

Donabate-Portrane



Educate Together

Parental Involvement Policy

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on

Chairperson's Signature: _____

Principal's Signature: _____

Review Due: _____

Donabate-Portrane



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Parental Involvement Policy

Introduction

This policy was reviewed by a sub-committee of teachers and parents in consultation with the staff and P.T.A. in April 2018 and has been ratified by the Board of Management of the school.

- Our school is a community where pupils, parents/guardians and teachers collaborate and work in partnership for our children.
- When parents/guardians 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 Toward Partnership in the Early Years*.
- In keeping with the Ethos of our patron body, Educate Together, our school is democratically run. This means that the Board of Management is democratically elected, and the involvement of all parents/guardians is sought and encouraged.
- A high level of parental involvement is a feature of our school and requires a commitment from parents.
- Parents/guardians, 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/guardians with specific skills and invite those parents/guardians to share their skills with us at a school and class level. We highly

encourage those parents/guardians, with the time and interest available to them, to do so.

- 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/guardians are invited to become involved in the school in many ways and at many levels, for example: serving on school bodies, fundraising, volunteering their time in the classroom, accompanying classes on school trips, helping out at school events - the opportunities are endless.

Benefits of Parental Involvement

- Children benefit from a greater diversity in the classroom.
- Children profit from more one-to-one attention.
- Parental skills may support and complement work already taking place.
- Parental involvement actively supports and encourages the child's learning.
- A wide range of activities is facilitated. This can be interesting and fun, and can lead to a broader and more holistic education.
- It provides 'good parent/teacher relationships and a better level of understanding between home and school' (National Parents' Council).
- It enhances communication, trust and respect between parents and teachers.
- Parents/guardians can learn about the curriculum.

- Parental involvement allows children to see that school is an extension of home and therefore fosters the idea of the 'school family'.
- Parental skills can contribute to the smooth running and development of the school.
- Parental involvement provides the opportunity of making lifelong friends.

How to get involved

- Parents/guardians are invited to consider their skills, interests and talents and availability in relation to classroom involvement and provision of classroom support. Parents can communicate this information to the class teacher directly or to the Class Parent representative. The Class Parent Representative is elected at the beginning of the school year. He/she acts as a point of contact between the class teacher and parents/guardians re opportunities for involvement in the classroom depending on what help is needed at any given time. The Class Parent Representative helps facilitate parents/guardians of children new to the school in becoming familiar with involvement opportunities.
- Parental Involvement is often about being able to provide a helping hand in one's spare time. It does not always have to be skill or talent based. Parents with free time who are willing to share that time in classroom support are a valuable asset to our school.
- Sometimes parental involvement is once off; parents may offer to visit the classroom to provide a talk on an aspect of the curriculum that relates to their work or life. Parents may be able to take time to accompany the class on a tour or assist with a once off activity.
- Sometimes parental involvement is continuous; parents may commit to a weekly time slot providing support in an area of the curriculum at the request of the class teacher.

- Every class has a Parental Involvement folder stored at the classroom door. Teachers can highlight the type of assistance the class requires and list dates for same. Parents can sign up for helping out on particular dates depending on their availability.
- Sometimes parents have skills that can provide school support rather than specific classroom support: Availability and ideas for same can be communicated to the P.T.A through the Class Parent Representative or to the school office.
- The school website is used as a communication tool in the school community. Sometimes requests for parental help or involvement opportunities are posted on the website. Details of class or school events which parents are welcome to attend are also posted on the website.

Guidelines for Getting Involved

- Parents come into the classroom at the invitation of the teacher by prior arrangement and for an agreed purpose. **Before volunteering their time parents (or any other volunteer) must read the Parental Involvement Policy and the Child Protection Policy. Following this they must sign an agreement form indicating that they agree to abide by these policies. All parental volunteers must comply with Garda Vetting requirements.**
- The happiness, welfare and safety of our children are our primary concerns. A child's personal history, academic achievements/abilities, behaviour/personality traits etc. are **strictly confidential**. On leaving the **school volunteers should never discuss the children**. Failure to respect this request is considered a serious breach of policy.
- Respect for the teachers in their professional capacity is essential.
- Discipline of children remains the sole responsibility of the teacher.

- All work will be supervised by the teacher. Class teacher remains with class during all classroom activities
- All office work will be supervised by the school secretary or a member of the Board of Management.
- Volunteer helpers should be conscious of, and sensitive to, the needs of the entire class, not just the needs of any one child.
- The highest standard of behaviour, good manners and language are expected.
- Punctuality and consistency are crucial.
- In the interests of safety, toddlers and younger children of volunteer parents/guardians cannot be accommodated during classroom activities.
- No fees are payable. Any expenses that you wish to reclaim must be sanctioned in advance by the teacher and must be accompanied by receipts.
- In the case of an ongoing project that takes place over a number of weeks, parents will meet with the teacher to discuss the activity. It remains the responsibility of the teacher to determine the appropriateness (e.g.: Is it suitable for the age group? Has something similar been covered already? etc.). The class teacher has the final say in the event that he/she feels that the activity x is falling short of its original aims and objectives.
- The school ethos must be upheld at all times. Our school is multi-denominational, co-educational, child centred and democratically run. Consequently, respect for all of the partners in education, namely children, teachers and parents, must be upheld at all times.
- Mobile phones must be switched off or on silent during pupil contact time.

- It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that anyone helping out on a voluntary basis is asked to sign an agreement to abide by the school policy on parental involvement in the school before working in classrooms, helping out with school events or accompanying classes on trips. Teachers must ensure volunteers are made aware of the importance of confidentiality.
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Parental Involvement Agreement Form

I have read the Parental Involvement Policy and the Child Protection Policy and agree to abide these while working as a volunteer in the school.

Name: _____

Signature: _____