

## **Introductory Statement**

This policy was developed by the staff of Shraigh N.S, in consultation with the Board of Management. Its purpose 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 the 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 Shraigh N.S.'s Vision Statement. The 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**

- Annual orientation meeting for parents of 'new' Junior Infants – late May/early June
- Formal parent/teacher meetings currently held in November
- School reports are posted 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 family notes, calendar of events, notes from class teachers/special education teachers, TextaParent.ie, homework journals and individual pupils progress reports
- Homework Journals are used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers. Parents are requested to sign diary each night to certify that homework has been completed
- Parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of all school policies
- 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.

## **Parent/Teacher Meetings**

The aims of 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 visit to the office or by note in the homework journal) 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 (e.g. 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 parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear etc, this can be done but it is important to keep class interruptions to a minimum.

## **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.

- Appointment slips are issued to parents during the week prior to the meeting. 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.

## **End-of-Year School Reports**

- An end-of-year school report is issued by post 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.

## **Other Parent/Teacher Communications**

- The TextaParentie service is also used to notify/update parents of significant/unexpected events during the school year
- Parents are encouraged to check Homework Journals on a nightly basis (Monday to Friday) as notes/comments may be included by the child's teacher. Similarly, parents may use the homework journal to communicate with teacher(s). Parents are required to complete the appropriate section of the homework journal to notify the class teacher of their child's absence, including date(s) and reason for absence(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
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes when the opportunity arises
- 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 late arriving to school, 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.

## **Health and Safety Issues**

Shraigh N.S. prides itself on being an open, welcoming place for all members of the school community. However, in order to provide a safe and supportive environment for all who work and learn in the school the following procedures are in place:

- A closed circuit monitoring/recording system (CCTV) has been installed outside the school building
- As the BoM is responsible for the health and safety of all members of the school community, parents/guardians are not allowed to challenge/reprimand another person's child on the school premises
- The willingness of parents to be involved in a voluntary capacity with such support activities as sports programmes (e.g. coaching), healthy eating promotional work, Seachtain na Gaeilge, etc is valued and very much appreciated by the school. However, in order to protect the privacy and integrity of all members of the school community, such volunteers are required to respect the confidential and/or sensitive nature of information which may come to their attention during the course of their work in the school
- The BoM is responsible for ensuring the health, safety, wellbeing and educational progress of students. They also have a duty under Section 8 of the *Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005* to ensure; so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of employees. The Department of Education and Skills has acknowledged that on very rare occasions there may be incidents of assaults on school employees. The BoM of Shraigh N.S. is cognizant of its duty to provide a safe place of work for its employees. The BoM is concerned to protect school employees from the risk of violence of any kind, be that in the form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults or other forms of intimidation. The BoM ensures that appropriate measures are taken to:
  - a) Prevent or minimize the risk of assault on employees and
  - b) To support all staff who have been assaulted or threatened with assault and
  - c) To ensure that appropriate action is taken to safeguard against a recurrence.

## **Procedures for Addressing Complaints**

It is acknowledged that disagreements and/or complaints may arise from time-to-time. The primary thrust of the Home/School Partnership outlined above is seen as supporting a preventative rather than a curative response to the difficulties that may occasionally develop.

It is envisaged that all disputes/challenges should be addressed initially at a more informal level, usually involving contact and communication between parent(s) and teacher(s). Experience has shown that where a mutually respectful willingness among parent(s) and teacher(s) exists to discuss difficulties and to engage in a solution-driven approach to addressing such disputes/challenges, then the majority of such matters are resolved speedily and to the satisfaction of all involved.

Where a satisfactory resolution of the issues is not achieved at the more informal level, then parent(s) and/or teacher(s) may wish to pursue the matter further and involve themselves in a more formal approach to seek resolution of the matter.

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

All staff members, parents, pupils and BoM members share responsibility for supporting the implementation of the Home/School Partnership Policy.

## **Success Criteria**

The school evaluates the success of this Policy through:

- Positive and supportive engagement and participation of parents, staff, BoM members and pupils in the education process
- The extent to which there exists a mutually-beneficial, supportive and positive atmosphere and relationship among all members of the school community
- Feedback, as appropriate, from all members of the school community
- Indications that the smooth and efficient running and organisation of the school is enhanced through the implementation of this policy
- The indications that the facilitation and implementation of the Home/School Partnership Policy are enhancing the learning opportunities of the pupils of the school.

## **Timetable for Review**

A review of this policy will be conducted as deemed appropriate, based on the success criteria outlined above.

Signed:

Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

