



## **16. Gortnahoe NS**

### **Home/School Partnership Policy & Complaints Procedure for Parents**



### **Introductory statement**

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidance to parents and staff on the invaluable Home/School Partnership Approach that benefits the education of all pupils in our school. In particular, it outlines procedures for effective Parent/Teacher Communication, including Parent/Teacher Meetings. School personnel and family members strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other and this approach is central to the realisation of our Mission Statement. This partnership is envisaged as a positive working relationship that is characterised by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and a willingness to listen and learn in the best interests of pupils' development and progress.

### **Strategies/Procedures to Support the Home/School Partnership Approach in Gortnahoe N.S.**

- Annual General Information/Orientation Meeting for parents of 'new' Junior Infants – late June
- Formal Parent/Teacher Meetings to be held in November annually.
- School Reports sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each pupil at the end of each school year
- As appropriate, additional meetings between Parent(s) and Teacher(s) concerning pupils who may have special educational needs and/or to discuss pupil progress, behaviour, etc
- Ongoing communication throughout the school year by means of "Aladdin", notes, calendar of events, website notifications, notes from class teachers/special education team teachers, homework journals, individual pupils progress reports, etc.
- The school values and welcomes the participation of parents/guardians in school events e.g. school masses/concerts, sports days etc
- Parental involvement and participation is particularly encouraged in certain areas of children's education, such as sacramental preparations, social personal and health education programmes, health promotion activities, sports events, green school projects, etc.

### **Parent/teacher meetings**

The aims of our Parent/Teacher Meetings are:

- To facilitate an exchange of information among staff members and parents
- To let parents know how their children are progressing in school
- To let teachers know how children are getting along outside school
- To establish an ongoing relationship and communication with parents



### **Informal parent/teacher communication:**

- Communication between parents and teachers is encouraged
- *Parents are asked to please make an appointment (by phone call, by a visit to the secretary's Office or by note to the teacher) to meet with the child's teacher if/when needed.* Pre-arranged appointments facilitate better quality communication between the parent and teacher, rather than the more rushed and distracted type that takes place when the teacher has to supervise the pupils in the class from the classroom door while at the same time communicating with a parent. Pre-arranged meetings allow for more discreet communication and avoid potential embarrassment for a child when his/her parent is talking to the teacher at the classroom door
- It is understood that from time-to-time certain 'sensitive/urgent' situations (eg serious illness of family member, family crisis, etc) will arise which will require a parent to arrive at the school without appointment and such situations will of course continue to be facilitated. Outside of such situations parents should not arrive at the classroom door unannounced/without appointment to seek a consultation with a staff member, if at all possible.

### **Formal parent/teacher communication**

Formal timetabled Parent/Teacher Meetings take place each year. These Meetings are an important opportunity for parents and teachers to exchange information regarding the child's progress and *every effort should be made by parents to attend the meeting.* Gortnahoe N.S. has an excellent attendance rate to date.

- Appointment are made through the Aladdin connect app. Appointment slips are arranged for any parents not using the Aladdin connect app. If unable to attend, parents should notify teacher(s) accordingly so that an alternative appointment may be made
- In the case of married but separated parents, requests may be made by both parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for parent/teacher meetings
- In the case of unmarried separated parents, requests may be made by both parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for parent/teacher meetings, subject to the natural father having established his 'guardianship, custody and access rights' through the court and/or by means of statutory declaration made by the natural mother. A consent form will be drawn up by the Principal in such cases.

### **End-of-year school reports**

- An end-of-year school report is issued to parents in June
- All communication from the school will be posted to the child's home address as given on the enrolment form, unless otherwise requested/notified by parents



- In the case of married but separated parents, requests may be made by both parents to have a copy of the end-of-year report posted to their address
- In the case of unmarried separated parents, requests may be made by both parents to have a copy of the end-of-year report posted to their address subject to the natural father having established his 'guardianship, custody and access rights' through the court and/or by means of statutory declaration made by the natural mother or written consent having been given by the mother to the school principal.

### **Other parent/teacher communications**

- Aladdin is also used to notify/update parents of significant/unexpected events during the school year
- Parents are encouraged to check homework on a nightly basis (Monday to Thursday) as notes/comments may be included by the child's teacher. Similarly, parents may use the homework journal or copy to communicate with teacher(s).

Where either/both parents is/are involved in new relationships, it should be noted that communications from the school to new partners will be limited to that which is expressly agreed between the parents and notified to the school or that which has been provided for by a court order.

### **Parents are encouraged to**

- Develop and maintain close links with the school
- Collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their child(ren)
- Emphasise the benefits and importance of learning to their child(ren)
- Equip pupils with all the appropriate school materials (books, copies, writing materials, etc) required during the school day, including a healthy, nutritious lunch and full uniform/tracksuit
- Notify the school at the earliest opportunity if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to your child and therefore may adversely affect his/her education
- Provide a note of explanation when a pupil is absent from school or not in correct/full uniform/tracksuit
- Speak positively about the school and its staff members: if there is a concern, please address it directly with a staff member
- Show care and respect for school property and encourage child(ren) to do likewise
- Refrain from bringing family pets on to the school premises (even if on a lead)
- Facilitate the child(ren) reaching their full potential and gaining maximum benefit from their time in school by ensuring that pupils attend regularly and punctually throughout the school year. The practice of taking pupils out of school at any time during the school year in order to facilitate family holidays and/or taking pupils out of school early during the school day (unless it is absolutely necessary for attendance at medical appointments etc) should be avoided. Whenever possible, parents should request from other professionals that appointments be arranged for after-school times
- Leave the school building/grounds promptly when 'dropping-off' pupils especially those young pupils who may experience some 'separation anxiety' in the earlier part of the school year. Further contact will be made with parents if the need arises.



### **Staff members seek to**

- Promote partnership and collaboration with parents in the interests of the child(ren)'s learning and holistic development on a 'whole school' basis
- Maximise the active participation of parents in their child(ren)'s education
- Raise awareness in parents of their own capacities to enhance their child(ren)'s educational progress
- Promote active co-operation between home, school and relevant community and statutory agencies in promoting the educational interests of pupils.



## Complaints Procedure

**If any parent has a complaint they are expected to follow the *Complaints Procedure* below.**

## Complaints Procedure

### Introduction

Only those complaints about teachers which are written and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the Board of Management, except where those complaints are deemed by the Board to be:

- (i) on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
- (ii) frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school;
- (iii) complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure. Unwritten complaints not in the above categories may be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

### Stage 1

- 1.1 A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.
- 1.2 Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher she/he should approach the Principal Teacher with a view to resolving it.
- 1.3 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

- 2.1 If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further she/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
- 2.2 The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

### Stage 3

- 3.1 If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board and except in those cases where the chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the Board to be required:
  - (a) supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint; *and*
  - (b) arrange a meeting with the teacher and, where applicable, the Principal Teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

### Stage 4

- 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 referred to in 3.2 (b).
- 4.2 If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within 3 days of the Board meeting.
- 4.3 If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:
  - (a) The teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
  - (b) The teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;



- (c) The teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint;
- (d) The teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the Board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
- (e) The Board may arrange a meeting with the complainant if it considers such to be required. The complainant would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
- (f) The meeting of the Board of Management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1 (b).

### Stage 5

5.1 When the Board has completed its investigation, the Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board.

5.2 The decision of the Board shall be final.

5.3 This Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years;

5.4 CPSMA or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party 3 months' notice of intention to do so.

In this agreement 'days' means school days.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson of BOM)      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_