



Scoil na mBuachaillí, Ardacha
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Working with Parents, Communication Policy

Introductory statement

This policy was developed by the staff of Scoil na mBuachaillí, Ardacha, the Board of Management and the parents in the school year 2023-24.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and parent/staff communication in Scoil na mBuachaillí, Ardacha. 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 their 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/parent association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with Parents

- Meeting for parents of new Second Class boys – June of First Class
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in November
- Parents receive school report of each pupil at the end of each school year
- Meetings with parents whose children have special needs (School Support Plan meeting and review)
- Consultation throughout the year
- Written communication mostly electronically through Aladdin or email
- Parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of all school policies. Decisions taken to change current policies and procedures or to introduce

new ones will be made known to all parents in written format via email or notice on Aladdin

- Newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns
- Messages/notices sent on Aladdin to parents
- Parents can message his/her son's class teacher directly on Aladdin
- Parents can contact the office by email oifig@ardaghboysns.ie or by phone 0238848777
- Homework diary, 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 events throughout the year e.g. Sports Day, school Masses and school concerts, end of year celebration/Sixth Class Graduation
- Involvement of parents in the Religion 'Grow in Love Programme' section for parents
- Parents are also welcome to make an appointment any time throughout the year. If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the school secretary or message the teacher directly through Aladdin 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.

Communication by email- response time

Response times to emails from the school secretary can vary depending on the demands in the office at any given time. It is considered reasonable that 3-5 school days are allowed for a response (with the exception of holiday periods during which email is only checked intermittently).

Response times to emails to the Principal can also vary greatly depending on the demands at any given time. Priority must be given to the pupils, staff and overall running of the school. A response time of 5-7 school days is considered to be reasonable.

Teachers are in class during the day and will not have time to access emails. They may be engaged in planning, meetings or personal matters after school hours and so again 3-5 school days is considered to be a reasonable response time.

There may be occasions where a parent is trying to contact the school by phone and/or email and are not receiving a response. Office hours are limited and the secretary is not always at the desk. We ask for patience during these times.

Online and Social Media Communication

Scoil na mBuachaillí, Ardacha has a website www.ardaghboysns.ie photos, policies and news items such as the school calendar are posted here.

The school name, or anything that identifies the school, should not be used online or on social media (for example if you post a photo to your personal social media, school should not be mentioned in it) by members of the public including parents without express written permission from the principal or Board of Management. Scoil na mBuachaillí, Ardacha will request removal of any online or social media sites that are not approved by the school.

Staff members are entitled to a private life. Some parents know staff members socially and are friends or follow each other on social media. If your only interaction with a staff member is through school, please do not send a friend or follow request on social media. Likewise, please discourage your son(s) from doing so. Any friend or follow requests from pupils to a staff member's personal social media will be blocked and reported to home.

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 communicated to parents through Aladdin. Parents will book their meetings through the Aladdin app. Meetings may take place in classrooms or support rooms. The teachers use prepared guidelines for the meetings and collaborate in advance about the progress of individual children. A short written record of the meeting is maintained 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 opinions 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

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

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 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-Student Support Plans

Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings on the subject of the **Student Support Plans** will take place in September/October. However, if a parent wishes to arrange a meeting with the SET at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by prior appointment.

Informal Parent/Staff Meetings

1. Scoil na mBuachaillí, Ardacha encourages communication between parents and staff
2. Meetings with the class teacher at the class door, when collecting from the pitch or bus after a school outing to discuss a concern/ child's progress are discouraged on a number of grounds:
 - A teacher cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent
 - It is difficult to be discreet when so many children are standing close by
 - It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to staff 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 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.

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.

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** 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** 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 and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 school 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 with a copy of the written complaint and
 - b. Arrange a meeting with the staff, and where applicable, the principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 school 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 school days of the meeting
2. If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated, the staff and the complainant should be so informed within 3 school 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:
 - a. The staff 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 and the complainant within 5 school 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 must 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 time of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected
- We ask that the privacy of staff be respected, if your only interaction with a staff member is through school, please do not send friend/follow requested on social media. Friend/follow requests from pupils to teacher's private social media accounts will be blocked and reported to parents. Please discourage your son/s from doing so.

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.

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management of Scoil na mBuachaillí, Ardacha ratified this plan on the 25/10/2023. The policy will be reviewed in 2026-27 school year or sooner if the need arises.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

This plan is available to view at the school by the parents on request.