



***ST. TOLAS NATIONAL
SCHOOL
COMMUNICATIONS
POLICY***



St. Tola's N.S. is a co-educational, Catholic, primary school which strives to provide a well-ordered, caring, happy and secure atmosphere where the intellectual, spiritual, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and nurtured.

Parents are recognised as the primary educators of their children. Teachers are recognised as professionals in education and work in partnership with parents.

Regular, orderly parent-teacher communication is welcomed throughout the duration of the pupil's education at our school and home-school links are actively encouraged.

Members of the B.O.M., teaching staff, classroom support staff, and secretary strive to create an open and welcoming atmosphere where good communications are fostered and developed. Respectful communication between Teachers, Principal and Parents is imperative and is in the best interests of the children's education, care and well-being while in our school. Respect, honesty and acceptance of differing viewpoints is the basis for all good communications.

Aims of Communication Policy

- To build a school community which is supportive of pupils, staff and all members of the school community.
- 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 of the school community.
- To promote a culture of respectful partnership in the education of the children in our care.

The following types of communication are actively pursued in our school. Other activities may occur as appropriate.

- Informal parent-teacher contact is always welcome.
- Formal parent-teacher contact.
- Specially convened Parent – Teacher meetings – held in November each year.
- Meeting for parents of new Infants – May/June each year.
- Written reports at the end of each school year for all pupils. They contain results of standardized tests for pupils from 1st – 6th class.
- IEP meetings, in September/October and February, for parents whose children have assessed Special Education Needs.
- Regular updates of school activities – via e-mail or letter.
- Notices displayed on school doors and the outdoor notice board.
- School website – updated regularly.



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- Parents are asked to comment on new Policies and their views will be considered by the Board of Management
- Welcome Books/Prospectus' are given to all new entrants to our school. This allows the parent and child to view/discuss photos to familiarize the child with the school.
- Seesaw (online communication tool) for classes Juniors – 2nd.
- Google Classroom for children in 3rd – 6th classes. Homework bags for Junior and Senior Infants.
- Homework Journals, 1st – 6th class, used to relay messages. Parents requested to sign a diary.
- Shared Reading booklets provide a record of reading and allows parents to participate in the school's Reading Programme and comment on the child's reading progression.
- Parents are invited to all school events and celebrations – School Masses, Raising of Flags, Carol Services, Concerts, Whole school events.
- Grandparents are invited to Grandparents day celebrations.
- Parents are invited by the Parish to become involved in Sacramental Preparations.

It is important that the school is informed if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety for your child and therefore may adversely affect his/her education and/or behavior.

Roles & Responsibilities

Effective and respectful communication is a core value at our school. This principle applies not only to our students but also to all educational partners, including staff, parents, board members, and the wider community. While student behavior is crucial, adults within the school community also bear the responsibility of modeling the behavior we expect from children.

It is essential that everyone involved in the school community takes responsibility for their own conduct.

For example:

- All stakeholders are expected to communicate with respect and courtesy, both in person and via email. Shouting, aggressive tones, or irate emails will not be tolerated. Should any individual display anger or aggression towards another member of the school community, they may be asked to leave the premises. In some cases, it may be necessary to involve the Gardaí.
- All stakeholders must treat every student attending the school with the highest level of respect while on school grounds.



- Staff members will only discuss matters related to a parent or guardian's own child. The school respects each child's right to privacy, and we ask that parents do the same for other children.
- When meetings are scheduled, it is advisable to agree on a reasonable time limit for the meeting, and every effort should be made to respect this time frame. Every effort should be made not to exceed the agreed duration

What parents can expect

- Parent communications responded to within a reasonable time
- Requests for appointments responded to or scheduled within a reasonable time;
- Parent to be notified about single serious issue or ongoing problem;
- Annual formal parent/teacher meetings, with other meetings and calls within reason.

What parents should not expect

- Teachers returning a call after work hours
- A response to an irate email.
- Answering emails in the evening/weekends
- Access to the teacher's private phone number or email.

To increase mutual respect, remember

- Teachers will make mistakes; they're human, too;
- Teachers have their own families and lives; respect their privacy;
- We're all on the same team - your child's support team;
- Use age-appropriate language around children on the school grounds and at the gate when you collect them at the end of the school day;
- Recognise that we won't always agree, but we promise to listen;
- Speak positively in front of your child.

Parent/Teacher meetings

Formal Parent-Teacher meetings are held in November outside of school hours. Parents are invited to select a specific time if they have particular requirements. Children's times are arranged, bearing in mind that siblings need to be allocated consecutive times. Parents are also allocated times to meet with SEN/ASD Class teachers – if applicable. If the selected date does not suit a family, a mutually acceptable time and date is agreed between Parents and Teachers. If custody of a child is shared, requests can be made by both parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for parent/teacher meetings.

The aims of Parent/Teacher meetings are:

- To let parents know how their children are progressing in school



- To inform teachers on how children are coping outside school
- To establish an ongoing relationship and communication with parents
- To help teachers/parents get to know the children better as individuals
- To help children realise that home and school are working together

A Teacher/Principal or a Parent may request a parent-teacher meeting at any time to discuss teaching, learning or behaviour management issues. Every effort will be made to arrange a meeting at the earliest possible opportunity. Parents can phone the office and a mutually acceptable time can be arranged.

Informal Parent/Teacher Meetings

Respectful communication between Parents and Teachers/Principal is always encouraged. However, arranging parent/teacher meetings within the school day while children are in school is difficult. Meetings with the class teacher at the class door to discuss a child's concern/progress is discouraged on a number of grounds

- To enable all concerned to benefit from a meeting, it is necessary to give notice of the meeting so relevant information can be collected.
- It interferes with teaching time for the class.
- A teacher cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent.
- It is difficult to be discrete when so many children are close by.
- It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to the teacher at a classroom door.

