



St. Matthew's National School
Cranfield Place, Sandymount, Dublin 4

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PARENT / TEACHER COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on Parent/Teacher Meetings and the Parent/Teacher communication in St. Matthew's N.S.

Good communication between parents and teachers is essential to the positive, supportive environment we work to create. The home is central to the development of the child and the nurturing of good, moral values. Both St. Matthew's and the family strive to be mutually supportive 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 and 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 Parent Association, Library Committee, and Garden Committee etc.
- 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.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

- Class meetings are held in September so that parents can be informed of the requirements of the new class and to outline the programme of work, homework and expectations for the year.
- A standardised written report on each pupil is provided at the end of each school year.
- Individual Parent/Teacher meetings take place in November for 1st-6th Class and in February for Infant Classes.
- Consultation throughout the year.
- There are additional meetings with Parents whose children attend Learning Support or who have Special Needs.
- Following the completion of standardised testing in May, Parents are provided with the opportunity to briefly meet with the Class Teacher to obtain their child's results.
- Teachers may consult with parents regularly or request to meet Parents.
- The homework diary can be used with 1st – 6th class to relay messages. Parents are asked to sign the journal daily.
- Newsletters are issued on a termly basis. They include updates on the school, B.O.M. and P.A. news and notices of forthcoming events.
- Weekly newsletters/notes are generally sent home on Thursdays with the eldest member of the family or e-mailed if requested by parents. This is an efficient and

cost-effective way of keeping in touch. However Parents are asked to check the bags regularly, otherwise they may not be fully informed about what is happening in the school.

- Parents may be texted from time to time with school reminders and messages.
- A Noticeboard for Parent Information is located in the Entrance Hall and at the School Gate.
- The school website is www.stmatts.ie
- Parents are invited to assemblies, school concerts and to children's choir events etc.
- There is an Open Day for parents of new Pre-School and Junior Infants in May/June. Parents and pupils are invited to the school hall/Junior Infants Classroom and are welcomed to the school by the Principal and class teacher. It is also an opportunity to distribute the necessary documentation.

FORMAL PARENT TEACHER (P/T) MEETINGS

Formal timetabled Parent/Teacher meetings take place in November for First–Sixth Class and in February for Infant Classes. The Principal and Teachers agree the meeting schedule and parents are invited to sign up for the meetings in advance. The school aims to co-ordinate sibling meeting times. Teachers use a prepared written report based on school guidelines.

The purpose of Parent/Teacher meetings is to:

- Let parents know how their children are progressing in school
- Inform teachers on how children are coping outside school
- Establish an on-going relationship and communication with parents
- Allow 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 identify ways in which parents and teachers can support the child further

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.

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.

ADDITIONAL PARENT/TEACHER MEETINGS

Communication between parents and teachers is vital and is strongly encouraged at St. Matthew's.

Informal communication is important and it naturally takes place early in the morning between teachers and parents while children are settling into their classroom or at home-time. This informal chat is very important; however, 'meetings with teachers at class doors' to discuss a concern or a child's progress is discouraged on a number of grounds:

- A teacher cannot adequately supervise a class while at the same time speaking to a parent.
- It is difficult to be discrete when so many children are standing close by.
- It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to the teacher at a classroom door.

Outside of the Formal Parent/Teacher meetings in November/February, a parent may wish to meet with their child's class teacher, and a teacher may wish to meet with a parent.

When a Parent would like to meet a Teacher to discuss a concern or development:

- A Parent should give the teacher a note or speak to the teacher during an informal part of the day (morning time/home time etc).
- If a Parent rings or calls into the School Office to request an appointment with a Teacher, parents will be given a 'Request to meet a Teacher Form'.
- A parent must give a reason for the meeting. The template in the Appendix can be used.
- The teacher will then give the parent a time and date at which they will be available to meet the parent.
- These meetings generally take place immediately before or after school. They can only be arranged within the school day in exceptional circumstances.

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 down to a minimum. The school secretary can then relay messages onto children.

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 aim 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.

When a Teacher would like to meet a Parent to discuss a concern or development:

- The Teacher will give the Parent a note or speak to the Parent during an informal part of the day (morning time/home time etc).
- The teacher will give a reason for the meeting and a time and date at which they will be available to meet the parent.
- These meetings generally take place immediately before or after school. They can only be arranged within the school day in exceptional circumstances.

When a Parent would like to meet a Principal:

- The School Principal is very happy to meet Parents regarding enrolments, finances, secondary schools etc. However, when it comes to a concern or

complaint, a Parent must first approach the class teacher regarding the matter. A Parent may then speak to the Principal regarding the matter.

- If a Parent rings or calls into the School Office to make an appointment with a Principal, parents will be given a 'Request to meet a Principal Form'.
- If the matter has not been discussed with the Class Teacher, the parent will be redirected to meet the teacher first.
- A Parent must give a reason for the meeting. The template in the Appendix can be used.
- The Principal will then give the parent a time and date at which they will be available to meet the parent.

END OF YEAR REPORT

Schools aim to help parents to understand fully the evidence of learning that the school reports to them. In line with Departmental advice, the school uses an NCCA standard report template. 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

PARENTAL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Complaints are infrequent but the school would wish that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. 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 approach the **Staff Member** with a view to resolving the complaint
2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher, he/she should approach 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 Staff Member 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:
 - Supply the Staff Member with a copy of the written complaint and

- Arrange a meeting with the Staff Member, and where applicable, the Principal 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.
2. If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated, the Staff Member 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, the following steps should be followed:
 - a. The staff should be supplied with copies of any written evidence in support of the complaint.
 - b. He/she should be requested to supply a written response to the complaint to the Board and should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation to the Board and to be accompanied by another person to that meeting.
 - c. The Board may arrange a meeting with the complainant, who may be accompanied by another person to this meeting.

Stage 5

Following the Boards investigations, the Chairperson shall convey the decision of the Board in writing to the staff and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board. The decision of the Board shall be final.

TEXTS, EMAIL & SOCIAL MEDIA
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At St. Matthew's N.S., we want to communicate with parents and deal with queries and concerns in a fair, just and respectful manner. We would ask that if a parent has a query or complaint; the above procedure is adhered to.

Complaints and queries must not be made by approaching other parents via text, email or social media. The Board of Management would deem such communication as wholly unacceptable and against the school ethos.

If you have a concern, speak to your child's Class Teacher or directly to your child's Class P.A. Representative.

BEHAVIOUR OF ALL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE SCHOOL
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Positive and respectful communication is of high importance 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. 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 Gardaí must 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
- Staff Members are generally available to listen to a quick issue in the morning and after school. However, should a parent need to have a discussion or meeting, an appointment should be made at a convenient time for both parties. This ensures that issues can be resolved.

Signed: _____ **Chairperson of Board of**
Management Date: 27/1/15

Signed: _____
Principal Date: 27/1/15

Date of next review: September 2017

MEETING WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Date: _____ Child: _____ Class: _____ Parent(s): _____

Interview on request of Parent/Teacher (circle)

Reason for Interview:

Teacher's Input:

Parent's Input:

Any Other Information:

