

Curragh Post Primary School

Introduction and Scope of this Policy:

This document sets out the policy of Curragh Post Primary School in respect of the relationships that the school aspires to develop and maintain with the parents / guardians of our students. It, also, outlines some of the valuable work carried out by our Home School Community Liaison Officer and the contribution that can be made by our Parents' Council.

Relationship to school's Mission / Vision / Aims:

Curragh Post Primary School's Mission Statement is as follows:

Mission Statement

Our School values the gifts and talents of students and staff in their development in an atmosphere of equity, caring and mutual respect. Can we achieve this? Yes, we can. Is Féidir Linn.

Ráiteas Misin

Luachanna ár scoil ná na buanna, taillainne agus fireann na scoile i bhfobairt san atmaisféar cothromais, comhbhách agus coimhease. An féidir linn é a dhéanamh? Is Féidir Lin seo a dhéanamh.

Définition de notre mission

Notre établissement a pour vocation de valoriser les capacités et les talents de ses étudiants et de son personnel dans leur évolution, dans un esprit d'équité, de sollicitude et de respect mutuel. Pouvons-nous accomplir cela? Oui, nous le pouvons.

This Home School Partnership Policy is another important framework within which “the development of whole people, empowered to lead effective lives in the wider society” is enhanced in our school. The dignity of each student, staff member and parent / guardian is honoured and reflected in school policies and structures, including this policy.

This policy is informed by the school's Mission Statement which commits us to preparing all students for the challenges of adolescent and adult life and to respecting the dignity, worth and individuality of every member of the school community. The school's role in the development of young people supports and is enriched by the active participation of parents / guardians in all aspects of their childrens' lives.

Rationale:

This Home School Partnership Policy aims to ensure that appropriate opportunities and procedures are in place to enable the school

- to offer a quality and holistic education to our students;
- to ensure that the education programme is challenging, suitable and appropriate to all students;
- to ensure that parents / guardians are as fully informed as possible about the activities of their children;
- to increase the parents' / guardians awareness of the school's role in the education of their children and
- to ensure that parents / guardians are encouraged to participate as fully as possible in the school related activities of their children.

Goals:

The school shall have in place appropriate means and processes

- to inform parents / guardians about the work of the school;

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- to involve parents / guardians in the work of the school;
- to inform parents / guardians about the work / activities and progress of their children in the school;
- to involve parents / guardians in the work / activities and progress of their children in the school and, ultimately,
- to support the role of parents / guardians as the primary educators.

Role of Parents / Guardians:

The school is a supportive organisation in respect of the primary educators – parents / guardians. Our efforts to provide holistic education, in its various forms, are most meaningful and effective when parents / guardians both understand and support our aims and activities. Parents / guardians are most effective when they do their best to ensure that

- their children are imbued with a positive attitude to education in general and this school in particular;
- their children come to school and all classes with all of the required books, uniform, equipment and materials, etc.;
- the “Guidelines for All Students” (see copy in Student Journal, on school website and posted to parents / guardians before the start of each school year) are fostered by parents / guardians with their children and followed by the students concerned;
- their children are aware of and fully compliant with the school’s Code of behaviour;
- their children work hard both within and outside school at their studies;
- they encourage their children to participate in a range of extra / co curricular activities;
- they attend parent – teacher meetings, parent information evenings and school events and
- they support the ongoing work of in school management, the Board of Management, all school staff, the Parents’ Council and, where appropriate, the Students’ Council.

Home School Contacts:

In this school, parents / guardians are encouraged to support the school and to see the school as a caring school that values their support and contribution. Where parents / guardians have concerns about any aspect of their children’s welfare, they should feel free to contact, as appropriate, the school principal, deputy principal, chaplain, guidance counsellor and / or year head. It is important to the school that parents / guardians and school staff work with each other and are seen to work together for the benefit of students, in a wide range of educational, personal and social and career / vocational activities.

School Home Contacts:

In this school, the main contacts between the school and the home are made through:

- (1) Parent – Teacher Meetings. There is one meeting per year for 1st, 2nd and 5th years, while there are two (one between Halloween and Christmas and the other around Easter time) for our 3rd and 6th year students.
- (2) Parent Information Evenings. Most years groups have one such meeting per year. The themes of these meetings vary from “Settling into Secondary School” (for 1st years) to “Exam Preparation / Study Skills” (for 2nd and 3rd years) while for senior students (5th and 6th years) these meetings normally focus on “Study Skills / Exam Preparation / Career Options and Choices”. Presentations at these meetings are normally made by the Principal and other members of staff such as the Guidance Counsellor and Year Heads.
- (3) School Letters / Newsletters. The school principal regularly sends out letters / newsletters / information booklets to parents / guardians so as to keep the entire school community as fully informed as possible about school matters – policy development, Board of Management

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issues, upcoming school events and activities, student achievements, etc. These items of correspondence are posted to parents / guardians directly.

