



Scoil Barra Naofa, Monkstown Parental Involvement Policy

School Details

Scoil Barra Naofa, Monkstown N.S. is co-educational national school in Monkstown, Co. Cork, under the Patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork & Ross. There are currently (2018/2019) eight mainstream classes, with single-grade classes in each.

Introduction

This policy was drafted as a collaborative exercise between Board of Management (BoM), staff and parents. The BOM believe that a strong partnership between all partners in the school community can only have positive benefits for the students. A policy was first drawn up and ratified in 2007. The Board of Management, teachers, Parents' Association and all parents are responsible for the implementation of the policy. The policy was reviewed again in 2019 by parents, teachers and BoM.

Rationale

It is necessary to have a Parental Involvement Policy because:

- Parents are the primary educators of their child(ren) and are valuable partner's in their child(ren)'s education in the formal school setting.
- Parental involvement benefits pupil learning.
- Promotion of partnership between parents, teachers and the Board of Management is vital to the health of the school community.
- It supports the Education Act, 1998; Education Welfare Act, 2000
- It supports School Self Evaluation
- 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.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

"Scoil Barra Naofa, founded on 19th February 1872 is a Catholic Primary School of both boys and girls. The mission of the school is to provide a comprehensive, inclusive and accessible education of the highest quality, which will enable all our pupils to develop to their full potential as persons – spiritually, socially, morally, physically and academically. We are committed to providing a learning environment which is free from discrimination, threats, bullying, and harassment for all our staff and students. In a caring and respectful way we will affirm each person's self-worth and dignity and provide a student-centred education that nurtures the strengths, talents and potential of all."

School Ethos

Scoil Barra Naofa manifests a strong sense of community within the school and promotes a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, pupils and parents. The positive ethos permeates the activities of the school, creating social inclusion and cohesion with a happy, learning environment. Inspired by belief in God, Scoil Barra Naofa actively pursues respect, truth, freedom, justice and understanding for all."

As a Catholic school, we believe that the school is not an isolated unit but a union of many people who come together to give it its life and meaning. The triple partnership of home, school and parish is essential if the school is to live up to its Mission Statement.

We are committed to methods of evaluating and improving channels of communication between school and parents. Our evaluation shall be ongoing and continuous, as we make every effort to make parents feel welcome and valued at all times.

Aims

- Helping parents to develop a positive role in complementing and supporting the work of the school in educating their children.
- To build a school community committed to supporting all its pupils
- To establish procedures for the sharing of information in relation to pupil progress and attainment
- 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

1. Parents' Association
2. Board of Management
3. Vision / Mission and Aims
4. Organisational policies
5. Curriculum plans
6. Communication
7. Education Welfare Services, Tusla
8. Volunteers and Guest speakers

1. Parents' Association

The Parents' Association is the structure through which parents/guardians in the school can work together for the best possible education for their children. Scoil Barra Naofa has an active Parent Association who meet regularly (about every six weeks). All parents and guardians are welcome to attend these meetings.

The A.G.M. is held each September/October, and the Association is affiliated to the National Parents Council. The Parent Association also communicates regularly with the Principal Teacher.

The Parents' Association are involved in organising social events for the school community and many of these events generate funds for the school with the teachers of Senior School.

- Hallowe'en event
- Santa Sunday
- Summer Sports Night
- Ice cream to all children
- Co-ordinating reception for families Cafeteria on Holy Communion Day
- Supporting events that celebrate the graduation of 6th Class & providing gifts for the graduating class

- Supporting other school events, as appropriate – Healthy Eating Week, School Sports Day etc
- Supporting all parents through organisation of NPC information evenings / speakers
- Supporting policy development

The *Constitution of the Scoil Barra Naofa Parents' Association* was updated in 2018.

2. Board of Management

Section 15 of the *Education Act 1998* states that (1) “*It shall be duty of the board to manage the school on behalf of the patron and for the benefit of the students and their parents and to provide or cause to be provided an appropriate education for each student at the school for which that board has responsibility*”.

The Board of Management meets, on average, every six weeks during the school year (September to June) or as required. The Board is comprised of 2 direct nominees of the Patron; 1 Teachers' Nominee; 2 Parent Nominees and 2 Community Nominees.

The following persons have been appointed to the Board of Management 2016/2019: Don McAleese (Chairperson); Sylvia Coakley (Treasurer); Ciara Ní Bhuaiigh (Principal); Diarmuid Murphy (Staff Nominee); Fr. Con Cronin (Patron Nominee); Sinéad Flannery (Parents' nominee); Frank Lyons (Parents' nominee) and Eugene Harrington (Patrons Nominee)

BOM members are not delegates for their electorates. They have no obligation to report back to their electors or to take instruction from them on how to vote at Board Meetings as this would be a breach of confidentiality 8(a) constitution. . The BOM decide on what may be reported at the end of each meeting. The Principal usually communicates on behalf of the Board of Management with parents, via the PA, the school newsletter, or email /post – as appropriate.

