

Claddaghduff NS

Parental Involvement Policy

Introduction

This policy was drafted as a collaborative exercise between Board of Management (BoM), staff and parents. The BOM believe that a strong partnership between all partners in the school community can only have positive benefits for the students.

Rationale

It is necessary to have a Parental Involvement Policy because:

- Parents are the primary educators of their child(ren) and are valuable partner's in their child(ren)'s education in the formal school setting.
- Parental involvement benefits pupil learning.
- Promotion of partnership between parents, teachers and the Board of Management is vital to the health of the school community.
- It supports the Education Act, 1998; Education Welfare Act, 2000
- It supports School Self Evaluation
- It provides 'good parent/teacher relationships and a better level of understanding between home and school' (National Parents' Council).
- It enhances communication, trust and respect between parents and teachers.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

Claddaghduff N.S is a co-educational, Catholic primary school, which strives to provide a caring, happy, safe and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. While Claddaghduff N.S is a school with a Catholic ethos, it also has due recognition for all other religions. We are committed to the creation of a positive, stimulating learning environment dedicated to the full and harmonious development of all the pupils in our care.

Our school motto is:

“Mól an óige agus tiocfaidh siad”

School Ethos

Claddaghduff N.S manifests a strong sense of community within the school and promotes a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, pupils and parents. The positive ethos permeates the activities of the school, creating social inclusion and cohesion with a

happy, learning environment. We are committed to methods of evaluating and improving channels of communication between school and parents. Our evaluation shall be ongoing and continuous, as we make every effort to make parents feel welcome and values at all times.

Aims

- Helping parents to develop a positive role in complementing and supporting the work of the school in educating their children.
- To build a school community committed to supporting all its pupils
- To establish procedures for the sharing of information in relation to pupil progress and attainment
- To enrich and extend the educational opportunities provided for pupils by accessing the skills and talents of parents

Guidelines

These guidelines address parental involvement in the following areas

1. Parents' Association
2. Board of Management
3. Vision / Mission and Aims
4. Organisational policies
5. Curriculum plans
6. Communication
7. Education Welfare Services, Tusla
8. Volunteers and Guest speakers

1. Parents' Association

The Parents' Association is the structure through which parents/guardians in the school can work together for the best possible education for their children. Claddaghduff N.S has an active Parent Association. The Parents Association A.G.M. is held each October, and the Association is affiliated to the National Parents Council. The Parent Association also communicates regularly with the Principal Teacher. The Parents' Association are involved in

organising social events for the school community and many of these events generate funds for the school with the teachers of Senior School.

- Christmas Concert
- Valentines Raffle
- Co-ordinating Claddaghduff Hall for families on Holy Communion Day/ Confirmation Day
- Supporting events that celebrate the graduation of 6th Class
- Supporting other school events, as appropriate – Healthy Eating Week, School Sports Day etc

2. Board of Management

Section 15 of the Education Act 1998 states that (1) “It shall be duty of the board to manage the school on behalf of the patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents and to provide or cause to be provided an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility”. The Board of Management meets, on average 4 to 5 times during the school year (September to June) or as required. The Board is comprised of 2 direct nominees of the Patron; 1 Teachers’ Nominee; 2 Parent Nominees and 2 Community Nominees.

The following persons have been appointed to the Board of Management 2023-2027: Feicin Mulkerrin (Chairperson); Bernice O’ Rourke (Treasurer); Laura Griffin (Principal); Eileen O’ Malley (Staff Nominee); Mary McDonagh (Patron Nominee); Eimear Heaney (Parents’ nominee); Damien Prendergast (Parents’ nominee) and John Dolan (Local Nominee).

BOM members are not delegates for their electorates. They have no obligation to report back to their electors or to take instruction from them on how to vote at Board Meetings as this would be a breach of confidentiality 8(a) constitution. The BOM decide on what may be reported at the end of each meeting. The Principal usually communicates on behalf of the Board of Management with parents, via the PA, the school newsletter, or email /post – as appropriate.

3. Vision / Mission & Aims

Parents/Guardians are partners in all aspects of school life and are facilitated to engage in policy making, classroom activities, extracurricular activities and any community events.

4. Organisational Policies

Policies are communicated to our parents on our school website. When necessary, parents are consulted on certain policies.

Our parents have a role and responsibility in relation to the following policies and procedures:

- Anti- Bullying

- Attendance
- Child Safeguarding
- Code of Behaviour
- Homework
- Special Education Needs
- Healthy Lunches
- Mobile Phone & Electronic Device
- School Tour Policy
- Substance Use
- Attendance
- Administration of medicine
- Uniform

5. Curriculum Plans

- **Beginning of School Year:** Class Teachers will communicate directly with parents (via letter / information session) where they can disseminate information regarding curricular and school related issues. This can include information on curriculum planning, homework and how parents can support their child in accessing the curriculum.
- **Parents as partners:** In Claddaghduff N.S we value that staff and parents are partners in education. This is especially evident in positive parental involvement in homework or similar, through Shared Reading and other interactive activities. In other classes, parents are invited to view projects etc. These activities are beneficial in developing the parent/child/school relationship.
- **Parental Volunteers supporting the Curriculum:** Parents will be canvassed annually regarding their skills, areas of interest and strengths and a list of these are kept on file. In the event of a parent's skill set overlapping with the curricular plans of the class teacher, willing volunteers are used when required. (It is considered best practice that all volunteers be Garda Vetted, where possible)
- **Continuum of Support (Stage 1):** Teachers will concerns relating to a child's progress socially, emotionally or academically, will arrange a meeting with parents to discuss these concerns and strategies for supporting the child's access to the curriculum within the class setting. A Student Support File is used to record these agreed strategies and monitor.
- **Continuum of Support (Stage 2):** If concerns continue in relation to academic progress or social, emotional and behavioural competence, further support maybe required. The Class Teacher will seek the support of the Special Education Teachers in the school. A meeting is arranged with parents to discuss new strategies, which may include withdrawal as part of a group for relevant intervention(s). Parents are updated of their child's progress, and recommendations to continue/not continue with this level of support, through progress meetings arranged with the Class Teacher and relevant SET.
- **Continuum of Support (School Support Plus):** In the case of children with Special Educational Needs, where one-to-one support from a Special Education Teacher is recommended, parents are involved in the process of developing and implementing an Individual Education Plan for their child. There is an initial consultation meeting in

