

St. Patrick's Junior and Senior School Home School Community Liaison & Parental Involvement Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated in consultation with the staff, Board of Managements and parents of St. Patrick's Junior and Senior School, Corduff.

Rationale

The Home School Community Liaison Scheme is an integral part of the DEIS initiative in St. Patrick's and is a targeted intervention aimed at addressing educational disadvantage in the school. This policy is an acknowledgment of parents' mutual role and commitment to further the partnership links between them in order to promote positive learning experiences for the pupils of St. Patrick's.

Vision

St. Patrick's is a school community where pupils, parents/guardians, teachers, staff and management work in partnership to provide the best education for our children and to ensure we create the optimum learning/teaching atmosphere in our school. Working together, we will support all of our pupils to develop to their full potential. We will create an inclusive atmosphere where all partners in the school community will treat each other with respect, dignity and as equals. We welcome and value each parent's unique contribution to our school.

Home School Community Liaison Role

St. Patrick's Junior and Senior School has a shared Home School Community Liaison Coordinator (HSCL).

*This HSCL policy seeks to strengthen and promote the **five aims** of the HSCL scheme:*

- 1) To maximise active participation of the children in the learning process in particular those who might be at risk of failure.
- 2) To promote active co-operation between home, school and relevant community agencies in promoting the educational interests of the children.
- 3) To raise awareness in parents of their own capacities to enhance their children's educational progress and to assist them in developing relevant skills.
- 4) To enhance the children's uptake from education, their retention in the educational system, their continuation to post-compulsory education and to third level and their attitudes to lifelong learning.
- 5) To disseminate the positive outcomes of the scheme throughout the school system generally.

The role of the co-ordinator involves:

- Organising courses, talks or meetings for parents/guardians.
- Supporting and involving parents/guardians in their children's education.
- Meeting parents/guardians in the school and in their home.
- Developing closer ties between teachers, schools and the parents/guardians.
- Encouraging parents/guardians to work on classroom projects, such as Big Book Reading or Maths for Fun.

Courses and classes include:

- Curricular areas - for example English classes and Irish Classes so that parents can support their children with their school work.
- Personal Development - through courses such as yoga and parenting.
- Leisure Activities - for example yoga, fitness classes and arts & crafts.
- Educational Development - which range from basic literacy to FETAC level courses, for example computers

Places on courses are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis with priority given to Parents/Guardians and Grandparents of the pupils of St. Patrick's.

Use of the Parents' Room/Participation in Classes:

- The parents' room is usually the venue for courses and talks.
- Tea/coffee facilities are provided for parent's courses & talks. Use of the water boiler is at one's own risk.
- We do not have the facility or staff to look after children during classes.
- Participants are asked to clean up the kitchen after use.
- Class participants are asked to leave the room when the class is over to allow for preparation for next timetabled activity in the room.
- Participants are asked to exit through the outside exit and not through the school.
- If class participants need to access the school office at any stage of the class, they are asked to do so by coming through the main office door.
- Smoking is not allowed within the school grounds.

Development for Teachers in the HSCL Scheme:

Development for teachers is in the area of developing partnership and collaboration with parents in the interests of the children's education.

This development, which occurs at staff meetings and through informal meetings, includes:

- ✓ the promotion and establishment of a continuity in the children's transfer from home to school, and from primary to second level
- ✓ an understanding of partnership in the context of the parents' role as the primary educators of their children

- ✓ the development of attitudes and behaviours regarding the complementarities of parents' and teachers' skills, knowledge and experiences in the enhancement of children's' learning
- ✓ joint policy making between parents and teachers on issues such as homework, code of positive behaviour, healthy eating and HSCL.

