

Home/School Partnership Policy

Nicker N.S.

Introductory statement

This Policy was developed in consultation with the staff, Board of Management and the Parents' Association of Nicker N.S. Its purpose is to provide information and guidance to parents and staff on the invaluable Home/School Partnership Approach that benefits the education of all pupils in the school. In particular, it outlines procedures for effective Parent/Teacher Communication, including Parent/Teacher Meetings.

School personnel and family members strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other and this approach is central to the realisation of our school Mission Statement. The 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.

Strategies/Procedures to Support the Home/School Partnership Approach in Nicker N.S..

- Annual General Information/Information Meeting for parents of 'new' Junior Infants – Generally during the third term.
- Formal Parent/Teacher Meetings
- School Reports are provided to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each pupil at the end of each school year
- As appropriate, additional meetings between Parent(s) and Teacher(s) concerning pupils who may have special educational needs and/or to discuss pupil progress, behaviour, etc
- Ongoing communication throughout the school year by means of family notes, calendar of events, website notifications, notes from class teachers/special education team teachers, 'textaparent.ie', homework journals, individual pupils progress reports, newsletters and arranged meetings between teachers and parents (at the request of either party)
- Homework sheets (Infant classes) and Homework Journals (1st – 6th classes) are used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers. Parents are requested to sign diary each night to certify that homework has been completed
- Through the Parents' Association and Board of Management, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of all school policies
- The school values and welcomes the participation of parents/guardians in school events e.g. school masses/concerts and special events.
- Parental involvement and participation is particularly encouraged in certain areas of children's education, such as sacramental preparations, social personal and health education programmes,

health promotion activities, sports events, green school projects, Science projects and other school initiatives.

Parent/teacher meetings

The aims of Parent/Teacher Meetings are:

- To facilitate an exchange of information among staff members and parents
- To let parents know how their children are progressing in school
- To let teachers know how children are getting along outside school
- To establish an ongoing relationship and communication with parents

Informal parent/teacher communication:

- Communication between parents and teachers is encouraged
- Parents are asked to please make an appointment (by 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/her parent is talking to the teacher at the classroom door.
- It is understood that from time-to-time certain 'sensitive/urgent' situations (eg serious illness of family member, family crisis) 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 it is essential that an appointment is made. Parents should not arrive at the classroom door 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.

In order to promote self reliance from an early age, we encourage all pupils from Senior Infants to Sixth class to walk to their classroom independent of their parents. It is at the discretion of parents of junior infants to drop children at the door of the main school building or at their classroom door.

We acknowledge the positive spirit of co-operation which characterises the vast majority of interactions between all members of the school community. It is expected that all interaction between parents and school personnel will be conducted in a non-aggressive, co-operative manner. At no stage will loud, aggressive interactions be allowed to continue. The Principal and

staff have the co-operation of the Board of Management in requesting that any adult, parent, or visitor to the school who is not abiding by same, be asked to leave the premises immediately.

If the aggressive behavior persists, in the interests of health and safety, the Principal has authority from the Board of Management to make contact with the Gardaí immediately who will deal with the matter.

Formal parent/teacher communication:

Formal timetabled Parent/Teacher Meetings take place each year. These meetings are an important opportunity for parents and teachers to exchange information regarding the child's progress and every effort should be made by parents to attend the meeting.

- Appointment are arranged with parents prior to the meeting. If unable to attend, parents should notify teacher(s) accordingly so that an alternative appointment may be made
- In the case of married but separated parents, requests may be made by both parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for parent/teacher meetings

End-of-year school reports

- An end-of-year school report is issued to parents approximately one week before Summer Holidays.
- All communication from the school will be sent home with the child/ren
- In the case of married but separated parents, requests may be made by both parents in writing, to have a copy of the end-of-year report posted to their address

Other parent/teacher communications

- The 'textparent.ie' service is also used to notify/update parents of significant/unexpected events during the school year
- Parents are encouraged to check Homework Journals on a nightly basis as notes/comments may be included by the child's teacher. Similarly, parents may use the homework journal to communicate with teacher(s). Parents are required to complete the appropriate section of the homework journal to notify the class teacher of their child's absence, including date(s) and reason for absence(s).

Parents are encouraged to

- Develop and maintain close links with the school. Address concerns promptly and directly with a staff member in the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect.

- Collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their child(ren)
- Emphasise the benefits and importance of learning to their child(ren)
- 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
- Become actively involved in the Parents' Association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes when the opportunity arises
- Notify the school at the earliest opportunity if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to their child and therefore may adversely affect his/her 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.
- 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 on these occasions if the need arises.

Staff members seek to

- Promote partnership and collaboration with parents in the interests of the child(ren)'s learning and holistic development on a 'whole school' basis
- Maximise the active participation of parents in their child(ren)'s education
- Raise awareness in parents of their own capacities to enhance their child(ren)'s educational progress
- Promote active co-operation between home, school and relevant community and statutory agencies in promoting the educational interests of pupils.

Health and Safety Issues:

Nicker N.S. prides itself on being an open, welcoming place for all members of the school community. However, in order to provide a safe and supportive environment for all who work and learn in the school the following procedures are in place:

- All parents and visitors should enter and leave the school building by the main door, at the front of the school. All visitors (including parents/guardians) to the school must report to the secretary's office to gain admission to the school.
- All visitors to the school must sign the visitors' book located adjacent in the secretary's office.
- A closed circuit monitoring/recording system (CCTV) has been installed outside the school building
- As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health and Safety of all members of the school community, parents/guardians are not allowed to challenge/reprimand another person's child on the school premises.

- If a child is unwell or has an accident and needs to be collected, school staff will contact the child's parents. Another parent will not undertake this duty unless asked by a member of staff.
- The willingness of parents to be involved in a voluntary capacity with such support activities as Sports Programmes (e.g. coaching), Healthy Eating Promotional Work, the Parents' Association etc is valued and very much appreciated by the school. However, in order to protect the privacy and integrity of all members of the school community, such volunteers are required to respect the confidential and/or sensitive nature of information which may come to their attention during the course of their work in the school
- 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 of Nicker N.S. is aware of its duty to provide a safe place of work for its employees. The Board of Management is concerned 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.

Procedures for addressing complaints

It is acknowledged that disagreements and/or complaints may arise from time-to-time. The primary thrust of the Home/School Partnership outlined above is seen as supporting a preventative rather than a curative response to the difficulties that may occasionally arise.

It is envisaged that all disputes/challenges should be addressed initially at a more informal level, usually involving contact and communication between parent(s) and teacher(s). Experience has shown that where a mutually respectful willingness among parent(s) and teacher(s) exists to discuss difficulties and to engage in a solution-driven approach to addressing such disputes/challenges, then the majority of such matters are resolved speedily and to the satisfaction of all involved.

Where a satisfactory resolution of the issues is not achieved at the more informal level, then parent(s) and/or teacher(s) may wish to pursue the matter further and involve themselves in a more formal approach to seek resolution of the matter. This more formal approach is outlined in the school's Parental Complaints Policy.

Teachers are encouraged and expected to discuss with the principal any issues or concerns which may arise in their classes, in order to work towards an effective resolution.

All staff members, parents, pupils and Board of Management 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, Board of Management 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

This policy was reviewed and approved by the Parents' Association Committee at a meeting

The policy was subsequently reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting on _____ its implementation was deemed effective from that date.

A copy of this policy was made available to all members of staff. Parents were made aware of the existence and availability of the policy by means of family note, and this policy is also included on the Nicker N.S. website at www.nickerns.com

Timetable for Review:

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