

## **Communication Policy.**

### ***Introductory Statement***

The purpose of this statement is to provide information and guidelines on Parent /Teacher communication both formal and informal in St. Michael's. This policy was drafted and ratified in 2007. It was reviewed in 2019.

The home is central to the development of the child and the nurturing of values. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive of each other so that the child's education can be effective.

The initial policy evolved after consultation with class teachers, support teachers, B.O.M. and parents.

Parents are encouraged to

- Develop close links with 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
- Participate in policy and decision making process affecting them

### ***Rationale***

Good communication between all of those involved in school i.e. teachers, children, parents and ancillary school staff is very important for the effective running of our school. In St Michael's N.S. we seek to enable each child to develop their potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are valued. This work can best be done where there is a high level of openness, co-operation and respect between staff, pupils, parents, parents association and the board of management.

### ***Aims***

Our aim is to promote and support good communication structures between all of those in our school community - staff, children, parents and Board of Management.

### ***Parents are encouraged to:***

- Develop close links with the school
- Participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of all staff members in the school
- Collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their children

## Parent Teacher Communication

- Share the responsibility of seeing that the school remains true to its vision
- Become actively involved in the school/parent association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them

### *Staff are encouraged to:*

- Participate in any meetings with parents in a positive and respectful manner and affirm the role of the parent as the ‘primary and natural educator’ of their children (as per Article 42.1 of the Irish Constitution)
- Collaborate with the parents in an open two-way communication so that both parties are working together to develop the full potential of the children
- Be aware of the activities organised by parents association and link in with them where possible to support their activities and events

### *Staff Communication*

The school has adopted ‘*Working Together – Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations*’. A copy is available in the Principal’s office and may be downloaded from the INTO website

<http://www.into.ie/ROI/InfoforTeachers/StaffRelations/WorkingTogether/>

- Regular staff meetings are held during Croke Park hours to work on the school’s development and the school plan.
- In addition to formal communication that takes place during staff meetings, the principal is available to meet with any member of staff who wishes to discuss school matters with her.
- The whiteboard in the staffroom will be used for general updates and information.
- Texts and Aladdin (school management system) are used for circulating various correspondence.
- The principal may send reminders or notifications of emergencies, such as school closures through text.

### *Communication with Parents/Guardians by the School*

- Meeting for parents of new junior infants and new class pupils take place in term three. The principal provides parent with a wide range of information about the school, focusing on what school life at St Michael’s N.S. will be like for their children. Parents are also

## Parent Teacher Communication

introduced to a range of school policies and procedures.

- Parents of children who are new to the school receive a copy of the School Information Booklet A-Z of our school
- All parents are invited to an introductory meeting for each class in September each year.
- Parent / Teacher Meetings usually take place in October.
- Meetings with parents whose children have special needs take place as arranged between the class teacher and/or support teacher and relevant parents.
- End of year pupil reports are issued children's progress in all classes in June. The 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 can support their child's learning
- All primary schools must use one of the report card templates (available at [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)) for reporting to parents on students' progress and achievement at school.
- Homework diary 1<sup>st</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> class used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers
- The school website
- School Newsletters
- Written communication via letter from school.
- Text-a-parent.
- The School Calendar is issued to parents during Term 3 annually. Homework diary 1st -6th class used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers
- Student Council send letters home to parents,

### ***Communication with Class Teacher***

- Class information meetings are held in September to provide an opportunity for parents to meet the class teacher and to receive and overview of the plan for the year, class structures etc.
- Teachers may place a note in the Homework Folder or write a note in the Homework Journal (1st Class onwards) to communicate with parents/guardians.
- Meetings with the class teacher at the class door or while the children are assembling to discuss a child's progress/concern is discouraged on a number of grounds:

## Parent Teacher Communication

It is difficult to be discrete when so many parents and children are standing close by

It is not appropriate for a parent to discuss sensitive information at a classroom door or in the yard

Teaching and learning is affected as it takes from teaching time

The teacher cannot adequately supervise their class while at the same time speaking to a parent

As all the teachers in this school, including the principal, have full-time teaching responsibilities, meetings with parents need to be pre planned.

