Scoil Bhríde, Cill Bhríde
Clonee, Co. Meath. D15 XA32
Telephone: **01-8210300**
Email: **info@scoilbhridens.ie**
Web: **http://www.scoilbhridens.ie**
Roll No: **168250**

Parent/Guardian/Staff Communication Policy

Introductory Statement

The purpose of this document is to provide information and guidelines to parents/guardians and staff on parent/guardian/staff meetings and parent/guardian/staff communication in Scoil Bhríde. 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/Guardians are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with the school
- Participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of the teachers and all staff members in 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/parent/guardian council
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them

Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with Parents/Guardians

- Meeting for parents/guardians of prospective new Junior Infants takes place late May/ mid-June
- Individual meetings for parents/guardians of Junior Infants will take place in September
- Parents/Guardians/Teacher meetings take place in January for all pupils
- Parents/Guardians receive their child's written school report at the end of each school year
- Meetings as required with parents/guardians whose children have additional needs
- Consultation throughout the year
- Regular written communication which keeps parents/guardians up to date with all school concerns, activities, events,dates of school holidays and other closures:
    - regular updates from the Principal
    - termly newsletters
    - school website and instagram
- Homework diary/Seesaw/emails/Aladdin School System used to relay messages between parents/guardians and teachers.

- Through the parents/guardians' council, parents/guardians are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of relevant school policies. Decisions taken to change current policies and procedures or to introduce new ones are made known to all parents/guardians in written format via the school newsletter or termly letters.
- Parents/Guardians may be invited to events throughout the year
- Involvement of parents/guardians in
    - the Religion "Grow in Love" Programme (section for parents/guardians/home)
    - the Stay Safe programme and home school links section
    - the Weaving Wellbeing programme and home school links section.
- All communication sent from the school will be sent to the child's home address as given on the enrolment form, or as updated on Aladdin, unless otherwise requested, in writing, by parents/guardians.

If a parent/guardian wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact Helen, the school secretary, to arrange a suitable time.

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 his/her education.

In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/guardians/legal guardians named on the enrolment form or updated on the Aladdin school system, will be consulted by staff.

Parent/Guardian/Teacher meetings

Formal parent/guardian/teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes (Circular 14/04). Where possible, they will be held in the second term, in January, for all classes. They will be initiated by the school staff and details regarding time, etc. will be worked out by the class teacher, in consultation with parents/guardians. The school will attempt to co-ordinate times where siblings are concerned. Meetings generally take place in classrooms and support rooms. The teachers use prepared guidelines for the meetings and collaborate in advance about the progress of individual children. A short written record of the meeting is maintained by each teacher.
In the case of separated parents/guardians, requests can be made, in writing, by both parents/guardians to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for parent/guardian/teacher meetings.

The purpose of the Parent/Guardian/Teacher meeting is:

- To establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents/guardians
- To let parents/guardians know how their children are progressing in school
- To help teachers/parents/guardians get to know the children better as individuals
- To help children realise that home and school are working together
- To meet demands for accountability
- To share with the parent/guardian the problems and difficulties the child may have in school
- To review with the parent/guardian the child's experience of schooling
- To learn more about the child from the parent/guardian's perspective
- To learn more about parent/guardian opinions on what the school is doing
- To identify areas of tension and disagreement
- To identify ways in which parents/guardians can help their children
- To negotiate jointly, decisions about the child's education
- To inform the parents/guardians of relevant assessment results

Circular 56/2011 Initial Steps in the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy Strategy and the follow-on interim review and new targets 2017 to 2020 have been adopted by the Board of Management. References to parent/guardian/school communication are:

Reporting to Parents/Guardians

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for their children's learning and development. Schools can strengthen the capacity of parents/guardians to support their children in this way by sharing meaningful information with parents/guardians about the progress that 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 learner's engagement with tasks, outcomes of other assessment tasks and tests, and examples of students' work. In turn, parents/guardians will often be able to enrich staff knowledge of their students' progress through providing further information about the students' learning at home.

Report card templates

In Scoil Bhríde we help parents/guardians to understand fully the evidence of learning that the school reports to them, especially information from any standardised tests. We use the NCCA standard report templates in reporting information about the progress of our pupils to their parents/guardians, including information from standardised tests. The NCCA report card templates which were developed through a process of consultation with schools and parents/guardians take account of research commissioned by the NCCA.

