



## **Parent and Guardian/Staff Communication Policy**

### **Introductory statement**

This policy was developed by the staff of St Brigid's NS, the Board of Management and the Parent Teacher Association in the school year 2023 - 2024.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents/guardians and staff on parent & guardian/staff meetings and parent & guardian /staff communication in St Brigid's NS, Ballysax. 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 & Guardians 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 Teacher Association

### **Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with Parents/Guardians**

- Parents/Guardians and any visitors to the school must report to the school office. Sign in/out books are to be used as appropriate.
- Meeting for parents & guardians of new Junior Infants – mid June
- Parent & guardian /teacher meetings one-to-one in November
- Parents & guardians receive school report of each pupil at the end of each school year
- Meetings with parents & guardians whose children have special educational needs
- Consultation throughout the year
- Written communication using a note or Homework Diary
- Email communication: parents/guardians will have the school email addresses of their children's teacher and principal. Teachers/Principal will respond in a timely fashion, bearing in mind the working hours and workload of staff. Emails cannot be dealt with by teachers during teaching hours.
- Through the Parent Teacher Association, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies.
- Regular newsletters keep parents & guardians up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns
- Aladdin Connect is the administrative system used in the school. Parents/Guardians are requested to log the days children are absent and the reason for the absences,



## St. Brigid's National School, Ballysax, Curragh, Co. Kildare

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using this system. Likewise, this system should be used to alert the school if a child will be late to school or will leave early

- Homework diary 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class, used to relay messages which are signed between parents & guardians and teachers. Parents & guardians are requested to sign diary each night to certify that homework has been completed
- Involvement of parents & guardians in the Religion curriculum's section for parents & guardians.

**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 or wellbeing.** 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 & Guardian/Teacher meetings**

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes. Where possible, they will be held in the first term, towards the end of November for all classes. They will be initiated by the school staff and details regarding time, etc. will be worked out via the Aladdin App. Parents & guardians will be given the opportunity to select preferred times through this app. Meetings may take place in classrooms, support rooms or in the PE 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/Guardian/Teacher meeting is:

- To establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents/guardians
- To let parents/guardians know how their children are progressing in school
- To help teachers, parents & guardians 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 with parents/guardians the problems and difficulties a child may have in school
- To review with the parent/guardians the child's experience of schooling
- To learn more about the child from the parent's/guardian's perspective
- To identify ways in which parents/guardians can help their children
- To negotiate jointly decisions about the child's education

Parents & guardians are also welcome to make an appointment any time throughout the year. If a parent or guardian wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the school secretary to arrange a suitable time.

Teachers may request a meeting with a parent/guardian at times other than the November meetings and these will be arranged at mutually convenient times.



### **Meetings and communication regarding School Support Plans**

Meetings on the subject of the **School Support Plans** for children with special educational needs will take place in November between Special Education Teachers (SETs) and parents/guardians. These meetings may take place with the Class Teacher as part of the Parent & Guardian/Teacher meetings, or at individual meetings between SETs and parents/guardians. At November meetings, SETs and parents/guardians may arrange for further follow up meetings. If a parent/guardian wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child with the Special Education Teacher, they may do so by prior appointment.

### **Report card templates**

Schools should help parents/guardians 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/guardians can support their child's learning

All primary schools **must** use one of the report card templates (available at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)) for reporting to parents on students' progress and achievement at school with effect from the date of this circular.

### **Informal Parent or Guardian/Staff Meetings**

- The School encourages communication between parents and staffs.
- Meetings with the class staff at the class door or in the staff car park to discuss a child's concern/progress are discouraged on a number of grounds:
  - (i) Staff cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent
  - (ii) It is difficult to be discreet when other parents or children may be standing close by
  - (iii) It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent/guardian is talking to staff at a classroom door.
- Emergency occasions may arise where a parent/guardian 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, however this will not always be possible.
- If parents/guardians wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear etc, this must be done through the secretary's office to keep class interruptions to a minimum.



## **Complaints Procedure**

Complaints are infrequent but the Board of Management and school staff would wish that these would be dealt with fairly and quickly. The school has a Complaints Procedure which is available on the school website and in hard copy form on request.

## **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/guardians 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/guardian's child. Under GDPR Staff members are not permitted to discuss other children with it is asked that parents/guardians respect other children's rights to privacy.
- When stakeholders meet, it is important to respect that the length of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected.

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

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act became operative on 1 November 1989.

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. A copy of this circular can be found in the school's Health and Safety folder.

**Ratified by the Board of Management on November 20<sup>th</sup> 2023**