

Monaleen N.S.

Policy on Communication between staff and parents/guardians.



Parent/Staff Communication Policy

Introductory statement

This policy was developed by the staff of Monaleen National School in the year 2019.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and parent/staff communication in Monaleen National School.

Monaleen N.S. is an inclusive school committed to the holistic education of all of our pupils. The health, safety and wellbeing of all our pupils and staff are of paramount importance.

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 his/her 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/parents association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with Parents

- The use of Aladdin Connect and the School App as our primary means of communication
- Phone calls/emails/text messages
- Meetings arranged through the office (meetings are strictly by appointment only)
- Meeting for parents of new Junior Infants – in May and June every year
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in November every year
- Parents receive school report of each pupil at the end of each school year
- Meetings with parents whose children have special needs take place on a regular basis
- Written communication from time to time, although communication will primarily take place through Aladdin Connect and the School App
- School website <http://monaleenns.ie/> will keep parents and staff alike up to date with school policies, calendar etc.
- E-newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events
- Homework journal 1st – 6th class will be used to convey homework that has been set and some messages. Parents requested to sign diary each day to certify that homework has been completed/notes received
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Book Fair, Christmas Concerts, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Communion, Confirmations and other religious ceremonies, Graduation ceremonies
- Consent forms will need to be signed at various times of year to allow childrens' participation in some events. This can be done through Aladdin Connect.

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she must 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. Meetings may take place in classrooms, support rooms or communally in the PE Hall. A short written record of the meeting is maintained and retained by each 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 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 perspectives 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

We recognise that 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 via Aladdin Connect, the School App, by email or 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. There may be review meetings later in the year. 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/Teacher Meetings

1. The School encourages communication between parents and teachers.
2. Meetings with the class teacher at the class door to discuss a child's concern/progress are strongly discouraged on a number of grounds:
 1. Staff cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent
 2. It is difficult to be discreet when so many children are standing close by
 3. It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to the teacher 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/Deputy 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. These meetings must still be arranged through the office, not at the 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.

If parents are collecting a child during school hours, they must sign in at the secretary's office and fill in a collection slip which will be brought to the class teacher.

All contact information held by the school should be up to date, parents/guardians are requested to contact the school with any change in contact details.

Only parents/guardians and contacts named on the enrolment forms will be contacted in the event of an emergency.

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 should, firstly approach the **class teacher/staff member** with a view to resolving the complaint
2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class staff he/she should approach the **Principal** with a view to resolving it
3. If the complaint is still unresolved, the parent/guardian should raise the matter with the **Chairperson** of the Board of Management with a view to resolving it.

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 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:
 - a. Supply the staff member with a copy of the written complaint and
 - b. 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 staff member is informed and the following steps should be followed:
 - a. The staff member should be supplied with copies of any written evidence in support of the complaint
 - b. 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
 - c. The Board may arrange a meeting with the complainant, who may be accompanied by another person to this meeting.

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.

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 duration of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected. Further meetings can be arranged to facilitate further discussions
- Teachers are generally not available to meet without appointment in the morning and after school as teachers are responsible for receiving and discharging pupils at these times. 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 9:00 am and finish at 2:40pm and this time should not be interrupted. Teachers may also have supervision duty before and after school.

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.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be ratified in May 2019 and implemented fully from May 2019. The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.

The school management team and the teachers will implement this policy.

The Board of Management ratified this policy on _____.

Chairperson

Date

Date of Implementation: _____ **Review Date:** _____