Parental Involvement

Benefits of Parental Involvement

- Children benefit from greater diversity and from more one-to-one attention in the classroom.
- Parental skills may support and complement work already taking place.
- Parental involvement actively supports and encourages the child's learning.
- A wider range of activity is facilitated. This can be interesting and fun, and can lead to a broader and more holistic education.
- It promotes “good parent/teacher relationships and a better level of understanding between home and school” (National Parents’ Council).
- It enhances communication, trust and respect between parents and staff.
- Parents can learn about the primary school curriculum.
- Parental involvement allows children to see that school is an extension of home.
- Parental skills can contribute to the smooth running and development of the school.
- Parental involvement provides the opportunity of making lifelong friends, strengthening the links within the school community and parents get support from each other.

How to Get Involved

There are many ways to get involved at St. Patrick's:

- a) Participation in classrooms:
Parents are invited to consider their skills, interests and time available and communicate this information to the class teacher or HSCL Co-ordinator e.g. baking, gardening, cultural exchanges, Art, Music, Drama, Maths for Fun, Big Book Reading, paired reading and many more.
- b) Courses and Classes: every year we run a number of classes/courses for parents in the school. For example, Healthy Food Made Easy, First Aid, Computers, English as a Second Language, Arts & Crafts, Yoga, Family Learning Courses and many more.
- c) Volunteering e.g. help out in the library, garden, tours, sporting events etc.
- d) Sports Day e.g. face-painting, participating in parent/teacher races.
- e) Attend meetings; induction for Early Start, Junior Infants & 3rd Class; Sacrament Meetings; Graduations.
- f) Read the newsletter and browse the schools' websites.

- g) Make an appointment to speak with your child's teacher to discuss any concerns you might have from time to time.
- h) There is a parental role in supporting the child's learning in each class. Take an active interest in your child's progress through examining his/her homework and signing the homework journal every night.
- i) Learning support and special needs- Parents/guardians are consulted about children receiving learning support. Parents are included in devising an IEP/IPLP.
- j) Attend coffee mornings.
- k) Attend special assemblies (e.g. Grandparents' Week, Christmas) & school shows upon invitation.
- l) Organisational policies- this is a consultative process which involves parents/guardians in policy formation. Parents have a role and responsibility to read and inform themselves on these policies. From time to time we will ask parents to be involved in a consultation and/or formulation around school policies.
- m) Fundraising.
- n) Participation on Local Education Committee.
- o) Parents Association.
- p) Board of Management:
Two parents/guardians are parent nominees on the Board of Management. These members are elected onto the Board.

Guidelines for Getting Involved in Pupil-based Activities

Parents come into the classroom at the invitation of the teacher, by prior arrangement and for an agreed purpose.

- The happiness, welfare and safety of the children are our primary concern. A child's personal history, academic ability, progress or behaviour is strictly confidential. Parents/Guardians will not discuss their thoughts on how a pupil might be doing (academically/behaviourally/socially/emotionally) with any party. Any doubts about issues of confidentiality must be discussed with the class teacher.
- Respect for the professional role of the teacher is essential.
- Discipline/behaviour remains the responsibility of the teacher.
- All work will be supervised by the teacher.
- Parents who participate should be conscious of and sensitive to the needs of the entire class, not just the needs of their own child.
- Parents coming into the classroom must consult with the teacher before inviting other parents/individuals to participate.
- In the interests of safety, babies, toddlers and younger children cannot be accommodated during a class/pupil activity.
- The highest standard of adult behaviour and language is expected.
- Punctuality and consistency are crucial.

- No fees are payable. Any expenses that you wish to reclaim must be sanctioned in advance by the Principal, and must be accompanied by receipts.
- In the case of an on-going project that takes place over a number of weeks, parents will meet with the teacher to discuss the activity. It remains the responsibility of the teacher to determine its appropriateness (e.g. is it suitable for the age group? is it relevant to the curriculum?)

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Patrick's S.N.S. at its meeting on _____ . Parents may view this policy on the school website or by appointment with the Principal.

Date: _____

Fr. Liam McClarey

Chairperson of the Board of Management