

Corpus Christi National School

Parent-School Partnership Policy



Introductory Statement

This policy was developed as part of the School Self Evaluation process in Corpus Christi National School. The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidance to parents/guardians and staff on parent/staff meetings and communication. It also outlines the immense contribution that parents make to the running of our school through their involvement in the Board of Management and the Parents' Association.

The family and home are central to the social and intellectual development of the child and to the nurturing of relationships. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other with the shared purpose of creating an atmosphere of trust and cooperation where each child is encouraged to reach their full potential. All the stakeholders aim to work for the benefit of the child and their learning.

Mission Statement

At Corpus Christi National School, we are committed to providing a caring, safe and friendly environment for all the pupils. Our mission statement explains that:

“Corpus Christi is a Catholic primary school where we strive to learn together in a happy and safe environment and where everyone is valued, respected and encouraged to do their best.”

A positive school culture and climate exists which -

- recognises the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment
- promotes the habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among its members
- recognises the role of parents in equipping children with a range of life skills
- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community.

Aims

- To affirm and support the role of the parents/guardians as the "primary and natural educators" of their children
- To promote a positive relationship between parents/guardians and teachers in their respective roles as educators
- To have two-way communication that is meaningful between parents/guardians and the school in relation to school programmes, practices and pupil progress
- To state the current channels of communication between school and parents/guardians.

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 child
- Share the responsibility of seeing that the school remains true to its ethos, values and distinctive character
- Become actively involved in the Parents' Association and/or Board of Management
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them and their child.

Staff are encouraged to:

- Establish good communication with the 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 them at an early stage
- 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 them reach their potential
- Value and respect the input of parents as they know their child best.

Structures in place to facilitate open communication and consultation with parents:

- The existence of a strong, well established Parents' Association, who are welcomed into the school and encouraged to get involved in school activities e.g. Christmas celebrations, Sports Day, First Communion, Sponsored Walk, Fun Day etc
- Meetings for parents/guardians of new Junior Infants are held in mid-May/early June (with their child for *Meet and Greet session* with the class teacher)
- Face to face Parent/Teacher meetings are held in November
- Parents receive a school report for their child at the end of each school year
- Meetings with parents of children who are on a School Support Plus Plan are organised in October/ November
- Ongoing consultation with parents/guardians throughout the year
- Regular notifications on Aladdin Connect and the school website keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and other school information
- The child's homework diary 2nd –6th is used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers. Parents are requested to sign the diary each night to certify that homework has been completed
- Our School Newsletter informs the school community of important developments, recent events and activities that are happening in the school.
- Our Twitter page is our most up to date communication for parents where teachers record class and whole school events and activities for parents to see.
- Our school website corpuschristi.ie hosts important information on school policies, procedures and school information.
- Seesaw is the remote learning platform used by the school to communicate the child's daily learning schedule during school closures. The Seesaw family App facilitates communication between home and school during remote learning periods.
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Christmas Carol Service, Sponsored Walk, Fun day etc.

- Through the Parents' Association, parent volunteers are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies. Decisions taken to change current policies and procedures or to introduce new ones will be made known to all parents in written format via the school website.
- If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, they can contact the school secretary to arrange a suitable time.
- 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 her education.
- 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.
- Formal Parent/Teacher meetings are usually held once a year for all classes towards the end of November (Circular 14/04).

The purpose of the Parent/Teacher Meeting is:

- To establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents
- To inform parents how their child is progressing in school
- To help children realise that home and school are working together
- To share positives about the child
- To share with the parent the challenges/difficulties the child may have in school
- To discuss with parents the STen scores of their child's standardised tests
- 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 ways in which the parent can help their child
- To negotiate jointly decisions about the child's education.

Reporting to Parents:

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for their child's learning and development. Schools can strengthen the capacity of parents to support their child in this way by sharing meaningful information about the progress that their child is making in the education system. In turn, parents will often be able to enrich the teacher's knowledge of the child's progress through providing further information about the child's 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. Corpus Christi National school uses the standard report card devised by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) to assist schools in reporting information about the progress of primary pupils to parents, 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.

- All communication sent from the school will be sent via Aladdin Connect or occasionally via the child's home address as listed on their application form for admission 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 IEP meetings:

Formal meetings with parents of children with School Support Plus Plans will take place in October/November. However, if a parent/guardian wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by appointment.

Informal Parent/Teacher Meetings:

Corpus Christi National School encourages communication between parents/guardians and staff.

Meetings with the class teacher at the classroom door or in the class line in the morning to discuss concern is 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. Occasions occur where a parent needs to speak to a teacher urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The Principal will aim to facilitate such meetings where possible, making every effort to ensure that the children in the class do not lose out on any of the teaching/learning time.

Parents' Association

Corpus Christi National School has a proud tradition of parental involvement in the Parents' Association. Our Parents' Association is a member of the National Parents' Council (NPC). The following is the list of activities that the PA involves themselves in regularly:

- fundraising through raffles, sponsored walks etc.
- providing refreshments at times of special events e.g. First Communion
- organising events for the children e.g. Communion party, Graduation party, Fun day etc
- decorating the school for various special events- Graduation/Communion Party etc
- work in the school garden
- discussion of school policies.

