



St Fintan's N.S. Sutton

Communication with Parents Policy

Introduction

St Fintan's NS is a co-educational primary school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. It is a mainstream primary school catering for a full cross section of pupils.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent teacher meetings and the parent teacher communication in St. Fintan's N.S.

*The term 'parent' implies any person with parental responsibility such as foster parent, carer, guardian or local authority.

Relationship to School Ethos

The school promotes positive home-school contacts, not only in relation to the welfare of children, but in relation to all aspects of school life. This policy is in keeping with the school ethos through the provision of a safe, secure and caring school environment and the furthering of positive home-school links. The home is central to the development of the child and the nurturing of good, moral values. Both St. Fintan's and the family strive to be mutually supportive 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.

Parent-Teacher Communication Procedure

Parents are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with the school and 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 Parents Association.
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.
- Participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of the staff.

School Communications with Parents

- A standardised written report on each pupil is provided at the end of each school year.
- Individual parent teacher meetings take place in November for all classes.
- There will be consultation throughout the year as necessary.
- There are additional meetings with parents whose children attend support classes or who have additional needs.
- Teachers may consult with parents regularly or request to meet parents.
- The homework journal or Aladdin can be used to relay messages. Parents are asked to sign the journal daily.
- Parents receive frequent electronic messages from the school via the Aladdin App.
- The school website is www.stfintansns.ie and the email address to be used by parents with inquiries etc., is info@stfintansns.ie
- An open morning for parents of incoming junior infants is held in June. Parents are welcomed to the school by the principal and the new junior infants are invited to meet their teacher in the classroom.

Formal Parent-Teacher (PT) meetings

Formal timetabled parent teacher meetings take place in November for all classes. Parents are invited to sign up for the meetings in advance through the Aladdin app. The school aims to co-ordinate meeting times for siblings and those in receipt of support. Requests can be made by both parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for parent teacher meetings. The principal may attend parent teacher meetings if requested by either teacher or parent.

The purpose of parent teacher meetings is to:

- Let parents know how their children are progressing in school
- Inform teachers about the child's learning and development at home
- Encourage and develop relationships and communication with parents
- Allow teachers and parents get to know the children better as individuals
- Identify ways in which parents and teachers can support the child further

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.

Additional Parent-Teacher Meetings

Outside of the formal parent teacher meetings in November, a parent may wish to meet with their child's class teacher, and a teacher may wish to meet with a parent.

When a parent would like to meet a teacher to discuss a concern or development:

- The parent should request a meeting either through the school office or via the Aladdin App.
- The parent must give a reason for the meeting.
- The parent will be given a time and date at which the teacher will be available to meet them.
- These meetings generally take place immediately before or after school. They can only be arranged within the school day in exceptional circumstances.

When a teacher would like to meet a parent to discuss a concern or development:

- The teacher will request a meeting either through the school office or via the Aladdin App/school journal.
- The teacher will give a reason for the meeting.
- The teacher will suggest a time and date at which they will be available to meet the parent.
- These meetings generally take place immediately before or after school. They can only be arranged within the school day in exceptional circumstances.

Forgotten items

If parents wish to drop in forgotten lunch boxes, sports gear etc. this will be done through the secretary's office as it is important to keep class interruptions down to a minimum. Forgotten items can be left at reception. Parents are asked to label the item with child's name and class, (labels provided at the office). The school secretary will deliver the item(s) to the children.

Urgent meetings

Occasions occur where a parent needs to speak to a teacher 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.

When a parent would like to meet the principal:

- The school principal is very happy to meet parents regarding enrolments, finances, secondary schools etc. However, when it comes to a concern or complaint, a parent must first approach the class teacher regarding the matter.
- If a parent contacts the school office to make an appointment, and it transpires that the matter has not been discussed with the class teacher, the parent will be redirected to meet the teacher first.
- A parent must give a reason for the meeting.
- The principal/secretary will then suggest a time and date at which they will be available to meet the parent.

End of year report

The school aims to help parents to understand fully the evidence of learning that the school reports to them. In line with Departmental advice, the school uses an NCCA (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment) standard report template. 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

Parental 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. Note that the school will not be dictated to as to the method of its' communications.

Formal Stage 1-Discussion

1.1 Parent meets teacher

A parent who wishes to make a complaint in respect of their own child, should, seek an appointment with the teacher concerned with a view to resolving the complaint.

1.2 Parent meets Principal

Where the parent is unable to resolve the complaint with the teacher, he/she should approach the principal with a view to resolving the complaint.

1.3 Parent meets Chairperson

When the complaint remains unresolved, the parent should raise the matter with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving the complaint.

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved during this stage.

Formal Stage 2-Written

2.1 Written complaint sent to Chairperson

If the complaint has not been resolved at Stage 1 and the parent wishes to pursue the matter further, he/she should submit the complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. This commences stage 2.

2.2 Chairperson provides a copy to the teacher

The Chairperson should provide a copy of the written complaint to the teacher against whom the complaint has been made, without delay.

2.3 Chairperson convenes meeting

The Chairperson should seek to resolve the complaint between the teacher and the parent within 10 school days of the commencement of Stage 2.1.

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved at this stage.

Formal Stage 3 -Board of Management

3.1 Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board of Management

If the complaint remains unresolved following stage 2 and the parent wishes to pursue the matter, they should inform the Chairperson in writing of this fact. The Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board of Management within 10 days of receipt of this written statement. At this meeting, the Board can decide to proceed to either stage 3.2 or 3.3.

3.2 Complaint concluded

Where the Board considers the complaint, the process may be concluded at this stage, if the Board considers that:

- a) the complaint is frivolous/vexatious;
- b) the complaint has already been investigated by the Board;
- c) the complaint is more appropriately dealt with through a more relevant Department of Education circular,
or;
- d) where recourse to law has been initiated.

Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parent should be so informed within five days of the Board meeting.

3.3 Proceed to a hearing

Where the Board decides to proceed to a hearing, it should proceed as follows:

- a) the teacher should be informed that the complaint is proceeding to a full hearing and the Chairperson must ensure the teacher has been supplied with all documents which are being considered by the Board.
- b) the Board should arrange a meeting with the parent if required. The parent is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting.
- c) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of their case to the Board. The teacher is entitled to be represented by a friend or a union representative, who may be accompanied for the purpose of assistance and note taking.
- d) the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board as the employer in response to the complaint. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be shared with any third party.
- e) The meeting of the Board of Management referred to in 3(b), (c) and (d) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1, in so far as possible.

Formal Stage 4-Decision

Stage 4.1 Written decision from Chairperson

Following the Board's investigations, the Chairperson shall convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent within 5 days of the meeting of the Board held at stage 3.3.

Stage 4.2 Complaint Concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.

Text, Email and Social Media

In St. Fintan's N.S., we want to communicate with parents and deal with queries and concerns in a fair, just and respectful manner. We would ask that if a parent has a query or complaint, the above procedure is adhered to.

Complaints and queries must not be made by approaching other parents via text, email or social media. The Board of Management would deem such communication as wholly unacceptable and against the school ethos. If necessary, in such circumstances, appropriate and proportional action may be taken to preserve the good name of the school and its' staff.

If you have a concern in this regard, please speak to your child's class teacher.

Behaviour of all Stakeholders in St. Fintan's NS

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 behaviour in the school. 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 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 the right to privacy of all children in the school.

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.

Ratification and Review

The implementation of this policy will commence immediately on ratification by the Board of Management on 29/01/24 . It will be reviewed every three years in the third term or as circumstances may warrant.

Martin Mahony

Date 30/1/24

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Loro Farrell

Date 30/1/24

Principal