



St. Brigid's B.N.S.
Howth Road, Killester, Dublin 5, D05A386
Phone 01 8336149
Roll Number: [19308J](#)



Email: info@stbrigidsbns.ie Website: www.stbrigidsbns.ie

Home/School Partnership Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was reviewed by the staff of St. Brigid's B.N.S. in consultation with the Board of Management and the Parents' Association in November 2021.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and parent/staff communication in St. Brigid's B.N.S.

The Home/School Partnership is envisaged as a positive working relationship that is characterised by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and a willingness to listen and learn in the best interests of pupils' development and progress.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Develop and maintain 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 Parents' Association.
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.
- Participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of the staff and all staff members in the school.
- Equip pupils with all the appropriate school materials (books, copies, writing materials, etc) required during the school day, including a healthy, nutritious lunch and full uniform/tracksuit.
- Notify the school at the earliest opportunity if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to their child and therefore may adversely affect his education.
- Provide a note of explanation when a pupil is late arriving to school, absent from school or not in correct/full uniform/tracksuit.
- Show care and respect for school property and encourage child(ren) to do likewise.
- Facilitate the child(ren) reaching their full potential and gaining maximum benefit from their time in school by ensuring that pupils attend regularly and punctually throughout the school year. The practice of taking pupils out of school at any time during the school year in order to facilitate family holidays and/or taking pupils out of school early during the school day (unless it is absolutely necessary for attendance at medical appointments etc) should be avoided. Whenever possible, parents should request from other professionals that appointments be arranged for after-school times.
- Leave the school building/grounds promptly when 'dropping-off' pupils especially those young pupils who may experience some 'separation anxiety' in the earlier part of the school year. Further contact will be made with parents if the need arises.

Staff are encouraged to:

- Participate in any meetings with parents in a positive and respectful manner and affirm the role of the parent as the ‘primary and natural educator’ of their children (as per Article 42.1 of the Irish Constitution).
- Collaborate with the parents in an open two-way communication so that both parties are working together to develop the full potential of the student.
- Be aware of the activities of the Parents’ Association and link in with them where possible to support their fundraising activities.

Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with Parents:

- Meeting for new parents of new Junior Infants and new pupils throughout the school – May & June
- Formal Parent/Teacher meetings one-to-one in November
- Meetings with parents whose children have special educational needs and also when developing School Support Plus Plans (SSPP)
- School report for each pupil at the end of each school year
- Through the Parents’ Association, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies. Mandatory policies are available to view on the school website www.stbrigidsbns.ie
- Ongoing communication throughout the school year by means of newsletters, Aladdin, homework journals, phone calls, notes, Text-a-Parent etc.
- 1st-6th class Homework diaries are used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers
- Notes re absences from school: these need to be sent to teachers on Aladdin or in written form, on the pupils return to school stating the reason for the absence. The notes are then kept by the teacher for TUSLA statistics at the end of the year. Under Section 20 of the Education Welfare Act, schools are obliged to notify TUSLA if pupils are absent more than 20 days in a year from school. Letters will be kept on file. There is no need to phone the school about pupil absences A standard letter will be issued to parents of pupils whose non-attendance is a concern following a period of absence totalling 15 days
- The school values and welcomes the participation of parents/guardians in school fundraising events e.g. Book Fair, Bingo, Christmas Fair
- Involvement of parents in school activities e.g. library, sports, Maths for Fun, Credit Union (subject to Garda Vetting)
- Parents are invited to events throughout the school year e.g. Grandparents’ Day, school masses, Christmas shows
- Participating in the preparation of children for the sacraments – the implementation of the ‘Do This in Memory’ and ‘You Shall Be My Witness’ programmes.

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 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 the teachers.

Where either/both parents is/are involved in new relationships, it should be noted that communications from the school to new partners will be limited to that which is expressly agreed between the parents and notified to the school or that which has been provided for by a court order.

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 staff 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 staff's knowledge of their students' progress through providing further information about the students' learning at home.

