

St Gabriel's Primary School

Parent - School Partnership Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and communication in St Gabriel's Primary School. 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 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 all staff members in the school
- Collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their children
- Become actively involved in the school/parent association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them
- Liaise with the Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator

Staff members are encouraged to:

- Establish good communication with parents/guardians of pupils in their class
- Keep parents/guardians informed of their child's progress and behaviour both positive and negative
- Actively listen to parents/guardians and encourage them to raise concerns at an early stage to avoid situations escalating
- 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 her reach her potential
- Value and respect the input of parents

Communication and consultation

The school employs the following structures to ensure open communication and consultation:

- Formal and informal meetings
- Annual school report cards
- School website (www.stgabrielsprimary.ie)
- Letters, newsletters and texts
- Parents' association
- Homework diaries.
- Invitations to attend class and whole school e.g. Reading for Fun, Maths for Fun, Chatter Matters, sports week, masses, concerts, carol services, science exhibitions.
- A Parents' Room to facilitate parents for coffee mornings, meetings and courses.
- Involvement of the Home School Community Liaison (H.S.C.L.) Co-ordinator where necessary to offer advice and support via meetings, phone or home visit

To ensure open communication and consultation we ask that parents inform the school if:

- A family event/situation occurs that could cause anxiety to the child and therefore may adversely affect the child's education.

- There is a change of address or phone numbers. All communication sent from the school will be sent to the child's home address or phone number as stated on enrolment form.
- They wish to have reports or letters sent to separate addresses or if they require separate parent – teacher meetings, in the case of separated parents.
- Custody arrangements or guardianship changes. 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.

Meetings

A number of formal meetings are arranged each year by the school. Other meetings may take place as necessary. Teachers are not available to meet with parents during class times, but meetings before or after school can be scheduled by appointment only. Parents can call to the office, contact HSCL or send a written note to organise a suitable time. Similarly, parents are welcome to make an appointment, through the secretary's office, to meet with the Principal. If a matter is urgent and the Principal is unavailable, the parent/s may meet with the Deputy Principal. It is school policy to keep a written record of formal meetings.

Parent-teacher meetings

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all children (Circular 14/04). They take place in November, normally from 1:30/2:30 to 5.30. A note is sent to each parent/guardian stating date and time for meeting. Where parents/guardians have difficulty with the allocated time, alternative arrangements can be made between parents and teacher. S.E.T. teachers and class teachers may meet jointly with parents. Areas for discussion include attendance, behaviour, progress, social development, daily preparation for school, homework, attitude towards learning, areas of concern, standardised test results, successes and suggestions regarding how parents can help. HSCL will support parents in attending and will liaise with parents to rearrange appointments where necessary.

New entrants

A Meeting is held with parents of incoming Junior Infants and new entrants to other classes to welcome them to St. Gabriel's and to give information on uniform, lunches, books and guidance on practical issues for new pupils. Parents are given the opportunity to meet one another and hear general information while the children meet their peers in their new classroom.

Class meetings

During September a meeting for parents may be held for each class. It is coordinated by our HSCL teacher and facilitated by the class teacher. It is an opportunity to discuss the curriculum, classroom routines, homework, relevant school policies (Child protection, Code of Behaviour, Acceptable Use of IT) and teacher expectations.

S.E.N.

Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings on the subject of the Individual Education Plan will take place in September/October. However, if a parent wishes to arrange a meeting at any other stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by prior appointment.

Informal meetings

Although very brief messages can be shared with a teacher before school, meetings with the class teacher at the classroom door or in the yard to discuss concerns are discouraged. Teachers cannot adequately supervise a class while at the same time speaking to a parent. It is difficult to be discreet when so many children are standing close by and it can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to staff in front of others. However, messages may be passed on via the school secretary, Home-School teacher or Principal.

Report cards

St Gabriel's Primary School uses NCCA report card templates for reporting to parents on students' progress and achievement at school. They are distributed in the last fortnight in June each year. The report cards report on four key areas; the child's learning and achievement across the curriculum, the child's learning dispositions, the child's social and personal development and ways in which parents can support their child's learning. Standardised tests results are included for children in 1st to 6th classes. These standardised test results are also discussed at the annual Parent – Teacher meetings in November.

Complaints procedures

Complaints are infrequent but should they arise they are best dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, firstly approach the class teacher and make an appointment with a view to resolving the complaint. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher he/she should follow the agreed complaints procedure, see Parental Complaints Policy.

At this time, the same complaint procedures relate to all staff.

Behaviour of all stakeholders

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This extends to all stakeholders including 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 all stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviours in the school. Please note:

- All stakeholders are expected to speak to each other with respect. Shouting, foul or abusive language 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 respect.
- Parents are not permitted to approach or reprimand another person's child on the school 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

Health, safety and welfare

Under the scope of The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 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. In this respect, all staff should be aware of DES Circular 0040/1997.

Related policies

- Admissions & Participation
- Anti-Bullying
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Critical Incident
- Data Protection Policy
- Home-School Community Liaison
- Parental Complaints Procedures
- Special Educational Needs

Ratification and review: This policy was last 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.
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 12/05/2021