

St Felim's National School

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Charity No: 20109967
Principal: Mrs. Eilís Keegan
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Leiter, Bailieborough, Co. Cavan A82 CX30

November 2022

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 November 2022. 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. 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 Síochana.

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 13/12/22.

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: Eilís Keegan
Eilís Keegan (Principal)

Appendix One: Complaints Procedures:

The Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the Catholic Primary School Managers' Association reached agreement in 1993 on a procedure for dealing with complaints by parents against teachers. 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 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, 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.

* In this agreement days means school days.

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 three years.
- 5.4** CPSMA or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party three months' notice of intention to do so.

In this agreement day means school days.

* In this agreement 'days' means school days.