



## ST. CLARE'S COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS POLICY

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### COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS POLICY

#### **Introductory Statement**

St. Clare's Convent Primary School recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with parents and guardians and is committed to being open and accessible for all parents and guardians. St. Clare's welcomes parents to work in partnership with staff in the interests of their child's education. The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines to parents/guardians on Parent/Teacher Meetings and Parent/teacher communication in St. Clare's Convent Primary School, Harold's Cross. The home is central to the development of the child. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive of each other so that the student's education can be effective. This policy addresses the main ways in which the school ensures effective communication between home and school.

#### **AIMS**

- To improve the quality of service given to students at St. Clare's by ensuring that effective communication and consultation takes place between the school and parents/guardians.
- To improve the quality of service by ensuring robust processes for consultation between the school and parents/guardians.

#### **Communication**

Communication between the school and parents/guardians operates in the following ways:

- Parents are invited to attend parent/teacher meetings each year to review the progress of the student;
- Parents of Junior Infants students are invited into the school to a meeting to discuss Paired Reading;
- Parents of first class students are invited into the school to a meeting to discuss Paired Maths;
- Parents of each infant class are invited into the school to an appropriately themed Parents' Meeting to cover issues relating to teaching and learning for the class level;
- The student diary is used as a key vehicle for communication between parents and the school and the diary is fully explained at the annual induction meeting for new parents in February/March and to all students as they start first class;
- Communication about student progress takes place formally for each student through the end of year report and mid-term progress report for students in 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> classes.



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Details about events at the school are published to parents/guardians in hard copy and/or through other forms of electronic communication (e.g. on the website, selective texts to specific groups of parents etc.);

The circular letter is a key vehicle for communicating in a variety of ways:

- alerting parents/guardians to forthcoming issues and events;
- celebrating the life of the school;
- petitioning parental views;
- publishing the results of consultations;

The school has all newsletters, events and key information on our up to date website.

Queries about events at the school may be made by phone to the school or by email.

### **Responding to parents**

Any requests for information such as requests for letter for Child Benefit, Visa Entry renewal etc. are dealt with within 5 school days **during term time only**.

### **Consultation**

Questionnaires are issued to parents on a range of issues are through a variety of means (hard copy, online, electronic surveys, email). They may be distributed at specific parental events or via 'student post' system.

The consultation process via questionnaires address key service areas such as the school curriculum, homework, etc.

We aim to communicate in the following ways:

- Electronically through our school website;
- Regular newsletters with matters of the moment and dates;
- Additional letters when further opportunities become available to the students;
- Informal meetings with the class teacher and or Principal;
- Formal meetings at Parent/Teacher meetings or for IEP (Individual Education Plans) meetings;
- Text messaging;
- Notices informing you of "Matters of the moment";
- By telephone when pertinent to your child only;
- Website.

### **PROCEDURES**

#### **Electronic Communication**

- St. Clare's email address [info@stclares.ie](mailto:info@stclares.ie) is readily available for use by parents.



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### Possible reasons to email

- ✓ Absence note
  - ✓ To arrange an appointment
  - ✓ Minor query / clarification – **more serious issues should not be discussed via email. Make an appointment through the Secretary where needed.**
  - ✓ Bring minor issue to teacher's attention
- St. Clare's website address [www.stclares.ie](http://www.stclares.ie) is displayed on all headed notepaper;
  - On our website you will find:
    - Latest newsletter;
    - Information on the management of the school;
    - Policies appropriate and relevant to the student's day to day life at St. Clare's;
    - Links to official documents;
    - Links to educational websites;
    - Parent section; and
    - Calendar.

### Written Communication

#### From School

- A comprehensive letter is sent home during the first week of each term. If your child is absent the letter is given to your child on his/her return to school. Parents are asked to transfer this information to a place where it is readily available for reference;
- Other letters go out when necessary some of which will need to be completed and returned to school;
- Letters and consent forms for trips are sent giving adequate notice and any relevant information (e.g. packed lunch requirements /clothing);
- Individual letters are sent home when the school is responding to the requirements of the Code of Behaviour Policy, Attendance Policy, Healthy Eating Policy or other such policies; and
- Individual letters are sent to notify parents of a payment due.

#### Correspondence to parents

St. Clare's Primary School provides the following correspondence during the school year:

- Parents are informed in September each year that the school operates the Child First Guidelines and also informs the parents the name of the DLP and DDLP;
- Before the commencement of the Anti-Bullying Week the theme and details of the week are outlined in a letter sent to parents;
- Regular circulars are issued to parents;



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- Text messages are also used;
- A Newsletter is issued focusing on the achievements during the year;
- Regular updates on the school website;
- Blogs.

### Parental Support

We expect that parents will provide the following support:

- Provide resources and help for various topics;
- Equip their child/children with appropriate materials, sufficient healthy lunch and full uniform;
- Look at their child's/children's books, worksheets and copies containing the written work, support and help their child/children with the organisation of this and discuss the work;
- Attend Open Days, Visual Arts Exhibitions and Science Exhibitions to view the student's work;
- Assist with the provision of 'raw' materials for visual arts, history, science and/or other topics;
- Facilitate the use of reference material if necessary, e.g. project homework;
- Visit libraries and museums.

