

# **St. Attracta's National School Ballaghaderreen**

**19980S**



**Parents  
as  
Partners  
Policy**

## **Introduction**

This policy provides information and guidelines for parents and staff on parent/school communication. 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, to support and enhance the quality of the child's educational opportunities and learning outcomes. All the stakeholders aim to work for the benefit of the child and their learning.

### **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's Parent Association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them
- Liaise with the Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator, School Completion Person and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
- Use Aladdin Connect

### **Staff are encouraged to:**

- Establish good communication with parents/guardians of pupils in their class
- Keep parents/guardians informed of their child's progress and behaviour both positive and negative
- Listen to what parents/guardians have to say and encourage them to bring any concerns to you at an early stage to avoid situations escalating
- Be aware of the role of parents/guardians as primary educators and emphasise that all parties are working together for the child's benefit to help him/her reach his/her potential
- Value and respect the input of parents as they know their child best.

## **Structures to support open communication and consultation between parents and the school**

### **Aladdin Connect**

- This essential school app assists parents in communicating with school and school with parents. A registration link is sent by text/email to the parents/guardians on the enrolment form. From the app store, the Aladdin Connect should be downloaded to the phone. Once set up, parents can view their child's details such as name, address, age, date of birth, attendance, report cards, parent's mobile numbers and email addresses. It is important these details are kept up to date by parents/guardians editing the details on Aladdin Connect.
- Using Aladdin Connect means that parents can send a quick message to inform the school/teacher of a child being absent and the reason

- The school will send a message to the registered parent/guardian through Aladdin Connect at 10am when a child is absent from school without a reason.
- The school operates a secure online e-payment system through Aladdin Connect and Elavon. Parents can pay using the Aladdin Connect app or by a link sent from the school.

### School Website

- This is an excellent means of communication between parents and school containing relevant information relating to our school, news, school life, learners, parents, policies and more. It also has a translate option available for various languages. The website is used to celebrate events and achievements in the school and also to disseminate information and school news through the school newsletter. The website is updated regularly and provides a [school contact link](#).



previously known as [Twitter](#)

- The school and each class have a dedicated page where parents/guardians are updated regularly on achievements, and the day to day activities in the school.

### Email

- The school's email address [secretary@stattractasns.com](mailto:secretary@stattractasns.com)

### Notice Boards

- There is a notice board to the right of the main front door of the school where events are displayed. Throughout the school there are displays including our work towards being a School of Sanctuary, wellbeing, attendance, achievements and more.

### Display Screen

- As parents/guardians enter the school, they will see a display screen with images of various events that the school has participated in our school. This is regularly updated and parents can see what is happening when visiting the school.

### New Parents

- An induction meeting is held each year in June for the parents/guardians of the incoming Junior Infant Class. New parents/guardians are invited to this meeting. Parents receive an Induction Pack/Welcome Pack at this meeting and are set up on Aladdin Connect for the new school year. School policies and information are also discussed.

### Communication sent by post

- In exceptional situations, written communication may 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.
- It is vital that family contact details including address, mobile numbers and email addresses are checked and updated regularly on Aladdin Connect or by the school website link to update contact details.

## Telephone Contact

- Parents may contact the school office on 094 9860646 or 083 0160493. Teachers may not take telephone calls during the school day as they are required to be in their classrooms teaching and supervising their classes. A parent may pass on information via the school secretary and teachers can return calls if necessary outside class time.

## In general

- Home School Liaison/ School Completion Person Room to facilitate meetings.
- The General Purpose Room is set up to facilitate parents for coffee mornings, meetings, courses etc.
- Parents receive the school report of each pupil at the end of each school year. This is available through Aladdin Connect.
- Written communication between teachers/Principal and parents in a range of formats including Aladdin Connect noticeboard messages, school website, newsletters, information sheets, text notifications, updates on X, and Facebook.
- Through the Parents' Association, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies. Decisions taken to change current policies and procedures or to introduce new ones will be made known to all parents in written format via written communication from the Principal
- Homework diary 1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class, used to relay class related messages which are signed between parents and teachers. A homework folder is used in the Infant Classes. Parents of all children from Infants – 6<sup>th</sup> class are asked to check that homework has been completed and sign homework journals daily.
- From time to time parents may be invited to share their expertise with their child's class in a structured way. 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 objective to identify parents with specific skills and to invite those parents to share their skills with us at a school and a class level.
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. school masses, school concerts, sporting events, Grandparents' Day, carol service
- Involvement of parents in the relevant activities. Parents in the classroom which include Reading for Fun, Maths for Fun, creative music etc.
- Involvement of the Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator where necessary to offer advice and support which include information on learning practices which can be carried out in the home, information on the provision of facilities such as homework club, Foróige evening classes. The School Completion Person may assist where required on these matters.
- Home School Community Liaison Co-ordinator where necessary will provide support with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator or Special Education Teacher in interpreting the psychologist's reports and the next steps to support a child where there has been a diagnosis or not to parents

