



## Whole School Policy on Parent/Teacher Communication

### Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated by the staff of Castlegar NS in consultation with the Board of Management and the Parents' Association. Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents/guardians and teachers on parent/teacher meetings and parent/teacher communication in Castlegar NS. The family and home are central to the development of the child and the nurturing of Christian 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.

### Parents/Guardians are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with 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 and Parents' Association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them

### Structures in place to facilitate open communication and consultation with Parents/Guardians

- Meeting for parents of new Junior Infants – mid May
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in October/November
- Parents/Guardians receive school report of each pupil at the end of each school year
- Meetings with parents/guardians whose children have special needs
- Consultation throughout the year on policy development. Parents are given the opportunity to give feedback on all draft policies via our dedicated page on the school website <http://castlegarns.ie/wordpress/school-policies/> Parents are given notice that policies will be uploaded to view and respond via newsletters and texts.
- Written communication through newsletters
- Through the Parents' Association, parents/guardians 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/guardians in written format via newsletters
- Regular newsletters keep parents/guardians up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns.

- Homework diary 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class, used to relay messages which are signed between parents/guardians and teachers. Parents requested to sign diary each night to certify that homework has been completed
- Parents/Guardians are invited to school Masses and school concerts
- Involvement of parents in the ‘Religion Alive O Programme’ section for parents.

**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 the teachers.

### **Parent/Teacher Meetings**

The aim of Parent/Teacher meetings is:

- To let parents/guardians know how their children are progressing in school
- To inform teachers on how children are coping outside school
- To establish an ongoing relationship and communication with parents/guardians
- To help teachers and parents/guardians get to know the children better as individuals
- To help children realize that home and school are working together

### **Informal Parent/Teacher Meetings**

1. Communication between parents/guardians and teachers is to be encouraged
2. Arranging parent/teacher meetings within the school day while children are in school is difficult. However, parents/guardians are welcome to speak to the Principal or teacher(s) at an appointed time
3. Meetings with the class teacher at the class door to discuss a child’s concern/progress is discouraged on a number of grounds:
  - A teacher cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent/guardian
  - It is difficult to be discrete when so many children are standing close by
  - It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent/guardian is talking to the teacher at a classroom door

Occasions occur where a parent/guardian needs to speak to a teacher urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The Principal will 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/guardians 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.

Parents/Guardians are strongly discouraged from taking pupils out of school during term time in order to facilitate family holidays.

### **Formal Meetings**

Formal timetabled parent/teacher meetings take place in October /November However, if a parent/guardian 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/guardians
- 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.

### **Complaints Procedure**

The following is the agreed complaints procedure to be followed in primary schools

#### **Stage 1**

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 teacher 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**

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 teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

#### **Stage 3**

1. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the authorization of the Board:
  - a. Supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint and
  - b. Arrange a meeting with the teacher, and where applicable, the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 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 days of the meeting
2. If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated, the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within 3 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 teacher 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**

1. Following the Board's investigations, the Chairperson shall convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board. The decision of the Board shall be final.

#### **Success Criteria**

- Swift and efficient resolution of grievances
- Parent/Teacher satisfaction
- Positive school community feedback
- Reviews of school policies as issues arise

#### **Implementation**

The procedures outlined in this policy will be implemented from September 2014

#### **Review**

These procedures will be evaluated at the end of the first year of implementation and reviewed regularly thereafter.

Any amendments necessary as a result of such reviews will be undertaken.

## **Ratification and Communication**

This policy was approved by the Board of Management of Castlegar NS on September 24<sup>th</sup> 2014.

### **Communication**

This policy was communicated to teachers and parents/guardians and implemented from September 23<sup>rd</sup>

Parents/Guardians are welcome to inspect this policy a copy of which is available in the Principal's office.