Board of Management

As is required by the DES (*see Governance Manual for Primary Schools*) two parents elected by the school body of parents are among the eight members of the school Board of Management. These parents, along with the other members, attend approximately five board meetings per year. The Board of Management is responsible for the overall running of the school and the two parents have a crucial role in this.

It is important to note that neither the teacher nor the parents on the board are delegates of their electorates. They are not obliged to report back to the parent body or take instructions on how to vote at meetings. Confidentiality in all board matters is of utmost importance.

Complaints Procedure

It is the policy of the school that any complaints should be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. The following is the agreed complaints procedure to be followed in primary schools.

Procedural Points

This procedure is a staged procedure where every effort is made to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage. In most cases, concerns will be dealt with either informally or formally at the earlier stages of the procedure. Where it has not been possible to agree on a resolution at the earlier stages, the procedure does allow for the escalation of the matter to the Board of Management. This procedure sets out, in four stages, the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed. It is expected the parties will follow each stage in sequence.

- Where the term written correspondence is used, this refers specifically to a letter or email correspondence from a parent/legal guardian(s).
- Only complaints about a teacher which are written and signed by a parent/legal guardian, and which relate to their own child, will be investigated.
 - Where a complaint raised by a parent/legal guardian is deemed by the employer/board of management to relate to the following, this procedure will not apply;
- matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
- frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
- complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.
 - In all circumstances, any form of written correspondence for the attention of the Board of Management must be supplied to the Chairperson of the Board of Management only. Any deviation from this could be deemed prejudicial and as acting outside the scope of this agreement.
- Days in this procedure refer specifically to school days. A school day is a day on which the school is in operation. Holiday periods, school closures and leaves of absences are not counted as school days for the purpose of this procedure.
- Group/collective complaints are not provided for and each parent/legal guardian raising a concern will be dealt with separately through this process.
 - The procedure is a domestic forum and accordingly, neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any stage.
 - Issues should be raised in a timely manner. It is in the best interests of the child that issues are raised to achieve early resolution at the earliest possible stage with the teacher, ideally while the pupil is in that teacher's class.

Stage 1- Informal stage: Discussion

1.1 A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint in respect of their own child should, firstly seek an appointment with the **class teacher concerned** with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings with the teacher can be convened as appropriate.

1.2 Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher, he/she should seek an appointment with the **Principal** with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings with the Principal can be convened as appropriate.

1.3 Where the complaint remains unresolved, the parent/guardian should seek an appointment with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings with the Chairperson can be convened as appropriate.

Complaint resolved-The complaint may be resolved during this stage

Stage 2- Formal stage- Written

2.1 If the complaint has not been resolved at Stage1, the parent/legal guardian who wishes to pursue the matter further, should submit the complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. This commences Stage 2.

2.2 The Chairperson should provide a copy of the written complaint to the teacher against whom the complaint has been made, without delay.

2.3 The Chairperson should seek to resolve the complaint between the teacher and the parent/ legal guardian within 10 school days of the commencement of stage 2.1. This may require one or more meetings to be convened by the Chairperson with the teacher/ parent/legal guardian and other school personnel as deemed appropriate by the Chairperson.

Complaint resolved -The complaint may be resolved at this stage.

Stage 3- Board of Management

3.1 Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board

If the complaint remains unresolved following stage 2 and the parent/ legal guardian wishes to pursue the matter, they should inform the Chairperson in writing of this fact. The Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board of Management within 10 days of receipt of this written statement. At this meeting, the Board can decide to proceed to either stage 3.2 or 3.3

3.2 Complaint concluded

Where the Board considers the complaint, the process may be concluded at this stage, if the board considers that:

- a) The complaint is frivolous/vexatious;
- b) The complaint has already been investigated by the board;
- c) The complaint is more appropriately dealt with through a more relevant DE circular, or;
- d) where recourse to law has been initiated. Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parent/legal guardian should be so informed within five days of the Board meeting.

3.3 Proceed to a hearing

Where the Board decides to proceed to a hearing, it should proceed as follows:

- a) the teacher should be informed that the complaint is proceeding to a full hearing and the Chairperson must ensure the teacher has been supplied with all documents which are being considered by the Board.
- b) the Board should arrange a meeting with the parent/legal guardian if it considers such to be required. The parent/ legal guardian is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting.
- c) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of their case to the Board. The teacher is entitled to be represented by a friend or a union representative, who may be accompanied for the purpose of assistance and note taking.
- d) the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board as the employer in response to the complaint. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be shared with any third party.
- e) the meeting of the Board of Management referred to in 3(b), (c) and (d) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1. in so far as possible.

Stage 4-Formal Stage-Decision

4.1 Written decision from Chairperson

The Board will consider the complaint and the response provided and will adjudicate on the matter. The Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent/legal guardian(s) within five days of the meeting held at stage 3.3.

4.2 Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.

Behaviour of all members of the school community

Positive and respectful communication is of utmost importance to our school. This not only extends to the children but to all members of the school community i.e. 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 everyone is responsible for their own behaviours in the school.

- All are expected to speak to each other with respect. Shouting, cursing or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If anyone 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 members of the school community- pupils, staff and parents will be treated with the utmost respect while on the premises
- Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these times should be respected.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act became operative on 1 November, 1989. 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.

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.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 29/11/22.
This policy was reviewed at the Board of Management meet on 21/10/24.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

Niamh Greene
Principal

Felix McKenna
Chairperson of the Board of Management