



**ST. BRIGID'S GIRLS' SCHOOL,
THE PARK, CABINTEELY.**

PARENT/STAFF COMMUNICATION POLICY

Introductory Statement and Rationale

a. Introductory Statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff communication in St. Brigid's G.N.S.. 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 members of the school community aim to work for the benefit of the child and her learning.

b. Rationale

St. Brigid's G.N.S. is committed to providing information and guidelines to all members of the school community. Good communication and confidentiality are essential to maintaining a positive working and learning environment. Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect in a happy, caring and supportive environment means that people feel included, consulted and informed.

Aims

The Communications and Confidentiality Policy aims to:

- facilitate good communication between staff, parents and the whole school community
- outline procedures for communication between staff and parents

Parents/guardians are required 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
- Familiarise themselves with activities and role of the Parents' Association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes offered to them

Staff are required to:

- Participate in any meetings with parents in a positive and respectful manner
- Collaborate with the parents in an open two-way communication so that both parties are working together to develop the full potential of the students

Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with parents

- Meeting for parents of new Junior Infants-May/June
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in November for classes Senior Infants - 6th
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in January for Junior Infants
- Parents receive school report for each pupil at the end of each school year
- Meetings with parents whose children have special needs and consultation throughout the year as necessary
- Informal written communication
- Aladdin Connect/Noticeboard keeps parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns
- Aladdin Connect/Noticeboard is a means for parents to communicate information to the school in respect of pupil absences and to communicate the granting of consent by parents for their children's participation in school activities such as tours
- Online educational platforms such as Google Classroom are used as a digital link between school and home
- School website <http://www.stbrigidsgirlsschool.com/>
- Homework diary/homework sheet Junior Infants – 6th class, used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers. Parents requested to sign diary/sheet each night to certify that homework has been completed
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Garden Open Day
- Involvement of parents in the Religion 'Grow-in-Love' Programme' via the section for parents within that programme and through preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation
- Aladdin Noticeboard facilitates direct communication between parents and teachers
- If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she could also contact the school secretary to arrange a meeting
- It is vital that the school is informed if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to a child in school and therefore may adversely affect her education.

Aladdin Connect/Noticeboard:

Aladdin Noticeboard facilitates direct communication between parents and teachers. Aladdin Noticeboard can be used by parents as a quick, effective way of communicating information about their child or to arrange a meeting with a teacher. If a response is required, parents must expect a reasonable period for this response, as normal working hours are to be respected. Teaching and learning are the priority for our teachers during the school day.

Parent/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. Meetings for the parents of Junior Infants will be held in January. 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 Aladdin. The school will attempt to co-ordinate times where siblings are concerned. Meetings may take place in classrooms, support rooms, communally in the PE Hall or remotely if requested. The teachers use prepared guidelines for the meetings and collaborate in advance about the progress of individual children. In the case of separated parents, both parents are offered separate meeting times if requested.

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 demonstrate to children that home and school are working together.
- 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 school activities from a parent's perspective
- To identify areas of concern
- 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.

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 the teachers use, such as outcomes of assessment tasks and tests and samples of students' work.

Report Card

Using a report card template from the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), St. Brigid's Girls' School aims to help parents to understand the evidence of learning that the school report contains, including information from standardised tests.

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

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's progress, they may do so by prior appointment with the class teacher. In the case of separated parents, requests can be made by both parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for meetings.

Formal Meetings for Support Plans

Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings regarding those children for whom School Support Plans are in place will be scheduled for September/October. However, if a parent wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss the progress of their child, they may do so by prior appointment. Support Plans will be reviewed by teachers and parents later in the year.

Informal Parent/Teacher Meetings

1. The school encourages communication between parents and teachers
2. Meetings with the teacher at the class door to discuss a child's concern/progress are discouraged because
 - a) a teacher cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent
 - b) it is difficult to be discreet when so many children are standing close by

c) it can be embarrassing for a child when her parent is talking to staff at a classroom door

d) a confidential conversation is difficult to facilitate in such circumstances

If necessary, an urgent conversation would be facilitated by the teacher and principal.

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.

In accordance with best practice regarding Child Safeguarding, parents are requested not to go to the classroom door directly. On entry, parents must call to the office first.

Complaints Procedure

It is in the interests of pupils, parents and teachers that good relations should exist between home and school. Teachers will discuss any problems which may arise from time to time. With mutual respect and goodwill, most problems can be resolved readily. Complaints are infrequent but the school would wish that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. The agreed complaints procedure to be followed in primary schools can be found on our school website or by request from the school office.

Conduct of all Stakeholders

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 good 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 will be called
- All stakeholders will treat our children and staff 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. Comments regarding other children will not be tolerated, whether those comments are made verbally, in print or on social media platforms. Dignity and respect for all members of the school community must be maintained.
- 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 times should be respected.
- Where possible, staff and parents should give a brief indication of the subject matter of the proposed meeting in order to ensure that the meeting is effective and productive.
- Anonymous complaints will not be investigated unless they are in relation to Child Safeguarding or Bullying.

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 Boards of Management and for those who work in schools.

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 Department of Education Circular 40/97 which deals with the procedures to follow if they feel they have been subjected to any of the above behaviours. (See Appendix 1).

Success Criteria

Our Communication & Confidentiality Policy will be seen to be working well when:

- we receive positive feedback from members of the school community
- there is good communication between staff within the school
- there is good communication between staff, parents and the whole school community
- staff and parents have access to these clear communication procedures

Roles and Responsibility

All members of the school community, under the positive and supportive leadership of the Board of Management and Principal, have both a role and a responsibility in successfully implementing this policy.

Implementation Date

This policy was implemented on 29th January 2024.

Timetable for Review

This policy is to be reviewed regularly and as the need arises.

Ratification and Communication

Parents will be made aware in school communication that the policy is available for viewing on the school website.

Date of ratification: 29th January 2024

Appendix 1

[Circular 40/97 - Assaults on Teachers/School Employees \(File Format Word 50KB\)](#)