

ST.FELIM'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

SN Leiter, Coill an Chollaigh, Co. Cabhain

Roll No. 18564W

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Parent/School Partnership

Introductory Statement:

This policy was developed as a follow on from the School Self Evaluation Process in the 2018-2019 school year. It was developed in Term 1 of 2019-2020 school year. It was reviewed by the Parent Association and ratified by the Board of Management.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and communication in St. Felim's NS. The family and home are central to the social and intellectual development of the child and the nurturing of good, moral values. 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

Staff are encouraged to:

- Establish good communication with parents/guardians of pupils in their class
- Keep parents/guardians informed of their child's progress and behaviour both positive and negative
- Listen to what parents/guardians have to say and encourage them to bring any concerns to you at an early stage to avoid situations escalating
- Be aware of the role of parents/guardians as prime educators and emphasise that all parties are working together for the child's benefit to help her reach her potential
- Value and respect the input of parents as they know their child best.

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

- Meeting for parents of new Junior Infants – mid June
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in October
- Parents receive school report of each pupil at the end of each school year
- Meetings with parents whose children have special needs with special education teachers
- Consultation throughout the year
- Written communication
- Through the parents' association or by viewing draft policies on the school website, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies.
- Decisions taken to change current policies and procedures or to introduce new ones will be made known to all parents in written format via Aladdin Connect / school website
- Regular notifications through Aladdin Connect and the school website keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns
- Homework diary 1st – 6th class, used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers. Parents requested to sign diary each night to certify that homework has been completed
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. school masses, carol services, school concerts

Parents of infants are also welcome to make an appointment any time throughout the year. Infant teachers will be available between 2.00pm and 2.50pm for this when necessary. These meetings can be arranged by contacting 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 the child and therefore may adversely affect their education. In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians named on the child's enrolment form will be consulted by staff.

Parent / Teacher Meetings:

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes (Circular 14/04). Where possible they will be held in the first term, in October for all classes. They will be initiated by the Principal; parents will be invited to book a time slot of their child/children through the Aladdin Connect App or by contacting the school office. Meetings will take place in classrooms and special education rooms. The teachers use prepared guidelines for the meetings and collaborate in advance about the progress of individual children.

The Purpose of the Parent / Teacher Meeting is:

- To establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents
- To inform parents how their children are progressing in school
- To help teachers/parents get to know the children better as individuals
- To help children realise that home and school are working together
- To meet demands for accountability
- To share all positives about the child
- To share any problems and difficulties the child may have in school with the parents,
- To review the child's experience of schooling with the parents
- To learn more about the child from the parent's perspective
- To learn more about parental opinions on what the school is doing
- 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 about the progress that their children are achieving in the education system. This information needs to draw on the different sources of evidence that staff 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 student's work. In turn, parents will often be able to enrich staff's knowledge of their students' progress through providing further information about the students learning at home.

Report Card Templates:

Schools should help parents to understand fully the evidence of learning that the school reports to them, especially information from any standardised tests. The NCCA has provided a range of standard report templates to assist schools in reporting information about the progress of primary pupils to parents, including information from standardised tests. The NCCA report card templates were developed through a process of consultation with schools and parents can take account of research commissioned by the NCCA.

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

St. Felim's N.S. uses standard report card templates for reporting to parents on students' progress and achievement at school.

Formal Meetings:

Formal timetabled parent/teacher meetings take place in October. 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 – IEP's / IPLP's

Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings on the subject of the **Individual Education Plan / Individual Personal Learning Plan** will take place in September/October. 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

The School encourages communication between parents and teachers, however, meetings with the class teacher at the classroom door to discuss concern is discouraged on a number of grounds:

1. Teachers cannot adequately supervise a class while at the same time speaking to a parent
2. It is difficult to be discreet when so many children are standing close by
3. It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to staff at a classroom door

Occasions occur where a parent needs to speak to a teacher 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.

Complaints Procedures:

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 between the INTO/CPSMA to be followed in primary schools.

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.

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 'days' means schools 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
- Staff are generally available to listen to a quick issue in the morning and after school. However, should a parent 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. School begin at 9:10 am and finish at 2:50pm and this time should not be interrupted.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work:

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act became operative on 1 November 1989. It is an important piece of legislation for the BOM and for those who work in schools, as schools and colleges were brought under the scope of safety legislation for the first time.

It is recognised that school staff may be at risk from violence in the form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults or other forms of intimidation. This behaviour may come from pupils, parents, guardians, other staff members or intruders.

In this respect, all staff should be aware of **DES Circular 40/97** which deals with the procedures to follow if they feel they have been subjected to any of the above behaviours.

Implementation & Review

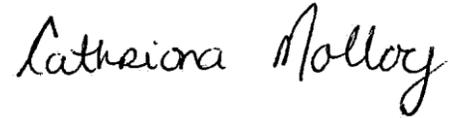
The whole school community are responsible for the implementation of this policy. It will be implemented with immediate effect of it being ratified by the Board of Management.

This policy was reviewed and updated by the Board of Management in November 2019. It will be reviewed in 2022 or sooner if deemed necessary.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 13-11-2019.



Signed: _____
Patricia Sheridan
Chairperson of Board of Management



Signed: _____
Cathriona Molloy
Principal