

St. Peter Apostle Junior and Senior Schools

Home, School, Community Liaison Policy

Reviewed by parents and teachers April 2015

Mission Statement

“To maximise the participation and partnership between home and school where a greater quality of learning and teaching will prevail ensuring the optimum benefit to the child”

Background and Rationale

The home-school liaison policy is of benefit to the child in that the parent is more involved in the formal education system and works in conjunction with the school. Parents are also actively involved in education in that they attend workshops or classes to improve their personal effectiveness and parenting skills.

A formal home-school policy provides clarity on the practice and procedures involved in home school interactions. The policy obviously demonstrates the importance of partnership between home and school in education. It encourages a pro-active approach to home-school relationships. It also helps to break down perceived barriers between home and school. It improves communication levels: social interactions and support systems between home and school.

Aims/Objectives

- To raise expectations of parents and teachers with regard to education and achievement;
- To maximise the child's learning;
- To foster a greater understanding between parents and teachers;
- To facilitate the continued education of parents, teachers and children;
- To improve communication levels between parents and teachers;
- To facilitate the participation of parents in education;
- To provide opportunities for parent and teacher interactions;
- To promote better community awareness and to establish links between local community agencies.

Role of Parents in Education

- To lay the foundations for education;
- The parents have a critical role in the foundations of education
- Parents provide the first steps of education in the areas of behaviour; self-esteem/confidence; values and morals.
- Relationships within the home have a part to play in education e.g. how to get on with others;
- Parents provide for the basic physiological needs of the child: food, clothing, shelter;
- Parents have a fundamental role in developing the communication skills/styles of the child including listening, verbal and non-verbal communication
- Parents have a role to play in the growth of confidence and self-esteem of the child, to accept the child's uniqueness and encourage them to be themselves;
- Parents provide the basic emotional psychological support of the child in education this includes communication with the child, support, guidance, praise and encouragement;
- Parents promote educational success through:
 - Encouraging good work habits;
 - Meeting teachers and other parents to support the work of teacher and school;
 - Encouraging out of school activities
 - Being involved in their child's activities and interests.

The Home School Liaison Scheme supports the parent in the following ways:

- Through *home visits* for a wide variety of purposes
- Providing a *parents room* where parents can attend courses and meet with each other in a pleasant environment
- Providing a variety of personal development and recreational courses during the school year
- Arranging a crèche service while parents attend school courses/events
- Providing opportunities for parents to engage more with their child's education, e.g. volunteering time to help out in the class room, *table-top activities*, play time, maths for fun, paired reading, summer reading club
- Passing on information to parents on local services, community issues
- Referring parents on to relevant agencies as appropriate, e.g. local speech therapist, counselling service, local health nurse, etc
- Co-ordinating *class meetings* at start of year where parents can meet their child's teacher in group setting
- Welcoming new parents through the organisation of in-take meetings (pre-school, junior infants, 3rd class)
- Involving parents as partners in education e.g. through participation in regular school policy reviews and development, involvement in paired reading etc
- Bringing information from class teacher to the home and vice versa
- Parents are invited to share particular skills or talents with the school community, e.g. knitting cookery etc
- Arrangement of informal meetings/coffee mornings for parents
- Arrangement of meeting between parents and any new teachers if and when appropriate

Role of Teachers in Education

- To support and continue the work of parents in areas of behaviour, self-esteem, values and relationship building of the child;
- To facilitate the child's learning through awareness of the child's unique capabilities and to assist the child in reaching their human potential;
- To be involved in the holistic development of the child
- To develop the social, physical, intellectual and emotional skills potential of the child;
- To be aware of the child's needs and talents
- To communicate with parents and be aware of the child's background;
- To develop good work habits, to give direction and assist the child in the transition from primary to secondary level;
- To empathise with and listen to the child.

The H/S/C/L co-ordinator supports the teachers and principal in the following ways:

- Collaboration with teachers in arranging meetings with parents
- Developing contacts with home on specific issues as requested by teacher or principal through home visits

- Keeping teacher/principal informed of any relevant information following on from parental contact
- Developing partnership between school staff and parents through parental involvement in classroom activities and through collaboration on policy development and reviews
- Attend planning meetings with pre-school staff
- Attending 'Care Team' meetings and other intervention meetings with principal and staff
- The co-ordinator may meet parents one to one to discuss issues of concern with respect to the child's welfare.

