



Holy Well N.S. Parent/Staff Communication Policy (September 2020)

Introductory statement

This policy was developed following a review process involving the staff of Holy Well N.S. and the Interim Manager.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and parent/staff communication in Holy Well N.S. 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 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, supporting 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
- Become actively involved in the school/parent association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with Parents

- -Meeting for parents of new Junior Infants.
-Scheduled Parent/teacher meetings take place in October/November.
-Parents receive school report of each pupil at the end of each school year.
-Meetings with parents whose children have special educational needs.
-Written communication.
-Once established in Term 1 2020 via the parents association, parents will

be 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 the school app and the school website.

- The School App and the school website www.holywellns.ie keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns. We are a green school and the use of paper notes is kept to a minimum.

-Parents are notified of significant or unexpected events during the school year by school app notification or text.

- The school app is now the school's main communications channel and administration processing platform for parents and guardians. It provides a single touch point where all of the school's published news and information can be quickly and easily accessed through a parent's phone. Many of our traditional paper-based forms have been digitised and parents must use these forms going forward as we will no longer have the processes in place to handle paper forms. These changes will help us achieve GDPR compliance, reduce our carbon footprint, reduce costs and streamline our administration work

-The homework journal for 1st to 6th classes. Parents are requested to sign journal each night to certify that homework has been completed.

-Parents and families are invited to events throughout the year e.g. school concerts, school Masses, etc.

-Involvement of parents in the Religion 'Grow in Love' section for parents.

-Participating in CAPER.

-Phone calls; Teachers and parents may communicate by phone from time to time. These phone calls are not to be recorded without the full knowledge and permission of the teacher.

Parents of Infants are welcome to make an appointment any time throughout the year. Teachers of Infants will be available between 1.30pm and 2pm for this when necessary.

It is important that the school is informed if family events/situations occur that may cause distress 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 * due to Covid-19, please see addendum – Appendix A

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 October/early November. 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. Meetings may take place in classrooms or 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 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 provide an opportunity for parents to communicate any difficulties their child may be experiencing.
- 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.

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 students' work. In turn, parents will often be able to enrich staffs knowledge of their students' progress through providing further information about the students' learning at home.

Formal Meetings * due to Covid-19, please see addendum – Appendix A

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

Formal Meetings-IEPs – * due to Covid-19, please see addendum – Appendix A

Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings on the subject of the **Individual Education/Support Plans** will take place in October and February for children availing of special education teaching. 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.

Informal Parent/Staff Meetings * due to Covid-19, please see addendum – Appendix A

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, **no matter how urgent**, he/she can contact the school secretary to arrange a suitable time by phone call.

Issues should never be raised in the presence of children or in public areas or classrooms

1. The School encourages communication between parents and staff.

2. Meetings with the teacher at the class door to discuss a child's concern/progress are discouraged on a number of grounds:

1. The teacher cannot adequately supervise his/her 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.

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 endeavour 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.

If parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear etc, this can be done through the secretary's office as it is important to keep class interruptions to a minimum.

Parents are strongly discouraged from taking pupils out of school during term time in order to facilitate family holidays.

All parents must report directly to the school office when visiting the school during class time. Please use the main door for entering and exiting any of the school buildings. When collecting a pupil the school secretary will contact the classroom and the pupil will come to the school office. Children must be signed out.

The Board of Management of Holy Well N.S. never allows the recording of teachers' voices at either formal or informal parent teacher meetings, IEP Meetings etc.

Complaints Procedure

Complaints are infrequent but the school would prefer that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. The Board of Management of Holy Well N.S. has adopted the INTO/CPSMA Complaints procedure which provides a mechanism for dealing fairly with parental complaints against a teacher. 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:

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

In this policy “days” means school days.

Please note: In Holy Well N.S. the following procedure applies equally to SNAs.

The following is the agreed complaints procedure to be followed in primary schools.

Stage 1-informal stage

1. A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, firstly arrange a meeting with the **teacher** by appointment through the school office. This meeting should be with a view to resolving the complaint
2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the teacher, he/she should arrange a meeting with the **Principal**, with a view to resolving it
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-formal stage

1. If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further, he/she should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management
2. The Chairperson will 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

1. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the authorisation of the Board:
 - 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

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 Stage 3.1(b)
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
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 copies of any written evidence in support of the complaint;
 - (c) He/she 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;
- (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

- i. the Board's investigations, the Chairperson shall convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board. The decision of the Board shall be final.

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 of the stakeholders i.e. the staff, parents and the wider community. Anyone entering our 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 Gardai may 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 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.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act became operative on 1 November 1989. It is an important piece of legislation for Boards of Management and for those who work in schools, as schools and colleges were brought under the scope of safety legislation for the first time.

It is recognised that school staff may be at risk from violence in the form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults, bullying or other forms of intimidation. This behaviour may come from pupils, parents, guardians, other staff members or intruders.

In this respect, all staff should be aware of **DES Circular 40/97** which deals with the procedures to follow if they feel they have been subjected to any of the above behaviours.

This policy was ratified by the Interim Manager on 24th October 2020.

Interim Manager: _____ Date _____

Principal _____ Date _____

Covid-19 – Meeting Arrangements

Parent/Teacher Meetings, Informal Meetings and Formal Meetings – IEPs/student support plans.

- Parent/Teacher Meetings may take place via phone or be postponed. We will review this closer to the time.
- Where a parent needs to discuss an issue with the teacher please use the school journal, email the class teacher directly or contact the school office and request the class teacher return your call at a time that is convenient. **Note:** recording of teachers calls/discussions is not permitted.
- Special Educational Needs:- alternative arrangements will be put in place by the SEN Team to discuss your child's support plan for the coming year. The special education teacher will liaise with you and the class teacher in relation to support plans.