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.

School Website: www.sttolasdelvin.com

Principal's information notices and Class activities are made available through the school website.

Parents who are registered for email communication also receive newsletters and bulletins directly to the email address provided. It is important that school is informed if parents change their e-mail address.

The website presents and stores important school policy documents which are therefore publicly available. The website provides a communication facility for parents and others who wish to contact the school or inform themselves about school activities. It is updated regularly. The website has an event calendar which is regularly updated, a school news section, sections for class activities, a section for Parents and photo galleries. Parents and pupils are encouraged to visit the school website regularly to keep up to date with what's new in school.



Complaints Procedure

An agreed complaints procedure involving all the representatives in the education process (teacher unions, managerial bodies and DES) was revised in January 2024 and the steps necessary to resolve school-related complaints are clearly laid out. This agreed procedure for dealing with complaints is attached. (See Appendix A).

Registration of New Entrants

Enrolment forms are available on the school website and in the Office. Prospective Parents are invited to enroll children in February each year. Parents of all new entrants are invited to attend an open afternoon in May/June of the year the child will commence in the school.

This afternoon is important as it

- Allows the children to become familiar with the school before September and to meet their new teacher and the Principal.
- Allows new Parents to meet the class teacher and the Principal and to become familiar with the school.
- Allows the class teacher to speak to the Parents about general organization within the classroom, the subjects covered and various other useful topics of information.
- Gives Parents an opportunity to ask questions.
- Allows Principal to speak about the school, its general organization, policies and practices and to ensure Parents and children feel welcome in the school.
- Allows Parents to sign up for the Book Rental scheme if they wish.

Annual Progress Reports:

Detailed pupil progress during the academic year is issued in June. Teachers spend quite some time collating these reports. Parents are advised to keep these reports in a safe place for reference as they may be required if the child changes school. They are also useful in building a profile of a pupil's learning strengths and weaknesses.

A designated communications notice board

School and community information is situated near the carpark door of the school and important notices may occasionally be posted on the front door.

Absences

Absences must be notified in writing to the school in accordance with National Education Welfare Board requirements. A separate attendance policy is available on the school website.

Individual parents are encouraged to assist at the various events organised for parents and pupils throughout the school year.

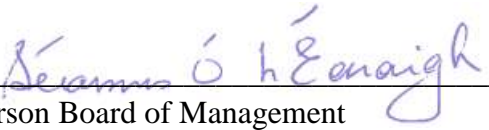


Board of Management

St. Tola's N.S. has a properly constituted Board of Management composed of nominees of the trustee, community, teachers and parents. The Board of Management meets on a regular basis.

Ratification and Communication

The Board of Management ratified this revised policy at its meeting on 26th February 2025. Copies of the policy will be circulated and communicated to all members of the staff, parents and guardians. A copy will be available on the school website.

Signed: 
Chairperson Board of Management
Date: 26th February 2025

Signed: 
Principal



Appendix A:

Revised Parental Complaints Procedure

**Note:**

- A copy of this procedure will be available for parents/legal guardians on the school website and/or on request from the school. This procedure comes into effect on the 1st of January 2024.
- Under the Education Act 1998, legally, all schools are managed by the school's Board of Management, on behalf of the school patron.

Purpose/Objective

The parental complaints procedure was revised and agreed by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the management bodies of primary schools, the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association, the Church of Ireland, An Foras Pátrúnachta, the Muslim Primary Education Board, Educate Together and the National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education in 2023. It is designed to provide an open and clearly defined process to facilitate parents/legal guardians in raising concerns about their own child/children in an agreed, fair and transparent manner.

It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a child's life and as such from time-to-time concerns may arise which they may need to engage with the school. It is expected that engagement will be timely, courteous and resolution focused to ensure that the important relationship between the parent and school can be preserved and respected. It is expected that all parties concerned will engage proactively.

Procedural Points

The procedure is a staged procedure where every effort is made to resolve matters at the earliest possible stage. In most cases, concerns will be dealt with either informally or formally at the earlier stages of the procedure. Where it has not been possible to agree a resolution at the earlier stages, the procedure does allow for the escalation of the matter to the Board of Management. This procedure sets out, in four stages, the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed. It is expected the parties will follow each stage in sequence.

- Where the term written correspondence is used, this refers specifically to a letter or email correspondence from a parent/legal guardian(s).
- Only complaints about a teacher which are written and signed by a parent/legal guardian, and which relate to their own child, will be investigated.
- Where a complaint raised by a parent/legal guardian is deemed by the employer/board of management to relate to the following, this procedure will not apply;
 - matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
 - frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
 - complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.
- In all circumstances, any form of written correspondence for the attention of the Board of Management must be supplied to the Chairperson of the board of management **only**. Any deviation from this could be deemed prejudicial and as acting outside the scope of this agreement.
- Days in this procedure refer specifically to school days.** A school day is a day on which the school is in operation. Holiday periods, school closures and leaves of absences are not counted as school days for the purpose of this procedure.
- Group/collective complaints are not provided for and each parent/legal guardian raising a concern will be dealt with separately through this process.
- The procedure is a domestic forum and accordingly, neither management nor the INTO intends that there would be legal representation at any stage.
- Issues should be raised in a timely manner. It is in the best interests of the child that issues are raised to achieve early resolution at the earliest possible stage with the teacher, ideally while the pupil is in that teacher's class.



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