Parent/Teacher Meetings

The purpose of Parent/Teacher meetings is:

1. To establish an ongoing relationship and communication with parents
2. To let parents know how their children are progressing in school
3. To help staff/parents get to know the children better as individuals
4. To help children realise that home and school are working together
5. To identify ways in which parents can help their children
6. To negotiate jointly decisions about the child's education

Informal Parent/Teacher Meetings:

- Communication between parents and teachers is encouraged
- Parents are asked to please make an appointment (by Aladdin, email, phone call or by note in the Homework Journal) to meet with the child's teacher if/when needed. Pre-arranged appointments facilitate better quality communication between the parent and teacher, rather than the more rushed and distracted type that takes place when the teacher has to supervise the pupils in the class from the classroom door while at the same time communicating with a parent. Pre-arranged meetings allow for more discreet communication and avoid potential embarrassment for a child when his parent is talking to the teacher at the classroom door
- It is understood that from time-to-time certain 'sensitive/urgent' situations (e.g. serious illness of family member, family crisis, etc) will arise which will require a parent to arrive at the school without appointment and such situations will of course continue to be facilitated. Outside of such situations, parents should not arrive at the school unannounced/without appointment, to seek a consultation with a staff member
- 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.

Formal Parent/Teacher Meetings:

Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings take place in November. These meetings will be initiated by the school staff and details regarding times etc. be arranged through Aladdin.

Parents will be given the opportunity to select preferred times on Aladdin by a certain date and then teachers will assign any remaining appointments to parents.

Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings on the subject of School Support Plus Plans take place in September.

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. Requests for meetings with teachers/Principal should be put in writing (by email or a note) or by phone (secretary's office). A brief indication of the reason for the meeting (homework, social, behavioural, home issues) should be given.

Aladdin Connect is used as the main means of communication between home and school. All other 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, or placed in the child's schoolbag as appropriate.

In the case of married but separated parents, written requests can be made by both parents to meet their child's teacher individually for meetings.

In the case of unmarried separated parents, written requests may be made by both parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for parent/teacher meetings, subject to the natural father having established his 'guardianship, custody and access rights' through the court and/or by means of statutory declaration made by the natural mother.

End-of-year school reports

- An end-of-year school report is issued on Aladdin to parents in June.
- All communication from the school will be posted to the child's official home address as given on the enrolment form, unless otherwise requested/notified by parents.
- In the case of married but separated parents, a written request may be made by both parents to have a copy of the end-of-year report issued separately either via Aladdin or by email/post.
- In the case of unmarried separated parents, a written request may be made by both parents to have a copy of the end-of-year report issued separately either via Aladdin or by email/post, subject to the natural father having established his 'guardianship, custody and access rights' through the court and/or by means of statutory declaration made by the natural mother.

Report card templates

St Brigid's B.N.S. uses the NCCA report card templates which were developed through a process of consultation with schools and parents and take account of research commissioned by the NCCA. The report card reports information about the progress of primary pupils to parents, including information from standardised tests.

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.

Behaviour of all Stakeholders in the School

Positive and respectful communication is of utmost importance to our school. This is something we work on with the students in the school but this also extends to all of the stakeholders e.g. 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 and is a major part of our education model, 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 members of the school community are responsible for their own behaviours in the school. Examples include:

- Speak to each other with respect. If a stakeholder displays anger or aggression to another member of the school, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building. In certain cases, the Gardaí may be called.
- Treat our children with the utmost respect while on the premises.
- Teacher's should not be asked to speak about another parent's child. The teachers of the school will respect your child's right to privacy so it is asked that parents respect other children's rights to privacy.
- Ensure the length of meetings are to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected.
- If a parent needs to meet with a teacher, an appointment should be made before or after school hours and at a convenient time for both parties. This ensures that issues can be resolved. Classes begin at 8.50am and finish at 1.30pm (Junior & Senior Infants) and 2.30pm (1st-6th classes).
- All visitors to the school should adhere to protocol on entry to the school premises i.e. press the entry buzzer, identify themselves and sign the visitors' book.

Complaints

Complaints are infrequent, but the school would wish that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. The parental complaints procedure has been agreed between the INTO and CPSMA and was written to deal with complaints about teachers. *See Appendix 1.*

Safety, Health & Welfare at Work

Boards of Management are responsible for ensuring the health, safety, wellbeing and educational progress of students. They also have a duty under *Section 8 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005* to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of employees. The Department of Education and Skills has acknowledged that on very rare occasions there may be incidents of assaults on school employees. The Board of Management (BOM) of St. Brigid's B.N.S. is cognisant of its duty to provide a safe place of work for its employees. The BOM has a duty to protect school employees from the risk of violence of any kind, be that in the form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults or other forms of intimidation. The BOM is anxious to ensure that every effort would be made to create and maintain a culture in St. Brigid's B.N.S. where acts of violence are not tolerated and

where incidents, when they do occur, are effectively and speedily dealt with. The BOM has adopted the guidelines outlined below to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to:

- a) Provide a safe place of work for employees
- b) Prevent or minimise the risk of assault on employees and
- c) To support staff members who have been assaulted or threatened with assault and to ensure that appropriate action is taken to safeguard against a recurrence.

In this respect, all staff and parents 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.

Roles & Responsibilities

All staff members, parents, pupils and BOM members share responsibility for supporting the implementation of the Home/School Partnership Policy.

Success criteria

The school evaluates the success of this Policy through:

- Positive and supportive engagement and participation of parents, staff, BOM members and pupils in the education process
- The extent to which there exists a mutually-beneficial, supportive and positive atmosphere and relationship among all members of the school community
- Feedback, as appropriate, from all members of the school community
- Indications that the smooth and efficient running and organisation of the school is enhanced through the implementation of this policy
- The indications that the facilitation and implementation of the Home/School Partnership Policy are enhancing the learning opportunities of the pupils of the school.

Ratification and communication

The policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on 24th November 2021. Its implementation was deemed effective from that date.

Staff and Parents were made aware of the existence and availability of the policy on a school's newsletter, and this policy is included on the St. Brigid's B.N.S. website at www.stbrigidsbns.ie

Timetable for Review:

A Review of this Policy will be conducted as deemed appropriate, based on the success criteria outlined above.

Signed: *Seán Moran*
Chairperson of the BOM

Date: *24th November 2021*

Revised Parental Complaints Procedure



Note:

- A copy of this procedure will be available for parents/legal guardians on the school website and/or on request from the school. This procedure comes into effect on the 1st of January 2024.
- Under the Education Act 1998, legally, all schools are managed by the school's Board of Management, on behalf of the school patron.

Purpose/Objective

The parental complaints procedure was revised and agreed by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the management bodies of primary schools, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, the Church of Ireland, An Foras Pátrúnachta, the Muslim Primary Education Board, Educate Together and the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education in 2023. It is designed to provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child/children in an agreed, fair and transparent manner.

It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life and as such from time-to-time concerns may arise which they may need to engage with the school. It is expected that engagement will be timely, courteous and resolution focused to ensure that the important relationship between the parent and school can be preserved and respected. It is expected that all parties concerned will engage proactively.

Procedural Points

The procedure is a staged procedure where every effort is made to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage. In most cases, concerns will be dealt with either informally or formally at the earlier stages of the procedure. Where it has not been possible to agree a resolution at the earlier stages, the procedure does allow for the escalation of the matter to the Board of Management. This procedure sets out, in four stages, the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed. It is expected the parties will follow each stage in sequence.