### Visit to the School

St. Clare's Primary School welcomes communication, participation and collaboration based on mutual trust and understanding. Meetings of parents and teachers have the potential to strengthen relationships, which are essential for the welfare of the students. The visits have occurred regularly in the past and have developed positive relationships and informed mutual understanding ([See Policy on Parent Meetings](#))

### Opportunities for Parents and Teachers to Meet

#### Formal

- ✓ Each year there are formal parent teacher meetings in Mid November and again in February;
- ✓ New junior infant students visit the school with their parents to meet the teachers and see the classrooms;
- ✓ Each year we have an induction evening for parents of our new intake;
- ✓ Each year there are parent meetings to introduce Paired Reading;
- ✓ Each year there are parent meetings to introduce Paired Maths;
- ✓ We organise a Science Exhibition twice a year;



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- ✓ We organise a Visual Arts Exhibition annually in the second term;
- A meeting with the class teacher at school gate at dismissal time, to discuss a child's concern/progress is discouraged on a number of grounds:
  - ✓ A teacher cannot adequately supervise the dismissal of his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent/guardian;
  - ✓ It is difficult to be discrete when so many children and parents/guardians are standing close by; and
  - ✓ It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to the teacher at the school gate.
- If a parent wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss his/her child the parent may do so by prior appointment.
- 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 students in the class do not lose out on any of the teaching and learning time they are entitled to.
- 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 down to a minimum.

### **Formal Meetings**

Formal timetabled Parent Teacher meetings take place in November and in February annually. However, if a parent wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss his/her child a parent may do so by prior appointment.

- On the third Friday in May we have an Open Day, when we display a wide variety of activities, pupils' work and information;
- The pupils perform during regular assemblies that parents are invited to attend;
- There are two concerts one at Christmas and an End of Year;
- Informal discussion occurs on a daily basis between class teachers and parents.

### **What parents can expect**

- Parent communications responded to within a reasonable time;
- Requests for appointments responded to or scheduled within a reasonable time;
- Parent to be notified about single serious issue or ongoing problem;
- Annual formal parent/teacher meetings, with other meetings and calls within reason.

### **What parents should not expect**

- Teachers returning a call after work hours;



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- Answering email in the evening/weekends;
- Access to teacher's private phone number or email.

### **When you should contact your child's teacher**

- Changes in family situation;
- Medical issues that arise or change;
- Illness;
- Safety issues, change in behaviour at home;
- Family emergencies, sleepless nights, play dates, appointments (send a note)
- Ongoing and pervasive problems/concerns at school or home;
- When you can't keep a scheduled appointment;
- When homework takes way more time than recommended or your child is unable to do most of it independently.

### **When you have last minute information for the teacher**

- Send a note;
- Call the office and leave a message for the teacher.

### **Communication that interferes with teaching and learning**

- Showing up before school or during the school day without an appointment;
- Discussing an issue with the teacher when he/she is dismissing the class at home time;
- Speaking to the teacher disrespectfully or angrily, especially in front of your child or other students;
- Gossiping to other parents rather than discussing issues directly with the teachers; remember that you are the model of how you want your child to communicate.

### **Ways to make your child more responsible and independent**

- Encourage your child to talk to the teacher about problems with homework or other issues at school. Send an email or note to the teacher so he/she is aware, simply saying, "                     had a problem yesterday that he/she needs to talk to you about." Let the teacher take it from there;
- Have your child write a note to the teacher explaining why homework wasn't completed, then sign the note;
- Make your child responsible for carrying his/her own bag and belongings to and from school even in Junior Infants;



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- If your child forgets his/her lunch, homework, sport gear, or musical instruments; do not bring them to him/her. Let him/her be accountable for it rather than delivering it to school;
- Leave your child at the drop-off point; let him/her walk to his/her class line. When you walk along, it interferes with the line, and sends the message that you're not totally comfortable leaving your child at school;
- If your child is late, bring him/her to the main reception to fill out a late arrival book.

Please note, bringing your child's lunch or belongings after the start of the school day discourages independence and sets a poor example. Belongings left in the classroom after the end of the school day can be retrieved the following morning.

### **To increase mutual respect, remember**

- Teachers will make mistakes; they're human, too;
- Teachers have their own families and lives; respect their privacy;
- We're all on the same team - your child's support team;
- Use age-appropriate language around children on the school grounds and at the gate when you collect them at the end of the school day;
- Recognise that we won't always agree, but we promise to listen;
- Speak positively in front of your child.

### **Homework**

Homework is based on what was taught and learned in the classroom. ***(Refer to Homework Policy)***

### **Implementation and Review**

The policy will be referred to regularly to check that it is being consistently implemented. The Principal is responsible for the implementation of this policy and for its review.

### **Ratification and Communication**

The Board of Management ratified this revised policy at its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017. Copies of the policy will be circulated and communicated to all members of the staff, parents and guardians. A copy will be available on the school website.

**Signed:**

*Sr. Mercedes Boen*

**Chairperson Board of Management**



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**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> February 2017