

Policy on

Working Together:

Parent/Guardian - Staff

Communication

**Limerick School Project NS,
O'Connell Avenue,
Limerick City.**



WORKING TOGETHER: PARENT/GUARDIAN - STAFF COMMUNICATION POLICY

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

This policy was developed by the staff, the Board of Management and the Parent Teacher Association of Limerick School Project NS in the school year of 2016-2017. It was reviewed in the 2021-2022 academic year in coordination with the *Dignity at Work* and *Parental Complaints* policies.

RATIONALE

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines to parents/guardians and staff on parent/guardian-staff meetings and parent/guardian-staff communication in Limerick School Project NS. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other so that the child's education can be effective. Everyone associated with Limerick School Project aims to work for the benefit of the child and his/her learning.

PARENTS / GUARDIANS

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 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 (See school Ethos and Mission Statement);
- Become actively involved in the school / Parent-Teacher Association;
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

STAFF

Staff members are encouraged to:

- Participate in any meetings with parents/guardians in a positive and respectful manner and, in keeping with Limerick School Project Charter, affirm the role of the parent/guardian as the 'primary and natural educator' of their children (as per Article 42.1 of the Irish Constitution);
- Collaborate with the parents/guardians in an open two-way communication so that both parties are working together to develop the full potential of the student;
- Be aware of the activities of the Parent Teacher Association and link in with them where possible to support their fundraising activities.

STRUCTURES TO FACILITATE COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

In Limerick School Project NS we have a number of structures, routines and protocols in place to ensure that parents/guardians are well-informed of activities happening in the school and of their child's progress:

- A meeting is provided for new parents/guardians before their child starts school;
- Details of classroom staff are communicated to parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year as are any regular updates re temporary, substitute or work experience personnel as they change. Advance notification is given where possible if a regular member of staff is leaving so that parents/guardians can prepare the pupil for the imminent change;
- Parent/Guardian Teacher meetings are held annually in the first term;
- Meetings take place between parents/guardians and the trans-disciplinary team (including Occupational, Speech & Language therapists and Social workers) working with the student in order to ensure agreement on expected goals and targets;
- A school report for each pupil is sent at the end of each school year;
- Communication and consultation takes place throughout the year (communication book, reports from SNA in certain circumstances, and reports from teacher);
- SeeSaw and Google Classroom are used to strengthen the home-school links and ensure that parents are informed of what is happening in class
- On-going communication takes place between the Principal and the Parent-Teacher Association. Parents/guardians are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of relevant school policies;
- Any policies under review will be made known to all parents/guardians through the Thursday Nuacht;
- Weekly newsletters (An Nuacht) are provided to keep parents/guardians up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns;
- Homework diaries (and communication diaries, in certain circumstances) are used to relay signed messages. Parents/guardians are requested to sign the diary each day to certify that homework has been completed and that communication book/weekly reports have been checked;
- Parents/guardians are invited to certain events throughout the year e.g., assemblies, plays, sports day, winter and spring fairs.

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

Formal Parent / Guardian - Staff Meetings

Formal meetings are held between parents/guardians and staff at least once a year (usually in November) and more often than that where the need arises. The aim of formal Parent/Guardian - Staff meetings is:

- To improve communication between the school and parents/guardians;
- To let parents/guardians know how their children are progressing in school;
- To inform staff on how children are coping outside school;
- To establish an ongoing relationship and communication with parents/guardians;
- To help staff/parents/guardians get to know the children better as individuals;
- To help children realise that home and school are working together.

Formal Parent/Guardian - Teacher meetings will be scheduled through Aladdin. Where parents/guardians are separated, both parents/guardians should attend the same Parent-Guardian - Teacher meeting to ensure that both are provided with exactly the same information.

Informal Parent / Guardian - Staff Meetings

Limerick School Project NS encourages informal communication and good rapport between parents/guardians and staff. However, when a child's progress or a concern needs to be discussed, a formal meeting should be scheduled. The staff member should be informed of the nature of the concern in advance of the meeting so that he/she can prepare. A scheduled formal meeting is required because:

- A staff member cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent/guardian;
- It is difficult to be discreet when there are other parents/guardians and children standing close by;
- It could cause distraction for a child when his/her parent/guardian is talking to a staff member at a classroom door.

Occasions occur where a parent/guardian needs to speak to a member of staff 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. A parent/guardian wishing to speak to a member of staff urgently should in the first instance indicate the request to the school secretary. The school secretary will pass on the request to the Principal if the staff member being sought is a teacher, SNA or therapist. In the absence of the Principal, the secretary can use discretionary judgement to communicate the request to the Deputy Principal or directly to the member of staff themselves. If parents/guardians wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear etc, this can be done through the secretary's office. Parents/guardians are strongly discouraged from taking pupils out of school during term time in order to facilitate family holidays.

School Support Plus Plans and Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Formal timetabled parent/guardian - staff meetings on the subject of School Support Plus (SSP) plans (for children with SEN) take place no later than September/October annually. However, if a parent/guardian wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by prior appointment. In relation to these meetings, the following considerations apply:

- 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/guardians;
- In the case of separated parents/guardians, requests can be made by both parents/guardians to meet their child's teacher(s) for SSP meetings.

