

Parents as Partners Policy



St Benignus NS, Balcadden

1.0 Introduction

St Benignus NS, Balcadden is committed to ensuring that every child receives a quality education. We want to work with parents/guardians to ensure that we support their child's learning in whatever way we can. We acknowledge the role of parents as partners in education. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the life of the school. It is crucial to the success of our pupils that the school fosters parental interest and support. Communication between school and home should be open and positive. St Benignus NS, Balcadden acknowledges that the parents are the primary educators of their children and we endeavour to create an open and welcoming atmosphere in our school at all times. This policy outlines strategies adopted by the school to promote positive home-school relations.

2.0 The policy's relationship to the school's mission statement and ethos

St Benignus NS aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral, emotional and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and other people. We endeavour to equip each child with the skills and positive self-esteem to empower them to contribute to their community and become lifelong learners. We believe that a positive working relationship with parents/guardians is fundamental to the achievement of this aim.

3.0 Parent-teacher communication

3.1 Parent-teacher meetings

Parents are welcome in our school and are encouraged to keep in regular contact with class teachers and learning support/resource teachers. We realise that early communication often prevents a later difficulty arising and is in the best interests of our pupils. Parents are encouraged to write a note in the Homework Journal or contact the school office to arrange an appointment with class teachers.

Parent-teacher meetings are held annually in accordance with Circular 14/04.

Parents/Guardians have an opportunity to have an individual meeting with their child's class

teacher and discuss their child's progress both academically and socially. Parent/guardians will be given advance notice of this date(s) at the beginning of the school year. A letter confirming times will be sent to parents/guardians closer to the time of the meetings. Arrangements will be made in the school to ensure that meetings for siblings will be synchronised to accommodate parents/guardians as much as possible. The Principal and Learning Support/Resource teachers will also be available during Parent-teacher meetings. Our Learning Support and Special Needs Policy also allows for systematic parent-teacher meetings once a term for pupils availing of supplementary teaching. To meet the needs of parents who are unable to attend on the specific date(s) of the Parent-teacher meetings teachers will arrange to meet them before or after school during the week leading to the assigned date(s) for Parent-teacher meetings.

3.2 Homework journals

The school will provide personalised Homework Journals to pupils at cost price. These Homework Journals contain the School Calendar as well as a summary of school information and the most pertinent school policies. Most importantly, the Homework Journal provides an effective means of daily communication between parent and teacher.

3.2 Beginning of the school year communication

The Principal sends a welcome letter to all parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year outlining priorities for the coming school year. This letter will also contain a Schedule of Yearly Events. Class teachers send home their Homework Policy for the year which outlines advice and time limits for parents to follow.

3.3 Induction meeting for new parents

An Induction Meeting is held in June each year for the parents/guardians of the Junior Infant class for the coming school year. Parents are invited to this meeting by letter. This meeting is attended by the Principal, Chairperson of the Board of Management, Representatives of the Parents' Association and the Junior Infant teacher. Parents receive the Induction Booklet for New Parents at this meeting. School information and pertinent school policies are also discussed. Most of all, this meeting provides a forum to allay the fears and anxieties of new parents. It provides an opportunity to us to assure parents that their child's happiness and welfare is of vital importance to the teachers and staff of the school. We realise that children learn best when they feel happy and secure. To this end, parents are encouraged to keep in close contact and communication with the school. Parents' questions are invited and answered at the Induction Meeting. Our Parents' Association provide refreshments after the meeting is over. This meeting is followed by a visit to the school when the new pupils can visit their new classroom with their parents/guardians.

3.4 End of Year Report Cards

Parents/Guardians receive an End of Year Report Card in June every year. This Report Card outlines each pupil's progress for the year including their performance on Standardised Tests (1st-6th) as outlined in our Assessment Policy. An explanatory letter is also included with the Report Card to explain test scores.

3.5 Newsletters

The school Principal and staff provide information to a contact person from the Parents' Association for the Newsletter that goes out to all parents several times a year. The Newsletter is an excellent means of communication between parents and school.

3.6 Textparent and email

The school has established a database of mobile phone numbers for parents on the textparent.ie website. This facilitates the sending of text messages to all parents or specific groups of parents. Email addresses for all those on the Parents' Association have been compiled and can be sent emails as a group.

3.7 Website

The school website is regularly updated with latest news and notice of school events. School policies are also uploaded onto the school website on the Policy page.

3.8 Notice Board

The Notice Board outside the school is regularly updated with notices relating to school events and events in the local community.

4.0 Parental involvement

We believe that meaningful parental involvement of parents/guardians in school life is crucial to the success of our school as a learning community. The following structures have been put in place to facilitate parental involvement in the life of our school.

4.1 Parents' Association

We have an active and supportive Parents' Association in our school. Our Deputy Principal attends all meetings to ensure effective communication between staff and parents is encouraged. The officers on the committee of the Parents' Association have a meeting with the Principal after each Parents' Association meeting to discuss pertinent issues. The two parent nominees on the Board of Management are also members of the committee of the Parents' Association. A copy of the constitution and general activities of the Parents' Association is provided in Appendix 1. The Parents' Association also organise events such as the Christmas Quiz to provide social occasions for parents/guardians to meet. The Parents'

Association also run a school Credit Union using a rota of volunteers. These volunteers also train the children as tellers.

4.2 Policy sub-committees

Parents take part in the review of policies in the school. This is done through the setting up of sub-committees for specific policies. Parents can volunteer to sit on the sub-committees of policies as they are reviewed.

4.3 School events

The school hosts many events during the year to encourage the participation of parents/guardians in school life. Examples of these events include the annual Book Fair, Christmas performances and concerts, Maths Week, Sports Day, Active Week, art exhibitions, school garden, school sports, school outings etc. Parents are also encouraged to participate in the preparation of the children for the Sacraments of Communion and Confirmation.

5.0 Review and evaluation procedures.

We will keep this policy under review and revise it according to its success in encouraging partnership between school and parents/guardians.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ (date)

Signed: _____
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____