



## Scoil Mhuire

### Positive Communication Policy : Working Together

This policy was developed by the staff of Scoil Mhuire, the Board of Management (BoM) and the Parent's Association in the school year of 2024. Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and parent/staff communication in our school community. 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 of the stakeholders, in-school community, 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 (See school Ethos and Mission Statement)
- Become actively involved in the school/parent association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them

#### **Staff** are encouraged to:

- Participate in any meetings with parents in a positive and respectful manner and, in keeping with our Mission and Vision statement, affirm the role of the parent as the 'primary and natural educator' of their children (as per Article 42.1 of the Irish Constitution).
- Collaborate with the parents in an open two-way communication so that both parties are working together to develop the full potential of the student.
- Be aware of the activities of the Parents' Association and link in with them where possible to support their fundraising activities.

#### **1. Structures in place to facilitate Open Communication & Consultation with Parents**

- Welcome meeting for new parents
- Details of classroom staff communicated to parents at the beginning of the school year and any regular updates.
- Advance notification to be given where possible if a regular member of staff is leaving so that parents can prepare the student for the imminent change
- One-to-one meetings between parents and teachers, parents and Behaviour Analyst, parents and therapists
- School report for each pupil at the end of each school year
- Communication and consultation throughout the year (communication book, reports from SNA, update phone calls reports from teacher) where necessary
- Thorough consistent and on-going communication between the Principal and the Parents' Association. Parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of relevant school policies.
- Any policies under review will be made known to all parents through Aladdin
- Monthly newsletters to keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school

concerns

- Everyday general information can be communicated through Aladdin and children's Homework diary is used to relay signed messages.
- Parents and teachers are requested to sign children's homework diary each day to certify that homework has been completed and communication book/weekly reports have been checked.
- Parents invited to events throughout the year e.g. Christmas play, sports day
- 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.
- Forgotten Items:** If parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear etc, this can be done through the secretary's office as it is *important to keep class interruptions to a minimum.*

**Parent/staff meetings:** The aim of Parent/Staff meetings is:

- To further communicate between the school and parents
- To let parents know how their children are progressing in school
- To inform staff on how children are coping outside school
- To establish an ongoing relationship and communication with parents
- To help staff/parents get to know the children better as individuals
- To help children realise that home and school are working together

**Informal Parent/Staff Conversations:** Our school encourages communication between parents and staff. However meetings with the class staff in the reception lobby to discuss a child's concern/progress are discouraged on a number of grounds:

- A staff member cannot adequately supervise their student/class while at the same time speaking to a parent
- It is difficult to be discreet when there are potentially other parents and children standing close by.
- It could cause distraction for a child when his/her parent is talking to staff at a classroom door.

**Requested Parent/Staff Meetings: Occasions when a parent requests a meeting**

- Occasions occur where a parent needs to speak to a member of staff. We ask parents to give an indication as to the purpose of a meeting
- 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 their teaching/learning time.
- A parent wishing to speak to a member of staff urgently should in the first instance indicate their request to the school secretary. The school secretary will pass on the request to the Principal. In the absence of the Principal, the secretary can use discretionary judgement to communicate the request to the Deputy Principal or directly to the member of staff themselves.

**Formal Meetings: School Support Plan Meetings**

- Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings on the subject of **School Support Plans** 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. The School Support Plan is given to the parents.
- In the case of separated parents, requests can be made by both parents to meet their child's staff(s) individually for parent/staff meetings.

## 2. Expected Behaviour of all Stakeholders in the School

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This is something we work on with the students in the school but this also extends 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 and is a major part of our education model, *adults in the school community also have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children.*

## 3. Monitoring of Behaviour

### **Respectful behaviour:**

- It is important that all stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviours in the school. All stakeholders are expected to speak to each other with respect.
- 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 duration of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time.
- Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected.
- 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.
- Classes begin at 9:20 am and finish at 3:00pm and this time should not be interrupted if possible.

### **Disrespectful behaviour:**

- Examples of disrespectful behaviour that will not be tolerated - *this applies to all communications both in person, on our Aladdin platform or on any social media platforms eg. Whats app, Facebook etc.*- Threats, Shouting, Insults, Accusations, Derogatory tones, speaking negatively about staff members or children.
- If a stakeholder displays disrespectful behaviour to any member of staff over the phone, the phone call will be terminated by the staff member and staff will inform the Principal.
- If a stakeholder displays disrespectful behaviour to any member of staff in person, the staff member will terminate the meeting and will inform the Principal.
- In extreme cases, the Gardaí may be called.