Sub-Committees

The Board of Management often sets up sub-committees with specific mandates. Parents or guardians are often members of these committees. The committees are sub-committees of the Board of Management and the terms of reference for any such sub-committee are agreed by the Board of Management and clearly stated in writing. The accounts (if any) for these sub-committees are accountable by the Board of Management and the sub-committees report directly to the Board of Management annually, or as requested.

Scoil Barra Naofa currently (2019) has three sub-committees:

- Book Rental Committee
- Garden Committee
- Library Committee.

Additional sub-committees involving parents can be set up for particular tasks as required by the Board of Management. The members of any sub-committees should be Garda vetted through the school.

3. Vision / Mission & Aims

Parents/Guardians are partners in all aspects of school life and are facilitated to engage in policy making, classroom activities, extracurricular activities and any community events.

4. Organisational Policies

We include parents in the drafting of organisational policies, where appropriate. Appropriate draft policies are also discussed in Parents' Association meetings, and in consultation with the school principal.

Our parents have a role and responsibility in relation to the following policies and procedures:

- Administration of Medicine
- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Child Safeguarding
- Code of Behaviour
- Homework
- Special Education Needs
- Healthy Lunches
- Mobile Phone & Electronic Device
- School Tour Policy
- Substance Use
- Uniform
- Attendance Policy

5. Curriculum Plans

- **Beginning of School Year:** Class Teachers will communicate directly with parents (via letter / information session) where they can disseminate information regarding curricular and school related issues. This can include information on curriculum planning, homework and how parents can support their child in accessing the curriculum.
- **Parents as partners:** In Scoil Barra Naofa we value that staff and parents are partners in education. This is especially evident in positive parental involvement in homework or similar, through Shared Reading and other interactive activities: E.g. In certain classes a Teddy visits each home with a diary to be filled showing the activities. In other classes, parents are invited to view projects etc. These activities are beneficial in developing the parent/child/school relationship.
- **Parental Volunteers supporting the Curriculum:** Parents will be canvassed annually regarding their skills, areas of interest and strengths and a list of these are kept on file. In the event of a parent's skill set overlapping with the curricular plans of the class teacher, willing volunteers are used when required. (It is considered best practice that all volunteers be Garda Vetted, where possible)

Examples include:

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

Many parents volunteer with supervision E.g. Supervision at swimming etc.

- **Continuum of Support (Stage 1):** Teachers will concerns relating to a child's progress socially, emotionally or academically, will arrange a meeting with parents to discuss these concerns and strategies for supporting the child's access to the curriculum within the class setting. A Student Support File is used to record these agreed strategies and monitor.
- **Continuum of Support (Stage 2):** If concerns continue in relation to academic progress or social, emotional and behavioural competence, further support maybe required. The Class Teacher will seek the support of the Special Education Teachers in the school. A meeting is arranged with parents to discuss new strategies, which may include withdrawal as part of a group for relevant intervention(s). Parents are updated of their child's progress, and recommendations to continue/not continue with this level of support, through progress meetings arranged with the Class Teacher and relevant SET.

- **Continuum of Support (School Support Plus):** In the case of children with Special Educational Needs, where one-to-one support from a Special Education Teacher is recommended, parents are involved in the process of developing and implementing an Individual Education Plan for their child. There is an initial consultation meeting in September to discuss the child's strengths and needs and to establish the focus for the year. Class teacher, SET, SNA (where necessary) and parents are invited to attend this meeting. If required a multi-disciplinary meeting including outside agencies can be convened. Parents are given a copy of the targets set after this discussion. A review meeting is held in February and again in June to discuss progress and to isolate new focus if required

