

BALLYKEEL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Introduction

At Ballykeel Primary School, all parents and carers are equally valued as part of our school community. We aim to provide pupils with the support and the environment they need in order to achieve their full potential. Children's learning is improved when we work in partnership with their parents or carers, and their wider family. We therefore believe in the value of close cooperation with all families, and regular consultation between home and school.

Rationale

Parents play a vital role in the development and education of their children. Parents and families have the primary responsibility for the development of their children's character, with the support of their school community. Parents have a primary influence on their child's attitudes towards school, their learning, and their future success. When parents are engaged and involved, then pupils, families, teachers, schools, communities and parents themselves benefit in the following ways:

- Increased pupil achievement
- Regular pupil attendance and punctuality
- Positive attitudes and behaviours
- Positive pupil-teacher relationships
- Positive pupil-parent/carer relationships
- Positive parent/carer-teacher relationships
- Clear understanding of pupils' needs
- Shared understanding of pupils' strengths and areas for development
- Successful completion of homework tasks
- Pride in the school and the community in which it is situated

School will therefore be enriched and viewed as a positive place to teach, learn and grow, with a shared culture of high expectations and standards.

Objectives

- To foster and promote a two-way partnership between home and school where all parents feel welcome and valued.
- To maintain a reasonable and manageable 'open door' approach so that parents are able to communicate with staff, both formally and informally.
- To provide parents with regular and frequent information about the school and their child's progress and development.
- To enhance the learning experiences of all pupils through the involvement of parents and the community wherever possible.
- To encourage parents and carers to take an interest and be involved in their child's learning.
- To work with parents in promoting positive behaviour at home and at school.
- To seek parents' views and opinions and act upon them.
- To provide support and encouragement for families suffering difficulties/crises, or barriers to involvement.
- To promote parental learning.

Involvement in Children's Learning and Wellbeing

- Parents and carers may wish to talk to class teachers before or after school on an informal basis.
- A 'meet the teacher' session at the beginning of each school year at which parents see the classroom and are given information they need for the year ahead.

- Bi-annual parent/teacher meetings. These provides opportunities to celebrate successes, discuss targets, review learning and progress and listen to parental views.
- Parents of new Nursery and Primary 1 pupils have a meeting as part of the induction process and their children meet their new teachers in June.
- Nursery and P.1 parents have a baseline interview at the start of each school year.
- 'Get Ready to Learn,' reading, phonics and numeracy information evenings are held for P.1 parents.
- The Incredible Years Learning Programme is offered each year to parents.
- Information sessions for parents whose children are in the 2-3 club.
- Parents are given information and strategies on how to support learning at home through help sheets, newsletters, information sessions and the website.
- An information morning on Accelerated Reader takes place at the start of each school year.
- The nursery use Seesaw to communicate with parents and to show what the children are doing during the day.
- Parents are asked to contribute to areas of interest in classrooms and contribute items such as junk materials.
- Loving Literacy and Mighty Bags of help for P.1 parents.
- Parents of pupils receiving SEN support are invited to meeting the SEN teachers. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs are invited to an Annual Review.
- A written report on each child's academic and personal development is made available in the summer term.
- Policy documents, and other information on the work going on in all aspects of school life, are on the school's website.
- Homework is distributed according to the homework policy. We value parental support regarding the completion of these tasks.
- The school's family support worker provides one to one and group support to both children and parents.

Involvement in the School Community

- The school's website provides a wealth of information on all aspects of school life.
- A monthly school newsletter, published on the website, shares pupils' successes and updates parents on events and information from school.
- Parents, carers and their families are invited to a number of events throughout the school year including:
 - Special assemblies or services e.g. Harvest, Christmas and Easter
 - End of year shows eg School Production, Fashion Show, Talent Show
 - Leavers assembly/prize day
 - Open Days for Nursery and the Primary
 - Christmas and Summer Fairs
 - Sports Days
 - Breakfast morning
 - Community Carol Singing and Ballymena Festival
 - Christmas Coffee Morning and Nativity for local senior citizens
 - Spring Concert as part of our collaborative shared education work with St Brigid's
 - Fundraising events such as the Sponsored Walk
 - Focus weeks in school to view children's work
 - Events held by the school's family support worker, eg coffee mornings, Couch to 5k, Mood Matters, craft classes, transition support session, lads and dads, mums and daughters
 - The school welcomes visitors and or various organisations from the community into school to either enhance teaching and learning, widen the experiences of our children or provide guidance or support to staff.
- In addition, the school encourages and supports parents to play an active role in the governance and management of the school. We have 2 parent governors who represent the views of the parents on the Board of Governors.
- The Principal leads a Parental Consultation Group which meets once per term. The views of parents are sought through this on all aspects of school provision, and a parent governor is also a member of this group.
- Parents are encouraged to support fund raising initiatives for school and charity.

Communication with Parents

We aim to be as open as possible with parents and we communicate with them in the following ways:

- The school's website is the main, and most up to date source of news, information, and policies.
- The app linked to the website which sends reminders as text alerts, and messages are sent to parents' email accounts.
- Meet the teacher at the start of each school year
- Homework diaries.
- SMS messages – texts are sometimes sent to parents to promote school events and to give reminders
- Telephone – messages can be taken and left for specific staff
- Ballykeel Bugle which showcases termly events and reports on school news and information.
- Nursery, P.1 and P.2 newsletters
- Letters and notes put into school bags
- P.1 to P.3 teachers' classroom windows
- Noticeboard at the top of the path
- Information in the entrance halls of the primary school and nursery unit.

Consultation with Parents

- The school will make every effort to consult parents and carers, both formally and informally, about their views on school life, children's learning and new initiatives.
- The school values regular feedback, and will make every effort to act on parents' and carers' views, wherever possible.
- The Parent Consultation Group is a forum for active and ongoing feedback and consultation.
- The home-school agreement, signed by parents and the school, details the responsibilities and expectations of all parties.
- Parents or carers are asked to keep the school fully informed about any health concerns, or any other issues which may affect their child, so that the school can make all reasonable efforts to meet the requirements of that child.
- Teachers (including the SLT) can be approached informally before and after school, and will always take careful account of any information forwarded to them.
- The school will seek parental views more formally through a questionnaire during each school development plan review.
- Outcomes of any inspection activity will be shared via the school's website.

Formulated June 2019

Next Review 2022