### **Log of Actions:**

- If repeated patterns of this disrespectful behaviour occurs, the Principal & Board of Management will keep a log of actions.
- The Principal or Chairperson may request that the stakeholder who displayed the disrespectful behaviour attend a meeting
  - ★ in order to resolve any outstanding issues and
  - ★ to agree on respectful communications going forward.
  - ❖ The Principal or Chairperson will communicate that this meeting is a *verbal warning*.
  - ❖ Further communications will be again logged by the BOM.
- If there is a breach where anger or aggression is used, the BOM will issue a letter to the person outlining the non-acceptance of this behaviour as a *second warning*.
- If there is a third breach where anger or aggression is displayed, a final warning letter will be issued. As this is a form of verbal abuse the Gardaí may be called.

#### 4. General 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 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, 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 templates

Schools should help parents to fully understand the evidence of learning that the school reports to them, especially information from any standardised tests. The NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) 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 and take account of research commissioned by the NCCA. The report cards provide for reporting in four key areas:

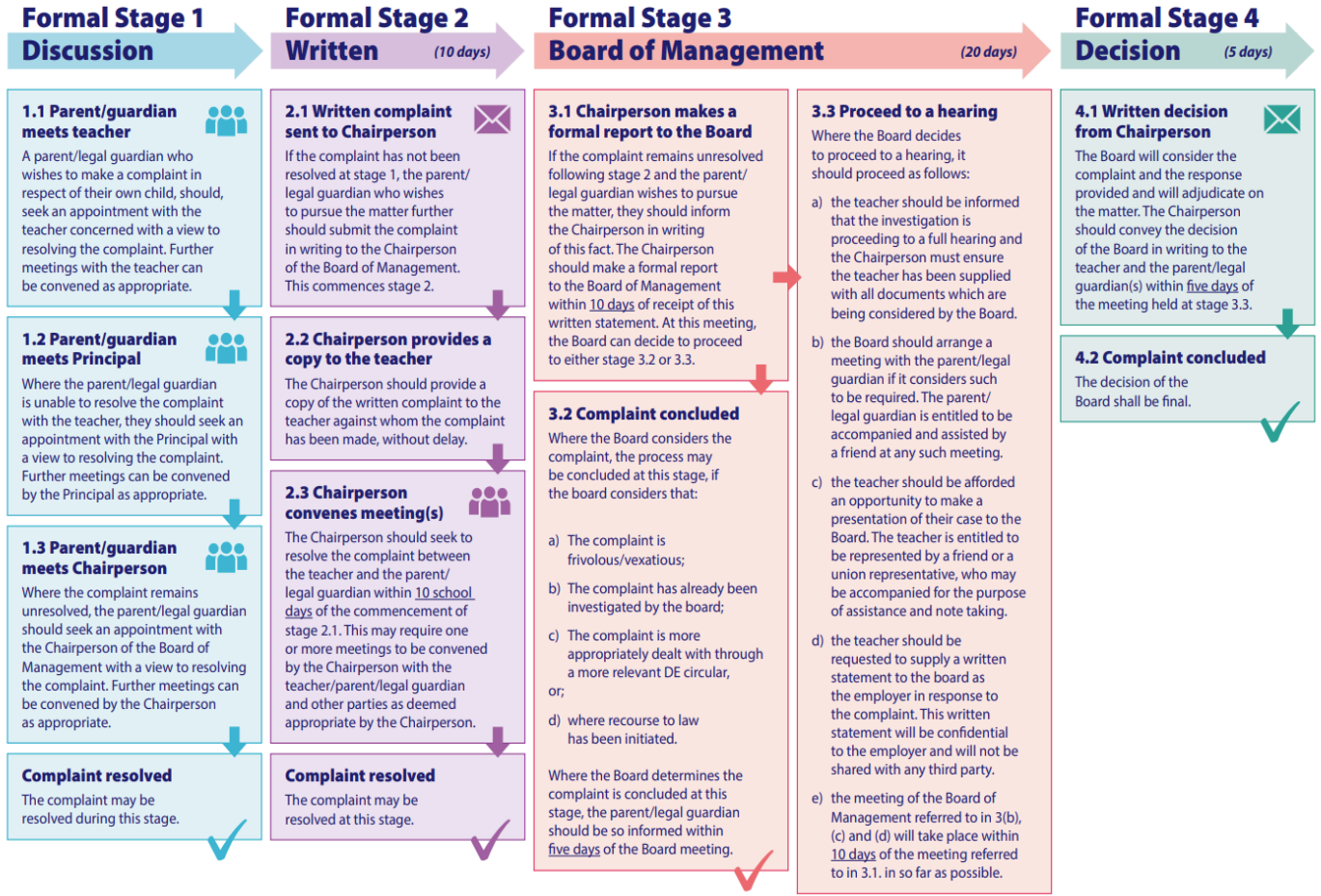
1. the child's learning and achievement across the curriculum
2. the child's learning dispositions
3. the child's social and personal development
4. ways in which parents can support their child's learning

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.

#### 5. Complaints Procedure for Parents:

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

The attached is the agreed complaints procedure to be followed in primary schools. *Note: This is a procedure reached through national agreement between the INTO, CPSMA and the Department of Education:*



This policy was ratified by the Board of Management

Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: February 2024