The teacher reserves the right to request the presence of the principal or another teacher during these meetings.

If you wish to discuss a particular issue with a teacher please contact the school to make an appointment.

However, informal communications between teachers and parents may take place should the need arise at drop off or pick up time to listen to a quick issue as long as confidentiality issues are not impacted. If matters raised cannot be resolved immediately or if the parent or staff member needs to discuss the matter further an appointment should be made.

Teachers are available to speak to parents/guardians by appointment.

These appointments may be made by sending a note to the class teacher in the homework folder, speaking to the teacher briefly at drop off or pick up or by ringing the school.

Teachers may communicate with parents/guardians by phone if the need arises.

**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 their 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.

### ***Urgent Communication with the School***

In an emergency situation a parent may need to speak to a member of staff urgently. Sometimes these meetings may 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 teaching and learning time.

### ***Absences***

All absences should be explained by a signed written note

### ***Parent/Teacher Meetings – Formal***

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings take place in October for all classes in accordance with Circular 14/04. The purpose of the Parent/Teacher meeting is to:

- Establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents
- Let parents know how their child is progressing at school
- Share with the parents the problems and difficulties the child may have in school
- Learn more about the child from the parent's perspective
- Identify ways in which parents can help their child
- To help staff/parents get to know the children better as individuals
- To help children realise that home and school are working together

If a parent wishes to arrange an additional meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by contacting the class teacher.

NPC booklet “*Supporting Your Child's Learning at Home.*”

<http://www.npc.ie/attachments/61c89cf9-820f-4de8-a9d3-9880f2bbd7d5.PDF>

### ***Parent Contact Details***

Parents' contact details including emergency contact details, must be provided to the school. During the first term of each school year, parents will be asked to update their contact details as held by the school. These contact details are used only for the purpose of communicating with parents on issues relating to their child.

It is vital that the school is aware of any changes to methods of communication with families. The responsibility for informing the school of a change of address, phone numbers or emails rests principally with parents.

### ***Board of Management***

- The staff representative on the board of management and the principal liaise between staff and the board of management.
- The board of management issues an agreed report after each meeting which is circulated to staff and parents.
- Where appropriate, parents/guardians can communicate with the board of management by letter and this correspondence will generally be considered at the next scheduled board meeting. It should be noted that the Complaints Procedure should be followed if a complaint is being made, where the board of management is only involved when resolution with the teacher and the principal have been exhausted.

### ***Policies and Procedures***

- Policies and procedures are published on the school website following their development/review. It is reported in the board of management agreed report when a policy is developed/reviewed.

### ***Parents Association***

The chairperson of the parent's association will liaise with the principal regarding all of its activities and events. We are very fortunate that an active Parents Association is in existence in our school. Membership is open to all parents/guardians of all pupils enrolled. It promotes the interests of the pupils in co-operation with B.O.M., Principal and staff. The B.O.M. and staff of this school recognises the contribution that our P. A. has made to our school. Due to fund raising by our P.A. we have improved our I.T. equipment, additional reading schemes, access to bus trips to sporting events and many events organised during the school year.

### ***Behaviour of all Stakeholders in the School***

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This is something we work on with the children in the school but this also extends 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 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. Examples include:

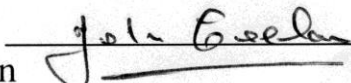
- All stakeholders are expected to speak to each other with respect. Shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If a stakeholder displays anger or aggression to another member of the school, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building. In certain cases, the Gardaí may be called.
- 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.
- The school would ask that if you have a concern/complaint please do not utilise school email or school mobile phone.

### ***Ratification***

This policy was initially ratified in 2007 following subsequent changes it will be presented to the BOM 2019/2020.

Next review date: 2024

### **Ratified 2007**

Signed :   
Fr Geelan