

## **Parent/Teacher Communication Policy**

#### **Introductory statement**

This policy was developed by the staff of Bunscoil Bhríde in consultation with the Board of Management and the Parents' Association. Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and teachers on parent/teacher meetings and parent/teacher communication in Bunscoil Bhríde. The family and home are central to the development of the child and the nurturing of Christian 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.

#### Parents are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with 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's Parents' Association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them

#### Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with parents

- All parents are asked to download the Aladdin Connect app, allowing two-way communication between school and home, and facilitating the sharing of information relating to attendance, school reports etc with parents.
- Meeting for parents of newly enrolled Junior Infants in spring and mid-June
- Meeting for parents of Junior Infants in September
- One-to-one Parent/Teacher Meetings in November
- Parents receive school report of each pupil in mid-June, allowing time for contact to be made with regard to any concerns/queries arising before the end of the year
- Termly Support Plan Meetings with parents whose children have special educational needs
- Consultation throughout the year
- Written communication
- Through the Parents' Association, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of all 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 newsletter
- Fortnightly newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns
- The Homework Diary, used in 1st to 6st classes serves as a medium 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
- Parents are invited to family masses, school celebrations/events and school concerts
- Involvement of parents in the religious education Grow in Love section for parents.

- Volunteer parents (who are Garda vetted) from the Parents' Association are asked to accompany classes on school tours / outings
- Parents are encouraged to participate in paired reading initiatives and Ready Set Go Maths programme in infant classes.

# It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to your 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 the teachers.

#### **Parent/Teacher Meetings**

The aim of Parent/Teacher Meetings is:

- To let parents know how their children are progressing in school
- To inform teachers on how children are coping outside school
- To establish an ongoing relationship and communication with parents
- To help teachers/parents get to know the children better as individuals
- To help children realise that home and school are working together

#### **Informal Parent/Teacher Meetings**

- 1. Communication between parents and teachers is to be encouraged
- 2. Arranging parent/teacher meetings within the school day while children are in school is difficult. However parents are welcome to speak to the Principal or teacher(s) at an appointed time
- 3. Meetings with the class teacher at the class door / school gate to discuss a child's concern/progress is discouraged on a number of grounds
  - a. A teacher cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent
  - b. It is difficult to be discrete when so many children are standing close by
  - c. It can be embarrassing for a child when her parent is talking to the teacher at a classroom door

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 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.

If parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear etc, this can be done through the secretary's office.

Parents are strongly discouraged from taking pupils out of school during term time for family holidays.

#### **Formal Meetings**

Formal timetabled Parent/Teacher Meetings take place in 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 sent via the Aladdin app, which all
  parents are asked to download. Communication may also be send to the parents' email
  addresses or 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.

#### **Complaints Procedure**

See Appendix 1 below for Parental Complaints Procedure

### Appendix 1

## Revised Parental Complaints Procedure

















#### Note

- A copy of this procedure will be available for parents/legal guardians on the school website and/or on request from the school.
   This procedure comes into effect on the 1st of January 2024.
- Under the Education Act 1998, legally, all schools are managed by the school's Board of Management, on behalf of the school patron.

#### Purpose/Objective

The parental complaints procedure was revised and agreed by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the management bodies of primary schools, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, the Church of Ireland, An Foras Pátrúnachta, the Muslim Primary Education Board, Educate Together and the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education in 2023. It is designed to provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child/children in an agreed, fair and transparent manner.

It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life and as such from time-totime concerns may arise which they may need to engage with the school. It is expected that engagement will be timely, courteous and resolution focused to ensure that the important relationship between the parent and school can be preserved and respected. It is expected that all parties concerned will engage proactively.

#### **Procedural Points**

The 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 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.

Revised Parental Complaints Procedure | 1

#### Formal Stage 1 Discussion

#### Formal Stage 2 Written (10 days)

### Formal Stage 3 **Board of Management**

Formal Stage 4 Decision

(5 days)

## 1.1 Parent/guardian

1.2 Parent/guardian

Where the parent/legal guardian

is unable to resolve the complaint

a view to resolving the complaint.

Further meetings can be convened

by the Principal as appropriate.

1.3 Parent/guardian

Where the complaint remains

unresolved, the parent/legal guardian

Management with a view to resolving

the complaint. Further meetings can

should seek an appointment with

the Chairperson of the Board of

be convened by the Chairperson

Complaint resolved

meets Chairperson

as appropriate.

with the teacher, they should seek an

appointment with the Principal with

meets Principal<sup>1</sup>

A parent/legal guardian who

#### 2.1 Written complaint sent to Chairperson

If the complaint has not been resolved at stage 1, 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.

#### 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.

### 3.3 Proceed to a hearing

(20 days)

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.
- 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.

## meets teacher

wishes to make a complaint in respect of their own child, should, seek an appointment with the teacher concerned with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings with the teacher can be convened as appropriate.

#### 2.2 Chairperson provides a copy to the teacher

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

#### 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,
- d) where recourse to law
- has been initiated. Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parent/legal guardian

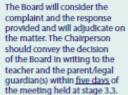
should be so informed within

five days of the Board meeting.

#### The complaint may be The complaint may be resolved during this stage.

resolved at this stage.

#### 4.1 Written decision from Chairperson



#### 4.2 Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.

Complaint resolved

2.3 Chairperson

convenes meeting(s)

The Chairperson should seek to

resolve the complaint between

legal guardian within 10 school

days of the commencement of

stage 2.1. This may require one

or more meetings to be convened

parent/legal guardian and other

appropriate by the Chairperson.

school personnel as deemed

by the Chairperson with the teacher/

the teacher and the parent/

Where a complaint is received about a principal the above process commences at Stage 1.2.