



Communication Policy

Introductory Statement

The family and home are central to the social and intellectual development of the pupil and the nurturing of good, moral values. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other and aim to work for the benefit of the pupil and their learning so that the pupil's education can be effective.

This policy was developed by the Board of Management and staff of Kilkeny School Project NS, and in consultation with the Parent Teacher Association in the school year 2023-2024. It will be revised in the 2025/26 school year. Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff communication including formal and informal parent/staff meetings.

Kilkeny School Project NS staff and Board of Management believe that:

The Kilkeny School Project is run on a democratic basis, encouraging active participation by parents/guardians and pupils in the daily life of the school whilst positively affirming the professional role of the teachers. Good communication between home and school is important because with positive and active partnership the pupil gets the best that primary education can offer.

In the KSP, there is a deep commitment to nurturing inclusivity and understanding. Our motto "Learn Together to Live Together" is testament to this.

People are expected to show tolerance, co-operation and respect towards each other in the K.S.P. In the spirit of openness and communication we encourage parents/guardians to make an appointment with their pupil's teacher to discuss any difficulties that may arise.

Kilkeny School Project NS staff and Board of Management are committed to

Developing close effective links with parents

Participating in meetings in a positive and respectful manner and affirming the central and fundamental role of parents/guardians as Primary Educators^[2] of their children

Maintaining the ethos, values and distinctive character of Kilkenny School Project National School

Supporting and facilitating the Parents Association.

Encouraging and facilitating the participation of parents/guardians in school policy and decision making

Parents/guardians are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with 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
- Become actively involved in the school and Parents' Association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians will be consulted by staff. It is essential that all parents and legal guardians are named on the enrolment form.

Behaviour of all adults in the School

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. Adults in the school community have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children. All adults will treat our children, staff and other parents with the utmost respect while on the premises.

All adults within the school are expected to speak to each other with respect, shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If any adult displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building and/or school site. In severe cases, and if required, the Gardaí will be called.

The school will respect all children and parents/ guardians' right to privacy. Staff will only refer to the pupil of the parents/guardians present.

It is important that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that may cause anxiety to the pupil and could possibly have an impact on the pupil's wellbeing and learning. The first point of contact should always be the pupil's class teacher. Parents/guardians can do this by contacting the office on office@kilkennyschoolproject.ie

The school should at all times know who is collecting a pupil. The school secretary and class teacher will have a list of people and their contact information who have been authorised to collect. Should this change the onus is on the parent/guardian to inform the school secretary/class teacher of the change. This information can be provided by email or by dropping into the school office. Under no circumstances will a pupil be released to anyone unauthorised/unknown to the school. If, at any time, parents/guardians alter the pick-up arrangements for their pupil, the school should be given written authorisation by the parent immediately. In an emergency situation, the parent/guardian must leave a message on the answering service or speak with the principal/teacher.

Structures in place to facilitate open communication and consultation with Parents/Guardians.

Annual Consultation throughout the year including:

Welcome day for new Junior Infants and their parents/guardians in mid June each year.

Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in November or early in the second term.

Class teachers/ Special Education Teachers meet regularly with parents/guardians whose children have additional educational needs. This will inform the pupil's School Support Plan (SSP).

Written communication including:

Homework diary (1st – 6th class), to inform parents/guardians about assigned homework, to confirm that homework has been completed and to relay messages between home and school.

Emails sent from class teachers to parents, through the Aladdin Connect Noticeboard.

Emails sent from parents/guardians to teachers via the teachers' emails _____@kilkennyschoolproject.ie or via the office email, office@kilkennyschoolproject.ie

Regular newsletters (The Bulletin) keep parents/guardians up-to-date with school events, holidays, decisions taken to change current policies and procedures or to introduce new ones and other school concerns

School report for each pupil at the end of each school year (shared via Aladdin).

Some pupils may have a Home-School Communication diary. This is not a means of reviewing academic/social progress but rather serves as a useful tool to share information between home and school.

Generally, communication sent from the school will be 'paperless'. Emails sent from the school will be sent to the email address(es) provided at enrolment, unless otherwise requested by parents/guardians. All paper communication sent from the school will be sent to the pupil's home address as given on the enrolment form, unless otherwise requested by parents.

