

Kentstown National School

Home/School Partnership Policy

Introductory Statement:

This policy was developed by the staff of Kentstown National School in consultation with the Board of Management and the Parents' Association. Its purpose is to provide information and guidance to parents and staff on the Home/School Partnership approach that benefits the education of all pupils in the school. School personnel and family members strive to be mutually respectful and supportive of each other as this approach is central to the realisation of Kentstown National School's Vision Statement.

The partnership is envisaged as a positive working relationship that is characterised by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect, and a willingness to listen and learn in the best interests of the pupils' development and progress.

Strategies/Procedures to Support the Home/School Partnership Approach in Kentstown National School:

- Annual General Information/Orientation Meeting for parents of incoming Junior Infants in June
- Formal Parent/Teacher meetings in November
- School Reports are posted to parents/guardians at the end of each school year
- As appropriate, additional meetings between parents/guardians and teachers concerning pupils who may have special educational needs and/or to discuss pupil progress, behaviour etc.
- Ongoing communication throughout the school year by means of family emails, newsletters, school facebook page, class dojo, school website, notes/emails from class teachers/special education team teachers, text-a-parent, homework diaries etc.
- Homework Diaries (1st -6th class) are used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers. Parents are requested to sign the homework diary each night to certify that homework has been completed
- Parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies through the Board of Management and the Parents' Association
- The school values, and welcomes, the participation of parents/guardians in school events e.g. school masses, concerts, Maths Week, Science Week, Engineers' Week etc.
- Parental/guardian involvement and participation is encouraged in certain areas of the children's education such as sacramental preparations, project work, social personal and health education programmes e.g. Mighty Mouth Programme, sports events etc.

Parent/Teacher Meetings:

The purpose of Parent/Teacher Meetings:

- To establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents/guardians
- To facilitate an exchange of information among staff members and parents/guardians
- To let parents/guardians know how their children are progressing at school
- To let teachers know how children are getting along outside of school
- To help children realise that school and home are working together
- To meet demands for accountability
- To identify ways in which parents/guardians may help their child
- To negotiate jointly decisions about the child's education
- To share all positives about the child
- To share with parents/guardians the problems or difficulties the child may have in school

Informal Parent/Teacher Communication:

Respectful and supportive communication between parents/guardians and teachers is encouraged. Parents/guardians are asked to make an appointment (by phone call, email, class dojo, or note in the child's homework diary) to meet with the class teacher if/when needed. Pre-arranged appointments facilitate better quality communication between the parent/guardian and the teacher. It is important to state the reason for the requested meeting to ensure efficient use of time and a more effective and satisfactory outcome.

Formal Parent/Teacher Communication:

Formal, timetabled Parent/Teacher meetings take place each year in November. These meetings are an important opportunity for parents/guardians and teachers to exchange information regarding the child's progress and every effort should be made by parents/guardians to attend the meeting.

- Teachers communicate appointment times using the homework diary (1st -6th) and via class dojo, note, or email in Junior and Senior Infants. If unable to attend, parents/guardians should notify the teacher accordingly so that an alternative appointment may be made. Every effort will be made to facilitate families with more than one child in the school with meetings that take place on the same day within a reasonable timeframe.
- In the case of married but separated parents, requests may be made by both parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for parent/teacher meetings
- In the case of unmarried but separated parents, requests may be made by both parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for parent/teacher meetings, subject to the natural father having established his 'guardianship, custody and access rights' through the court and/or by means of statutory declaration made by the natural mother.

Formal Meetings – IEPs:

Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings to set up Individual Education Plans for those children who meet the criteria for this take place in September/October each year. 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.

End-of-Year Reports:

- An end-of-year school report is issued by post to parents/guardians in June.
- Parents are requested to send a stamped addressed envelope to the school for this purpose
- In the case of married but separated parents, requests may be made by both parents to have a copy of the end-of-year report posted to their address
- In the case of unmarried but separated parents, requests may be made by both parents to have a copy of the end-of-year report posted to their address subject to the natural father having established his 'guardianship, custody and access rights' through the court and/or by means of statutory declaration made by the natural mother.
- Kentstown NS uses standard report card templates from the NCCA range.