- (4) The Students Journal. Student credits are recorded by Year Heads / Assistant Year Heads in the Student Journal for parents / guardians to read and note.
- (5) Student Reports. Reports are issued by the school relating to student progress twice a year (late December / early January and mid / late June). In addition, a report written on the basis of student performance in “mock exams by 3rd and 6th years is posted in March / April.
- (6) Ongoing contact between teachers and parents / guardians. Teachers / Year Heads are encouraged to communicate with parents / guardians promptly on matters of student achievement, student good behaviour, under achievement, misbehaviour, etc. These contacts may be by means of a note in a student’s journal, a letter home, a phone call, etc. Such contact may be followed by a meeting within the school attended by the relevant staff member, the parents / guardians concerned and, frequently, the student him / herself.

Open invitations are issued, through the regular school newsletter / principal’s letter or through special and specific notices for parents / guardians to attend and participate in as many as possible of the school’s activities.

The Work of the Home School Community Liaison Officer (Pastoral Care for Students):

In ensuring working, supportive and understanding relationships are developed between the school as an organisation and its staff with the parents / guardians of students and with the wider school community, the Home School Community Liaison Officer (Mr. Ciaran O’Toole) is a key and important person. The key concern is to ensure that the school provides an appropriate and supportive level of pastoral care for students as they move towards personal growth and holistic development.

The Home School Liaison Community Liaison Officer acts as a link between school and home, often calling to families with a view to maximising the benefit their children can derive from their education and helping parents, teachers and school authorities to understand one another better. His primary focus is on working with and supporting the relevant adults in the child’s life.

Some of the main work normally involves visiting the families of all of our new 1st Year students from September onwards, by prior arrangement if at all possible. While the child is in school, the Home School Liaison Community Liaison Officer can have a discreet but open meeting with parents / guardians about how the student in question is settling into school. He explains the work of the school and advises parents / guardians about issues they inquire about. He, also, explains how best to handle certain situations. Above all, he encourages parents / guardians to become involved in their children’s education and to work with the school to ensure that the students’ needs are met and that the student can work well in a safe and challenging school environment.

Where difficulties are experienced in making contact during normal school hours, every effort will be made to contact parents / guardians outside of these hours.

Occasionally, at the request of the Principal, the Home School Community Liaison Officer visits the families of students, normally by prior arrangement. These meetings normally arise when the school is particularly concerned about the welfare (personal, behavioural, academic or pastoral) of individual students and wishes to discuss the issues involved in a caring and supportive way with the relevant parents / guardians.

Where appropriate and with the full knowledge of the parent(s) / guardian(s) involved, information / concerns raised at these home school visits is shared with members of the school’s management,

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teaching and student support staff, so as to enable more meaningful support / greater understanding to be provided to the student(s) in our care.

Parents' / Guardians' Nominees to the school's Board of Management:

Parents / Guardians of students in Curragh Post Primary School elect two persons to sit on the school's Board of Management. It is important to note that elected Board members are not delegates to their electorates. They have no obligation to either report back to their electors or to take instruction from them on how to vote at Board meetings. However, subject to the necessary confidentiality of financial, personnel and personal matters, a brief report is normally given by the Parents' nominees (and occasionally the Principal / Board Secretary) to Parents' Council meetings.

The Work of the Parents' Council:

Among many other issues, the 1998 Education Act emphasises the role of Parents' Associations / Parents' Councils in schools. Some edited extracts of the 1998 Act are as follows:

- (1) "The parents of a recognised school may establish, and maintain from among their number, a parents' association for that school and membership of that association shall be open to all parents of students of that school.
- (2) A parents' association shall promote the interests of the students in a school in co-operation with the Board, Principal, teachers and students of a school and for that purpose may:-
 - (a) advise the Principal or the Board on any matter relating to the school and the Principal or Board, as the case may be, shall have regard to any such advice, and
 - (b) adopt a programme of activities which will promote the involvement of parents, in consultation with the Principal, in the operation of the school.
- (3) The Board shall promote contact between the school, parents of students in that school and the community and shall facilitate and give all reasonable assistance to parents who wish to establish a parents' association and to a parents' association when it is established.
 - (a) A parents' association shall, following consultation with its members, make rules governing its meetings and the business and conduct of its affairs.
 - (b) Where a parents' association is affiliated to a national association of parents, the rules referred to in paragraph (a) shall be in accordance with guidelines issued by that national association of parents with the concurrence of the Minister".

