

Communication Policy

All Saints'

National School

Carysfort Ave, Blackrock, Co. Dublin



Parents are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with 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

Methods of Communication in All Saints' N.S.

- New parents induction day – mid June prior to commencing at All Saints
- Parent/ teacher meetings for each child – November
- School reports for individual children at the end of the year, including results from any standardised test completed in the Summer Term
- IEP (Individual Education Plan) meetings for children with Special Educational Needs
- Consultation throughout the year
- Written communication – notes home, newsletters, text messages
- Current policy changes or procedural changes are made known to all parents in written format via school newsletters
- Newsletters to enable parents to keep up to date with school events, holidays, school concerns, and to celebrate achievement
- Homework Diary – Junior infants to 6th class. Each child's diary can be used to relay short messages which are signed between parents and teachers. It is important that parents sign the homework diary each night to certify that homework has been completed
- Parents are invited to attend church services and school concerts
- Parents or guardians are not allowed to contact members of staff on their personal phones without prior permission as this is deemed inappropriate. Parents should only contact staff through the school office or homework journal to pass on a message or request a meeting.

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 the teachers.

Reporting to Parents:

All Saints' N.S. endeavours to help parents to understand fully the evidence of learning that the school reports to them, especially any evidence from standardised tests. The NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) 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. Two standard templates (Junior/ Senior) have been adopted from those provided by All Saints' N.S. and 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

The use of these templates is a Department led guideline as outlined in Circular 0018/2012 for use in all schools beginning Summer 2012.

Parent/ Teacher Meetings:

There are many purposes and requirements for good parent/ teacher communication by way of meetings. These meetings can take two formats; formal, and informal.

The aim of parent/ teacher meetings is:

- To inform parents of how their children are progressing in school
- To inform teachers on how children are coping outside school
- To establish an ongoing relationship and communication with parents
- To help teachers/ parents get to know the children better as individuals
- To encourage children to realise that home and school are working collaboratively

Informal parent/ teacher meetings:

Communication between parents and teachers is encouraged at All Saints' National School. Arranging parent/ teacher meetings within the school day while children are in school cannot be facilitated however, parents are welcome to make an appointment to speak to the Principal or relevant teacher at an appointed time.

Meetings with a class teacher at the classroom door to discuss a child's concern/ progress is discouraged for a number of reasons:

- A teacher cannot adequately supervise their class while at the same time speaking to a parent
- It is difficult to be discreet and offer full attention when so many children are close by
- Children can often feel embarrassed when their parent is speaking with the class teacher so obviously

It is important to understand that occasions can occur where a parent needs to speak to a teacher urgently. Sometimes these meetings may need to take place without prior notice. The Principal will endeavour to facilitate such meetings where possible, on condition that the children in the class do not lose out on any of the teaching/ learning time.

If parents need to drop in lunchboxes, sports gear, etc. this can be done through the secretary's office as it is important to keep class interruptions to a minimum.

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

Formal meetings:

Formal timetabled parent/ teacher meetings take place in November of each year. 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.

Communication from the school can be in various formats:

Formal communication 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, one meeting time will be provided and both parents are encouraged to attend. In exceptional circumstances, requests can be made by both parents to meet their child's teachers individually for parent/ teacher meetings

Most notes/ newsletters are sent home via schoolbags, with the youngest member of each family

SNA Communication

At times, an SNA (Special Needs Assistant) may be present in a classroom to facilitate the access provision of one or more children with Special Educational Needs. Communication regarding qualifying children can be directed to the SNA present at the usual times.

Communication with SNAs should be confined to physical and care needs only. Educational issues must be communicated to the class teacher directly.

Complaints Procedure

The following is the agreed complaints procedure to be followed in primary schools, adopted by All Saints' N.S.

Stage 1 – informal stage:

1. A parent/ guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, firstly approach the relevant class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint
2. Where the parent/ guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher he/ she should approach the Principal teacher 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 teacher 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:
 - i) Supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint and
 - ii) Arrange a meeting with the teacher, and where applicable, the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days 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 teacher 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 following steps should be followed:
 - i) The teacher should be supplied with copies of any written evidence in support of the complaint

- ii) 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
- iii) The Board may arrange a meeting with the complainant, who may be accompanied by another person to this meeting

Stage 5:

1. Following the Board's investigations, the Chairperson shall convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board. The decision of the Board shall be final.

Behaviour Supporting Communication:

Positive and respectful communication is very important at All Saints' N.S. This not only extends to the children but to the whole school community (eg. 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 participants in the school community are responsible for their own behaviours when in or representing the school. Examples include:

- All community members are expected to speak to each other with respect. Shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If a person 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 must be called.
- All adults 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 children's right to privacy so it is asked that parents respect other children's rights to privacy
- When any school community members 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
- Teachers and staff 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, and appointment should be made at a convenient time for both parties. This ensures that issues can be resolved. Classes begin at 8.50 am and finish at 2.25 pm and this time should not be interrupted.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work:

Safety legislation for Boards of Management, and for those who work in schools and colleges became operative on 1st November 1989.

At All Saints' N.S. we recognise 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 are 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.

Ratified by the Board of Management

Chairperson: Rev. Ian Gallagher

Date: 24th February 2014