



Communications within the School Policy

Introductory Statement:

The In-School Management team of Dalkey School Project NS (DSPNS) conducted an initial review of the Communications Policy. Staff members, the Board of Management and the Parent Teacher Association were then consulted. The Communications Policy should be read in conjunction with other Policies, such as the Code of Behaviour and the Complaints Procedure.

Rationale:

It is generally accepted that good communication between all of those involved in the school i.e. teachers, special needs assistants (SNAs), children, parents/guardians, and ancillary staff is a vital part of our school.

Relationship of Communications Policy to characteristic spirit of the school

The four principles of Educate Together inform the characteristic spirit of the school:

- Multi-denominational i.e. all children having equal rights of access to the school, and children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds being equally respected
- Co-educational and committed to encouraging all children to explore their full range of abilities and opportunities
- Child centred in their approach to education
- Democratically run with active participation by parents in the daily life of the school, whilst positively affirming the professional role of the teachers

Dalkey School Project seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are valued. This work can best be done where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, pupils and parents.

Aims

DSPNS aims to promote and support sound communication structures in the following areas:

1. Staff Communications
2. Communication with Parents/Guardians
3. Within the wider school community (Board of Management & Parent Teacher Association) and staff, parents/guardians

All members of the school community are expected to familiarise themselves with the Communication Policy. It is considered that everyone has a responsibility to make themselves aware of where and how to seek information and updates as the need arises and should seek to keep themselves informed.

1. Staff Communications

- The school has adopted '*Working Together - Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations*'. A copy is in the Principal's Office and may be downloaded from the Irish National Teachers' Organisation website.
- In addition to the formal communication that takes place during staff meetings, the Principal undertakes to make herself available to any member of staff who wishes to discuss school matters with her.
- The whiteboard in the staffroom will be used for general updates and information.
- Emails are used for circulating minutes of staff meetings and various correspondence. Cubby holes will be used to circulate hard copies where necessary.
- Principal will inform staff of emergencies, such as school closure, through text.

2. Communication with Parents/Guardians

Joining the School Community: Parents of children who are new to the school receive a copy of our booklet for new parents /guardians which includes an outline of the history of the school, information on various structures within the school and points about the day to day school life. They also receive a copy of the school Code of Behaviour, Acceptable Technology Use Policy and a Calendar of the year.

School Calendar

The Calendar outlines the dates of the three terms, mid-term breaks etc. It is issued to all parents/guardians in September and is available on the school website (www.dspns.ie).

Child Progress:

All parent/teacher contact is considered to be extremely valuable in a child's education. Parents/guardians should ensure that they meet with their child's teacher at least once a year to discuss their child's progress, at a mutually convenient time.

- Individual parent/teacher meetings are held in November each year.
- Reports are issued on children's progress in all classes in June.
- Staff may use homework notebooks to communicate with parents/guardians.

Communication with Teacher

- Class information meetings are usually held in September to provide an opportunity for parents/guardians to meet the class teacher and receive an overview of the plan for the year, structures etc.
- Informal communications between teachers and parents/guardians may take place should the need arise at drop-off/pick up time.
- Teachers are available to speak to parents/guardians by appointment. These appointments are necessary in order that the teacher may have the opportunity to make alternative arrangements for his/her class, and also may have time to gather together information about the child. Appointments can be made through the school secretary, in person at drop off/pick up time or by using the homework journal.
- Teachers may communicate with parents/guardians by phone if the need arises.

General Communication

- Newsletters with information on events and school activities are circulated regularly and are also available on the blog section of the school website. Members of the school community are welcome to submit articles for the newsletter by email to the office info@dspns.ie
- Textparent is used for reminders and emergency updates.
- Individual teachers may send letters pertinent to their class re class trips or events. Parents/guardians should check school bags regularly for such communications.
- Notice boards for parents/guardians are at the upstairs entrance lobby and by the 6th class entrance.

Absences

- All absences should be explained by a written note or entry in the homework journal on the first day back at school. It is suggested that if the absence is over a day or two, the school should be contacted by telephone or email.

3. Wider School Community

Board of Management (BoM):

- The staff representative on the Board of Management and the principal liaise between staff and the BoM.
- The BoM prepares a summary report after each meeting which is disseminated with the school newsletter to staff and parents/guardians.
- Where appropriate, parents/guardians can communicate with the BoM by letter and this correspondence will generally be considered at the next scheduled BoM meeting. It should be noted that the Complaints Procedure should be followed if a complaint is being made, where the BoM is only involved when resolution with the teacher and the principal have been exhausted.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA):

- The staff representatives on the PTA and the principal liaise between staff and PTA.
- The PTA communicates with parents/guardians through the school newsletter, the website and text messages
- The PTA has representatives in each class who are responsible for communicating with their class about PTA events and seeking volunteers

Policies & Procedures

Policies & Procedures are published on the school website following their review. It is reported in the BoM Summary Report when a policy is reviewed.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the BOM on _____ (date)

Signed _____ Chairperson

Date _____

Signed _____ Principal

Date _____

Review Date _____