

PARENTS AS PARTNERS POLICY

Introduction /Rationale

The staff and Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Buithe is committed to assisting the school community in providing the optimum learning experience for all our pupils. This work can best be done where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils. This policy was identified as necessary in outlining roles and responsibilities and also to inform parents as to how best they can support the school and its pupils. We very much acknowledge the role of parents as partners in education and as the primary educators of their children. A strong home-school partnership is an essential element in the life of our school. Communication between school and home should be open and positive. We endeavour to create an open and welcoming atmosphere in many ways e.g. respectful communication between home and school and the provision of opportunities for informal meetings. This policy outlines strategies adopted by the school to promote positive home-school relations.

Aims:

- 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

Parents as a group have a range of talents, abilities and skills that have the potential to enrich and extend the educational opportunities provided for the children. It is our policy to identify parents with specific skills and to invite those parents to share their skills with us at a school and a class level.

Respect for the professional role of the teacher and the statutory responsibilities of the Principal, Patron and the Board of Management is always an important consideration.

Parental Involvement

We believe that meaningful parental involvement of parents /guardians in school life is crucial to the success of our school as a learning community. The following structures have been put in place to facilitate parental involvement in the life of the school.

Parents' Association.

We have an active and supportive Parents' Association in our school. Our School Principal attends meetings to ensure that effective communication between staff and parents is encouraged.

While all parents can be part of the Parents Association, not all can be involved or need to be involved in the day-to-day business of organising the work. It is for this reason that parents in this school elect a committee.

The committee is the team of people who manage the tasks of the Parent Association on behalf of all the parents. The committee manages the business of the Parent Association in accordance with the constitution of the Parent Association. The two parent nominees on the Board of Management are also members of the committee of the Parents Association. The Parents' Committee organise events such as Sports' Day etc.

The committee has the responsibility to plan and manage the programme of work of the Parent Association for the year. The Committee will meet with the Principal at the beginning of the school year to plan activities for the year. Changes may have to be discussed and agreed throughout the year, as new needs/interests emerge. The term of the committee runs for one year.

In a spirit of collaboration and trust, the Constitution of the Parents' Association will recognise that there are areas of school activity which belong to the professional work of the Principal and the teachers. There will also be recognition that certain areas of responsibility (e.g. finance) belong to the Board of Management.

The Parents' Association should consult with the Board about fundraising for the school or school projects.

**Remember- there may be many parents who do not want to be on a committee but who may want to help with particular activities. If you wish to offer your services to help in extra curricular activities etc. please be sure to give your name to a Committee member or contact the school*

Board of Management

Our BOM consists of eight members, two of whom are Parent Representatives.

These are elected following the Procedures and Guidelines for Boards of Management.

Policy Consultation

Parents are invited to take part in the review of policies in the school. Please note that parental consultation regarding policies, where appropriate, is conducted through various measures. Parents are made aware of policies on our school web site and a hard copy is also available for perusal in school.

Curriculum Plans

Parents are informed re curricular updates on an ongoing basis as the school recognises the importance of the parental role in supporting the learning of the child and the school plan.

Parents support the child's learning in many ways – by communicating to the school the child's learning needs and progress/barriers to progress, through homework, paired reading, spelling, independent reading, language development, preserving and raising self esteem of child, approaches to number operations, maths language, tables, ag spreagadh na paisti chun gaeilge a labhairt sa bhaile, poetry, local history, local geography, environmental awareness, living things etc.

The school may identify parents with particular knowledge or skills in curriculum areas and encourage them to share these skills with the pupils during school time.

Parents are advised at formal Parent/Teacher meetings and informal meetings throughout the school year of ways in which they can support their child's learning.

Parents of children attending Learning Support/ Resource Teacher are invited to meet the teacher formally and informally to consult in the devising of Individual Education Profiles and Individual Learning Profiles (IEPs/IPLPs)

Parent/Teacher Communication

- **Parent Teacher Meetings**

We realise the importance of early and honest communication with parents. In accordance with Circular 14/04 parents are invited to attend formal parent teacher meetings in the first term to discuss their child's progress academically and socially. Parents/guardians will be given advance notice re dates and times for these meetings. Both parents are encouraged to attend. Every effort will be made to synchronise meeting times for siblings so as to accommodate parents. The Principal and Learning Support/Resource teachers are also available to meet parents on that day. Our Special Needs Policy also allows for systematic parent - teacher meetings once a term for children availing of supplementary teaching. To meet the needs of parents who are unavailable to attend on the selected dates an arrangement is in place to organize a meeting on a day that suits all parties involved.

- **Parent/Guardian requested Meeting:**

Where a parent wishes to contact a teacher it is appropriate to make an appointment so that the teacher may give the parent their full attention. In this way it may be possible to make arrangements for the class to be supervised in the interest of safety and the confidentiality of the matter/child under discussion. It is also necessary that the subject matter is outlined so that the teacher may prepare properly for the meeting.

While we will provide the opportunity for informal meetings when necessary we would ask that parents be mindful of the demands on teacher's time when requesting informal meetings.

- **Homework Journals**

These provide an effective means of daily communication between parent and teacher from 1st to 6th class. A homework folder is used in the Infant Classes. Parents are asked to check that homework has been completed and signed. On occasion, in conjunction with our Code of Behaviour a Daily Report Card is used to communicate with parents regarding positive and negative aspects of certain children's behaviour at school. This is part of an Individual Behaviour Plan that will have been drawn up in consultation with parents.

- **Welcome Letter**

The Principal sends out a 'Welcome letter' at the start of the school year.

- **Induction Meeting for new parents**

An induction meeting is held each year in June for the parents of the incoming Junior Infant Class. Parents are invited to this meeting by letter. Parents receive an induction Pack at this meeting. School policies and information are discussed. This meeting provides a forum to allay any fears they may have regarding their child's learning and happiness. Parents are made aware that Scoil Naomh Buithe is a very open school that encourages and fosters good and respectful communication between all the partners in education. The newly enrolled Infants are also invited to attend on the same day so as to help allay any fears they may have.

- **End of Year Report Cards**

All Parents/Guardians receive an End of Year Report Card in June every year. This Report Card outlines each pupil's progress for the year including his or her performance on Standardised Tests (1st to 6th). An NCCA explanatory letter is also included with the Report Card to explain test scores.

- **Newsletter**

Class teachers and children take responsibility for keeping their class blog up to date. This is an excellent way for children to communicate to parents various aspects of their school life.

- **Web Site**

This is an excellent means of communication between parents and school. It is used to celebrate happenings and achievements in the school and also to disseminate information and school news. It is updated regularly and class blogs were recently added.

- **Text a Parent**

The school has established a database of mobile phone numbers for parents on the textparent.ie website. This facilitates the sending of text messages to all parents or specific groups of parents.

School Events

The school hosts many events during the year to encourage the participation of parents/guardians in school life. Examples of these include Sports Day, Book Fair, Christmas Concert, End of Year Show. Parents are also encouraged to participate in the preparation of the children for the Sacraments of Communion and Confirmation. Occasionally the school will organise guest speakers on matters of relevance e.g. Healthy Eating, Internet Safety etc.

Review and evaluation procedures.

We will keep this policy under review and revise it as necessary.

Success Criteria:

- Benefit to Pupil Learning
- Parental Involvement is increased in school activities
- Feedback from parents

Ratification

Policy ratified by B.O.M on 09/10/2014

Signed: _____

Chairperson Board of Management

Date: _____