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 pupils' work. In turn, parents/guardians will often be able to enrich staff members' knowledge of their pupils' progress through providing further information about the pupils' learning at home.

Annual Report Cards

The staff of Limerick School Project NS help parents/guardians to understand fully the evidence of learning that the school reports to them, especially information from any standardised tests. The *National Council for Curriculum and Assessment* (NCCA) has provided a range of standard report templates to assist schools in reporting information about the progress of primary pupils to parents/guardians, including information from standardised tests. The NCCA report card templates were developed through a process of consultation with schools and parents/guardians and take account of research commissioned by the NCCA. Limerick School Project NS uses one of these templates (Appendix A) and points parents/guardians in the direction of NCCA resources to help find out more about the template. Our report card provides 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.

Limerick School Project NS uses a recommended report card template (available at www.ncca.ie) for reporting to parents/guardians on students' progress and achievement at school with effect from the date of this circular.

When a Difficulty Arises

Complaints are infrequent in Limerick School Project NS but the school would wish that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. In the first instance, all issues or complaints in relation to your child should be directed to the class teacher (with the exception of matters related to child protection). Only when complaints cannot be resolved at class level, should they be elevated to the attention of the principal. Limerick School Project NS has adopted an agreed procedure for dealing with complaints and this can be found in *our Parental Complaints Policy*.

BEHAVIOUR OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS IN LIMERICK SCHOOL PROJECT NS

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to Limerick School Project NS. This is something we work on with the students in the school but this also extends to all of the stakeholders e.g. the staff, parents/guardians and the wider community. Anyone entering our school should feel safe. While the behaviour of children in our school is of vital importance and is a major part of our education model, 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 by adhering to the following guidelines:

- 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;
- Threats of harm (implied or explicit) must not be made under any circumstances. Where threats are made, they are brought to the attention of the Board of Management and are treated with the highest level of seriousness by the Board. In certain cases, the Gardaí may be called;
- All stakeholders must treat our pupils with the utmost respect;
- Staff should not be asked to speak about another parent's/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
- Staff members are generally available to listen to a quick general issue in the morning and after school. However, should a parent/guardian need to have a discussion or meeting regarding a specific concern, an appointment should be made at a convenient time for both parties. This ensures that issues can be resolved. Classes begin at 8:30am and finish at 2:10pm and this time should not be interrupted if possible.

REVIEWING AND EVALUATING THE POLICY

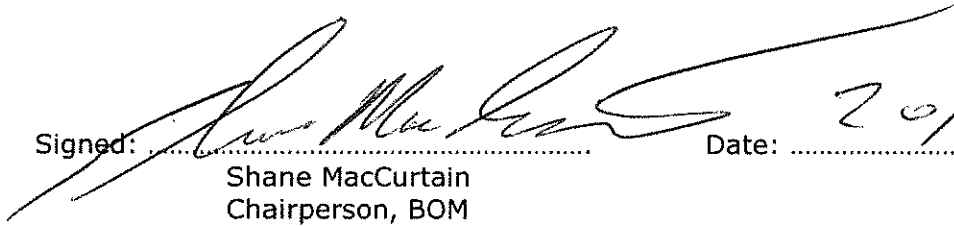
The implementation of this policy shall be monitored by the Principal, staff and the Board of Management. On-going review and evaluation of this policy will take cognisance of changing information or guidelines, legislation and feedback from parents/guardians, pupils, school staff and others. The policy will be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation.

RATIFICATION AND COMMUNICATION

This policy has been made available to all members of our school community. Further copies of the policy can be sought from the school secretary. All members of our school community are

expected to take responsibility for being fully familiar with the policy. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and the patron if requested.

The Board of Management of Limerick School Project ratified this policy on 20th September 2021 following consultation with all school stakeholders.

Signed:  Date: 20/9/21
Shane MacCurtain
Chairperson, BOM

APPENDIX A

Report Card Template

Name:

Class:

Your child as a learner				
	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
Interested in learning				
Listens attentively				
Works well independently				
Works well with other children				
Keeps trying even when tasks are difficult				
Homework is of high quality				
Presents work carefully				

Your child's social and personal development				
	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
Happy at school				
Behaves well in class				
Mixes well with other children				
Sensitive to others' feelings				
Behaves well in the playground				
Manages and expresses own feelings well				

Your child's learning during the year					
* Experiencing significant difficulty * Experiencing some difficulty ★ Managing comfortably ★ Capable and competent ★ Highly capable and competent					
English	*	★	★	★	★
Listening comprehension					
Oral expression					
Reading					
Written expression					

Gaeilge	*	★	★	★	★
Listening comprehension					
Oral expression					
(+ve) Reading					
(-ve) Writing					

Mathematics	*	★	★	★	★
Understanding and recalling					
Using problem sets					
Reasoning and problem solving					
Explaining and communicating					

Social, Environmental and Scientific Education	*	★	★	★	★
History					
Geography					
Science					

Arts Education	*	★	★	★	★
MusC					
Drama					
Visual Arts					

Physical Education	*	★	★	★	★
Physical Education					
Social, Personal & Health Education					
Religious/Ethical Education					

How you can further support your child's learning	

Standardised test results (if applicable)

6-10 Well above average, 7 High average, 5-6 Average, 4 Low average, 1-3 Well below average

Comments	

Attendance	Punctuality

Teacher:

Principal:

Date: