



Parental Involvement Policy

In this policy the word 'parent' also denotes 'guardian'.

1. Introduction

- Our school is a community where pupils, parents and teachers collaborate and work in partnership for our children. When parents decide to send their child to our school they are entering a very important relationship. 'Partnership is a working relationship that is characterised by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and a willingness to negotiate'. Gillian Pugh, Working Towards Partnership in the Early Years.
- In keeping with the principles of equality-based education, our school is democratically run and the involvement of all parents is sought and encouraged. We also welcome the involvement of grand-parents and other members of families under this policy.
- A high level of involvement is a feature of our school and requires a commitment from parents.
- Parents as a group have a range of talents, abilities and skills that have the potential to enrich and extend the educational opportunities provided for the children. It is our policy to identify parents with specific skills and to invite those parents to share their skills with us at a school and at class level.
- Respect for the professional role of the teacher and the statutory responsibilities of the Principal, Patron and the Board of Management is always an important consideration.
- Parents are invited to become involved in the school in many ways and at many levels, for example
 - serving on school bodies (Board of Management, Parent Teacher Association, Educate Together)
 - policy-making e.g. Positive Behaviour/Anti-Bullying/Anti-Racism Policy, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Parent Association Constitution, Homework Policy, Substance Use Policy.
 - Assisting in class activities.

2. Benefits of Parental Involvement.

- Parental involvement actively supports and encourages the child's learning.
- Parental involvement allows the child to see that school is an extension of home and therefore fosters the idea of the 'school family'.
- Children benefit from greater diversity in the classroom.
- Children profit from more one-to-one attention.
- A wide range of activity is facilitated. This can be interesting and fun, and can lead to a broader and more holistic education.
- It promotes 'good parent/teacher relationships and a better understanding between home and school' (National Parents Council). It enhances communication, trust and respect between parents and teachers.

- Parents can learn about the curriculum.
- Parents can get to know other children in their child's class.
- Parental skills can contribute to the smooth running and development of the school.
- Parental involvement provides the opportunity to make friends.

3. How to Get Involved

- Parents are, first of all, invited to consider their skills, interests and time available, and communicate this information to the class-teacher, the Principal and/or to the Parent Teacher Association.
- Parents can consult with the class-teacher about hobbies, skills or interests they can share with the class, bearing in mind that needs change from year to year.
- Parents can work in conjunction with the teachers in a planned and co-ordinated way. For example they can help with reading-groups, assist at art/craft times, Maths for Fun sessions, supporting children in IT work, work with the children at various curricular activities and lend a welcome hand in many other areas which can be identified with the teacher.
- Ongoing projects over a number of weeks may enhance and enrich the work the children are involved with in the classroom: parents are encouraged to discuss any ideas they may have with the teacher.
- Parents can help with tours and trips, art and sport activities and may also like to make costumes for school/class performances.
- Parents can assist in running extra-curricular activities.
- Opportunities are endless and are not limited to getting involved in your own child's class. We welcome parents/other family members with skills to share them with classes at different levels – baking, cultural exchanges, needlework, science/engineering knowledge, school garden, children's newsletter The school welcomes all ideas.

4. Guidelines for getting involved

- Parents come into the classroom at the invitation of the teacher by prior arrangement and for an agreed purpose.
- The happiness, welfare and safety of our children are our primary concern. A child's personal history and academic achievements are strictly confidential. If a person has any concern regarding issues arising in the classroom they should bring it to the attention of the class-teacher immediately and not discuss it with any third party.
- Respect for the teacher in their professional capacity is essential.
- Discipline remains the responsibility of the teacher.
- All work will be supervised by the teacher.
- Parents who participate should be conscious of and sensitive to the needs of the entire class, not just the needs of their own child.
- Parents coming into the classroom must consult with the teacher before inviting other parents/individuals to participate.
- Due to insurance constraints, toddlers and younger children cannot be accommodated during a classroom activity.
- The highest standard of behaviour and language is expected.
- Punctuality and consistency are crucial.
- No fees are payable. Any expenses that you wish to reclaim must be sanctioned in advance by the Principal and must be accompanied by receipts.
- Garda vetting is a necessary requirement for all school-based activities with children.

- The school ethos must be upheld at all times and it is important to keep in mind that the school is multi-denominational, co-educational, child-centred and democratic. Consequently, respect for all the partners in education – children, teachers and parents – must be upheld at all times.
- Parents will be asked to sign an agreement to abide by the policy on Parental Involvement in the School. (See below)

5. Parent-teacher communication

- Parents are encouraged to keep in contact with class teachers. We realise that early communication often prevents a later difficulty arising and is in the best interests of our pupils.
- Parent-teacher meetings are held annually, providing an individual meeting to discuss pupil's progress academically and socially. Parents will be given advance notice of this date. Arrangements will be made in the school to ensure that meetings for siblings will be synchronised, insofar as possible.
- Regular newsletters will be sent to parents via email detailing upcoming events, opportunities for parental involvement and important news concerning the school.
- An Induction Meeting is held in the latter half of the school year for the parents/guardians of the prospective Junior Infant class for the coming school year. Parents receive the Welcome Booklet at this meeting. School information and pertinent school policies are also discussed. Most of all, this meeting provides a forum to allay the fears and anxieties of new parents. It provides an opportunity to assure parents that their child's happiness and welfare is of vital importance to the teachers and staff of the school. In Malahide / Portmarnock Educate Together National School we realise that children learn best when they feel happy and secure. To this end, parents are encouraged to keep in close contact and communication with the school. Parents' questions are invited and answered at the Induction Meeting.

6. Parent Teacher Association

- The Parent Teacher Association has been in operation since the 2018/2019 academic year. Prior to that, a Parents' Association was in operation from 2015/2016 until September 2018.

This Parental/Guardian Involvement Policy was ratified by the board of management of Malahide/Portmarnock Educate Together NS on 15 January 2020.

Appendix 1

Parent/Guardian agreement form to be signed by parents along with other registration agreements.

I have read the policy document on Parental/Guardian Involvement in the School and agree to abide by the guidelines above.

Child's name: _____

Signature: _____

(Parent/Guardian)

(Parent/Guardian)

Date: _____