**It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to the child and therefore may adversely affect her education.**

In all matters pertaining to the well-being and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians named on the enrolment form will be consulted by staff. Where there has been a change to legal guardianship, the school should be informed with the paperwork immediately. Relevant information will also be relayed to the relevant staff by the Home School Co-ordinator and or the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator where applicable.

## **Parent/Teacher Meetings**

### **Purpose of parent/teacher meetings**

- 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 all positives about the child
- 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
- Further discussion of all above may take place on home visits with HSCL

### **Parent/Teacher Meetings to discuss the child's learning progress in the class**

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes (Circular 14/04). These meetings are held in the first term - November - for all classes. They will be initiated by the school staff and details regarding meeting times etc. will be worked out by the class teacher in consultation with parents. Parents will be given the opportunity to select preferred times on a note from the class teacher. The school will attempt to co-ordinate times where siblings are concerned. Meetings may take place in classrooms and SET rooms. The teachers use prepared guidelines for the meetings and, where relevant, collaborates with the SET in advance about the progress of individual children. The HSCL will work to ensure that all parents attend and will liaise with parents and staff to rearrange appointments where necessary.

### **Parent/Teacher Meetings to support planning for children with special educational needs**

Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings will be arranged between the teachers (class teacher and special education teacher) and child's parents. These meetings will support the planning and/or review of priority learning needs, learning targets and actions. These meetings will occur at least twice during the school year. 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.

### **Arranging an incidental meeting/s between parent and teacher during the school year**

In addition to the formal timetabled parent/teacher meetings in November, parents can also arrange an incidental meeting/s with the class teacher at any stage during the year to discuss their child. They can do make an appointment by contacting the teacher directly via Aladdin Connect/email or by contacting the school secretary. Classes begin at 9:20 am and finish at 3:00pm and this teaching time should not be interrupted. Infant teachers will usually be available between 2.00pm and 3.00pm.

## **Meetings without prior appointment**

Meetings with the class teacher at the classroom door to discuss concerns are discouraged on a number of grounds:

1. Staff cannot adequately supervise a class while at the same time speaking to a parent
2. It is difficult to be discreet when so many children are standing close by
3. It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to staff at a classroom door
4. HSCL may liaise with parent and staff on an informal basis by phone and or by home visit.

Occasions occur where a parent needs to speak to a staff member urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The Principal will aim to 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 or the information may be passed on by HSCL at break so as not to interfere with teaching time.

## **Reporting in writing 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 about the progress that their 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 staff knowledge of their students' progress through providing further information about the students learning at home.

### **Report Cards**

This school seeks to help parents to understand fully the evidence of learning that the school reports to them, especially information from any standardised tests. The school uses the NCCA report card templates when making the annual end-of-year information report about the progress of primary pupils to parents, including information from standardised tests. The school's report card provides information on the following 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
- Attendance

Parents/Guardians can view report cards on Aladdin Connect from their mobile device or home computer. The report cards are available in a number of languages. Parents are

encouraged to inform the school of the language where available on Aladdin Connect they wish their report card by the end of May each year.

### **6th class Education Passport**

As part of the 6th class transfer to secondary school, parents are encouraged to complete the NCCA Education Passport Parent Profile about their child. This is relevant for the secondary school.

### **Liaising with other agencies**

The school collaborates with a number of agencies that work with families and provide assessments and support to families.

#### **FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE**

Through our Home School Liaison Person, referrals can be made for play therapy, and parenting courses with the consent of parents

#### **TUSLA**

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. The school may collaborate with family support workers and social workers

#### **NEPS**

Pupils may be referred by the Principal to the NEPS Educational psychologist for assessment, following consultation with parents.

