

ST KILLIAN'S SCHOOL HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION POLICY



Policy Statement

This document sets out the Home School Communication Policy for St Killian's School 2022-2026. This policy was formulated by the members of the teaching staff in the Summer Term 2022 to have a transparent and uniform approach to communication throughout the school.

Scope

This policy has been drawn up in consultation with the Board of Management, NEPS, and Staff of St Killian's School and has been approved and adopted by the Board of Management. The policy applies to all staff/parents/pupils within the school.

Relationship to the School's Mission Statement

"If this child doesn't learn the way we teach, can we teach him/her the way he/she learns, and can we extend his learning options?"

Dr. Harry Chasty

School Philosophy

Each child's uniqueness is valued within the school, which fosters a secure, caring and positive environment, to enable each child to develop to their full potential.

Introduction

St. Killian's provides a co-educational, interdisciplinary educational service to children who experience an educational disability/ies in accordance with the existing St. Killian's Enrolment Policy.

The school depends on grants provided by the Department of Education and Skills and the school operates within the regulations laid down, from time to time, by the Department. Within the context and parameters of the Department regulations and programmes, the rights of the patron as set out in the Education Act (1998) and the funding and resources available, the school supports the principles of:

- Equality of access and participation
- Parental choice in relation to enrolment
- Respect for diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, language and ways of life.

Multi-Disciplinary Services are provided through Progressing Disability Services.

The psychological services are provided by National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS).

Rationale

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The rationale for this policy is to ensure compliance with the Education Act (1998) the Education Welfare Act (2000), The Equal Status Act (2000), Disability Bill (2002), and the E.P.S.E.N. Act (2004).

Core Principles of Policy

This policy recognises that St. Killian's is a Special School and a range of communication approaches should be used in order to meet the needs of individual pupils.

This school is committed to a positive home-school relationship with clear, open and appropriate communication between parents and the school. Parents are recognised as the primary educators of their children. Teachers are recognised as professionals in education and work in partnership with the parents.

St Killian's recognises the importance of regular communication between parents and staff and the benefit of these for the children. Good home-school links are actively encouraged. There is compelling research evidence that involvement of parents in children's education is a crucial determinant of successful educational outcomes. When parents have the opportunity to feed back information about their children to teachers, it enables teachers to be more effective in the classroom.

We recognise that there can also be obstacles to accessing information. The timing of meetings can make it difficult for a parent who works long hours or has a long commute to work to attend parent-teacher meetings. Time constraints can impact on parent-teacher meetings which require time to explore issues in detail.

Informal contact with parents can be affected by the physical lay-out of the school and by the routines that are in place. If children are brought to school by someone other than a parent, i.e. school transport, this also reduces the opportunity for informal contact and means that teachers and parents have to make a deliberate effort to meet.

However, St Killian's sees the value in clear lines of communication between school and home for the benefit of the children and will endeavour to maintain these in the ways listed below.

Aims

- To build a school community that is supportive of pupils, staff and all members of the school community who serve the school.
- To establish procedures for the sharing of information in relation to pupil progress, needs and attainment.
- To enrich and optimise the educational opportunities provided for our pupils by accessing the skills and talents of all the school community.
- To ensure both staff and parents are in receipt of up to date, relevant information about their children/pupils that will help them to provide the best care and education for them.
- To promote a culture of partnership in the education of our children.
- To support staff/parents/children's wellbeing through promoting a healthy home/work life balance.

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Overview

The Class Teacher is responsible for all pupils' education and welfare during the school day. Therefore parents should communicate directly with the teacher if they want to pass on information or should an issue arise.

Class Teachers will endeavour to communicate and to respond to parent's communications during work hours.

The preferred forms of communication are The School Diary or The Junior/ Senior Class Communication Notebook as this provides a clear/ structured record of communication between both parties.

Children in Multi-Stream Classes will normally use the School Diary
Children in the ASD Stream Classes will normally use the Junior/ Senior Class Communication Notebook.

Email communication (using personal school email account only)/ or Aladdin may also be used. Whilst St. Killian's recognises that parents are busy and may email outside school hours, Class Teachers will only respond during work hours. All Class Teachers should be aware of this and reply during agreed times, between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm.

Management and Administration will communicate with staff and parents as and when required.

When sending an email to more than one parent, please ensure that you BCC each parent. This is for GDPR purposes.

STAFF ARE REQUESTED TO NOT SHARE THEIR PHONE NUMBERS WITH PARENTS. THIS ALSO APPLIES TO BUS ESCORTS WHO ARE ALSO EMPLOYED AS SNAS IN THE SCHOOL.

Other informal home-school communication at St Killian's include: phone call, video call, in person meeting. If a parent/carer needs to meet a teacher, they are welcome to do so. They should arrange an appointment by writing to the teacher or phoning the school. **It will not be possible to facilitate meetings without an appointment except in exceptional circumstances.** This is to ensure that the meeting is given appropriate time and attention for the best interests of the child and taking into consideration the teacher's responsibilities for the rest of their class and their learning.

Parents can also contact the Principal, Deputy Principal or the School Office if they have a concern which **cannot be dealt with** by the Class Teacher.

St. Killian's expects all communications between parents and staff to be respectful and constructive. Abusive or threatening communications, including in person, phone calls, online, or written will not be tolerated. All such communications will be reported to the BOM and dealt with accordingly.

Other types of home school communication

- IEP meetings and IEP review – pre-arranged meetings (in person or online).*
- Multi-Disciplinary meetings – pre-arranged meetings (in person or online).*

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- Year End Reports.
- Ad. Hoc Reports and Forms.
- Ad. Hoc. calls to home relating to incidents.
- Red behaviour folders/communication books.
- Contact through SNAs
- Contact through Bus Escorts
- Newsletters
- School website
- Board of Management
- Parents' Association
- Text-a-parent on Aladdin will be used in the event of a red weather warning or other school closures.
- Ad, Hoc notes/ messages/ emails issued by Management or the School Office.