Other structures and processes including:

Parents/guardians are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies. The PTA receives policies in draft form and provides feedback to the Board. The document once ratified by the Board is made available to all parents via the school website or in hard copy if requested. Any feedback arising is brought to the attention of the Board.

Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Sports Day, Fun-Run, Assemblies and KSP Day.

Involvement of parents in curricular areas and focus weeks when appropriate eg. sharing knowledge or reading groups etc.

The Aladdin Connect App.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to utilise this app. Through this App contact details can be updated, consent can be sought, absences can be explained, school reports can be viewed, payments can be made and other useful applications. Parents/guardians need to contact the office if they cannot access the app.

Procedures for parents/guardians to initiate communication with the school.

It is recognised that parents/legal guardians are the primary educators in a pupil'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, in accordance with the agreed Revised Parental Complaints Procedure for Educate Together Schools.

If a parent/guardian wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the teacher usually via email, to arrange a suitable time. Classes begin at 9:05am and finish at 1:45pm (infants) and 2.45pm (1st-6th) and this time should not be interrupted. Meetings with the class staff at the class door or in the yard to discuss a pupil's concern/progress are not beneficial on a number of grounds:

- Staff 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 pupil when his/her parent/guardian is talking to staff at a classroom door.

On some rare occasions a parent/guardian may need to speak to a staff member urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The Principal will aim to facilitate such meetings making every effort to ensure that the children in the class do not lose out on any of the teaching/learning time.

If parents/guardians wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear during class time etc, this must be done through the secretary's office so that learning is not disrupted.

Communication between staff

Staff Inclusivity

All members of the school staff are valued for the unique contribution they make to the school community. Management cultivates a culture of inclusion, providing opportunities for collegial relationships and communication to develop across employment roles (teacher/additional needs assistant/secretary/caretaker) and actively working against the development of hierarchical divisions based on role.

The following guidelines are useful in considering ways to ensure that all staff feel equally valued and included:

- Providing opportunities for all staff to mix regardless of roles at break times can be logistically challenging but nevertheless represents a significant commitment to equality and staff inclusivity on the part of management.
- Care should be taken that a culture of mutual respect is present, even in private spaces like the staff room, to ensure that staff members' personal beliefs are not inadvertently undermined.

Information is disseminated to staff regularly through the Aladdin Notice Board. Replies are encouraged when appropriate. The Staffroom Notice board is used to communicate on activities as necessary.

Staff meetings follow an agenda, are minuted and the minutes are saved on a shared drive for all staff members. Staff also have Croke Park hours which are allocated to planning, School Self Evaluation (SSE), Additional Education Needs (AEN) planning and policy development. At staff meetings, wherever appropriate, the input of teachers, additional needs assistants (ANA)s and ancillary staff should be sought and valued on an equal basis. Ideally such opportunities should be identified beforehand and whole staff input explicitly welcomed.

Management should also make a concerted effort to ensure that non-teaching staff are considered in the organisation of whole-school activities. Participation by non-teaching staff in these activities should not be mandatory due to the restricted nature of these roles but non-teaching staff should feel empowered to contribute in meaningful and productive ways to school life.

Staff operate a Whatsapp group which is used for sharing general school updates, social news and events.

Communication is considered to be a strength among the staff and the informal communication before, during and after school is an integral part of the collegial and professional school atmosphere.

Board Communications

The board, at the closure of each board meeting shall determine the information to be conveyed to parents, school staff and the school community, and the manner and terms in which it should be conveyed and by whom. An agreed report should be drawn up for this purpose. The agreed report shall not include details of any issues which must remain confidential to board members. Such issues should be clearly identified and members must be notified of their obligations in respect of the confidentiality requirements.

Governance Manual For Primary Schools 2023 - 2027, P32

Communication between the in School Committees: Board of Management (BOM), Parent/Teacher Association (PTA), Executive (Patron)

There is a teacher representative on the Board of Management who attends meetings monthly. The PTA nominee on the Executive board reports regularly to the Executive about the activities of the PTA. The Executive nominee on the Board of Management reports regularly to the Board.

