



COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

CANAL WAY ETNS

This policy was developed by the staff of Canal Way Educate Together National School in consultation with the Board Of Management. Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and teachers on parent/teacher meetings and parent/teacher communication in Canal Way ETNS. The school note that the COVID pandemic has brought many changes to communication, and during school closures face to face communications will be held online where practicable.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Become actively involved in the school/parent association
- 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
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them

Annual Communication / Events:

- Class parent/teacher meeting in September.
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in November.
- Parents receive a school report for each pupil at the end of each school year.
- Student conferencing.
- Meetings with parents whose children have additional educational needs.
- Information evening meeting for parents of incoming junior infants.
- Orientation afternoons for incoming families.

General Communication:

- Meeting with parents to discuss behavioural / learning issues as necessary.
- During policy formation, parents will be encouraged to contribute to draft policies, which will be made available for a two week period during the formation process.
- Weekly /fortnightly newsletters to keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns.
- School website.
- Homework notebooks for homework communications 1st to 6th classes.
- Keep written communication to a minimum, and do not commit sensitive issues to writing.
- The school must be informed immediately by phone or in person, if family situations occur that require the school to manage your child's safety and wellbeing.
- In matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians nominated to the school will be consulted by the teachers.
- In the event that we need to inform you of an incident during the school day, we will endeavour to speak to you at the end of the school day. Where that is not possible, we may phone you where the teacher deems necessary.

Absenteeism:

- If your child is absent, you can enter a reason using the aladdin connect app.
- Only ring the office in the following circumstances - if the illness is contagious, or if advised by a medical professional.

COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW

Informal Meetings

It is difficult to arrange meetings during the school day. Parents are welcome to speak to the staff at an appointed time for a designated duration..

Meetings with the class teacher at the class door or in the yard while the children are assembling to discuss a child's concern/progress is discouraged on a number of grounds

- It is difficult to be discrete when so many children and parents are standing close by.
- It is not appropriate for a parent to discuss sensitive information at a classroom door or in the yard.
- Teaching and learning is affected.

All information regarding a child's educational progress or behavioural concerns will only be discussed with the teaching staff or Principal.

Urgent Meetings:

In an emergency situation, parents may need to speak to a teacher urgently. The staff at Canal Way ETNS will do their best to facilitate where possible.

If a teacher needs to speak to a parent / caregiver urgently:

- Phone parent/guardian contact number
- At collection time (child unwell, incident at school)
- Send email after school.

Ongoing Meetings arranged through (behavioural, learning, progress):

- Phone
- Email
- Person

Formal Meetings

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. This can be done by either

- Sending in a note to the class teacher.
- Sending an email to the secretary.
- Phoning the school

When making the appointment, you must state the nature of the meeting e.g. class work, behaviour related, personal. She/he will arrange a time where they can give you the time and privacy you may need. If deemed appropriate by the teacher they will take notes on the meeting which will be agreed on at the conclusion of the meeting.

When appropriate minutes of meetings will be taken, shared and agreed with all parties at the meeting.

Annual Parent Teacher Meetings

These are held in November. The aim of these verbal meetings are:

- To establish and promote an on-going relationship and communication with parents.
- To let parents know how their children are progressing in school
- To facilitate teachers on how children are developing outside school
- To help teachers/parents get to know the children better as individuals
- To help children realise that home and school are working together.

NOTE re. informal and formal meetings: All meetings are conducted respectfully, with the child's best interest at heart. Staff and parents have autonomy to terminate and reschedule meetings where deemed necessary or request the presence of another member of staff.

Please make an arrangement for your children to be taken care of, as we cannot facilitate children in the meeting nor facilitate supervision outside the meeting.

Communication Technology

Email

Staff will be provided with an email address for school use and this is to be circulated among staff members only. Parent / families communicate through the general office, to arrange meetings, and are encouraged to keep email correspondence brief.

Children's names are not to be used in emails by staff or whole school community, and no personal or sensitive or confidential information is to be sent to the school, in accordance with GDPR

Social Media

Photography – No photographs or videos are to be taken by parents / guardians while in the school. Many families request no photography when they enroll their children, and because of this management encourages our community to enjoy all performances, events and visits to the school ‘in the moment’. The school website will have photographs taken by staff on school cameras.

Parent Groups – Management are aware that there are social media parent groups in our community. It is noted that management or staff do not read these groups posts, and do not respond to items raised. Management and staff encourage our community to reflect before raising issues on social media as it is not always the the appropriate forum.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE:

Complaints Procedure – Educate Together, Education.ie & INTO.

PARENT COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Complaints procedure agreed between Educate Together (and all other Irish primary management bodies) and the teachers union – INTO, last updated in July 2014, on a procedure for dealing with complaints by parents against teachers. The purpose of this procedure is to facilitate the resolution of difficulties where they may arise in an agreed and fair manner. The agreement lays out in five stages the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed at each stage.

Introduction

Only those complaints about teachers which are written and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the board of management, except where those complaints are deemed by the Board to be:

- i. on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;*
- ii. frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school;*
- iii. complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.*

Unwritten complaints not in the above categories may be processed informally as set out in

Stage 1 of this procedure.

Stage 1

1.1 A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.

1.2 Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher (s)he should approach the principal teacher with a view to resolving it.

1.3 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

2.1 If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further she/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the chairperson of the board of management.

2.2 The chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3

3.1 If the complaint is not resolved informally, the chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board and except in those cases where the chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the Board to be required:

(a) supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint; and

(b) arrange a meeting with the teacher and, where applicable, the principal teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 4

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 referred to in 3.1 (b).

4.2 If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within 3 days of the Board meeting.

4.3 If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:

(a) The teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;

(b) The teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;

(c) The teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint;

(d) The teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the Board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;

(e) The Board may arrange a meeting with the complainant if it considers such to be required. The complainant would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting; and

(f) The meeting of the board of management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1 (b).

Stage 5

5.1 When the Board has completed its investigation, the chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board.

5.2 The decision of the Board shall be final.

5.3 This Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years;

5.4 Primary School Management or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party three months' notice of intention to do so.

In this agreement 'days' means school days.

RATIFICATION AND REVIEW

This plan was formally ratified by the Board of Management on 09.2021

It will be reviewed every 2 years.

Signed:

School Chairperson: Treasa Ní Mhurchu

School Principal: Dermot Stanley