September to discuss the child's strengths and needs and to establish the focus for the year. Class teacher, SET, SNA (where necessary) and parents are invited to attend this meeting. If required a multi-disciplinary meeting including outside agencies can be convened. Parents are given a copy of the targets set after this discussion. A review meeting is held in February in person or on the phone and again in June to discuss progress.

6. Communication

- *Parent Teacher Meetings:* These are held every October/ November over a week. Parents are given a date and time. Dates are set by the staff and management but any parent who is unable to attend will be facilitated at a convenient date.
- *School Report:* There is a yearly school report which is generated using 'Aladdin'. This is disseminated to parents via post/ email, depending on parent's preference. Every school report is read and signed by the Principal. Reports are written in collaboration between class and support teachers.
- *Newsletter:* A termly newsletter is issued giving general information on school activities, dates to remember etc. Updates are also given through the school website
- *Emails / Notes home:* Communication outside of the school newsletter with parents is usually done via email. Individual notes may be sent home by the class teacher or through the homework journal, unless they are of a serious nature when they are sent by post.
- *Homework Journal:* Claddaghduff NS asks that parents monitor and sign their children's homework journal daily. The homework journal is also used as a means of communication between home and school. Teachers inform parents of any issues as they arise and parents are able to comment or raise an issue to the teacher through the journal.
- *Parent/guardian requested meeting:* Parents may request a meeting by contacting the school office. A meeting at a time that is mutually convenient for both parents and teachers will be arranged by the school secretary. Parents should give an indication of the nature of the meeting.
- *Teacher requested meetings:* In the event of a teacher requesting a meeting, the teacher may request a meeting via a note in homework journal or the school secretary will contact the parent by phone to arrange a meeting. A meeting at a time that is mutually convenient for both parents and teachers will be arranged by the school secretary. Staff will give an indication of the nature of the meeting.
- *Notice Board:* An Information notice boards is located at the school gate. There is also one inside the school door.
- *Written Communication from parents/guardians:* Comments from parents can be given to the class teacher through the homework journal or by email.
- *Fundraising:* The Parents Association committee undertake fundraising activities for their own association and any excess is used for benefit of the school community. This is done in collaboration with school management.

7. Education Welfare Services

Tusla Parents will to be made aware of the role of Education Welfare Services in Tusla, in communicating with parents whose children have missed more than 20 school days. This will be communicated to parents through information nights and through the school newsletter. On reaching 15 days, parents will be informed by email that their child has been absent for 15 days and that Tusla will be informed at 20 days.

8. Guest Speakers

Guest speakers, including parents and grandparents who have skills and knowledge to share, may be invited to classrooms with the sanction of the Board of Management. They will be accompanied by a teacher during their time in school. The school is also supportive of parents who are undertaking further education and are seeking a work experience placement in a school.

Ratification and communication:

This policy was ratified by the BOM on 6th March 2024 and is available to view in the office or on our website.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed every 3-4 years

Signed: *Feicin Mulkerrin*
Chairperson

Date: 6th March 2024

Signed: *Laura Griffin*
Principal

Date: 6th March 2024

*Note – the original signed copy is located in policy folder in office

Appendix 1: Guidelines for parental involvement in classroom activities.

- Parents come into the classroom at the invitation of the class teacher / Principal by prior arrangement and for an agreed purpose. (It is considered best practice that all volunteers be Garda Vetted, where possible).
- The happiness, welfare and safety of the children are our primary concern. A child's personal history and academic achievements are strictly confidential: it is important the parent does not discuss their thoughts on how a pupil might be doing [academically /behaviourally /socially /emotionally] with any party. (Uncertainties in this area should be discussed with the class teacher or principal only.)
- Respect for the teachers in their professional capacity is essential.
- Discipline/behaviour remains the responsibility of the teacher.
- All work will be supervised by the teacher.
- Parents who participate should be conscious of and sensitive to the needs of the entire class, not just the needs of their own child if they are present.
- Parents coming into the classroom must consult with the class teacher / Principal before inviting other parents/individuals to participate.
- In the interests of safety, toddlers and younger children cannot be accommodated during a classroom / volunteer activity.
- The highest standard of adult behaviour and language is expected.
- Punctuality and consistency are crucial.
- No fees are payable. Any previously agreed expenses that a parent wishes to reclaim must be sanctioned in advance by the Board of Management, and must be accompanied by receipts.
- In the case of an ongoing project that takes place over a number of weeks/months, parents will meet with the teacher and/or Principal to discuss the activity. It remains the responsibility of the teacher and Principal to determine its appropriateness (e.g. is it suitable for the age group; has something similar already been done, etc.)
- The teacher has the final say in the event that he/she feels an activity is falling short of its original aims and objectives.
- The school ethos must be upheld at all times and it is important to keep in mind that the school is multi-denominational, co-educational, child centred and democratic. Consequently, respect for all the partners in education – children, teachers and parents – must be upheld at all times.