In general, Parents' Councils comprise a group of parents whose main concern is the educational development and educational opportunities of their children. The objectives of a Parents' Association are:

- To make parents aware of their role (rights and duties) in regard to the school;
- To inform parents about the education and progress of their children at the school, and in turn to inform school personnel about parents' expectations in that regard;
- To develop an active partnership within the education community and to ensure that parents are represented and participate at all levels of the education system;
- To assist parents to acquire the skills which their role demands and
- To seek to be consulted, and to participate at all levels in the decision-making processes which affect their children.

Examples of how these objectives can be pursued:

- Assisting at, or organising events and functions for the students at local level;
- Organising educational debates for students and / or parents / guardians;
- Organising Career Guidance talks and interviews;
- Fund raising for cultural, leisure and extra curricular activities and facilities;

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- Increasing understanding and co-operation by organising regular meetings with students, teachers, Boards of Management and parents / guardians, including social events;
- Circulating regular information to parents / guardians, regarding the work and activities of the Parents' Associations and the school;
- Exchanging information and reports with Boards of Management and other committees within the school community;
- Contributing to the process of school development planning and to policy development;
- Providing a forum and support for elections of Parent nominees to Boards of Management and
- Serving as a focal point for Partnership between the wider community and the school.

The objectives do not include:

- Acting as a complaints forum against teaching staff in areas that are the responsibility of the Principal or the School Board of Management or the Department of Education and Skills and
- Becoming solely a fund-raising organisation with no involvement in other matters of an educational nature.

The school wishes to have a vibrant and supportive Parents' Council, which normally meets once or twice a term.

Partnership Between the Parents' Council and the Teaching Staff:

While the school Principal and Deputy Principal attend Parents' Council meetings, the school Principal will invite the officers of the Parents' Council to meet with the teaching staff once a year. This will normally involve a brief, written report from the officers, informing the teaching staff of the issues raised by parents / guardians and will enable a short discussion to take place between the key adults in the lives of our students.

Review of the Home School Relationship:

The nature and quality of the relationships between Curragh Post Primary School and the parents / guardians who entrust their children to the school is an important matter for all of the partners and will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the Principal, the Board of Management and the Parents' Council.

Review Procedures:

The policy will be reviewed regularly and by the Board of Management at least once every four years. Any staff member who is unhappy with the content or the implementation of any school policy may request a review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible. The Parents' Council may request a formal review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible by the Board of Management.

Adopted by Board of Management: ???? 2015

Review Date:

February 2019

Specific Things I, as a Parent / Guardian, can do to support the school in its work for my child:

- Create an environment at home where education is valued as an important element of a young person's development;
- Listen to my son / daughter as he / she talks about school; praise effort and achievement and follow up, with the school, concerns or difficulties my child may be experiencing;
- Create a home environment that enables my children to believe that attendance at and participation in school is important and that absenteeism should be avoided;
- Avoid taking family holidays during term time;
- Encourage my child not to take on a part time job during term time. Work during term time increases tiredness and pressure on teenagers and negatively impacts on their ability to focus on classwork, homework and study;

- Ensure that all absences are necessary and are explained in writing to my child's Year Head;

- Ensure that the contact details in the school are correct and up to date – address, phone numbers, etc.

- Encourage my son / daughter to develop and maintain healthy relationships with his / her peers:
- Encourage my son / daughter to develop and maintain healthy relationships with school staff;

- Ensure my son / daughter is wearing the correct school uniform before he / she leaves the house;
- Create a suitable space for my son / daughter to do homework and study at home;
- Check the school diary weekly;

- Pay whatever small expenses, Book Rental, etc. are requested by the school;
- Attend and participate in Parent Teacher Meetings;
- Attend Open Evenings, Information Evenings, etc.
- Follow up Positive Reports Sheets sent by the school;
- Follow up Discipline Report Sheets or disciplinary matters, as reported by the school;

- Contact the school appropriately about matters that impact on my child's learning and development. This may be done by visiting the school in person (normally, by prior arrangement); contacting the Year Head, Deputy Principal, Principal and / or Home School Liaison Community Liaison Officer (Mr. Ciaran O'Toole) by phone and / or meeting him / her; emailing the school at principal@curragh.org, etc.