Access to school communications

See Appendix A

Absences

Absences should be communicated to the school in accordance with NEWB requirements by filling out the absences form on the St. Killian's Website. A separate Attendance policy is available in school.

It is important that parents/carers inform the bus escorts if their child is not travelling to school on a given day as soon as possible. Escorts are not responsible for reporting absences to class teachers. This is the responsibility of the parent/ guardian.

Parents/carers should also notify the school if the child is to be collected early or if they are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

Related Documents/Policies

Child Protection Policy

Dignity at Work Policy

Visitor's Policy

Data Protection Policy

Attendance Policy

School Contacts:

Joanna Walsh	Office Admin
Sue Lenihan	Principal
Mary O'Connor	Deputy Principal

office@skillianscork.com

principal@skillianscork.com

deputy@skillianscork.com

Additional Resources/Information

http://www.ncca.ie/en/Publications/Reports/Reporting_to_Parents_in_Primary_School_Communication_Meaning_and_Learning.pdf

https://www.cpsma.ie/wp-content/uploads/files/_Secure/Newsletters/Newsletter_Nov_10.pdf

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Definitions / Acronyms

NEPS	National Educational Psychological Services
BOM	Board Of Management
DES	Department of Education and Skills
NEWB	National Educational Welfare Board

Policy Approval

This policy has been reviewed and accepted by the school Board of Management

Chairperson of BOM

Date

Policy Review

It is acknowledged and accepted by all parties that this policy may be revised/modified annually or more frequently as required in light of on-going evaluation of statutory requirements or situations that arise during the school year.

Next Policy Review DateJune 2026.....

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Appendix A

(A)	Parents married to each other & living together	Mother and Father have <i>equal</i> guardianship and custody rights over the child unless a court order, specifying otherwise exists e.g. a care or supervision order. Where necessary the school should seek a letter from the parent's solicitor confirming the content of the relevant section of any such court order to clarify its impact [if any] on the school.	Both parents are entitled to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be consulted in regard to educational welfare • of child • notice of formal parent teacher meetings • copies of school reports • notice of meetings with NEPS, SENO etc, • notice of in-school/after school programmes, • notice of school closures • notice of preparation meetings for the various sacraments /other meetings. One letter/communication to both parents will suffice
(B)	Parents married to each other, separated & living apart	In addition to (A) above, parents may have an 'informal arrangement' as to the custody of and access to their child/ren. Where necessary, schools should request details of any such arrangement. 'Living apart' includes situations where couples who have separated continue to live under the same roof as well as situations where one or other has left the family home.	Both parents entitled to information as set out in (A) above. A separate letter/communication should be sent to each parent.
(C)	Parents married to each other, living apart with a 'Separation Agreement' in place	In addition to (A) above, the 'Separation Agreement' will detail any formal arrangement between the parents in relation to custody and access. Custody of the child normally rests with the parent	Both parents entitled to information as set out in (A) above. A separate letter/communication should be sent to each parent.

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		<p>with whom the child primarily resides. Parents may also have joint custody. Both parents remain guardians of the child.</p> <p>Where necessary the school should seek a letter from the parent's solicitor confirming the content of the relevant section of any such agreement to clarify custody and access arrangements in relation to how these may impact on the school.</p>	
(D)	Parents married to each other, living apart & either one or both is in a new relationship	<p>In addition to (A) above, the fact that either parent is in a new relationship or has remarried has no impact on the guardianship or custody rights of the natural parents.</p> <p>New partners have no statutory rights in relation to the child but may have a role with regard to collection from school etc. Communications from the school to new partners should be limited to that which is agreed between the parents or that which has been provided for by a court order.</p>	<p>Both parents are entitled to information as set out in (A) above.</p> <p>A separate letter/communication should be sent to each parent.</p> <p>No letter/communication should be issued to new partners, unless there is express agreement between the parties or unless such is provided for in a court order.</p>
(E)	Parents unmarried & living together or living apart	<p>The school should co-operate with the arrangements in place between the parties regarding the child unless a dispute arises.</p> <p>The natural mother only has automatic right of guardianship. A natural father can apply to the court seeking an order granting him guardianship, custody and access rights. In circumstances where the natural father is asserting his rights, the school should seek a letter from the parent's solicitor confirming the content of the relevant section of any such court order to clarify any such rights.</p> <p>Alternatively, provided the father is named on the child's birth certificate, the natural mother can agree by statutory declaration to grant the father such rights whereby he is appointed guardian. The school should seek a copy of the statutory declaration. Should the natural mother and father subsequently marry each other, both then have equal guardianship and custody rights as set out in (A) above.</p>	<p>The natural father does not have an automatic entitlement to the information set out in (A) above.</p> <p>A letter/communication goes to the natural mother and to the father if he is in possession of either a court order or a statutory declaration</p>
(F)	Parents unmarried & in new relationships	<p>The natural parents' rights are as set out at E above.</p> <p>New partners have no statutory rights in relation to the child but may have a role with regard to collection from school etc. Communications from the school to new partners should be limited to that which is agreed</p>	<p>The natural parents are entitled to the information as set out in (E) above.</p> <p>A letter/communication goes to the natural mother and to the father if he is in possession of either a court order or a statutory declaration.</p> <p>No letter/communication should be issued to new partners unless there is express agreement</p>

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		between the natural parents or that which has been provided for by a court order.	between the parties or unless such is provided for in a court order.
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(Drafting Notes – Remove these lines when policy is complete)
(This section is used as required, delete if not required)

Appendix A

Appendix B