



Parent/Teacher Communication Policy

Introductory statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines to parents and teachers on parent/teacher meetings and parent/teacher communication in The Harold School. The family and home are central to the social and intellectual development of the child and the nurturing of Christian values. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other so that the child's education can be effective.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with the school
- Participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of the staff and all staff members in the school.
- Collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their children
- Share the responsibility of seeing that the school remains true to its ethos, values and distinctive character
- Respect the school community (staff, pupils and parent body) when communicating via phone, Aladdin Connect, email, social media (e.g. Class WhatsApp Group)
- Become actively involved in the school/Parents' Association

Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with Parents

- Meeting for parents of Incoming Junior Infants – May/June
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one (normally once a year)
- Parents receive school report of each pupil at the end of each school year
- Communication from/to the school /class teacher via Aladdin Connect

- Through the Parent Teacher Association, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies.
- Regular newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays, etc. The school newsletter is circulated to all parents/guardians via Aladdin Connect.
- The school website is used to give parents general information about the school and school policies.
- Homework diary 2nd – 6th class, used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers. Parents are requested to sign their child’s diary each night to certify that homework has been completed.
- Parents are invited to school events such as School concerts, school mass, Sports’ Day throughout the year.

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she should:

- Write a note via Aladdin or put a note in the child’s journal for the attention of the teacher (Please do not go through the office to set up meetings with teachers)
- Emails (especially through the office) are not appropriate for privacy reasons.

--Teachers will endeavour to follow-up on communication with parents promptly – however please be mindful that a teacher’s primary concern during the school day is their class so they will be unable to read Aladdin messages between 8:30am and 2:30pm.

If a parent wishes to consult with the Principal, he/she should:

- Make an appointment provided there has been a meeting with the class teacher first and foremost. An appointment to meet the Principal should be arranged through the school office via admin@haroldschool.ie.

Social Forums WhatsApp etc.

The Parent Teacher Association (with the approval of the BOM) has facilitated parental communication by setting up 'Class WhatsApp groups'. The Class Reps manage these groups so they remain in line with the school Communication Policy.

- These groups are intended as a convenient way for the P.T.A to distribute general school information ... (e.g. Fundraising information, reminders for important school events... e.g. Parent talks, Christmas concerts, etc).
- It is not necessary to respond to a post unless it is requested e.g. request for volunteers.
- The class WhatsApp groups are not discussion based forums - personal opinions or hearsay should not be posted on the Class Whatsapp.
- Disrespectful or aggressive language should never be used. The tone should be positive, collaborative, kind and supportive of the school.
- School staff or pupils should never be referenced or discussed on Class WhatsApp groups

Please note, class WhatsApp groups should be named as follows:

e.g. **1st Class, Room X, The Harold School.**

For individual concerns, in the first instance please raise these directly with the class teacher via Aladdin Connect / arrange a meeting.

Class Reps are encouraged to use the following text if a user deviates from the above:

'Class WhatsApp groups are not discussion forums. In line with the school Communication Policy and as agreed with the P.T.A. please make contact with the class teacher if you have a query/concern'.

Parent/teacher Meetings

- Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes (Circular 14/04). They will be initiated by the school staff and details regarding time, etc. will be worked out by the class teacher, in consultation with parents. However, if a parent wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by prior appointment with the class teacher.
- All meeting times for the formal PT Meeting will be set up via Aladdin Connect.
- Meetings usually take place in classrooms, additional teaching support rooms. The teachers collaborate in advance about the progress of individual children.

- Please Note : In the case of separated parents, a written request to meet their child's teacher(s) on an individual basis for parent/teacher meetings. This can be done by each parent to either (i) class teacher via Aladdin Connect or (ii) email to admin@haroldschool.ie

The aim of Parent/Teacher meetings is:

- To establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents
- To let parents/guardians know how their children are progressing in school
- To inform teachers on how children are getting on outside school
- To share information with staff about their child's learning at home.
- To help teachers/parents/guardians get to know the children better as individuals
- To help children realise that home and school are working together.
- To share with the parent/guardian the positive /challenging behaviour the child may have in school
- To review with the parent/guardian the child's experience of schooling
- To identify ways in which parents/guardians can help their children
- To discuss & collaborate regarding decisions about the child's education
- To inform the parents/guardians about assessment according to school policy.

Informal Parent/Teacher Communication

- Communication between parents/guardians and teachers is to be encouraged. If a parent/guardian wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the teacher (via Aladdin Connect/homework Journal) to request a meeting/phone call.
- Arranging parent/teacher meetings within the school day while children are in school is difficult. However, parents/guardians are welcome to speak to the teacher(s) at an appointed time. If a parent/guardian wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she should:
 - Write a note or put a note in the journal (or via Aladdin Connect) for the attention of the teacher.. (Please do not go through the office to set up meetings with teachers)
 - Emails (especially through the office) are not appropriate for privacy reasons.
- It is vital that the class teacher/school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to your child and therefore may adversely affect his/her education
- An exceptional occasion may occur where a parent needs to speak to a teacher urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The school/Principal will make every effort to facilitate the urgent meeting and to ensure that valuable teaching time for the pupils is not significantly impacted.
- In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians named on the enrolment form will be consulted by the teachers.

- Teachers will endeavour to follow-up on communication with parents/guardians promptly – however please be mindful that a teacher’s primary concern during the school day is their class.
- In line with DES guidelines meetings onsite with the class teacher at the school gate or class door to discuss a child’s concern/progress are discouraged on a number of grounds:
 - The teacher’s primary responsibility is the education & supervision of his/her pupils. A teacher cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent/guardian.
 - It is difficult to be discreet when so many children are standing close by.
 - It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to the teacher at a classroom door.