The H/S/C/L scheme in relation to the child:

The child is held central to the h/s/c/l scheme. The scheme strives to promote the educational interests of the child, to maximise participation, to enhance the child's educational progression by raising awareness in parents of their own active role in the child's development.

The scheme strives to enhance the child's uptake of education and their retention within the system, and to enhance their attitude to life-long learning

The H/S/C/L scheme supports the child in the following ways:

- Promoting pre-reading skills at pre-school level through *CLOVER* gift packs (also a pack gifted to 2nd class pupils upon transfer to 3rd)
- Co-ordinating successful transfer to senior primary and second level schools
- Co-ordinating open days and visits to local second level schools
- Visits by co-ordinator to 2nd class to help reassure and prepare pupils for transfer
- Promoting anti-bullying and positive behaviour through the organisation of *Friendship Weeks*
- Encouragement and support of pupil attendance through organisation of events in school in conjunction with school's Attendance Officer.

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The H/S/C/L scheme in relation to the community

The HSCL co-ordinator represents the school body at community level

Through involvement with a variety of groups and organisations.

These contacts will generate much information about local services or events that can be of relevance to parents and teachers and the co-ordinator will share information as appropriate.

Local community contacts include the following:

- Networking with other HSCL co-ordinators through Family, Local and regional Cluster meetings
- Developing contacts with all agencies that deal directly with the children and parents of our school i.e. Get Ahead Club, Dóchas, Campus, Cumas, Compass, all schools of transfer, and School Completion Project personnel
- Attendance at Local Education Committee
- Attendance at case conferences as requested by certain agencies working with individual children and their parents
- Liaising with agencies to which parents and the school may choose to refer a child e.g.. Local Speech and Language service, public health nurse, dental nurse, St James

Child Guidance Clinic, Cherry Orchard Social services

- Liaising with Education Welfare Officer
- Developing links with other groups in the wider community but not necessarily dealing directly with the school i.e. Clondalkin Partnership, Clondalkin Drugs Task Force, Youth Workers in Ronanstown Youth Service, Beacon of Light Counselling Service

Teachers Supports to Parents

- Welcome parental involvement in education and keep parents informed of child's progress in school.
- Employing skills of diplomacy teachers will give an honest and fully rounded appraisal of the child's performance at parent teacher meetings
- Contact parents about any school problems as soon as possible i.e. 'nip problems early.
- Communicate to parents that meetings are held in high esteem and therefore should be scheduled appropriately
- Thank parents for their support e.g. when visiting/attending meetings.
- Be fair by being non-judgmental, not play favourites and avoid comparisons between children.
- Provide opportunities to explain the curriculum to parents.
- Acknowledge the good work/efforts of parents.
- Be aware of the child's family background circumstances.
- Never put down the child's family circumstances and show understanding of difficult family situations.
- Seek the involvement of parents when formulating school policies, this also boosts parental confidence through the involvement in policy making.
- Provide information to parents on school policies, schoolwork requirements, courses available and local ancillary services e.g. Health Clinic.

Parental Supports to Teachers

Parents offer support to teachers in the following ways:

- Providing for and taking care of the child's basic primary needs;
- To communicate positive opinions and values about school and teachers:
- To avoid criticism of school/teachers in front of children:
- To be well informed on school issues, in particular about homework requirements;
- Parents should check children's homework and establish good work habits
- To attend various school group/parent-teacher meetings:
- To keep teachers informed of any important family issues/situations which might have an impact on the child's educational/emotional progress;
- To support the teacher in front of the child;
- To meet class teachers, home school liaison or principal about any school problems, difficulties or misunderstandings
- Parents should schedule appointments/meetings with teacher so that professionalism and discretion can be maintained

Implementation Date: June 2015

Review Date: May 2016

Ratification:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: 8th June 2015

Communication:

This policy will be communicated to all staff members at a staff meeting in June 2015.

This policy will be available to all parents by the HSCL teacher from June 2015.

Priority Areas for 2015/16

- More parental involvement in classroom in particular at senior school level
- School newsletter in the junior school
- Maths for Fun to be completed by all streams at Senior level
- Science for Fun to be completed by 2nd classes as part of the transfer programme

