requested to update their contact details on Aladdin in September or as necessary.

In all matters pertaining to the well-being and education of pupils, staff will consult the parents/legal guardians named on the child's enrolment form.

#### **Standards of Behaviour on School Premises**

Parents and Guardians are requested model the standards of behaviour expected from pupils while on school premises as set out in our Code of behaviour. Parents should act as positive role models for their child in their relationships and interactions with the school.

#### **Safety, Health & Welfare at Work**

As the Board of Management is responsible for the health and safety of all staff and pupils, parents/guardians are requested not to reprimand another person's child on the school premises and/or at school related events or activities but to bring matters of concern to the attention of school management and/or teaching staff.

The Board of Management does not tolerate rude, threatening or aggressive behaviour and/or assaults by parents towards staff members or other parents. The Board of Management has a duty to protect staff under the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act 2005. If a person engages in rude, threatening or aggressive behaviour and/or assault, the individual will be asked to leave the premises and the Board of Management will be informed. The matter may also be notified to An Garda Síochána.

Posting of derogatory comments on social media platforms about members of staff/the school and/or members of the school community by pupils/parents and guardians is treated with the utmost seriousness. The Board of Management reserves the right to take appropriate action. Staff members may also have recourse to other options available to them. (DES Circular 0040/1997)

#### **Procedures for Addressing Complaints**

It is acknowledged that disagreements and/or complaints may arise from time to time. It is envisaged that all disputes/challenges should be addressed initially at a more informal level, usually involving contact and communication between parent(s) and teacher(s).

Parents/Guardians who wish to make a complaint may do so under the Complaints Procedure outlined in Appendix One of this document.

#### **Implementation & Review**

The whole staff is responsible for the implementation of this Code of Behaviour. The Policy will be implemented from the date of its ratification.

The board of Management will review the Parent school Partnership Policy in Term One 2025/2026 as part of our three-year policy review cycle. It may be subject to change at any stage during the year as deemed necessary by the Board of Management.

**Ratification and Communication**

The Board of Management ratified this policy at its meeting on 1 | 2 | 2024.

The Parents as Parents Policy will be available on our school website and a copy will be made available to parents/guardians on request.

Signed: Gerry Sheanon  
Gerry Sheanon (Chairperson B.O.M.)

Signed: Ellis Keegan  
Ellis Keegan (Principal)



## **Purpose/Objective**

The parental complaints procedure was revised and agreed by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the management bodies of primary schools, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, the Church of Ireland, An Foras Pátrúnachta, the Muslim Primary Education Board, Educate Together and the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education in 2023. It is designed to provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child/children in an agreed, fair and transparent manner.

It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life and as such from time-to-time concerns may arise which they may need to engage with the school. It is expected that engagement will be timely, courteous and resolution focused to ensure that the important relationship between the parent and school can be preserved and respected. It is expected that all parties concerned will engage proactively.

## **Procedural Points**

The procedure is a staged procedure where every effort is made to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage. In most cases, concerns will be dealt with either informally or formally at the earlier stages of the procedure. Where it has not been possible to agree a resolution at the earlier stages, the procedure does allow for the escalation of the matter to the Board of Management. This procedure sets out, in four stages, the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed. It is expected the parties will follow each stage in sequence.

- Where the term written correspondence is used, this refers specifically to a letter or email correspondence from a parent/legal guardian(s).
- Only complaints about a teacher which are written and signed by a parent/legal guardian, and which relate to their own child, will be investigated.
- Where a complaint raised by a parent/legal guardian is deemed by the employer/board of management to relate to the following, this procedure will not apply;
  - matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
  - frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
  - complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure
- In all circumstances, any form of written correspondence for the attention of the Board of Management must be supplied to the Chairperson of the board of management **only**. Any deviation from this could be deemed prejudicial and as acting outside the scope of this agreement.
- **Days in this procedure refer specifically to school days.** A school day is a day on which the school is in operation. Holiday periods, school closures and leaves of absences are not counted as school days for the purpose of this procedure.
- Group/collective complaints are not provided for and each parent/legal guardian raising a concern will be dealt with separately through this process.
- The procedure is a domestic forum and accordingly, neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any stage.
- Issues should be raised in a timely manner. It is in the best interests of the child that issues are raised to achieve early resolution at the earliest possible stage with the teacher, ideally while the pupil is in that teacher's class.



## Formal Stage 1 Discussion

### 1.1 Parent/guardian meets teacher

A parent/legal guardian who wishes to make a complaint in respect of their own child, should, seek an appointment with the teacher concerned with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings with the teacher can be convened as appropriate.

### 1.2 Parent/guardian meets Principal

Where the parent/legal guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the teacher, they should seek an appointment with the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Principal as appropriate.

### 1.3 Parent/guardian meets Chairperson

Where the complaint remains unresolved, the parent/legal guardian should seek an appointment with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Chairperson as appropriate.

### Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved during this stage.

## Formal Stage 2 Written

### 2.1 Written complaint sent to Chairperson

If the complaint has not been resolved at stage 1, the parent/legal guardian who wishes to pursue the matter further should submit the complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. This commences stage 2.

### 2.2 Chairperson provides a copy to the teacher

The Chairperson should provide a copy of the written complaint to the teacher against whom the complaint has been made, without delay.

### 2.3 Chairperson convenes meeting(s)

The Chairperson should seek to resolve the complaint between the teacher and the parent/legal guardian within 10 school days of the commencement of stage 2.1. This may require one or more meetings to be convened by the Chairperson with the teacher/parent/legal guardian and other school personnel as deemed appropriate by the Chairperson.

### Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved at this stage.

## Formal Stage 3 Board of Management

### 3.1 Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board

If the complaint remains unresolved following stage 2 and the parent/legal guardian wishes to pursue the matter, they should inform the Chairperson in writing of this fact. The Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board of Management within 10 days of receipt of this written statement. At this meeting, the Board can decide to proceed to either stage 3.2 or 3.3.

### 3.2 Complaint concluded

Where the Board considers the complaint, the process may be concluded at this stage, if the board considers that:

- The complaint is frivolous/vexatious;
- The complaint has already been investigated by the Board;
- The complaint is more appropriately dealt with through a more relevant DE circular;
- where recourse to law has been initiated.

Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parent/legal guardian should be so informed within five days of the Board meeting.

## Formal Stage 4 Decision

### 4.1 Written decision from Chairperson

The Board will consider the complaint and the response provided and will adjudicate on the matter. The Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent/legal guardian(s) within five days of the meeting held at stage 3.3.

### 4.2 Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.

### 3.3 Proceed to a hearing

Where the Board decides to proceed to a hearing, it should proceed as follows:

- the teacher should be informed that the complaint is proceeding to a full hearing and the Chairperson must ensure the teacher has been supplied with all documents which are being considered by the Board;
- the Board should arrange a meeting with the parent/legal guardian if it considers such to be required. The parent/legal guardian is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
- the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of their case to the Board. The teacher is entitled to be represented by a friend or a union representative, who may be accompanied for the purpose of assistance and note taking;
- the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board as the employer in response to the complaint. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be shared with any third party;
- the meeting of the Board of Management referred to in 3(b), (c) and (d) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1, in so far as possible.