Formal Meetings for pupils with additional learning needs (School Support Plus)

Team Meetings with class teacher, special education teacher and parents/guardians for children with additional learning needs (SS+) will normally take place in September/October. If a parent wishes to discuss their child’s additional needs at any stage, they may do so. This can be arranged via Aladdin Connect.

Reporting to Parents

Standardised Tests :

Every year, children from 1st - 6th class participate in standardised testing during the month of May.

The Harold School sends out an information leaflet in order to help parents/guardians to fully understand what the standardised test results mean.

Report Cards :

(The NCCA has provided a range of standard report templates to assist schools in reporting information about the progress of primary pupils to parents/guardians, including information from standardised tests. The NCCA report card templates were developed through a process of consultation with schools and parents can take account of research commissioned by the NCCA).

The Harold School uses one of the report card templates (available at www.ncca.ie) for reporting to parents on students’ progress and achievement at school. These report cards are normally issued via Aladdin Connect in mid June.

The report cards provide for reporting in four key areas:

- The child's learning and achievement across the curriculum
- The child's learning dispositions
- The child's social and personal development
- Ways in which parents/guardians can support their child's learning

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for their children's learning and development.

The Harold School can help parents/guardians to support their children by sharing meaningful information (report cards) with parents/guardians about the progress that children are achieving in the education system.

This information on the report card draws on the different sources of evidence that staffs use, such as conversations with the learner, data-collection and documented progress on objectives and milestones reached in their short and long-term planning, examination of students' own self-assessment data, documented observations of the learner's engagement with tasks, outcomes of other assessment tasks and tests, and examples of students' work.

School Attendance

The Harold School encourages pupils to attend school regularly and punctually. The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded electronically on the Aladdin system by each class teacher on a daily basis. Pupil attendance and punctuality is monitored by the class teacher, school office. Parents/guardians are informed in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year.

- Parents are encouraged to notify the class teacher (via Aladdin) regarding pupil absences. (e.g. justified absence - medical appointment, explained absence - illness).
- Late arrivals and early departures are recorded in the daily book in the office and also on the Aladdin system. (Parents should notify the class teacher regarding this via Aladdin)
- Parents receive notification from the school office (via Aladdin message) after a child has missed **12 days of school**. The school is obliged to make a school wide attendance report to Túsla regarding pupils who have been absent for **20 days** or more. The parent/guardian is notified that this return has been made to Túsla.
- Where a child has missed 20 or more days in a school year and there is a concern (unexplained or unjustified absences, where attendance is irregular, where a pupil is removed from the school register, where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more) the school will inform the Education Welfare Officer.

Parents are strongly discouraged from taking pupils out of school during term time in order to facilitate family holidays.

Roles & Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians as Members of the School Community

The NEWB publication *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools* recognises the role of adults, including parents, in modelling good behaviour and states “The adults in the school have a responsibility to model the school’s standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with students and with each other, since their example is a powerful source of learning for students.” Parents should be expected to model the standards that students are asked to respect. In order to do this, they need to be familiar with the standards and to understand the importance of expecting students to behave according to these standards. The ways in which parents and teachers interact will provide students with a model of good working relationships.

Parents/guardians are expected to be:

- Courteous, respectful and kind towards pupils and staff at all times.
- Respectful of school property and encourage their children to do the same

Behaviour of all Stakeholders in the School

Positive and respectful communication is fundamental to our school. This not only extends to the children but to all the stakeholders e.g. the staff, parents/guardians, and the wider community. Anyone entering our building should feel safe to do so. While the behaviour of children in our school is of vital importance, adults in the school community also have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children.

It is important that all stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviour in the school. Examples include:

- All stakeholders are expected to treat each other with respect. Shouting or other aggressive tones (in discussions (meetings, calls) or written formats (emails/messages/notes/Whatsapps)) are not acceptable. If a stakeholder displays anger or aggression (in discussions or written formats (emails, Whatsapps, notes, emails) to another member of the school community, they may be asked to cease the interaction/remove themselves from the building. In certain cases, the Gardaí must be called. The school will remind all stakeholders that interactions (meetings, discussions, calls, emails) can only be facilitated when communication is respectful (not aggressive, intimidatory in tone.)
- All stakeholders will treat our children with the utmost respect & courtesy at all times.

- **Staff should not be asked to speak about another parent's child.** The staff of the school will respect your child's right to privacy so it is asked that parents respect other children's rights to privacy
- As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health & Safety of all staff and students, parents are requested not to approach or reprimand another person's child on the school premises.
- When stakeholders meet, it is important to respect that the time of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected.

Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act became operative on 1 November 1989. It is an important piece of legislation for BoMs and for those who work in schools, as schools and colleges were brought under the scope of safety legislation for the first time.

Complaint/Grievance Procedure

If you feel your concern (complaint) has not been addressed, please contact the school office to request a copy of the school's Complaint/Grievance Procedure.

Dignity & Respect policy in our school community and workplace.

Our school has adopted the accepted procedures in the policy to investigate and deal with allegations of harassment, bullying and other inappropriate behaviour as outlined in the IPPN document '**Supporting each other**', the INTO document '**Working Together**' and '**DES Circular 40/97 – Assaults on Staff in Primary Schools**'.

Definition of what we consider Bullying & Harassment in our Community.

Our School Team has adopted the definition of adult bullying as set out by the Task Force (2001).

Signed:

Declan Murray

Chairperson Board of Management

Reviewed and ratified by the BOM on September 22nd 2022

Chairperson : Declan Murray

