

Taney Parish Primary School

Sydenham Villas, Dundrum, Dublin 14.



POLICY DOCUMENT

"The school is above all a happy school, a place where pupils enjoy coming each morning. A caring community of adults and children, where each is valued for her/his own unique contribution and effort, Taney Parish Primary School has a long tradition of providing the widest range of opportunities for children from the arts to sport and crucially and centrally in the academic area."

Home/School Communication Policy

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Name of School: Taney Parish Primary School

Roll Number: 15284B

1. General:

- 1.1 Taney Parish Primary School, Sydenham Villas, Dundrum, Dublin 14, Tel: 2985015, is a co-educational national school in the State education system under the patronage of the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin.
- 1.2 The school was originally established as a parochial and charitable school for the underprivileged of the parish in 1792. The present school building was built as a six-teacher school and opened in November 1970. It was subsequently extended in 1994 and is currently a 21-teacher school.
- 1.3 The school is a double-stream school, with two classes at each standard from Junior Infants to 6th Class. Pupils normally enrol and attend at the school after their 4th birthday and leave after their 12th birthday.

2. Introductory Statement:

- 2.1 This policy was developed by the staff, parents and Board of Management of Taney Parish Primary School. The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and parent/staff communication in Taney Parish Primary School.
- 2.2 At Taney Parish Primary School, we strive to achieve mutual support between staff and parents so that the education of our pupils can be efficient and effective. We operate an open door policy and parents are encouraged to develop close links with the school, to collaborate with the Principal and teaching staff and to share the responsibility for the education of their children.

3. Structures in Place to Facilitate Open Communication and Consultation with Parents:

- Formal parent/teacher meetings are held annually where class teachers meet parents on a one-to-one basis. However, if a parent wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child's progress they may do so by prior appointment.
- All teachers are available to meet parents by prior appointment.
- Parents of children with special needs meet teaching staff by appointment throughout the year to monitor progress.
- The school website informs parents about school matters and newsletters and written communication keeps parents informed of school activities and upcoming events.

- The School Calendar keeps parents up to date with school events, holidays and school closures.
- The Homework Diary, used from Second to Sixth Classes, is used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers.
- School Reports are issued annually to parents.
- Parents are invited to school services, concerts, sports etc.

4. Parent/Teacher Meetings:

4.1 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.

4.2 **Informal Parent/Teacher meetings:** Arranging parent/teacher meetings within the school day while children are in school is difficult. Informal communication takes place early in morning between teachers and parents as children are assembling in school. Informal communication also takes place between teachers and parents as children go home after school. This informal chat is very important.

However, meetings with class teachers at classroom doors to discuss a child's concern/progress are discouraged on a number of grounds:

- 4.2.1 A teacher cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent.
- 4.2.2 It is difficult to be discreet when so many children are standing close by.
- 4.2.3 It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to the teacher at a classroom door.

4.3 Occasions occur when a parent needs to speak to a staff member urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The School will aim to facilitate such meetings, making every effort to ensure that the children in the class do not lose out on any of their teaching/learning time.

5. Family Events/Situations which Impact on your Child:

5.1 It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to your child and therefore may adversely affect his/her education.

6. Approaching other People's Children:

- 6.1 As the Board of Management is responsible for the Health & Safety of all staff and pupils, parents are requested not to approach or reprimand another person's child on the school premises.

7. Dropping off Equipment during School Day:

- 7.1 If parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear etc. this can be done through the school office as it is important to keep class interruptions to a minimum.

8. Procedure for Dealing with Complaints:

- 8.1 The Board of Management of Taney Parish Primary School has adopted the Complaints Procedure, agreed by the teachers' union and management bodies, which provides a mechanism for dealing with parental complaints against a teacher as set out in Section 28 of the Education Act 1998. Complaints are infrequent, but the school would wish that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. The following is the agreed complaints procedure to be followed in primary schools:

8.2 INTO / Management Bodies Complaints Procedures for Primary Schools:

Introduction: Only those complaints about teachers which are written and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the Board of Management, except where those complaints are deemed by the Board to be:

- 8.2.1 on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education;
- 8.2.2 frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
- 8.2.3 complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.

Unwritten complaints not in the above categories may be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

Stage 1:

- a) A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.
- b) Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher, she/he should approach the Principal with a view to resolving it.
- c) If the complaint is still unresolved, the parent/guardian should raise the matter with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving it.

Stage 2:

- a) If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further, she/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

- b) The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3:

- a) If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board and except in those cases where the Chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the Board to be required:
 - (i) supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint; and
 - (ii) arrange a meeting with the teacher and, where applicable, the Principal Teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 4:

- a) If the complaint is still not resolved, the Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3.1(b).
- b) If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated, the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within three days of the Board meeting.
- c) If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation, it proceeds as follows:
 - (i) the teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
 - (ii) the teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;
 - (iii) the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the Board in response to the complaint;
 - (iv) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the Board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
 - (v) the Board may arrange a meeting with the complainant if it considers such to be required. The complainant would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting; and
 - (vi) the meeting of the Board of Management referred to in (iv) and (v) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in Stage 3.a.ii.

Stage 5:

- a) When the Board has completed its investigation, the Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within five days of the meeting of the Board.
- b) The decision of the Board shall be final.
- c) The Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years.
- d) Primary School Management or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party three months' notice of intention to do so.


NOTE: In this agreement, 'days' means school days.

9. Behaviour of all Stakeholders in the School:

- 9.1 Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This not only extends to the children but to all of the stakeholders e.g. the staff, parents and the wider community.
- 9.2 Anyone entering our building should feel safe to do so.
- 9.3 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.
- 9.4 It is important that all stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviours in the school:
 - 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.
 - All stakeholders are expected to speak to each other with respect. Shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If a stakeholder displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the premises. In certain cases, the Gardaí must be called.
 - All stakeholders will treat our children with the utmost respect while on the premises.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - Teachers are generally available to listen to a quick issue in the morning and after school. However, should a parent need to have a discussion or meeting, an appointment must be made at a time which is convenient for both parties. This ensures that issues can be resolved. Infant Classes begin at 8:50 am and finish at 1:15pm. First to Sixth Classes begin at 8.50 am and finish at 2:15pm and this time should not be interrupted.

10. Ratification, Review and Communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Taney Parish Primary School at its meeting on 10th October 2018 and is adopted immediately. It will be reviewed, as necessary, in line with relevant legislative changes. It will be available to parents and guardians on the school's website and from the school office, on request.

Signed:.....
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 10th October 2018