

## **COMMUNICATION POLICY**



***Our Lady Queen of the Apostles NS 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 where they are supported by and working closely with parents.

We know from research 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.

***Our Lady Queen of the Apostles NS 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 and values of Our Lady Queen of the Apostles 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
- 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.
- Become actively involved in the school and Parents Association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians will be consulted by staff. It is essential that all parents and legal guardians are named on the enrolment form.

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

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This includes communication online and via phone calls. 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. Adults in the school community have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children.

- All adults will treat our children with the utmost respect while on the premises
- All adults within the school are expected to speak to each other with respect, shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If any adult displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building and/or school site. In severe cases, and if required, the Gardaí will be called.
- The school will respect all children and parents' right to privacy so staff should not be asked to speak about any child except your own.

### ***Things that the school needs to know to keep your children safe and healthy***

- It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that may cause anxiety to your child and could affect his/her education.
- The school should at all times know who is collecting your child. The school secretary should have a list of people and their contact information who you have authorised to collect your child. Should this change the onus is on you to inform the school secretary of the change. You can provide this information by email.

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

#### ***Consultation throughout the year including:***

- Visit to the school for parents of new Junior Infants in May/June each year (Covid19 dependent)
- Junior Infant parent information meeting in September/October
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in November annually (Covid19 dependent)
- Meetings/communication with parents whose children have additional needs
- Home School Liaison Teacher available as a link between the school and home.

**Written communication including:**

- Homework Journal (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>), Teddy Bear book (Infants) to inform parents about assigned homework, to confirm that homework has been completed and to relay messages between parents and teachers.
- Regular newsletters keep parents up to date with school events, holidays, decisions taken to change current policies and procedures or to introduce new ones and other school concerns
- School report for each pupil at the end of each school year
- Aladdin Connect messages for general reminders and attendance.
- Seesaw messaging for remote learning.

Any written 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.

**Other structures and processes including:**

- Parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies. The documents, once ratified by the Boards, will be made available to all parents via the school website or in hard copy if requested. Any feedback arising is brought to the attention of the Board
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Sports Day and school concerts, Covid19 restrictions permitting
- Involvement of parents in curricular areas when appropriate e.g. Maths 4 Fun, One Book Project

**Procedures for parents to initiate communication with the school**

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, please write a note in the school journal or contact the school secretary ([info@clonburrissns.ie](mailto:info@clonburrissns.ie)). In the event that a parent has a complaint, Appendix 1 outlines the procedures to be followed.

Classes begin at 9.00 a.m. and finish at 1.30p.m. (Infants) and 2.30p.m. (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>) and this time should not be interrupted.

If parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear during class time etc., this can be done through the secretary's office so that learning is not disrupted.

If a parent wishes to contact the principal please email anything that may be confidential to [principal@clonburrissns.ie](mailto:principal@clonburrissns.ie)

Staff will endeavour to respond to emails within a reasonable timeframe.

***On line and Social Media Communication***

Our Lady Queen of the Apostles National School has a website <http://www.clonburrissns.ie> and Twitter account (@ClonburrissNS). Parents are requested to visit these sites regularly to keep up to date on school matters.

The school name or anything that identifies the school or class teacher should not be used online or on social media ( for example Ms Murphy's 5th class Facebook page or WhatsApp group) without express written permission from the principal or Board of Management.

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

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
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- To help children realise that home and school re working together.
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- To share with the parent the problems and difficulties the children may have in school
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- To review with the parent the child's experience of school
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- To learn more about the child from the parent's perspective
- 
- To identify ways in which parents can help their children
- 
- To negotiate jointly decisions about the child's education
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- To inform the parents of standardised test results according to school policy

### ***Organisation of parent teacher meetings***

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held one a year for all classes, usually in the first term towards the end of November. If the parent wishes to arrange an additional meeting to discuss their child they may do so by emailing the school secretary [info@clonburrisns.ie](mailto:info@clonburrisns.ie) If a meeting is required we will facilitate but we may use another mode of communicating, such as via a phone call or Zoom meeting..

In order to facilitate the operation of the school and the needs of children and other parents, it is important that meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and should be adhered to so that all parents are seen on time in so far as is possible.

### **Communication regarding School Support Plans**

For children with additional educational or care needs, scheduled communication relating to the child's School Support Plan may take place September/October. In the case of separated/divorced parents, Our Lady Queen of the Apostles National School will endeavour to facilitate requests made by parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for parent/teacher meetings.

### **School Reports**

Our Lady Queen of the Apostles National School produces formal reports for reporting to parents on students' progress and achievement at school annually in the third term using report card templates as required by the National Council of Curriculum and Assessment ([www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)). The report will cover

- 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

### **Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005**

This is an important piece of legislation for Boards of Managements and for those who work in schools.

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.

The school's Dignity at Work Policy will be reviewed and updated so that all those who work within our school are treated with dignity and respect and have access to a mechanism for dealing with conflict.

### **Ratified by the Board of Management**

Chairperson: Keelin Coyles

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021

## **APPENDIX 1:**

### **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 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 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:
  - i. Supply the staff member with a copy of the written complaint and
  - ii. Arrange a meeting with the staff member, 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 member 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 member 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 Board's investigations, the Chairperson shall convey the decision of the Board in writing to the staff member and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board. The decision of the Board shall be final.