#### **SENO**

Applications may be made to the Special Education Needs Organiser for in-school supports for pupils with special needs. Parental input is integral in the process.

#### **HSE**

Nurses and other personnel from the HSE visit the school to administer national programmes such as vision and hearing tests and to administer vaccinations. Parental consent is required.

#### **Children's Disability Network Team (CDNT), CAMHS**

Clinical Psychologists, and Occupational, Behavioural, Speech and Language Therapists visit the school to liaise with the Special Education Co-ordinator and specific staff on matters relating to interventions they are working on with children. This is with the consent of parents and is encouraged so that parents, the school and the agencies can provide the children with a holistic approach to their development where a concern or diagnosis has been made.

### **Behaviour expectations for all stakeholders when working/meeting/communicating with the school**

Positive and respectful communication is valued in our school. This not only extends to the children but to all of the stakeholders e.g. the staff, parents and the wider community. Anyone entering or working in our school 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 may be called.

- All stakeholders will treat 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.
- HSCL may liaise with parents to encourage them to adhere to the above.

## Health and Safety Issues

St. Attracta's National School prides itself on being an open, welcoming place for all members of the school community. However, in order to provide a safe and supportive environment for all who work and learn in the school the following procedures are in place:

- All school access/exit doors are controlled by an access control system. All visitors (including parents/guardians) to the school must press the buzzer on the front door to gain admission into the building and report to the secretary's office. The attendance book should be signed by the parent/guardian.
- A closed circuit monitoring/recording system (CCTV) is installed inside and outside the school building
- As the BoM is responsible for the Health and Safety of all members of the school community, parents/guardians are not allowed to challenge/reprimand another person's child on the school premises
- The willingness of parents to be involved in a voluntary capacity with such support activities as is valued and very much appreciated by the school. However, in order to protect the privacy and integrity of all members of the school community, such volunteers are required to respect the confidential and/or sensitive nature of information which may come to their attention during the course of their work in the school.

## Parents' Association

We have an active and supportive Parents' Association in our school. Details on the Parents Association and National Parents Council are available through the [school website](#). While all parents can be part of the Parents Association, not all can be involved or need to be involved in the day-to-day business of organising the work. It is for this reason that parents in this school elect a committee. The committee is the team of people who manage the tasks of the Parent Association on behalf of all the parents. The committee manages the business of the Parent Association in accordance with the constitution of the Parent Association. The two parent nominees on the Board of Management are also members of the committee of the Parents Association. The Parents' Committee organise events such as the annual Bake Sales, 6<sup>th</sup> Class farewell ceremony, arranged talks for parents from external speakers etc. The Committee also has a key voice in the development and review of a wide range of school policy area.



The committee has the responsibility to plan and manage the programme of work of the Parent Association for the year. The Committee will meet with the Principal at the beginning of the school year to plan activities for the year. Changes may have to be discussed and agreed throughout the year, as new needs/interests emerge. The term of the committee runs for one year. The Principal or delegate as assigned by the principal is invited to attend some meeting to promote effective communication between the school and parents.

In a spirit of collaboration and trust, the Constitution of the Parents' Association recognises that there are areas of school activity which belong to the professional work of the Principal and the teachers. There is also a recognition that certain areas of responsibility belong to the Board of Management e.g. school finance. To that end, the Parents' Association consults with the Board about fundraising for the school and provides regular updates to the board on the Association financial affairs.

Remember, there may be many parents who do not want to be on a committee but who may want to help with particular activities. If you wish to offer your services to help in extra curricular activities etc., please be sure to give your name to a Committee member or contact the school.

### **Complaints Procedure**

Complaints are infrequent, but when they may occur the school seeks to informally, fairly and quickly respond to them. The nationally agreed revised parental complaints procedure to be followed in all primary schools in Ireland is available on our school website <https://attractas.ie/>

### **Success Criteria**

- Impact on the level of pupil engagement and learning
- Parental involvement is increased in school activities
- Positive feedback from parents

### **Policy development**

This policy was updated in 2023 in consultation with the Parent Association and staff.

### **Ratification**

The Board of Management ratified this policy on **18/12/2023**.

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

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