

## **St Gabriel's Primary School**

### **Home School Community Liaison Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on the Home School Community Liaison Scheme and its operation. The principles of the scheme place an emphasis on partnership and collaboration and the complementary skills of parents and teachers in order to foster a spirit of inclusion for all. In St. Gabriel's we endeavour to support the principles of the scheme and its goals as follows:

#### **GOALS**

**To maximise active participation of the children in the learning process in particular those who might be at risk of failure *through*:**

- Encouraging all parents to participate and attend curricular related courses run by HSCL co-ordinators
- Encouraging and supporting all parents to access Aladdin as the primary form of communication between school and home
- Facilitating effective frequent communication between parents and teachers/ principals
- Encouraging parents to refer children to outside agencies, that will support the behaviour, education or social and emotional development of the child
- Liaising on a daily basis with teachers and principals
- Liaising with parents regarding their child's progress
- HSCL input at staff meetings
- Attending fortnightly Care Team meetings
- Attending monthly attendance meetings
- Supporting the development of the school's DESIS plan.
- Liaising regularly with School Completion Programme and the National Educational Welfare Board
- Meeting with parents through home visits, school meetings, front gate in the morning.
- Encouraging parents to participate within the class settings through organised activities (e.g. Maths for Fun, )

**To promote active cooperation between home, school and relevant community agencies in promoting the educational interests of the children *through*:**

- Conducting home visits to offer support/promote active co-operation
- Making HSCL contact details available to all parents
- Building rapport with incoming or new parents
- Having an open door policy, as far as possible
- Profiling on school campus
- Sending regular notes via **Aladdin** to keep parents up-to-date with HSCL activities
- Sending and responding to letters/ texts/ emails
- HSCL co-ordinator attending community agency meetings, including local Cluster meetings, in order to be informed as to what is available in the wider community
- Linking parents with services in their community
- Facilitating parents and teachers working together
- Holding information meetings for parents

- Organising parents' representation on the School Completion Management Committee
- Providing, managing and monitoring a Parents' Room
- Using funding provided by DES as outlined in Circular 0058/2013
- Facilitating parents representatives to aid policy formation

**To raise awareness among parents of their own capacities to enhance their children's educational progress and to assist them in developing relevant skills *through*:**

- Conversations with parents on home visits, in parents' room and in school
- Personal development courses for parents (e.g. Parents Plus)
- Literacy and numeracy courses for parents (e.g. Chatter Matters)
- Organisation of activities which allow parents to participate in their child's education within the school (e.g. Maths for Fun)

**To enhance the children's uptake from education, their retention in the educational system and their attitudes to life-long learning *through*:**

- Encouraging and supporting school attendance
- Liaising with parents to inform them of in-school supports that are available that may enhance their child's enjoyment of school/ability to perform in school (homework clubs, after-school sports clubs, therapies, etc.)
- Liaising with S.C.P. and local secondary schools to organise and facilitate transfer programmes for 6<sup>th</sup> Class children.
- Hosting parents' meetings which will provide relevant information on options for secondary schools in the locality, as well as addressing subject choices and concerns
- Liaising with other HSCL Co-ordinators regarding shared families in local schools
- Liaising with other schools regarding children transferring to new schools
- Providing support for parents whose children are experiencing academic and/or social/behavioural difficulties
- Meeting regularly with HSCL Co-ordinators from other schools as a family and local cluster (primary and post-primary)
- Providing opportunities for life-long learning for parents
- Supporting parents' participating in courses which will model to children life-long learning in action
- Promoting life-long learning outside the school (e.g. Adult Education Centre, Library)

**To disseminate the positive outcomes of the scheme *through*:**

- Updating notice-boards in Parents' Room
- Publishing articles on Aladdin
- Sending regular notes via Aladdin
- Including articles in school newsletters
- Reporting to each Board of Management meeting
- School website
- Conversations with parents
- Letters home

**Health, safety and welfare**

See Appendix 1 for guidelines with regard to HSCL work during the Covid-19 pandemic

**Related policies**

Admissions & Participation  
Attendance  
Child Safeguarding Statement  
Code of Behaviour  
Critical Incident  
Data Protection  
DEIS Plan  
Health and Safety Policy  
Parental Complaints  
Parent School Partnership  
Special Educational Needs

**Ratification and review:** This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in May 2021 and will be reviewed as necessary and at least within a four-year period.

