



## **Parents as Partners Policy**

### **INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT:**

This policy was developed in consultation with staff, the Parents' Association and members of the Board of Management. It was ratified by the Board of Management on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and communication in St. Mary's Boys' National School. 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 & CONSULTATION WITH PARENTS:**

- Meeting for parents of new Junior Infants – mid May/June
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in November
- 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, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies. Decisions taken to change current policies and

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procedures or to introduce new ones will be made known to all parents in written format via the school website/newsletter

- Regular notifications and the school website keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns
- Homework diary 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> 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 share their expertise with the school in a structured way
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. school masses, plays and school concerts
- Involvement of parents in relevant activities
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year – sports days, coffee mornings, carol services, concerts etc.
- 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 his education.

Parents of Infants are also welcome to make an appointment any time throughout the year.

Infant teachers will be available between 2.00pm and 3.00pm for this when necessary.

Parents can communicate with the school through the secretary by phone or email.

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the school secretary to arrange a suitable time. Some teachers may also use Class Dojo or Aladdin to communicate with parents.

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/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, 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 by the class teacher, in consultation with parents. Parents will be given the opportunity to select preferred times on a note from the class teacher. The school will attempt to co-ordinate times where siblings are concerned. Meetings may take place in classrooms and resource 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 let parents know 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 with the parent the problems and difficulties the child may have in school
- To review with the parent the child's experience of schooling
- 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

- To inform the parents of standardised test results according to school policy

*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 learners engagement with tasks, outcomes of other assessment tasks and tests, and examples of students 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. Mary's Boys' National School 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 November. 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:**

Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings on the subject of the **Individual Education 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
- Meetings with the class teacher at the classroom door to discuss concerns are discouraged on a number of grounds:
  1. Staff 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

### **COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE:**

Complaints are infrequent, but the school would wish that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. Therefore the school has a Parental Complaints Procedure which is available to view on our website ([www.ferrybankbns.ie](http://www.ferrybankbns.ie)) or can be viewed in the office.

### **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.
- 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 9:20am and finish at 3:00pm and this time should not be interrupted.

### **SAFETY, HEALTH AND WELFARE AT WORK:**

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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.

**Ratified by the Board of Management**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_