Other Parent/Teacher Communication:

- Email and textparent.ie are used to notify or update parents of significant/unexpected events during the school year. A notice board in the car park is also used for this purpose.
- Parents are encouraged to check the homework diaries on a nightly basis (Monday-Friday) as notes/comments may be included by the class teacher. Similarly, parents may use the homework diary to communicate with teachers.
- Parents are required to communicate the reason for any absences their child has using email, class dojo or a note in the homework diary.

Where either/both parents is/are involved in new relationships, it should be noted that communications from the school to their new partners will be limited to that which is expressly agreed between parents and notified to the school in writing signed by both parents or that which has been provided by a court order.

Parents are Encouraged to:

- Develop and maintain close links with the school
- Collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their child
- Emphasise the benefits and importance of learning to their child
- Participate in policy meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of the teaching staff and all staff members in the school
- Equip their child with all the appropriate school materials (books, copies, writing materials etc.) required during the school day, including a healthy, nutritious lunch and full uniform
- Become actively involved in the Parents' Association
- Participate in policy and decision making through the Board of Management and the Parents' Association when the opportunity arises
- Notify the school at the earliest opportunity if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to your child and therefore may adversely affect his/her education
- Provide a note of explanation when the pupil is arriving late to school, absent from school or not in correct/full school uniform.
- Speak positively about the school and its staff members: if there is a concern, please address it directly with the class teacher or in the case of general policy with the principal
- Show care and respect for school property and encourage children to do likewise
- Refrain from bringing family pets onto school property (even if on a lead)
- Facilitate the child reaching their full potential and gaining maximum benefit from their time in school by ensuring that pupils attend regularly and punctually throughout the school year. The practice of taking pupils out of school at any time during the school day, or school year, should be avoided unless necessary. Whenever possible, parents should request from other professionals that appointments be arranged for after-school times.
- Leave the school car park promptly when dropping off pupils especially those who may experience some 'separation anxiety' in the earlier part of the school year. Further contact will be made with parents if the need arises in this situation.

Staff Members Seek to:

- Promote partnership and collaboration with parents/guardians in the interests of the child's learning and holistic development on a 'whole school' basis
- Maximise the active participation of parents/guardians in their child's education
- Raise awareness in parents of their own capacities to enhance their child's educational progress
- Promote active cooperation between home, school and relevant community and statutory agencies in promoting the educational interests of pupils

Health and Safety Issues:

Kentstown National School prides itself on being an open, welcoming place for all members of the school community. However, 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 to the school (including parents and guardians) must report to the secretary's office to gain admission to the school.
- All visitors to the school must sign the visitor's log located in the secretary's office.
- A closed circuit monitoring/recording system (CCTV) has been installed inside and outside the school building
- As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health and Safety of all members of the school community, parents/guardians are not allowed to reprimand another person's child on school property.

Procedures for Addressing Complaints:

It is acknowledged that disagreements and/or complaints may occasionally arise. It is envisaged that all disputes/challenges should be addressed initially at an informal level, usually involving contact and communication between parents/guardians and teachers as outlined in our school Complaints Procedure.

Experience has shown that where a mutually respectful willingness among parent/guardians and teachers exists to discuss difficulties and to engage in a solution-driven approach to addressing such disputes/challenges, then the majority of such matters are resolved speedily and to the satisfaction of all.

Where a satisfactory resolution is not achieved at the more informal level, then parents/guardians and/or teachers may wish to pursue the matter further and involve themselves in a more formal approach to seek resolution as outlined in our school Complaints Procedure.

Roles and Responsibilities:

All staff members, parents/guardians, pupils, and Board of Management members share responsibility for supporting the implementation of the Home/School Partnership Policy.

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 stakeholders- staff, parents, and members of the wider community. Anyone entering 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 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.

- 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 privacy so it is asked that parents/guardians 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

Success Criteria:

The school will evaluate the success of this policy through:

- Positive and supportive engagement and participation of parents/guardians, staff, BoM members and pupils in the education process
- The extent to which there exists a mutually-beneficial, supportive, and positive atmosphere and relationship among all members of the school community
- Feedback, as appropriate, from all members of the school community
- Indications that the smooth and efficient running and organisation of the school is enhanced through the implementation of this policy
- The indications that the facilitation and implementation of the Home/School Partnership Policy are enhancing learning opportunities of pupils of the school

Ratified on 24th May 2017

Signed _____

Chairperson of the Board of Management

A review of this policy will be conducted as deemed appropriate, based on the success criteria above.