

# **POLICY ON PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

## ***Introduction***

This is a review of existing Parental Involvement Policy- May 2009

### **Rationale**

- This plan is a record of our decisions regarding Parental Involvement. It is intended to guide teachers and the school community
- All school policies are being reviewed at this time and the existing policy needed to be adjusted to meet the needs of the school and its community
- The review and adjustment of the policy aims to benefit pupil learning
- It promotes a close partnership between the school and parents
- It takes guidance from the Education Act,1998; Education Welfare Act, 2000, School Self Evaluation (Looking at Our School)

### **Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school**

Ratoath Senior National School seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are valued. This work can best be done where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils.

### **Aims**

By introducing this policy, the school community ideally aims:

- To build a school community committed to supporting all its pupils
- To outline roles and responsibilities within the school community
- To establish procedures for the sharing of information in relation to pupil progress and attainment
- To assist a school community in providing the optimum learning experiences for its pupils
- To outline how best parents might support the school and its pupils
- To enrich and extend the educational opportunities provided for pupils by accessing the skills and talents of parents

## ***Guidelines***

These guidelines address parental involvement in the following areas

- Parent Association
- Board of Management
- Vision / Mission and Aims
- Organisational policies and curriculum plans
- Communication
- Home School Community Liaison Teacher, Rural Co-ordinator, Education Welfare Officer
- Guest speakers

### **Parent Association**

This has operated continuously since 1974. It has proved a most useful link between home and school and has added significantly to the quality of school life and to community life in general. An AGM is held at which members are elected. As a rule meetings are held at least once a month. Parents should feel free to request the Parents' Association to research any matter for them.

### **Board of Management**

Parents elect two members to serve on the School Board of Management. Parents should feel free to contact any Board of Management member on any matter.

### **Vision / Mission and Aims**

- To build a school community committed to supporting all its pupils
- To encourage parents/guardians to contribute to the vision and mission of the school.
- To encourage parents/guardians to support the aims of the school

### **Organisational Policies**

A consultative process will be followed in involving parents/guardians in policy formation, e.g. questionnaires issued to all parents/guardians or to a representative sample. If there is an area of specific interest, a focus group could be formed to consider certain issues. Consultation with the Parents' Association will be part of planning in school events. The topic/area being addressed may inform the method of collaboration and consultation.

Parents have a very important role and responsibility in relation to policies or procedures, e.g.

- |                              |                                      |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ○ Administration of Medicine | ○ Learning Support and Special Needs |
| ○ Anti-Bullying              | ○ Lunches                            |
| ○ Attendance                 | ○ Mobile Phones                      |
| ○ Calendar                   | ○ Newsletter                         |
| ○ Child Protection           | ○ Parent Teacher Meetings            |
| ○ Code of Behaviour          | ○ Sports Day                         |
| ○ Environmental Awareness    | ○ Substance Use                      |
| ○ School Tours               | ○ Uniform                            |
| ○ Homework                   |                                      |

### **Curriculum Plans**

Parents/guardians have a very important role in supporting their child's learning in each class. Parents are informed at our 3<sup>rd</sup> Class parent night and at subsequent Parent Teacher meetings as to the ways in which they can support their child's learning. Parents are made aware of the information for parents that is available to them on the NCCA website.

Parents/ guardians with particular knowledge or skills in curriculum areas are identified and where and when appropriate such parents can visit the class to speak to the children on their experiences. e.g.

- Language: poet/author, member of drama group, etc.
- Mathematics: architect, builder, carpenter, accountant, etc.
- Arts: artist, actor, musician, dancer, etc.
- SPHE: district nurse, dietician, garda, etc.
- SESE: laboratory technician, historian, town planner, etc.
- P.E.: sportsperson, representatives from local sports groups, etc.

### **Learning Support and Special Needs:**

Initial testing is completed in September each year. The Learning Support teacher then invites the relevant parents/guardians to the school to discuss their child's needs. They are also included in devising an IEP/IPLP for their child. Parents/guardians are supported in meeting their child's learning goals through formal and

informal meetings, and through collaboration with the Learning Support teacher. They are also asked to support the child's school work with revision at home.

### **Communication**

Frequent communication is of vital importance in developing and nurturing a co-operation between home and school. If teachers and parents are working in harmony, inevitably the pupils will benefit and make more progress. Research shows that the most effective schools tend to be those with the best relationships with parents, and where parents are told not only when their children are in trouble but when they have behaved particularly well. Parents will be informed at an early stage if problems do occur. A child's parent is the most effective teacher. The home environment determines the child's progress in school.

Parents are asked to:

- insist that their child attends to homework
- encourage their child to fully co-operate in school
- take appropriate action if their child has been guilty of misbehaviour
- discuss problems with teachers and/or Principal.

Parents are always welcome at our school.

#### *Parent/Teacher Meetings:*

Parents are invited to Ratoath Senior National School by appointment to discuss their child's progress. This takes place late in the first term.

All teachers have parent teacher meetings for all classes 3<sup>rd</sup> through to 6<sup>th</sup> class.

All formal parent teacher meetings must only take place after an appointment is made. A parent cannot meet a teacher during school time as classes cannot be left unattended. However, if a teacher can accommodate a parent during school time for whatever reason by informing the principal, who will supervise their class.

#### *By Appointment with the Principal*

*Special Meetings:* For example, those held for the parents of children preparing for Confirmation.

*School Reports:* A full written report is provided twice a year. Oral reports are provided for parents at parent/teacher meetings. Teachers are available to discuss parent's concerns.

*Homework Notebook:* The school homework notebook is an essential and regular link between home and school. It gives both parent and teacher the opportunity to develop a partnership which will benefit all concerned, particularly the children.

*Children:* Children will be anxious to show their work at home. Parents should regularly check through the child's copies and comment on the grades awarded or any teacher remarks written in.

*School Government:* The children elect a School Government annually. The Government and all senior children are involved as far, as is practical in all the running of the school and in the formulation of rules. From time to time the Government publishes a newsletter.

### **Education Welfare Officer**

Parents are informed of the role of Education Welfare Officer and the role of the school in communicating with parents whose children have missed more than 20 school days.

If a family move their children to a new school, the Principal of the new school must inform the old school that these children are now in attendance.

### **Guest speakers**

Guest speakers who wish to address the parents of the school will speak to the Parents Association who will facilitate them where possible.

### **Success Criteria**

Some practical indicators of the success of the policy are;

- Benefit to pupil learning
- Parental involvement is increased in school activities
- Feedback from parents/staff