



Working Together Parent-Staff Communication Policy

Introductory statement

This policy was developed by the staff of Scoil Náisiúnta Br. Mícheál Ó Cléirigh (Creevy N.S.), the Board of Management and the Parents Association in the school year of 2017-2018.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and parent/staff communication in Creevy 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 the stakeholders aim to work together 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 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 meetings with parents in a positive and respectful manner affirming 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 activities

Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with Parents

- Meeting for parents of new Junior Infants – June, October/November
- 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 over the course of the year to support inclusion
- Consultation throughout the year
- Written communication
- Through the Parents' Association, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of relevant school policies.
- Regular newsletters and text messaging service keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school procedures/concerns.
- Homework diary/Homework folder 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
- Involvement of parents in the religious programme through the 'Grow In Love' section for parents
- Parents are also welcome to make an appointment with teachers any time throughout the year. Parents can make this appointment by contacting either the teacher or the school secretary
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year, such as end of year celebrations, Christmas concerts, plays and performances.

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/staff meetings

The aim of Parent/Staff meetings is:

- To establish and maintain communication 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 help staff/parents get to know the children better as individuals
- To help children realise that home and school are working together
- To share with the parent any challenges that may have arisen for the child
- To review with the parent the child's experience of schooling
- To identify ways in which parents can help their children
- To negotiate jointly decisions about the child's education
- To inform the parents of assessment data gathered 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 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, documented 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 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 and 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.

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

Text Messaging/Email Service

The text messaging/email service keeps parents up to date with school events, holidays and school concerns. Text messages/email will be sent to one mobile phone number or email address per family. In the case of separated parents, requests can be made by both parents to receive text messages and emails. All text messages will be sent to the first mobile phone number/email address as given on the enrolment form, unless otherwise requested by parents. Any changes to this number/email address must be given in writing to the school.

School Support Meetings

Where a child may require additional school support, additional parent teacher meetings may take place over the course of the school year, when devising and revising support plans. At times, outside professionals may attend these meeting and offer advice on how to best meet the child's needs in the school setting. 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/Teacher Meetings

Creevy N.S. encourage communication between parents and staff. Meetings with teacher in the reception lobby to discuss a concern/progress are discouraged on a

number of grounds.

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

Parents wishing to speak to a teacher can do so at 2:10 for infants and 3:10 for 1st-6th class provided it is a brief meeting and it is suitable for staff member to do so. If the issue is not resolved within 5 minutes or it is an issue that the parent feels will need longer than 5 minutes to address, an appointment must be made at a mutually acceptable time.

Occasions occur where a parent needs to speak to a member of staff 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. 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 if the staff member being sought is a teacher. 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.

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.

All explanations of pupil absences, along with notifications of dentist/medical appointments must be in writing to the class teacher. These notes should be written to the class teacher in the pupil's homework journal/homework folder (junior classes). This is required under the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Pupils attending dentist/medical appointments during the school day must be signed out in the sign out book in the secretary's office. If they return to the school following the appointment, they must also be signed in again. Parents are strongly discouraged from taking pupils out of school during term time in order to facilitate family holidays.

Complaints Procedure

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 to be followed in primary schools.

Note: This is a procedure reached through national agreement between the INTO and the CPSMA.

Stage 1-informal stage

1. A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, firstly approach the staff member with a view to resolving the complaint
2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the staff

member he/she should approach the **Principal** with a view to resolving it (or the **class teacher** if the complaint is against an SNA. In this instance the class teacher will work with the parent/guardian and SNA to try to reach an amicable resolution).

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-formal stage

1. If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further, he/she should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management
2. The Chairperson will bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the staff member and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3

1. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the authorization of the Board:
 - a. supply the staff member with a copy of the written complaint and
 - b. arrange a meeting with the staff member, and where applicable, the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 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.
2. If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated, the staff member and the complainant should be so informed within 3 days of the Board meeting
3. If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation, the following steps should be followed:
 - a. The staff member should be supplied with copies of any written evidence in support of the complaint
 - b. He/she should be requested to supply a written response to the complaint to the Board and should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation to the Board and to be accompanied by another person to that meeting
 - c. The Board may arrange a meeting with the complainant, who may be accompanied by another person to this meeting.

Stage 5

1. Following the Board's investigations, the Chairperson shall convey the decision of the Board in writing to the staff member and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board. The decision of the Board shall be final.

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.

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, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building. In certain cases, the Gardaí may 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. Classes begin at 9:30 am and finish at 3:10pm (2.10pm Infants) and this time should not be interrupted if possible.

Ratified by the Board of Management

Date: 29/11/2017

Review Date: November 2020