The report cards provide for reporting in four key areas:

- The child's learning and achievement across the curriculum
- The child's learning dispositions
- The child's social and personal development
- Ways in which parents/guardians can support their child's learning

Special Educational Needs

- Parents/guardians of Children with special educational needs will be invited to meet with both their child's SET (Special Education Teacher) and classroom teacher in January each year.
- Parents/guardians of children in our Coiscéimeanna autism classes will be invited to meet with their child's class teacher in January. It may be required to have more frequent meetings if your child is a pupil in Coiscéimeanna.
- Parents/guardians will receive a School Support or School Support Plus plan twice yearly which details the learning targets in place for their child.
- School Support Plus Plans are completed in December and June each year, for children with special educational needs who have a School Support Plus Plan in place (formerly known as an Individual Education Plan - IEP), parents/guardians will be invited to fill in or update an information gathering sheet. If a parent/guardian wishes to arrange a meeting at that stage or at any time during the school year, with the special education teacher and/or the class teacher to discuss their child, they may do so by prior appointment, through the school office.
- There may be other times during the school year when it would be beneficial for SET and parents/guardians to meet.

Informal Parent/Guardian/Staff Meetings

The school encourages communication between parents/guardians and staff.

Occasions occur where a parent/guardian needs to speak to a staff member urgently. Sometimes these meetings may need to take place without prior notice. The Principal will aim to facilitate such meetings by making every effort to ensure that the children in the class do not lose out on any of the teaching/learning time.

If parents/guardians 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.

Parents/guardians are strongly discouraged from taking pupils out of school during term time in order to facilitate appointments and family holidays.

Meetings with the Principal

The principal is happy to meet with parents/guardians by appointment through the secretary. It is important to inform the secretary of the issue to be discussed and the approximate time involved.

Complaints Procedure

Complaints are infrequent but, at Scoil Bhríde, we ask that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. Please see attached* the updated and revised **CPSMA Parent/guardian Complaints Procedure (December 2023).** This is the agreed complaints procedure to be followed in primary schools.
* Appendix A

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/guardians 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. Examples include:

- All stakeholders are expected to speak to each other with respect. Shouting 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 the children with the utmost respect while on the premises.

- Staff should not be asked to speak about another parent/guardian's child. The staff of the school will respect your child's right to privacy so it is asked that parents/guardians 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. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected.

- Should a parent/guardian 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 resolved. Classes begin at 9:20 am and finish at 2:00/3:00pm and this time should not be interrupted. Coiscéimeanna autism classes begin at 9:10 and finish at 1:50/2:50.

- Staff will not take responsibility for dissemination of third party information.

- Please also see our Dignity at Work policy.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act became operative on 1 November 1989. It is an important piece of legislation for BoMs and for those who work in schools, as schools and colleges were brought under the scope of safety legislation for the first time.

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 40/97** which deals with the procedures to follow if they feel they have been subjected to any of the above behaviours. A copy of this circular can be found in the school's Health and Safety folder.

Presented to the Board of Management at their meeting February 2024

Ratification and Communication

Ratified by the Board of Management on 08/02/24

Signed: Cliff O'Brien

Appendix A

Revised Parental Complaints Procedure

CPSMA

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-to-time 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.

Formal Stage 1 Discussion

1.1 Parent/guardian meets teacher

A parent/legal guardian who 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.

1.2 Parent/guardian meets Principal[1]

Where the parent/legal guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the teacher, they should seek an appointment with the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Principal as appropriate.

1.3 Parent/guardian meets Chairperson

Where the complaint remains unresolved, the parent/legal guardian should seek an appointment with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Chairperson as appropriate.

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved during this stage.

Formal Stage 2 Written *(10 days)*

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.

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.

2.3 Chairperson convenes meeting(s)

The Chairperson should seek to resolve the complaint between the teacher and the parent/legal guardian within 10 school days of the commencement of stage 2.1. This may require one or more meetings to be convened by the Chairperson with the teacher/parent/legal guardian and other school personnel as deemed appropriate by the Chairperson.

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved at this stage.

Formal Stage 3 Board of Management *(20 days)*

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.

3.2 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;

or;

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.

3.3 Proceed to a hearing

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.

e) 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.

Formal Stage 4 Decision *(5 days)*

4.1 Written decision from Chairperson

The Board will consider the complaint and the response provided and will adjudicate on the matter. The Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent/legal guardian(s) within five days of the meeting held at stage 3.3.

4.2 Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.

[1] *Where a complaint is received about a principal the above process commences at Stage 1.2.*