

# Scoil Mhuire gan Smál, Cill Choirle

# Parental Involvement

# Policy



## Policy Details

Name of Policy: Parental Involvement policy

Date Developed: January 2020

Signed by

Date Reviewed:

Chairperson: *Cereldine K.*

Ref Code:

Principal: *Danne Kirby*

Edition: 1

Date commenced: *30/01/2020*

## **1. Policy Statement**

Our school is a community where pupils, parents\*, and teachers collaborate and work in partnership for our children. When parents decide to send their child to our school, they are entering a very important relationship, one that is characterised by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect, and a willingness to negotiate.

Parents are invited to become involved in our school in many different ways, including serving on school bodies (Board of Management, Parents' Association, Do This In Memory Team, Junior Entrepreneur), involvement with sacramental preparation, feasts and festivals such as Halloween, Christmas, Catholic Schools Week, school tours, sports evening and other such events. Parents as a group have a range of talents, abilities and skills that have the potential to enrich and extend the educational opportunities provided for our children.

*\*The term parent here includes foster parent, guardian, adult acting in loco parentis, or who has a child in his/her care subject to any statutory power or order of a court.*

## **2. Benefits of Parental Involvement**

There are many benefits of parental involvement, including:

1. Children benefit from greater diversity in the classroom.
2. Parental skills may support and complement work already taking place.
3. Parental involvement actively supports and encourages the child's learning.
4. A wide range of activity is facilitated. This can be interesting and fun, and can lead to a broader and more holistic education.
5. It promotes "good parent/teacher relationships and a better level of understanding between home and school" (National Parents' Council.)
6. It enhances communication, trust and respect between parents and teachers.
7. Parents can learn about the Primary School Curriculum.
8. Parental involvement allows children to see that school is an extension of home and therefore fosters the idea of the 'school family.'
9. Parental skills can contribute to the smooth running and development of the school.
10. Parental involvement provides the opportunity of making lifelong friends.

## **3. Policy Scope**

This policy applies to all pupils, parents/guardians, and staff members of Scoil Mhuire gan Smál.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

In Scoil Mhuire gan Smál, we aim to provide quality learning experiences through a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which will help each pupil develop their potential as a unique individual in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy. It is agreed that a high standard of behaviour requires a strong sense of community within our school and a high level of co-operation among staff and between staff, parents and pupils.

Respect for the professional role of the teacher and the statutory responsibilities of the Principal, Patron and the Board of Management is of the utmost importance. The happiness, welfare and safety of the children are our primary concern. Discipline/behaviour of pupils in school remains the responsibility of the teacher. Parents who participate in school activities should be conscious of and sensitive to the needs of the entire class/group, not just the needs of their own child. The highest standard of adult behaviour and language is expected. Our school ethos must be upheld at all times.

The adults encountered by the children attending Scoil Mhuire gan Smál have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour in their dealings with the pupils, with each other and with the staff of Scoil Mhuire gan Smál as their example has an important influence on the children.

### **As adults we should aim to;**

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Promote positive behaviour, through example, honesty and courtesy.
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment.
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability, disability.
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.
- To discourage physical and verbal aggression and encourage pupils to “keep feet, hands and unhelpful comments to yourself”.

## **5. Behaviour that contravenes the principle of respect:**

- 5.1 The overriding principle governing our policies is respect – respect for ourselves and respect for each other.
- 5.2 Scoil Mhuire gan Smál defines unacceptable behaviour as that which contravenes this.
- 5.3 As outlined in our safety statement, “where an employee feels at risk or threatened by a particular person on school property, this must be drawn to the Board of Management’s attention.
- 5.4 The Board of Management will undertake to ensure that in such circumstances all appropriate measures will be taken to protect employees”.
- 5.5 The provisions of Circular 40/97 on “Assaults on Staff in Primary School” will be utilised as appropriate.
- 5.6 The Department of Education and Skills acknowledges that during the course of their work, school staff may be at risk from violence in the form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults or other forms of intimidation. Whether these take place on school property or in out-of-

school locations, the procedures to address this unacceptable behaviour will apply. “The Minister for Education is anxious that every effort be made to create and maintain a culture in schools where acts of violence are not tolerated and where incidents, when they do occur, are effectively and speedily dealt with” (ref. Circular 40/97).

