**Bunscoil na Toirbhirte**

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**Communications Policy**

**Parent/Staff Communication Policy**

 **Introductory statement**

This policy was developed by the staff of Bunscoil na Toirbhirte. Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and parent/staff communication in Bunscoil na Toirbhirte.

Bunscoil na Toirbhirte is an inclusive school committed to the holistic education of all of our pupils. The health, safety and wellbeing of all our pupils and staff are of paramount importance.

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 his/her 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/parents association
* Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

**Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with Parents**

* Aladdin Connect is our primary means of communication with parents and staff
* Phone calls/emails/text messages
* Meetings arranged through the office (meetings are strictly by appointment only)
* Parent/teacher meetings take place in October/November every year
* Parents receive school reports for each pupil at the end of each school year
* Meetings with parents whose children have special needs take place on a regular basis (IEP’s)
* Written communication will take place periodically, although communication will primarily take place through Aladdin Connect
* Our School website and Social Media accounts will keep parents and staff up to date with events, school policies, calendars and activities.
* Our Yearbook offers and insight into our schools activities.
* Newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events
* Homework journals (1st to 6th class) will used to convey homework that has been set and messages. Parents are requested to sign diary daily to certify that homework has been completed/notes received
* Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Bunscoil Ceilí, School matches, Communions, Confirmations and other religious ceremonies, Graduation ceremonies
* Consent forms will need to be signed at various times of year to allow children’s’ participation in some events. This will be done primarily through Aladdin Connect.

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she must 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 a child and therefore may adversely affect his/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.

**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 (October/November) for all classes. They will be initiated by the school staff. Times for meetings can be booked via Aladdin Connect. Meetings may take place in classrooms or support rooms. A short written record of the meeting is maintained and retained by each teacher.

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 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 perspectives 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.

Where a teacher has a concern they will not wait until the parent teacher meetings or end of year report to bring this to parents attention.

**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 by sharing meaningful information with them about the progress that children are achieving in school. This information needs to draw on the different sources of evidence that staffs 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**

We recognise that 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. Bunscoil na Toirbhirte uses an NCCA recommended report card template when reporting to parents on students’ progress and achievement at school.

These 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 October/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 via Aladdin Connect, by email, by text or 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-IEPs**

Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings on the subject of the Individual Education Plan will take place in September/October. There may be review meetings later in the year. 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/Teacher Meetings**

* Bunscoil na Toirbhirte encourages communication between parents and teachers.
* Meetings with the class teacher at the class door to discuss a child’s concern/progress are strongly discouraged on a number of grounds:

1. Staff cannot adequately supervise his/her 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 the teacher at the school door/gate.

Occasions occur where a parent needs to speak to a staff member urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The Principal/Deputy 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. These meetings must still be arranged through the office, not at the classroom door.

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.

If parents are collecting a child during school hours, they must sign in at the secretary’s office and fill in a collection slip which will be brought to the class teacher.

All contact information held by the school should be up to date, parents/guardians are requested to contact the school with any change in contact details.

Only parents/guardians and contacts named on the enrolment forms will be contacted in the event of an emergency.

**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.

**Stage 1-informal stage**

1. A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, firstly approach the class teacher/staff member with a view to resolving the complaint

2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class staff he/she should

approach the Principal with a view to resolving it

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 authorisation of the Board of Management:

* Supply the staff member with a copy of the written complaint and
* 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 staff member is informed and the following steps should be followed:

* The staff member should be supplied with copies of any written evidence in support of the Complaint
* 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
* The Board may arrange a meeting with the complainant, who may be accompanied by another person to this meeting.

**Stage 5**

Following the Boards 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 not only extends to the children but to all of the stakeholders e.g. the staff, parents and the wider community. Anyone entering our school 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 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 duration of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected. Further meetings can be arranged to facilitate further discussions
* Teachers are generally not available to meet without appointment in the morning and after school as teachers are responsible for receiving and discharging pupils at these times. 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 9:00 am and finish at 2:40pm and this time should not be interrupted.

**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 BoMs 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.

**Implementation and Review**

This policy will be ratified and implemented fully from the 22nd of September 2022. The policy will be

reviewed on a regular basis.

The school management team and the teachers will implement this policy.

Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_