

St Kilian's Junior School

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Roll Number: 19556F

Principal: *Kate Sweeney M.Ed.*
Deputy Principal: *Noreen Coll B.Ed.*

Communications Policy

Rationale:

To provide information and guidelines to parents and staff.

Introductory statement:

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 so that the child's education can be effective. All the community stakeholders aim to work in the child's best interests.

Staff:

The Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2012) applies to all teachers in St. Kilian's JNS. The role of the teacher is to educate. The ethical values of respect, care, integrity and trust underpin the standards of teaching, knowledge, skill, competence and conduct.

Parents are the primary educators of their children and are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with the school
- Participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of the teaching 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 Parents' Association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them

School Structures to facilitate open communication & consultation with Parents:

- Induction meeting for parents of new Junior Infants – mid June, and Curriculum Support meeting in September / October annually
- Parent/teacher meetings in November annually
- Parents receive a written school report for each pupil at the end of each school year
- Meetings with parents whose children have special needs
- Consultation throughout the year
- Homework Diary, used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers. Parents are requested to sign the Diary daily.
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. concerts, special gatherings, Sports' Day
- Phone; used to inform parents of accidents, arrange appointments.
- Text a parent; used to alert parents to events, messages or emergencies.
- Notes or emails used to inform parents of details of events, request monies/permission.
- Absences – parents are asked to inform the school in writing of any absences giving the date and reason for absence
- Newsletter; used to keep parents up to date with school events, holidays and school concerns.

- Website; used to provide parents with information on school policies, procedures and alert parents to special events.
- The school secretary can accept messages from parents for staff or pupils. Staff will endeavour to reply to messages within one day of receipt.
- Parents are encouraged to meet with teachers to discuss any incident occurring in school.
- Through the Parents' Association, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies.
- Involvement of parents in the 'Religion Programme Grow in Love' section for parents
- Participating in Ready Steady Maths roster, supporting children's learning.
- Parents wishing to speak to a teacher about their child may do so by appointment only. Parents of Infants are encouraged to make an appointment preferably between 1.40 and 2.30p.m.
- **It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to your child and therefore may adversely affect his/her education.** In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians named on the enrolment form will be consulted by staff.

Parent/Teacher meetings:

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes (Circular 14/04). Where possible, they will be held in the first term, towards the end of November for all classes. They will be initiated by the school staff and details regarding time, 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, support rooms. The teachers use prepared guidelines for the meetings and collaborate in advance about the progress of individual children.

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
- To help children realise that home and school are working together
- To meet demands for accountability
- 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.

Parents are asked to adhere to the time allotted and not to accept phonecalls etc. during parent teacher meetings, as time is limited.

Circular 56/2011 Initial Steps in the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy Strategy has been adopted by the Board of Management. References to parent/school communication are:

Reporting 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 with parents about the progress that children are achieving in the education system. This information needs to draw on the different sources of evidence that staffs 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 pupil's work. In turn, parents will often be able to enrich staffs knowledge of their child's progress through providing further information about the child's learning at home.

Report card templates:

St. Kilian's JNS uses one of the approved NCCA reporting templates to report annually to parents. The report cards provide for reporting in four key 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

Formal Meetings

Formal timetabled parent/teacher meetings take place in November. 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.

- All communication sent from the school will be sent to the child's home address as given on the application form, unless otherwise requested by parents
- 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.

Complaints Procedure

Complaints are infrequent but the school would wish that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. There is a formal complaints procedure, a copy of which is available from the school office.

Procedures:

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance in our school. This not only extends to the children but to all of the stakeholders, teachers, staff, parents and the wider community. Anyone entering or working in our school building should feel safe.

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 our pupils and detailed in our Code of Behaviour.

All stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviour in the school building.

- It is vital that the school is informed if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to a pupil and that may adversely affect his/her education and welfare.
- In all matters pertaining to the welfare and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians named on the Enrolment Form can be consulted by staff.
- The Child Protection Policy of St. Kilian's JNS informs our communication and confidentiality surrounding welfare issues.
- All communication sent from the school will be sent to the child's home address as given on the Application to Enrol Form unless otherwise requested by parents.
- In the case of pupils who are not living with parents, notes, notifications, etc. will be sent to the primary carer unless otherwise requested by both parents.

- There can be no unannounced visits to classrooms at any time.
- All visitors to the school must use the main door and report to reception.
- Meetings with any members of staff at the school door, in yard or outside of school are discouraged in the interests of discretion, confidentiality and class supervision.
- In so far as possible meetings between parents and teachers should be arranged outside teaching time. Otherwise appointments are subject to adequate supervision being arranged for the class.
- Under no circumstances can staff involve themselves in the resolution of conflicts between parents.
- When staff and parents meet, it is important that the time of meetings be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected.
- Staff should never be asked by a parent to speak about another parent's child. The staff of the school will respect all children's right to privacy.
- All stakeholders and visitors to the school must treat our children and staff with the utmost respect while on the premises or present at school related activities.
- All stakeholders must speak to each other with respect. Aggressive tones or demeanour, verbal abuse, threats or intimidation are not acceptable in St. Kilian's JNS.
- If a parent/visitor displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building.
- The involvement of the Gardai remains at the discretion of the Principal and/or the Board of Management.
- The Board of Management of St. Kilian's JNS recognises the right of all staff, pupils and parents to their privacy and personal life. Malicious rumours, gossip, inappropriate on line social networking will be considered by the Board of Management under the Guidelines of Circular 40/97 Assaults of Teachers/School Employees and Circular 60/2009 Procedures in Relation to Professional Competence Issues and General Disciplinary Matters.
- Under no circumstances can a parent or visitor directly approach a pupil during school hours.
- Parents are discouraged from directly approaching a pupil regarding incidents in school that are being dealt with as detailed in our Code of Behaviour.

Reviewed by the Board of Management



Chairperson:

Date: 25th September 2018