6. Communication

- **Parent Teacher Meetings:** These are held every November over two days. Parents are given an option of dates. Dates are set by the staff and management but any parent who is unable to attend will be facilitated at a convenient date.
- **School Report:** There is a yearly school report which is generated through 'Aladdin'. This is disseminated to parents through Aladdin Connect in accordance with departmental guidelines. Every school report is read and signed by the Principal. Reports are written in collaboration between class and support teachers.
- **Aladdin Connect:** Aladdin Connect enhances communication with parents and enables parents to stay connected and informed about their child's education by:
 - Ensuring that the school has their most up to date contact information
 - Keeping parents apprised of their child's attendance
 - Keeping parents up to date on school and classroom news via noticeboard messages
 - Allowing parents to view what items their child had for homework today
 - Keeping parents up to date on what library book their child is currently reading and if it is due/overdue to be returned
 - Allowing parents view their child's approved report card
 - Allowing parents to view their child's latest standardised test results
- **Newsletter:** A fortnightly newsletter will be issued from each school giving general information on school activities, parent classes/courses and upcoming events. Updates are also given through the school website / social media.
- **Emails / Notes home:** Communication outside of the school newsletter with parents is usually done via email. Individual notes may be sent home by the class teacher or through the homework journal, unless they are of a serious nature when they are sent by post.
- **Homework Journal:** SBN Homework Policy requires that parents monitor and sign their children's homework journal daily. The homework journal is also used as a means of communication between home and school. Teachers inform parents of any issues as they arise and parents are able to comment or raise an issue to the teacher through the journal.
- **Parent/guardian requested meeting:** Parents may request a meeting by contacting the school office. A meeting at a time that is mutually convenient for both parents and teachers will be arranged by the school secretary. Parents should give an indication of the nature of the meeting. They are informed of this procedure regularly through the school newsletter and the *Access & Visitors Policy (2018)* available on our school website.
- **Teacher requested meetings:** In the event of a teacher requesting a meeting, the teacher may request a meeting via a note in homework journal or the school secretary will contact the parent by phone to arrange a meeting. A meeting at a time that is mutually convenient for both parents and teachers will be arranged by the school secretary. Staff will give an indication of the nature of the meeting.
- **Open Evenings / Information Evening :** The Schools hold an open day for all, including prospective parents in October of each year. Parents and prospective parents are made aware

of this through signage, notifications in the Parish Newsletter, email, social media and flyers to local pre-schools. An Information Evening for parents of incoming Junior Infants is organised in May/June of each year. A reception afternoon for the pupils is arranged for the following day.

- **Notice Board:** An Information notice boards is located near the school gate. Parents will be notified regularly using these notice boards of activities, parent classes/courses and upcoming events.
- **Written Communication from parents/guardians:** Comments from parents can be given to the class teacher through the homework journal or by email.
- **Fundraising:** The Parents Association committee undertake fundraising activities for their own association and any excess is used for benefit of the school community. This is done in collaboration with school management.

7. Education Welfare Services, Tusla

Parents will to be made aware of the role of Education Welfare Services in Tusla, in communicating with parents whose children have missed more than 20 school days. This will be communicated to parents through information nights and regularly through the school newsletter.

On reaching 15 days, parents will be informed by automatically generated (through Aladdin system) text message that their child has been absent for 15 days and that Tusla will be informed at 20 days.

8. Guest Speakers

Guest speakers, including parents and grandparents who have skills and knowledge to share, may be invited to classrooms with the sanction of the Board of Management. As with all visitors to the school Guest Speakers are expected to sign in and sign out at reception. They will be accompanied by a teacher during their time in school.

The school is also supportive of parents who are undertaking further education and are seeking a work experience placement in a school. *See Work Experience Placement Policy*

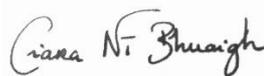
Implementation, Review and Communication

This policy was fully reviewed, approved and adopted by the Board of Management on 17/06/2019. The Board of Management will monitor the implementation of all aspects of this policy and amend as required.

The policy will be reviewed every four years or earlier, if necessary.

Next Review Date: Spring 2023

Signed:



(Principal)

Signed:



(Chairperson B.o.M.)

Appendix 1: Guidelines for parental involvement in classroom activities.

- Parents come into the classroom at the invitation of the class teacher / Principal by prior arrangement and for an agreed purpose. A volunteer form must be signed for Child Safeguarding purposes. (It is considered best practice that all volunteers be Garda Vetted, where possible).
- Parents who visit the school, in a volunteer capacity, should sign in (and out) at the school office, and where the appropriate ID lanyard while in the school.
- The happiness, welfare and safety of the children are our primary concern. A child's personal history and academic achievements are strictly confidential: it is important the parent does not discuss their thoughts on how a pupil might be doing [academically /behaviourally /socially /emotionally] with any party. (Uncertainties in this area should be discussed with the class teacher or principal only.)
- Respect for the teachers in their professional capacity is essential.
- Discipline/behaviour 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 if they are present.
- Parents coming into the classroom must consult with the class teacher / Principal before inviting other parents/individuals to participate.
- In the interests of safety, toddlers and younger children cannot be accommodated during a classroom / volunteer activity.
- The highest standard of adult behaviour and language is expected.
- Punctuality and consistency are crucial.
- No fees are payable. Any previously agreed expenses (such as budgets decided for the BOM sub committees) that a parent wishes to reclaim must be sanctioned in advance by the Board of Management, and must be accompanied by receipts.
- In the case of an ongoing project that takes place over a number of weeks/months, parents will meet with the teacher and/or Principal to discuss the activity. It remains the responsibility of the teacher and Principal to determine its appropriateness (e.g. is it suitable for the age group; has something similar already been done, etc.)
- The teacher has the final say in the event that he/she feels an activity is falling short of its original aims and objectives.
- 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.