



St. Patrick's NS Strangsmills

# Parent and school communication policy

Devised: 2024

[www.strangsmillsns.ie](http://www.strangsmillsns.ie)  
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## **Parent and School Communication Policy**

### **Introductory statement:**

This policy was drafted through a collaborative process involving staff, parents and the Board of Management.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and communication in St. Patrick's NS. The family and home are central to the social and intellectual development of the child and the nurturing of good, moral 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. 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
- ✓ Parents and teachers must participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner. Aggressive behaviour, in any form, will not be tolerated by the Board of Management.
- ✓ 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/parent association.
- ✓ Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them through the Parents Association.

### **Staff 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.
- ✓ Listen to what parents/guardians have to say and encourage them to bring any concerns to you 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 them reach their potential.
- ✓ Value and respect the input of parents as they know their child best.

**Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with parents:**

- ✓ Respectful communication between Parents and Teachers/Principal is always encouraged.
- ✓ Informal parent-teacher contact is always welcome
- ✓ Meeting for parents of new Junior Infants – June or August
- ✓ Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one, usually in November.
- ✓ Parents receive school report for their child at the end of each school year
- ✓ Phone calls/meetings for children on classroom support plans or accessing SNA support
- ✓ School support plan meetings in October and reviews in February for parents whose children have Special Educational needs
- ✓ Monthly school letters
- ✓ Text-a-parent app
- ✓ Written communication via e-mail/phonecall
- ✓ Throughout the school year, parents through the Parents Association are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies when appropriate. Policy updates will be made known to all parents through the monthly newsletter and via the school website
- ✓ Regular notifications (email/text) and the school website/facebook page keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns.
- ✓ Homework diary, used to relay messages and parents are requested to sign the diary each night to confirm homework has been completed.
- ✓ Parents are invited by the Parish to become involved in Sacramental preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation.
- ✓ Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Christmas concert, graduation
- ✓ Involvement of parents in relevant activities.

### **Parent/teacher meetings:**

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes (***Circular 14/04***).

Where possible they will be held in the first term, in November for all classes. They will be initiated by the school staff and details regarding time etc. will be worked out by the principal/class teachers and the school will co-ordinate times where siblings are concerned insofar as possible. If the selected date does not suit a family, a mutually acceptable time and date is agreed between parents and teacher. If custody of a child is shared, requests can be made by both parents to meet their child's teacher individually for parent/teacher meetings.

*The purpose of the parent/teacher meeting 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

A Teacher/the Principal or a Parent may request a parent-teacher meeting at any time to discuss teaching, learning or behaviour management issues. Every effort will be made to arrange a meeting at the earliest possible opportunity. Parents can phone the office and a mutually acceptable time can be arranged.

### **Formal meetings on Support plans/review of support plans:**

Formal timetabled meetings to discuss and draw up School support plans are held in October.

The Special Education teacher (and class teacher) in consultation with the parents draw up the support plan for a child. Recommendations from outside professionals such as psychologists, occupational therapists, speech therapists etc. will be reflected in the support plan.

Where a need arises, support planning meetings and review meetings will be arranged with parents at other times throughout the year and may be by phone or in person. If a parent wishes to arrange a meeting with the Special Education Teacher at any stage during the year to discuss their child's progress, they may do so by prior appointment.

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

The School encourages communication between parents and staff at all times, however it must be appreciated that the class teacher has full responsibility for his/her class from 9.00-2.40pm/1.40pm for Infants. Meetings with the class teacher at the class door to discuss a child's concern/progress are discouraged on a number of grounds:

- ✓ It interferes with teaching time for the class.
- ✓ A teacher cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent.
- ✓ It is difficult to be discrete when so many children are close by.
- ✓ To enable all concerned to benefit from a meeting, it is necessary to give notice of the meeting so relevant information can be collected.
- ✓ It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to the teacher at a classroom door.

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 to a minimum.

### **Reporting to parents:**

Parents have the primary responsibility for their children's learning and development. Schools can strengthen the capacity of parents to support their children in this way by sharing meaningful information about the progress that their children are achieving in the education system. This information needs to draw on the different sources of evidence that staff use, such as conversations with the learner, data-collection and documented progress on objectives and milestones reached in their short and long-term planning, examination of students own self-assessment data, documented observations of the learners engagement with tasks, outcomes of other assessment tasks and tests, and examples of students work. In turn, parents will often be able to enrich staffs knowledge of their child's progress through providing further information about the students learning at home.

Each June the school issues an NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) standard report to parents, reporting information about the progress of their child, including information from standardised tests.

#### **Updating of information:**

All communication sent from the school will be sent to the child's home address as given on the enrolment form, unless otherwise requested by parents or via the email address provided by parents. It is a parents responsibility to update the school on any changes to home address, email address or contact telephone details. This can be done by contacting the school office. It is imperative that there is an up-to-date emergency contact detail on file for every child.

**It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to the child and therefore may adversely affect their 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 staff.

#### **Emails and phone calls to staff:**

Teachers' primary responsibility is to the teaching and learning in their classroom and the supervision of the children in their care. With this in mind, parents are reminded that messages and e-mails sent to teachers during the school day, will not receive an immediate reply. Staff will undertake to reply to all messages received, at their earliest convenience.

If a parent/guardian wants to contact the teacher or leave an urgent message for their child, they should phone the main office and the school secretary will relay the message to the relevant person.

All staff members and parents/guardians have a right to their free time. With this in mind, communications to the school and from the school should take place during normal working hours. Contact at night, at weekends, on days off and during holidays should not expect a response until the next working day.

Staff members' private mobile phone numbers, email addresses or social media accounts, including WhatsApp, should never be used to contact staff in relation to school business. All contact with staff should be via the official school channels.

#### **Complaints procedure:**

Complaints are infrequent, but the school would wish that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. We have a separate parental complaints policy to deal with this area. See the school website for details.

#### **Behaviour of all stakeholders in the school:**

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This not only extends to the children but to all of the stakeholders e.g. the staff, parents and the wider community. Anyone working in St. Patrick's NS should feel safe. Anybody entering our building should also 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. Examples include:

- ✓ All stakeholders are expected to speak to each other with respect. If a stakeholder displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building.
- ✓ 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 stakeholders meet, it is important to respect that the time of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time.
- ✓ Staff are generally available to listen to a quick issue in the morning or after school. However, should a parent need to have a discussion or meeting, an appointment should be made at a convenient time for both parties. This ensures that issues can be discussed properly and be resolved. Classes begin at 9:00 am and finish at 2.40pm and this time should not be interrupted.

### **Social Media:**

The school uses 'Facebook' to relay news and to celebrate or notify people of events taking place in the school/locally. We would ask that social media platforms, as well as personal social media accounts are never used for commenting in a negative way on school matters or members of the school community. All stakeholders have a right to their reputation. The school's Parental **Complaints Procedure** (available on the school website) outlines a mechanism for dealing with an issue of concern or a complaint as speedily as possible and at the simplest level.

### **School platforms**

Many classes use closed platforms such as Seesaw or Google classroom to share children's work and photographs. Parents must not screenshot other children from these platforms and share with others. These are private platforms for that class and should not be shared in a public manner.

### **Ratification and communication:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 following consultation with staff and the Parents Association. It will be reviewed again in 2028/2029.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of BOM