The principal is represented by the Deputy Principal at PTA meetings. There is a teacher representative on the PTA who attends the PTA meetings. This representative brings items back to the staff, when relevant.

The parent/guardian nominees on the Board of Management attend PTA meetings as members of the PTA. Two representatives from each class are elected each year to the committee of the Parent Teacher Association. Attendance at monthly meetings of the PTA is open to all parents and teachers. The role of the parent representative on the Board of Management is determined by the Governance by Circular 0049/2023, Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2023 – 2027.

The K.S.P. recognises the importance of the educational partnership between parents/guardians and teachers. Parents/guardians are invited to volunteer their skills and help in a variety of areas for the benefit of the pupils and the school under the teacher's direction.

Communication with outside agencies

Kilkenny School Project has enjoyed and always benefited from links with various agencies. These include: Educate Together, National Educational Psychologists NEPS / Tusla/ National Council for Special Education NCSE/Oide etc.

KSP links with the community. Established links with local schools (Principal meetings, pupil events, sports events), Links with the community such as the Gardaí and local clubs, GAA, Rugby.

The KSP hall provides rental space outside school hours for local providers, such as Dance, Yoga, Special Olympics, Tai- chi.

Communication through the School Office

Emails can be sent by teachers directly to parents/guardians through Aladdin. Incoming emails are communicated through the office (office@kilkennyschoolproject.ie). Emails sent via the office are forwarded directly to the teacher's school email address. Teachers may opt, at their own discretion, to use their Kilkenny School Project address to communicate directly with parents/guardians. The parent/guardian can then respond via their school email account.

Communication by email- response time

Response times to emails from the school secretary can vary depending on the demands in the office at any given time. It is considered reasonable that 3-5 school days are allowed for a response (with the exception of holiday periods during which email is only checked intermittently). Response times to emails to the Principal can also vary greatly depending on the demands at any given time. Priority must be given to the pupils, staff and overall running of the school. A response time of 5-7 school days is considered to be reasonable. Teachers are in class during the day and will not have time to access emails. They may be engaged in planning, meetings or personal matters after school hours and so again 3-5 school days is considered to be a reasonable response time.

There may be occasions where a parent/guardian is trying to contact the school by phone and/or email and are not receiving a response. We ask for patience during these times.

Communication regarding Attendance

All schools are required to comply with the National Education Welfare Board. This body is responsible for monitoring school attendance in both primary and secondary schools throughout Ireland.

Under legislation the KSP reports regularly to the N.E.W.B. The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer, where a pupil has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where

attendance is irregular, where a pupil is removed from the school register and where a pupil is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more. It is very important that pupils attend school on a regular basis as they can miss out on important learning opportunities. If your pupil is absent from school, parents/guardians are required to send a note to the teacher explaining the reason for his/her absence.

Parents/guardians are notified in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year. Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to meet with the Principal during Parent/Teacher meetings and are informed of the school's concerns.

The school maintains communication with local pre-schools and second-level schools in order to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible.

Communication with other Schools

- When a pupil transfers from *Kilkenny School Project NS* to another school, the records on attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer and on request from the school.
- When a pupil transfers into *Kilkenny School Project NS* confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the pupil's previous school, and appropriate records sought.
- Pupils transferring from *Kilkenny School Project NS* to a post primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.

Parent/Teacher Meetings

The purpose of the Parent/Teacher meeting is:

- To establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents
- To let parents know how their children are progressing in school
- To help teachers/parents get to know the children better as individuals
- To help children realise that home and school are working together.
- To share with the parent the problems and difficulties the pupil may have in school
- To review with the parent the pupil's experience of schooling
- To learn more about the pupil from the parent's perspective
- To get general feedback from the parents regarding the school
- To identify ways in which parents can help their children

- To negotiate jointly decisions about the pupil's education

Organisation of Parents Teacher meetings

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes. If a parent wishes to arrange an additional meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their pupil, they may do so by contacting the school secretary or through the pupil's diary.

