



Parent/Teacher Communication Policy

Introduction:

This policy was developed by the staff of St. Christopher's Primary School in conjunction with the Board of Management and the parents of our pupils. Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff communication in our school including formal and informal parent/staff meetings.

St. Christopher's Staff and Board of Management believe that:

- Good communication between home and school is important because with positive and active partnership the child gets the best that primary education can offer.
- Teachers can do a better job when they are supported by and working closely with parents.

We know that children do better, behave better and are happier at school where parents and teachers work closely together and when parents are able to give their children support at home.

St. Christopher's Staff and Board of Management are committed to:

- Developing close effective links with parents
- Participating in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the central and fundamental role of parents as primary educators of their children
- Maintaining the ethos, values and distinctive character of St. Christopher's Primary School
- Supporting and facilitating the Parents' Association
- Encouraging and facilitating the participation of parents in school policy and decision- making.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with 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 and Parents' Association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians will be consulted by staff. It is essential that all parents and legal guardians are named on the enrolment form.

Behaviour of all adults in the School

Positive and respectful communication is highly important to 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 our building should feel safe to do so. Adults in the school

community have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children. All adults will treat our children, staff and other parents with the utmost respect while on the premises or its environs.

- All adults within the school are expected to speak to each other with respect; shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If any adult displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building and/or school site. In severe cases, and if required, the Gardaí will be called.
- The school will respect all children and parents' right to privacy so staff will not discuss children with parents other than their own.

Things that the school needs to know to keep your children safe and healthy.

- It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that may cause anxiety to your child and could affect his/her education. Your first point of contact should be your child's class teacher. Please email office@scps.ie and mark it for the attention of your child's teacher.
- The school should at all times know who is collecting your child. The school should have a list of people (and their contact information) who you have authorised to collect your child. Should this change, it is a parent's responsibility to inform the school. You can provide this information by email or by calling in to the school office. In an emergency situation, the parent must leave a message on the answering service or speak with the principal/teacher.

Structures in place to facilitate open communication and consultation with parents.

Annual Consultation including:

- Welcome day for new Junior Infants and their parents in June each year
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in November for Senior Infants to 6th classes and February for Junior Infants (a short, written record of the meeting is maintained by each teacher).
- Class teachers/Special education teachers meet with parents whose children have additional educational needs.

Written communication including:

- Homework diary or Google Classroom (1st – 6th class), to inform parents about assigned homework and to confirm that homework has been completed.
- Notifications/text messages via the Aladdin app.
- Emails sent from the school to parents.
- Emails sent from parents to class teachers, via the office (office@scps.ie).
- Parents are encouraged to use the Aladdin app to inform the school of any absences, changes of address or contact phone numbers.
- Regular newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays, decisions taken to change current policies and procedures or to introduce new ones and other school concerns
- School report for each pupil at the end of each school year uploaded to Aladdin.
- Notifications via the Aladdin app/text messages.

- Online platform e.g. Google Classroom/Class Dojo, for sharing class news and information. (Please note: Class Dojo is not used for parent-teacher communication in 1st-6th Classes).

Generally, communication sent from the school will be 'paperless'. Emails sent from the school will be sent to the email address(es) provided at enrolment, unless otherwise updated by parents. Any paper communication sent from the school will be sent to the child's home address as given on the enrolment form, unless otherwise updated by parents in writing.

Procedures for parents to initiate communication with the school

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the school administration to arrange a suitable time. Classes begin at 8:50am and finish at 1:30pm (infants) and 2.30pm (1st- 6th) and this time should not be interrupted. On some rare occasions, a parent may need 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 while 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 during class time etc, this can be done through the office so that learning is not disrupted.

Online and Social Media Communication

St. Christopher's Primary School has a website www.scps.ie. The website presents and stores important school policy documents which are therefore publicly available. The website provides a communication facility for parents and others who wish to contact the school. The website also has an event calendar which is regularly updated, a school news (blog) section and sections for the children's work.

The school name or anything that identifies the school should not be used online or on social media by members of the public including parents without express written permission from the principal or Board of Management.

Communication by email - response time

Response times to emails can vary depending on the demands at any given time. Teachers are in class during the day and will not have time to access emails. They may be engaged in planning, meetings or personal matters after school hours. It is considered reasonable that 48-72 hrs. are allowed for a response (with the exception of weekends/holiday periods during which email is only checked intermittently).

There may be occasions where a parent is trying to contact the school by phone and/or email and are not receiving a response. The school office is very busy and staff are engaged in a variety of tasks. We ask for patience during these times.

Parent/Teacher Meetings

The aims of Parent/Teacher meetings are:

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

Organisation of parent/teacher meetings

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for Senior Infants to 6th classes, usually in the first term towards the end of November. Meetings for Junior Infants are held in February. If a parent wishes to arrange an additional meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by contacting the school administration.

St. Christopher's Primary School uses prepared guidelines to give structure to the meetings. These include feedback on attendance, behaviour, homework, punctuality, standardised test results (where applicable) and overview of progress through the curriculum. Parent/Teacher meetings may take place in classrooms, offices, support rooms or through on-line platforms when necessary. Each meeting is allocated a 10-minute time slot which parents can book through the Aladdin Connect app. If a longer meeting is required these should be scheduled for another day.

In order to facilitate the operation of the school and the needs of children and other parents, it is important that meetings should be kept to the allocated time. Times of meetings are agreed beforehand and should be adhered to so that all parents are seen on time as far as is possible.

Planning meetings for Continuums of Support

For children with special educational needs, formal scheduled parent/staff meetings relating to the child's Continuum of Support will take place in September/October. 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.

In the case of separated/ divorced parents, St. Christopher's Primary School may facilitate requests made by parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for parent/teacher meetings.

School Reports

St. Christopher's Primary School produces formal reports for reporting to parents on students' progress and achievement at school annually in the third term using report card templates as required by the National Council of Curriculum and Assessment (www.ncca.ie). The reports are uploaded to the Aladdin app a fortnight prior to school closing for the summer break to allow parents time to ask for clarification with the school on anything contained in their child's report. The report will cover

- 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

Reports for children in their final year of primary school (sixth class) will be in the form of an Education Passport. These support the transfer of pupil information from primary to post-primary and follow a standard NCCA template.

Parents are advised to download and save their children's reports for future reference as they are no longer available via the app after a pupil leaves the school.

Parents are encouraged to visit our website www.scps.ie regularly to keep up to date on school matters. All newsletters and Principal's bulletins are available through the school website.

The Complaints Procedure is available on our school website, in the Policies and Procedures section. This outlines the staged approach to resolving difficulties.

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 the BOM 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 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 **Dept of Education Circular 40/97** which deals with the procedures to follow if they feel they have been subjected to any of the above behaviours.

SUMMARY:

Communication is key to the children's success in school.

Use the Aladdin app to keep the school updated

School will use text/notifications, emails and school website to keep parents updated.

School reports are uploaded and stored on the Aladdin app.

Parent-teacher meetings are booked via the Aladdin app.

Email to school (with teacher's name in the subject line): office@scps.ie

School phone: 01-6681155

School website: www.scps.ie

Ratified by the Board of Management

Chairperson: GAH

Date: 23rd February 2023