

## Communication Policy

### St Patrick's N.S, Dromard

#### **Rationale:**

To provide information and guidance to all members of our school community, children, parents, teachers, ancillary staff and anyone who has interactions with our school on the importance of effective, positive, respectful communication.

#### **Introductory Statement:**

The family and home are central to the social, emotional and intellectual development of the child. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other so that your child can achieve their full potential. Good communication in this school whether face to face, by email/phone or text should always be respectful and honest. We know from research that children “do better, behave better and are happier at school where parents and teachers work closely together and when parents are able to give their children support at home”.

***\* National Parents Council Document Working Effectively as a Parents Association 1***

#### **Staff:**

The Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2012) applies to all teachers in St Patrick's N.S, Dromard. The role of the teacher is to educate. The ethical values of respect, care, integrity and trust underpin the standards of teaching, knowledge, skill, competence and conduct. Positive and respectful communication is an integral part of school life.

#### **Parents:**

Parents are the primary educators of their children. In the best interests of their child, parents are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with the school.
- Participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner.

- 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.
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.
- In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians will be consulted by staff. It is essential that all parents and legal guardians are named on the enrolment form. If these details change, the school should be informed via email so records can be updated.

### **Structures to Facilitate Communication and Consultation:**

1. Homework Diary, used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers. Parents are requested to sign the Diary daily.
2. Important messages for class may be emailed via Aladdin/text
3. In senior classes from 4th upwards children may be asked in some cases to verbally deliver messages to parents, to give the children a sense of responsibility, acknowledge their strong oral communication and listening skills, prepare them for life beyond primary school.
4. Formal Parent/Teacher Meetings in autumn
5. Meetings for parents of children with Special Needs in October and February to discuss Individual Education Plans
6. School website/Blog feature; used to provide parents with information on school policies, procedures and alert parents to special events.
7. Parents receive a written Report on their child at the end of the School Year.
8. Reading Logs (Junior Classes)
9. Termly tests and other written assessments are sent home for signing by parents/guardian
10. SEESAW App
11. Monthly Newsletter from the Principal; used to keep parents up to date with school events, school concerns and BOM reports.

- If parents wish to contact the school via email, please send to the school email address dromardps@hotmail.com FAO Teacher's Name. The email addresses @moynens.com are no longer used by teachers to receive email from parents. Response time can be up to 3 school days but this is dependant on the nature of the message. Child safeguarding and Health & Safety issues will always be treated as urgent matters.
- If you wish to speak with your child's teacher by phone or to schedule a meeting, please call the school office and an appointment for a call/meeting will be made for you.

Teachers cannot take/make calls between 9:20am and 3pm and all calls/meetings will be outside these hours. These calls/meeting should be kept to a reasonable amount of time.

- If you check your child's homework journal and/or reading log/homework sheet (especially in the Junior classes) each day, the teachers will communicate any concerns they have therein. It is not school policy for teachers to give a weekly progress report for each child but they will definitely be in touch if they have any concerns. Likewise, as each parent/guardian knows their own child best, it is important you share any concerns you may notice with your child's 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 child is progressing in school
- To help children realise that home and school are working together.
- 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 identify ways in which parents can help their children
- To inform the parents of class test results

### **Formal Meetings**

- All communication for meetings sent from the school will be sent to the email 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. (Please see separation / custody policy)

### **Formal Meetings-IEPs**

Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings on the subject of the Individual Education Plan will take place once a term with the support teacher and the SNAs will attend at the beginning and end of each year if required. 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/Staff Meetings**

1. The school encourages communication between parents and staff.
2. Meetings with the class teacher at the class door/school gate to discuss a concern or child's progress, are **not allowed** on a number of grounds:
  - Staff cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent
  - It is difficult to be discreet when so many children are standing close by
  - It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to staff at a classroom door.

If parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear etc, this can be done by contacting the office and organising to drop off at gate.

- 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 teachers/parents talk by phone/face to face, it is important to respect that the time of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected.

- It is vital that the school is informed if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to a pupil and that may adversely affect his/her education and welfare.
- The school should at all times know who is collecting your child. Please see Collection Policy
- In all matters pertaining to the welfare and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians named on the Enrolment Form can be consulted by staff. If these details change, it is parent responsibility to inform school in writing of changes via email.
- The Child Protection Policy of St Patrick's N.S, Dromard informs our communication and confidentiality surrounding welfare issues.
- All communication sent from the school will be sent to the child's home address/email address as given on the Enrolment Form unless otherwise requested by parents.
- In the case of pupils who are not living with parents, notes, notifications, etc. will be sent to the primary carer unless otherwise requested by both parents. Please see Custody/Separation policy
- There can be no unannounced visits by parents/guardians to classrooms at any time.
- Under no circumstances can staff involve themselves in the resolution of conflicts between parents.
- Except in the case of exceptional circumstances and/or if deemed necessary by the school principal, all meetings with parents will be conducted on a case-by-case basis following a prearranged appointment via the school office.
- Aggressive tones or demeanour, verbal abuse, threats or intimidation are not acceptable in St Patrick's N.S, Dromard.
- If a parent/visitor displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building.
- The involvement of the Gardaí remains at the discretion of the Principal and/or the Board of Management.
- The Board of Management of St Patrick's N.S recognises the right of all staff, pupils and parents to their privacy and personal life. Malicious rumours, gossip, inappropriate online social networking

will be considered by the Board of Management under the Guidelines of Circular 40/97 Assaults of Teachers/School Employees and Circular 60/2009 Procedures in Relation to Professional Competence Issues and General Disciplinary Matters.

- Under NO circumstances can a parent directly approach a pupil during school hours.
- Parents are strongly discouraged from directly approaching a pupil/another parent regarding incidents in school that are being dealt with as detailed in our Code of Conduct.

**Ratified by the Board of Management**

Signed: George Donohoe Date: 17/6/21  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: Nancy Farrell Date: 17/6/2021  
Principal

---

## **Appendix A**

### **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 about their child or a class issue they should, firstly approach the **class staff** with a view to resolving the complaint.
2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint after discussing it with the class teacher the **Principal** should be informed and work with all parties in an effort to resolving the situation.
3. If a parent objects to contacting the class teacher the principal will inform the parent that all information shared will be discussed with the teacher and the situation will need to be resolved between all parties collaboratively.
4. If the parent is still not satisfied with the decision that has been made by the principal, he/she can proceed to the next stage, stage 2.
5. If the complaint is not classroom related the parent should bring the problem to the attention of the principal. Again, if he/she is not satisfied with the principal's decision on the matter they can proceed to the next stage.

#### **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 in question 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:
  - Supply the staff member with a copy of the written complaint.
  - 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 following steps should be followed:
4. The staff should be supplied with copies of any written evidence in support of the complaint.
5. 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.
6. The Board may arrange a meeting with the complainant, who may be accompanied by another person to this meeting such as a colleague or union member.

#### **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.

#### **REFERENCES:**

- Circular 40/97 DES
- Circular 60/2009 DES
- Circular 56/2011



- Children First – ‘National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011’
- The Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2012)
- St Patrick’s N.S School Policies on –
  - Complaints Procedure
  - Anti-Bullying
  - Code of Discipline
  - Child Protection
- National Parents Council document ‘Working Effectively as a Parents Association’- <http://www.npc.ie/attachments/cbdcfd37-98b5-4698-86aa-3f30c38fceed.pdf>