

Parent And Teacher Communication

Introductory statement

This policy was developed by the staff of Glynn NS, the Board of Management and the parents association in the school year 2013/2014.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and parent/staff communication in Glynn 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

Participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of the staff 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 association

Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with Parents

Meeting for parents of new Junior Infants – mid June

Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in November

Parents receive school report of each pupil at the end of each school year

Meetings with parents whose children have special needs

Consultation throughout the year

Written communication

Through the parents' council, 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/website

Regular newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns

Home-work diary 1st – 6th class, used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers. Parents may be requested to sign diary to certify that homework has been completed

Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Sports Day, school masses and school concerts

Involvement of parents in the 'Religion Alive O Programme' section for parents

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact 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/legal guardians named on the enrolment form will be consulted by staff.

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, towards the end of November 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. The school will attempt to co-ordinate times where siblings are concerned. 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, signed by the parents and the teacher is maintained in the pupil's school file.

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 children are progressing in school
- To help teachers/parents 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 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 learn more about parental opinions on what the school is doing
- To identify areas of tension and disagreement
- To identify ways in which parents can help their children
- To negotiate jointly decisions about the child's education
- To inform the parents of standardised test results according to school policy.

Circular 56/2011 Initial Steps in the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy Strategy has been adopted by the Board of Management. References to parent/school communication are:

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 with parents about the progress that children are achieving in the education system. This information needs to draw on the different sources of evidence that staffs 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 will often be able to enrich staffs knowledge of their students' progress through providing further information about the students' learning at home.

Report card templates

Schools should help parents to understand fully the evidence of learning that the school reports to them, especially information from any standardised tests. The NCCA has provided a range of standard report templates to assist schools in reporting information about the progress of primary pupils to parents, including information from standardised tests. The NCCA report card templates were developed through a process of consultation with schools and parents can 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 can support their child's learning

All primary schools must use one of the report card templates (available at www.ncca.ie) for reporting to parents on students' progress and achievement at school with effect from the date of this circular.

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 to the 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.

Formal Meetings-IEPs

Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings on the subject of the Individual Education Plan will take place in September/October. 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.

Informal Parent/Staff Meetings

The School encourages communication between parents and staffs.

Meetings with the class staff at the class door to discuss a child's concern/progress are discouraged 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.

Occasions occur where a parent needs to speak to a staff member urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The Principal will aim to 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 as it is important to keep class interruptions to a minimum.

Parent/Staff Communication Policy

Complaints Procedure

Complaints are infrequent but the school would wish that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. Parents should not write anonymous letters of complaint as they cannot be investigated under the agreed Complaints Procedure for primary schools

Please see our Complaints Procedure Policy

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 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 our children with the utmost respect while on the premises. 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. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected

Staffs are generally available to listen to a quick issue in the morning and 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 resolved. Classes begin at 9:20 am and finish at 3:00pm and this time should not be interrupted.

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.