



## **Parent/Staff Communication Policy**

### **Introductory statement**

This policy was developed by the staff of Rahara National School and the Board of Management in the school year 2024.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and parent/staff communication in Rahara National School. The family and home are central to the social and intellectual development of the child and the nurturing of good, moral 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. All the stakeholders aim to work for the benefit of the child and their learning.

### **Rahara National Schools Staff and Board of Management believe that:**

- Good communication between home and school is important because with positive and active partnership the child gets the best that primary education can offer.
- Teachers can do a better job when they are supported by and working closely with parents. We know that children do better, behave better and are happier at school where parents and teachers work closely together and when parents are able to give their children support at home.

### **Rahara National Schools Staff and Board of Management are committed to:**

- Developing close effective links with parents
- Participating in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the central and fundamental role of parents as primary educators of their children
- Maintaining the ethos, values and distinctive character of Rahara National School
- Supporting and facilitating the Parents' Association
- Encouraging and facilitating the participation of parents in school policy and decision-making.



## **Parents are encouraged to:**

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

## **Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with Parents**

- Open Evening/Day for new Junior Infants in term 2.
- Induction Day for new Junior Infants in June.
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in November.
- Parents receive school report of each pupil at the end of each school year
- Meetings with parents whose children have special needs
- Consultation throughout the year
- Written communication
- Through the Parent's Association, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies.
- Regular newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns
- Home work diary 1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> class, used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers. Parents requested to sign diary each night to certify that homework has been completed
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Green Flag Ceremony, school masses etc.
- School Website
- School Facebook Page
- Regular emails and text messages through Aladdin to keep parents up to date on upcoming events
- Meeting re: religious services on Reconciliation, Penance, Communion and Confirmation.
- Online Platforms
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year.



If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the school through email/phone to arrange a suitable time.

**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 staff.

## **Parent/Teacher meetings**

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes (Circular 14/04). Where possible, they will be held in the first term, towards the end of November for all classes. They will be initiated by the school staff and details regarding time, etc. will be worked out by the class teacher, in consultation with parents. The school will attempt to co-ordinate times where siblings are concerned. Meetings may take place in classrooms and the SET (Special Education Teacher) rooms. The teachers use prepared guidelines for the meetings and collaborate in advance about the progress of individual children. A short written record of the meeting is maintained by each teacher.

The purpose of the Parent/Teacher meeting is:

- To establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents
- To let parents know how their children are progressing in school
- To help teachers/parents get to know the children better as individuals
- To help children realise that home and school are working together.
- To meet demands for accountability
- To share with the parent the problems and difficulties the child may have in school
- To review with the parent the child's experience of schooling
- To learn more about the child from the parent's perspective
- To learn more about parental opinions on what the school is doing
- To identify areas of tension and disagreement
- To identify ways in which parents can help their children
- To negotiate jointly decisions about the child's education



- To inform the parents of standardised test results according to school policy.

*Circular 56/2011 Initial Steps in the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy Strategy* has been adopted by the Board of Management. References to parent/school communication are:

## Reporting to parents

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. This information needs to draw on the different sources of evidence that staff use, such as conversations with the learner, data-collection and documented progress on objectives and milestones reached in their short and long-term planning, examination of students' own self-assessment data, documented observations of the learner's engagement with tasks, outcomes of other assessment tasks and tests, and examples of students' work. In turn, parents will often be able to enrich staffs' knowledge of their students' progress through providing further information about the students' learning at home.

## Report card templates

Schools should help parents to understand fully the evidence of learning that the school reports to them, especially information from any standardised tests. The NCCA has provided a range of standard report templates to assist schools in reporting information about the progress of primary pupils to parents, including information from standardised tests. The NCCA report card templates were developed through a process of consultation with schools and parents can take account of research commissioned by the NCCA.

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



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 with effect from the date of this circular.

## **Formal Parent/Teacher Meetings**

Formal timetabled Parent Teacher meetings take place in November. It is agreed that a parent should be able to have a formal meeting with a teacher at a suitable and convenient time. At present in each school year there will be one formal parent-teacher meeting held in the 1st term of school (usually November). Meetings will normally commence at 3.00 p.m. and will end at 4:30p.m. unless otherwise agreed at local level. The school will close 15 minutes early at 14:45 on the day of the formal parent-teacher meeting. Parents are expected to attend these meetings. Choosing not to do so, without explanation is being neglectful. If a parent does not attend this formal meeting a note is sent to the parents by the principal inviting the parents into the school at another time.

**Teacher/ Parent communication** via notes: In 1st - 6th classes the children's journal is used for communicating messages between the teacher and parent regarding attendance, homework, absence etc. For children in infants who do not have a school journal, if a child is absent, parents must write in a note/email to the teacher explaining why the child is/was absent.

## **Planning meetings for Continuums of Support**

For children with special educational needs, formal scheduled parent/staff meetings relating to the child's Continuum of Support will take place in September/October. However, if a parent wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by prior appointment

## **Informal Parent/Staff Meetings**

Communication between parents and teachers is to be encouraged.



Arranging parent/teacher meetings within the school day while children are in school is difficult. However, parents are welcome to speak to the principal which will be facilitated as soon as possible. As the principal is a teaching principal it would be helpful if parents could please email in advance.

Informal communication takes place early morning when children are coming into school. This informal chat is very important. However, meetings with class teachers at class doors to discuss a child's concern/progress is discouraged on several grounds:

- Staff cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent
- It is difficult to be discreet when so many children are standing close by
- It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to staff at a classroom door.

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 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 they are entitled to. When possible, another teacher will teach the class until the class teacher returns.

For the safety of the children, all adults must report to secretary/teacher via the main front school entrance.

## **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.

### **Stage 1 -informal stage**

1. A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, firstly approach the **class staff** with a view to resolving the complaint
2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class staff he/she should approach the **Principal** 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-formal stage**

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 staff 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 authorisation of the Board:
  - a. Supply the staff with a copy of the written complaint and
  - b. Arrange a meeting with the staff, 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 staff 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 staff 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**

Following the Boards investigations, the Chairperson shall convey the decision of the Board in writing to the staff and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board. The decision of the Board shall be final.



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

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This not only extends to the children but to all 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 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 community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building. In certain cases, the Gardaí must 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
- Staffs are generally available to listen to a quick issue in the morning and after school. However, should a parent need to have a discussion or meeting, an appointment should be made at a convenient time for both parties. This ensures that issues can be resolved. Classes begin at 09:20 am and finish at 15:00 and this time should not be interrupted.

## **Safety, Health and Welfare at Work**

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act became operative on 1 November 1989. It is an important piece of legislation for BoMs and for those who work in schools, as schools and colleges were brought under the scope of safety legislation for the first time.





It is recognised that school staff may be at risk from violence in the form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults or other forms of intimidation. This behaviour may come from pupils, parents, guardians, other staff members or intruders.

In this respect, all staff should be aware of **DES Circular 40/97** which deals with the procedures to follow if they feel they have been subjected to any of the above behaviours.

### **SUMMARY:**

Communication is key to the children's success in school.

School will use text/notifications, emails and school website to keep parents updated.

School reports will be emailed to parents

Parent-teacher meetings times are emailed to parents

Email to school (with teacher's name in the subject line): [raharans@gmail.com](mailto:raharans@gmail.com)

School phone: 090 6623393

School website: [www.rahara.com](http://www.rahara.com)

**Ratified by the Board of Management**

**Chairperson:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_