



## **Parents as Partners Policy**

### **Introduction**

The staff and Board of Management of Nun's Cross National School is committed in assisting the school community in providing the optimum learning experience for all our 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 and encourage them to be actively involved in the life of the school. Communication between school and home should be open and positive. We endeavour to create an open and welcoming atmosphere in our school. This policy outlines strategies adopted by the school to promote positive home-school relations.

### **Rationale:**

"Partnership is a working relationship that is characterised by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and a willingness to negotiate." Gillian Pugh, *Working Towards Partnership in the Early Years*

It was deemed necessary to devise a policy on parental involvement at this time because of the following reasons:

- ❖ Benefits to pupil learning
- ❖ Promotion of partnership
- ❖ In response to legislation Education Act, 1998; Education Welfare Act, 2000
- ❖ School Self Evaluation (Looking at Our School)
- ❖ To celebrate and build on the existing good practice in our school

### **Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School:**

The mission of this school is to enable every child to develop spiritually, morally, intellectually, aesthetically and physically to his/her full potential in a friendly, safe,

and comfortable environment. This work can best be done where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils.

### **Aims:**

By introducing this policy the school community hopes

- ❖ 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.

### **Guidelines / Ways to become involved**

Parents are invited to become involved in the school in many ways and at many levels, for example:

- ❖ Serving on school bodies (Board of Management, Parent Association)
- ❖ Fundraising
- ❖ Policy development e.g. Code of Behaviour, homework policy, healthy lunch policy etc.
- ❖ In the school/classroom during particular activities e.g. sporting activities.

### **Parents' Association**

We have an active and supportive Parents' Association in our school. Ms Heaphy attends meetings to ensure effective communication between staff and parents is encouraged. A Chairperson is elected and they remain in contact with the designated teacher regarding issues of pertinent nature. A secretary, Chairperson and Treasurer are elected. The Parents' Committee organise and fundraise for such events such as Sports' Day, Christmas Concert, School Disco, Retirements, Green Flag Days, Santa's visit at Christmas and any other occasions not directly funded by the Department. The proceeds of the Christmas concert are used by the Parents' Committee to cover expenses on these occasions.

## **Board of Management**

Our BOM is constituted 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 draft policies on our school web site and a hard copy is also available for perusal in school. On occasion parents may be invited to form a subcommittee in the formulation/revision of certain policies e.g. RSE

## **Curriculum Plans**

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. Hints, tips and advice are provided to parents as to how best they can support their child's learning. Our web site also offers the latest advice and support to parents from organizations such as National Council for Curriculum and Assessment(NCCA).Parents of children attending Learning Support and our Resource Teacher (SEN) are invited to meet the teacher formally and informally to consult in the devising of Individual Education Profiles and Learning Profiles (IEPs/IPLPs)

## **Communication**

### ❖ Parent Teacher Meetings

We realise the importance of early and honest communication with parents and parents are invited to attend formal parent teacher meetings in the first term to discuss their child's progress academically and socially. The support teachers in the school are also available to meet parents on that day. This is in accordance with Circular 14/04. 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. Informal meetings are held as frequently as needed and parents are encouraged to (a) write a note in the homework journal if they wish to meet the

teacher or (b) to arrange an appointment through the teachers email addresses

### ❖ Homework Journals

These provide an effective means of daily communication between parent and teacher from 1st Class to 6th. A homework folder is used in the Infant Classes. 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. The letter also contains blanket consent forms regarding trips/outings/Internet Use etc. It also contains a copy of the school calendar link. Parents are also reminded of the importance of school attendance and punctuality in this letter.

#### ❖ 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 booklet at this meeting. School policies and information is 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 Nun's Cross National School is a very open school that encourages and fosters good communication between all the partners in education. Parents' questions are invited and answered at this meeting. The newly enrolled Infants are also invited to attend this gathering to visit their surroundings so as to allay any fears they may have.

#### ❖ End of Year Report Cards

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.

#### ❖ Homework Meetings

These are held at the start of September. They give parents an opportunity to meet the class teacher and for the teacher to explain procedures such a homework.

#### ❖ 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.

## ❖ Email

Email addresses for all parents have been gathered and given to individual class teachers as well as to the secretary. These addresses are used for communication between teachers and parents and vice versa. Meeting can be scheduled through these email addresses.

## **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, Garden Day etc. Occasionally the school will organise guest speakers on matters of relevance e.g. Healthy Eating, Internet Safety etc.

## **Liaising with other agencies**

Parents are made aware of the role of the Education Welfare Officer in communicating with parents whose children have missed more than 20 school days, in relation to placement of pupils in other schools.

## **Success Criteria:**

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

Reviewed: September 2014

Responsibility for Review:

Principal

Deputy Principal

Parents' Committee

B.O.M.

**Ratification and Communication:**

Policy ratified by B.O.M

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson Board of Management

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