**Signed:** *Maighread Ní Ghallchobhair O.P.*

Maighread Ní Ghallchobhair O.P. Chairperson of Board of Management

**Date:** 12/05/2021

## **Appendix 1**

### **Guidelines with regard to HSCL work during the Covid-19 pandemic**

As per Circular 0016/2019, the primary concern of the full-time work of HSCL Coordinators is to promote attendance, participation and retention of children/young people by working with the salient adult in the child's life. During the Covid-19 school closures, HSCL Coordinators provided significant support to vulnerable families within their school community. Examples included organising and/or delivering food and educational packs, wellbeing phone calls and support with accessing online learning platforms

#### **Prioritisation of Service Delivery**

Parents/guardians of incoming Junior Infants

Parents/guardians of students who have not returned to school.

Parents/guardians of students who school staff had difficulty making contact/ engaging in home learning with during the Covid-19 school closures

**Home visitation** is to be delineated into two categories:

- Essential: where there is a requirement for physical home/garden visitation
- Non-essential: where a significant contact can take place remotely in consultation with the school Principal and relevant stakeholders

Where essential visits are deemed necessary by the HSCL Coordinator and agreed to by the Principal/s the HSCL Coordinator must plan appropriately for same. In the absence of Home Visits, Coordinators should keep regular contact with their target families through phone calls text and other social media platforms.

#### **General Communication with Parents**

- HSCL Coordinators, as part of their school's Covid-19 Policy Statement are to contribute to providing up to date information on Public Health advice to targeted parents
- Advise parents not to bring their children to school if they display symptoms of Covid-19, or have been identified as contacts of a confirmed or potential case of Covid-19
- Provide information for target parents on school procedures should their child show symptoms of Covid-19 while at school
- Advise target parents as required to the procedure relating to a confirmed or potential case of Covid-19 in the school
- Promote good hand hygiene and display posters in the HSCL Office, Parents Room, etc.

#### **HSCL Coordinator Meetings with Parents in the School Building**

Parents will be restricted to essential meetings only and limited to those who have obtained prior approval from the Principal.

- Should parent visits to the school be deemed essential and be approved by the Principal they should be by prior arrangement, strictly timetabled and adhere to both Public Health guidelines, and the agreed actions detailed in the school's Covid-19 Policy Statement.

#### **Parents' Room Facilities**

- Parents' room facilities will not be available until further notice

### **Parent Classes**

- Should Parent Classes be deemed essential, and be approved by the Principal/s, they should be by prior arrangement, strictly timetabled and adhere to both Public Health guidelines, and the agreed actions detailed in the school's Covid-19 Policy Statement
- In the event of above, and in line with Public Health guidelines, alternative accommodation in the community may need to be sourced to host Parent Classes
- Materials used by parents in any agreed class/course should not be shared. A consistently allocated workspace should also be given to parents involved
- Online classes should also be considered
- Until further notice holding in-class parent activities (e.g. Maths for Fun) are not recommended
- Pupils/students and staff should not use the Parents Room, unless with prior permission from the school Principal and informing the HSCL Coordinator

### **HSCL Office**

Only essential visits approved by the Principal should be taken in the HSCL Office, and these should be by prior arrangement, strictly timetabled and adhere to both Public Health guidelines, and the agreed actions and control measures detailed in the school's Covid19 Policy Statement.

### **Using your Car as a HSCL Coordinator**

- HSCL Coordinators are advised to travel on your *own* to meetings, home visits etc.

### **HSCL Cluster Meetings**

- HSCL Family Cluster Meetings may be held remotely, or in small groups or in large spaces, in line with Public Health guidelines
- Local Cluster Meetings may for 2020-2021 be held remotely
- Arrangements for Cluster Meetings must at all times adhere to Public Health guidelines.