Parent/Teacher meetings may take place in classrooms, offices, support rooms or through phone calls and on-line platforms when necessary. Each meeting is allocated a 10-minute time slot which parents can book through the Aladdin Connect app. If a longer meeting is required these should be scheduled for another day.

In order to facilitate the operation of the school and the needs of children and other parents, it is important that meetings should be kept to the allocated time. Times of meetings are agreed beforehand and should be adhered to so that all parents are seen on time as far as is possible.

Planning meetings for Student Support

For children with designated special educational needs, formal scheduled parent/staff meetings relating to the pupil's SSPs will take place in September/October. However, if a parent/guardian wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their pupil, they may do so by prior appointment. In the case of separated/ divorced parents, Kilkenny School Project NS will facilitate requests made by parents to meet their pupil's teacher(s) individually for parent/teacher meetings.

School Reports

Kilkenny School Project NS produces formal reports for reporting to parents on pupils' progress and achievement at school annually in the third term using report card templates as required by the National Council of Curriculum and Assessment (www.ncca.ie). The reports are issued by email/ through the Aladdin app, mid June, to allow parents time to ask for clarification with the school teacher on anything contained in their pupil's report. The report will cover:

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

Reports for children in their final year of primary school (sixth class) will be in the form of an **Education Passport**. These support the transfer of pupil information from primary to post-primary and follow a standard template.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act became operative on 1st September 2005. 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.

It is recognised that school staff may be at risk from violence in the form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults or other forms of intimidation. This behaviour may come from pupils, parents, guardians, other staff members or intruders.

In this respect, all staff should be aware of **DES Circular 40/97** which deals with the procedures to follow if they feel they have been subjected to any of the above behaviours.

Online and Social Media Communication

The Bulletin (Newsletter) is sent weekly via the Aladdin Notice board. Parents/guardians and staff are encouraged to read the Bulletin as it contains day to day information on school activities.

Kilkenny School Project National School has a website www.kilkennyschoolproject.ie. Parents/guardians are encouraged to visit this regularly to keep up to date on school matters.

The school name or anything that identifies the school should not be used online or on social media without express written permission from the Board of Management. Kilkenny School Project NS will request removal of any online or social media sites that are not approved by the school.

On-line Communication Policy in the event of Long Term School Closure.

KSP teachers may organise live on-line communication during school closure because of COVID19 or otherwise. On-line meetings will involve groups of pupils / whole classes. One to one meetings may be arranged for some pupils, however this will only occur with prior consent of the parent/guardian and with the parent/guardian present. Parental permission will be sought by the school in advance of on-line meetings. Sharing the link for the meeting with your pupil is understood as giving permission. For senior pupils, parental permission will be sought by the school in advance of setting up children's Google Classroom accounts, links for on-line meetings will be shared directly on this platform.

Our school's Code of Behaviour and our Anti-Bullying Policy will be in force together with our school's Internet Acceptable Use Policy. School and Class Rules apply in any on-line classroom. If deemed necessary by the teacher, a parent / guardian must be in the room with the pupil for the duration of the meeting. The pupil may wear earphones. The pupil must have their camera turned on at all times. Invitations to meetings will be sent to Parent/Guardian email addresses or shared on Google Classroom / See-Saw / Class Dojo.

Children are not permitted to access Google Classroom using other Google accounts. They must use the usernames and passwords that have been provided for them by the school. Only the teacher may share this link. The meeting may not be recorded or photographed in any way. The teacher / administrator will be in charge of each meeting. He/she will remove pupils immediately in case of misbehaviour and if necessary shut down the meeting.

Live on-line communication is to facilitate contact with the pupils only. Parents can e-mail teachers with any queries they have.

Misuse of Google Account

In the case of misuse of their Google account, the teacher has the right to suspend the user's account temporarily as she/he deems appropriate. The use of the Google account is for school purposes only.

The KSP [Acceptable Use Policy](#) is regularly reviewed and is posted on the school's website.

Ratified by the Board of Management

Chairperson: _____

Date: _____

^[2] Article 42 of the Constitution of Ireland

References

Governance Manual For Primary Schools 2023 - 2027