



Home School Links Policy

April 20th 2021

St Mary's CBS
Portlaoise

HOME-SCHOOL LINKS POLICY

It is recognised by the parents/guardians, teachers and Board of Management of St Marys C.B.S. that the parents are the primary educators of the child. Good home-school links contribute greatly to the quality of education received by the child. To establish these links an open, cordial relationship should exist between parents and teachers which recognises and values the respective roles of each.

Aims

- To facilitate a communicative relationship between teachers, parents and guardians to the benefit of our pupils.
- To establish procedures for the sharing of information in relation to pupils' progress.
- To create a school environment where parents and guardians feel welcome and free to discuss their child's progress with the teachers.
- To encourage all parents to become involved with the Parents' Association.

Communications

Formal Parent-Teacher meetings will be held every year as per school calendar where each parent may have a private meeting with their child's teacher(s). The meetings will be held during the hours laid down by the DES. Where parents are unable to attend at this time, they are encouraged to make an alternative appointment with the Year Head at a mutually suitable time.

The school also encourages periodical informal meetings between teachers and parents which may be initiated by either party as they see fit.

Coffee mornings for each year group up to third year are organised annually to promote relations between school and parents/guardians. They create a friendly and approachable atmosphere for parents and can act as information sessions.

Parents will be encouraged to be familiar with the work being done by their child in school and to be aware of what homework is being done. A formal school report will be issued twice yearly. The school encourages parents to check their son's day to day progress via the school's VShare system.

Information on school activities will be communicated to parents/guardians through the Schools App, text messaging, the school website, periodic letters, bulletins and their son's school journal during the year.

In accordance with the Educational Welfare Act (2000), explanations for pupil absences must be telephoned, emailed or entered through the School App to the school office that day and followed up with a note in their son's school journal.

Parents' Association

The school recognises the benefits of an active Parents' Association. The Association may communicate with the school through meetings between the

chairperson/secretary and the principal/deputy principal, particularly after a Parents' Association, general or committee meetings. At B.O.M. meetings during the year, one item on the agenda as required will be the parents' representatives' report which allows for two-way communication between the board and parent body. Parent Association's support in the provision of resources, financial support and assistance in extra-curricular areas is welcome and appreciated.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is important that all partners in the school community be aware of the parameters of their own and others' respective roles and responsibilities. The school ethos must be upheld at all times. The ethos is defined by the Trustee. The school is a Catholic voluntary all boys secondary school, child centred, non-discriminatory and democratic. Consequently, respect for the partners – children, parents/guardians, staff and management – must be shown at all times.

One of the school's Assistant Principal (API) posts has been assigned to a teacher who acts as the Home School Liaison Coordinator to work with parents/guardians, students, the Educational Welfare Officer and Tusla to foster home / school relations. Further details of the roles and responsibilities of this middle management post can be read in Appendix 1.

This Home-School Links Policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 20th April 2021

Signed:



Appendix 1

Home School Liaison Coordinator – AP1

Objective:

- To foster school/home relations in the interest of student wellbeing, inclusion, equality of opportunity and holistic development with a special interest in school attendance.
- To build and maintain relationships with DES and state agencies (TUSLA)
- To reduce unexplained school absences
- To deal with school refusals

Roles and Responsibilities

- To develop the Home School Policy
- To monitor and improve attendance overall
- To develop home school links / home school visits to students in need
- To organise and plan Coffee Mornings for parents in 1st, 2nd 3rd year groups
- To liaise with the Principal, Care Team and Tutors in relation to students' needs
- To build relationships with parents through the provision of relevant educational talks
- To liaise with the Senior Management Team regarding Tusla Returns
- To attend weekly Care Team Meetings and act upon information learned
- To keep records in compliance with GDPR Guidelines and school practice
- To monitor on a weekly basis, the Late and Unexplained Absences of the students
- To send out Friday Detention Letters for 'Lates', as per our Code of Behaviour
- To liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) throughout the school year
- To advise the Senior Management Team of strategies and individual plans which could be put in place to improve attendance of one or several students.