- Where the term written correspondence is used, this refers specifically to a letter or email correspondence from a parent/legal guardian(s).
- Only complaints about a teacher which are written and signed by a parent/legal guardian, and which relate to their own child, will be investigated.
- Where a complaint raised by a parent/legal guardian is deemed by the employer/board of management to relate to the following, this procedure will not apply;
 - 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 a teacher in a school; or
 - complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.
- In all circumstances, any form of written correspondence for the attention of the Board of Management must be supplied to the Chairperson of the board of management **only**. Any deviation from this could be deemed prejudicial and as acting outside the scope of this agreement.
- **Days in this procedure refer specifically to school days.** A school day is a day on which the school is in operation. Holiday periods, school closures and leaves of absences are not counted as school days for the purpose of this procedure.
- Group/collective complaints are not provided for and each parent/legal guardian raising a concern will be dealt with separately through this process.
- The procedure is a domestic forum and accordingly, neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any stage.
- Issues should be raised in a timely manner. It is in the best interests of the child that issues are raised to achieve early resolution at the earliest possible stage with the teacher, ideally while the pupil is in that teacher's class.

Formal Stage 1 Discussion

1.1 Parent/guardian meets teacher



A parent/legal guardian who wishes to make a complaint in respect of their own child, should, seek an appointment with the teacher concerned with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings with the teacher can be convened as appropriate.

1.2 Parent/guardian meets Principal¹



Where the parent/legal guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the teacher, they should seek an appointment with the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Principal as appropriate.

1.3 Parent/guardian meets Chairperson



Where the complaint remains unresolved, the parent/legal guardian should seek an appointment with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving the complaint. Further meetings can be convened by the Chairperson as appropriate.

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved during this stage.



Formal Stage 2 Written (10 days)

2.1 Written complaint sent to Chairperson



If the complaint has not been resolved at stage 1, the parent/legal guardian who wishes to pursue the matter further should submit the complaint in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. This commences stage 2.

2.2 Chairperson provides a copy to the teacher

The Chairperson should provide a copy of the written complaint to the teacher against whom the complaint has been made, without delay.

2.3 Chairperson convenes meeting(s)



The Chairperson should seek to resolve the complaint between the teacher and the parent/legal guardian within 10 school days of the commencement of stage 2.1. This may require one or more meetings to be convened by the Chairperson with the teacher/parent/legal guardian and other school personnel as deemed appropriate by the Chairperson.

Complaint resolved

The complaint may be resolved at this stage.



Formal Stage 3 Board of Management (20 days)

3.1 Chairperson makes a formal report to the Board

If the complaint remains unresolved following stage 2 and the parent/legal guardian wishes to pursue the matter, they should inform the Chairperson in writing of this fact. The Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board of Management within 10 days of receipt of this written statement. At this meeting, the Board can decide to proceed to either stage 3.2 or 3.3.

3.2 Complaint concluded

Where the Board considers the complaint, the process may be concluded at this stage, if the board considers that:

- a) The complaint is frivolous/vexatious;
- b) The complaint has already been investigated by the board;
- c) The complaint is more appropriately dealt with through a more relevant DE circular, or;
- d) where recourse to law has been initiated.

Where the Board determines the complaint is concluded at this stage, the parent/legal guardian should be so informed within five days of the Board meeting.



3.3 Proceed to a hearing

Where the Board decides to proceed to a hearing, it should proceed as follows:

- a) the teacher should be informed that the complaint is proceeding to a full hearing and the Chairperson must ensure the teacher has been supplied with all documents which are being considered by the Board.
- b) the Board should arrange a meeting with the parent/legal guardian if it considers such to be required. The parent/legal guardian is entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting.
- c) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of their case to the Board. The teacher is entitled to be represented by a friend or a union representative, who may be accompanied for the purpose of assistance and note taking.
- d) the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board as the employer in response to the complaint. This written statement will be confidential to the employer and will not be shared with any third party.
- e) the meeting of the Board of Management referred to in 3(b), (c) and (d) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1. in so far as possible.

Formal Stage 4 Decision (5 days)

4.1 Written decision from Chairperson



The Board will consider the complaint and the response provided and will adjudicate on the matter. The Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the parent/legal guardian(s) within five days of the meeting held at stage 3.3.

4.2 Complaint concluded

The decision of the Board shall be final.



¹Where a complaint is received about a principal the above process commences at Stage 1.2.