## **It is in this context that the Department of Education and Skills highlights (ref. Circular 40/97):-**

- The Board of Management endeavours to provide a safe system of work for all staff.
- The Boards will consider and implement measures which would prevent or minimise the risk of assault to the employees of the Board, such as the Code of Behaviour and Discipline for pupils, the Staff Relations Policy and the Safety Statement. In the event of an assault on an employee, Circular 40/97 states that “Boards should develop a clearly defined procedure to be implemented. This policy should include a clear commitment on the Board’s part to be fully supportive of staff who have been subject to violence”.

## **6. Procedures to address unacceptable behaviour:**

Assault comes in many forms, for example, it may be physical, verbal or sexual. It is accepted that judgement will have to be exercised in each individual case – however, the following elements may be included in each procedure:

### **6.1 Verbal Assault:**

- 6.1.1 The incident should be immediately reported to the principal teacher/other colleague. Where the incident concerns a verbal assault on the principal, the chairperson is informed.
- 6.1.2 The details are recorded in an Incident Book kept for this purpose in the workplace. Situations in which members have been intimidated or threatened with physical violence will also be recorded. Threats of physical assault may be reported to the Gardaí.
- 6.1.3 Where the assault is by a pupil, the matter will be dealt with, following procedures outlined in our Code of Discipline and Behaviour Policy
- 6.1.4 Where the assault is committed by a parent/guardian, the Principal/Chairperson/Board may decide to inform the parent/guardian in writing, not to make direct contact with the teacher/school pending full consideration of the matter by the Board. Subsequently the Board will correspond with the parent/guardian. This statement may include:
  - *That the Board considers the assault unacceptable*
  - *What action the Board intends to take*
  - *Outlining what pre-conditions should be met before access to the school is restored.*
- 6.1.5 If the verbal assault is considered extreme, then the matter may be reported to the Gardaí.

### **6.2 Physical/Sexual Assault:**

- 6.2.1 In the case of a physical assault or sexual assault, the incident should be immediately reported to the principal teacher/other colleague. This report would normally be made by the teacher who was assaulted.
- 6.2.2 Where necessary, immediate medical assistance should be sought.

- 6.2.3** The BOM will be notified of the incident and where necessary an emergency meeting of the Board will take place. The Board should notify its legal advisors of the assault. The Board's insurance company should also be notified.
- 6.2.4** Where the assault is committed by a parent/guardian, the parent/guardian will be immediately instructed in writing not to make direct contact with the teacher/school pending full consideration of the matter by the Board. Subsequently the Board will correspond with the parent/guardian stating:
- *That the Board considers the assault unacceptable*
  - *What action the Board intends to take*
  - *Outlining what pre-conditions should be met before access to the school is restored.*

## **7. Social Media and Parents**

- 7.1 If parents have concerns about any aspect of their child's school life, these concerns should be addressed in person with their child's class teacher and/or principal. Social media is not the appropriate forum for this.
- 7.2 We recognise that parents may use social media to communicate with each other. However, postings on social media should not contravene a teacher's professional or personal integrity, or the good name of our school, staff or our pupils.
- 7.3 Any on-line behaviour which infringes on a teacher's professional or personal reputation, or the good name of our school, staff or pupils, will be addressed by management and guided by school policies in addressing and rectifying any issues.

## **8. Communication:**

- 8.1 The overriding principles guiding any meeting between parents and school staff are respect and tolerance.
- 8.2 The annual parent teacher meeting is a brief meeting providing an ideal opportunity for parents and teacher to discuss the progress of the student in school. Parents who require a more in-depth discussion with the teacher should make an appointment to meet at an appropriate time to facilitate this discussion.
- 8.3 Parents should make an appointment through the school office to meet with their child's teacher or principal. In this way, the communication is between the parent and the class teacher and/or principal. In making an appointment, it is best if parents give an indication of the purpose of the meeting.
- 8.4 Where behaviour contravenes the principles of respect and tolerance, a teacher/the principal will seek the presence of another staff member. Meetings will be terminated where there is aggressive behaviour, unacceptable language or unfair/untrue accusations.
- 8.5 Parents may not overtly or covertly record meetings.

## **9. Development, Monitoring and Review**

- 9.1 This policy was written by a process of collaboration involving the school management, staff, Students' Council and the Parents' Association.
- 9.2 The operation of the procedures outlined in this policy will be reviewed, and if necessary amended every 3 years, or earlier, if required.
- 9.3 This policy was circulated to all teaching staff. Furthermore a copy of this policy will be posted on the school website and will be included in the Administrative Policies folder in the school office where it can be inspected by parents.

## **References**

- INTO "Working Together Document, 2000 Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Dept. of Education Circular 40/97 "Assaults on Teachers/School Employees"