

Below is the current text of this policy. Please note, however, that it is due for review during the 2019/20 school year.



## **Communication and Liaison between School and Home Policy**

## **Communication and Liaison Between School and Home**

### **Introduction**

This policy was formulated by a subcommittee of the Board of Management comprising of parents and teachers. It has been made available for comment to all members of staff and to parents and guardians. It has been ratified by the Board of Management in March 2007 for implementation in April 2007. A copy has been circulated to all staff, parents and guardians.

It will be reviewed in March 2010 *[Note added 2019-06-11: To be reviewed during school year 2019/20.]*

### **Rationale**

D7ET has grown considerably over the past six years. Many after school activities have been organised by parents. Several subcommittees have been set up by the board of management. The volume of queries both to staff and the school office have increased accordingly. This policy needs to reflect these developments and make the handling of all queries more efficient.

### **AIMS**

To establish procedures for the sharing of information in relation to pupils attainment and progress.

To facilitate the school in communicating its policies and activities to the parent body and where applicable the wider community.

### **1. General Information**

#### **Board of Management of Dublin 7ET**

The Board of Management (BOM) is a body of people nominated by the patron (Educate Together) and recognised by the Department of Education. The Board of Management is charged with the direct governance of the school.

It comprises of:

Two direct nominees of the patron.

Two parents/guardians of children enrolled in the school (one father, one mother), elected by the general body of parents of children enrolled in the school.

The principal teacher of the school.

One other teacher on the staff of the school, elected by vote of the teaching staff.

Two community representatives, proposed by those designated in subsections (1) to (4)

The tenure of the present board is four years and will end October 2007.

#### **Sub- Committees**

The BOM of Dublin 7 ET has also put in place a number of subcommittees, all comprising of parents with a representative of the Board of Management on each committee. They are as follows:  
Fundraising Committee organises various fundraising activities throughout the year. Activities Committee organises many after-school activities (football, art classes, drama and music.) Policy Committee, which liaises with the school staff in drawing up policies.

Premises Committee has responsibility for premises.

## **The Parent Teacher Association**

The Association is composed of parents of children in the school, with teacher representation. The Association is there to support the Board of Management and its various committees. It also liaises between parents and the BOM and organises social and cultural events for the pupils and parents of the school.

## **2. General Home/School Communication**

General communication between school and home includes:

- a school information booklet distributed to each family;
- a school calendar; and
- the weekly newsletter (Thursday). This is sometimes accompanied by information from the BOM and the various sub-committees and the PTA, which include material about extra-curricular activities, fund-raising, and school policies.

There are also:

- open days for new infants enrolling;
- a further meeting between the Junior Infant teacher and parents during the year to familiarise parents with the Junior Infant Programme; and
- Parent Teacher Meetings for all classes, held in the Second Term.

In addition to the above, the school communicates with home using:

- notes home;
- homework journals;
- the end-of-year School Report; and
- the school's website at [www.d7educatetogether.com](http://www.d7educatetogether.com).

## **3. Parent/Staff Communication**

- All communication between parents and staff must be courteous and non-aggressive on both sides, however urgent the issue(s) might be.
- All contact with school staff should be through the school. Due to the volume of work going through the office, parents/guardians are asked to avoid relaying information by ringing the office, except in emergencies.
- Communicating directly with the class teacher is the most efficient use of everybody's time.
- Reasons for a child's absence should always be in the form of a letter.
- Explanations for being late or for not having homework done may be given by way of note via the child or directly by a parent to the teacher. In some cases, a quick word in the morning may suffice however, it is important to remember that the period from 08.30 – 08.45 is a time for greeting of children and is not an appropriate time for lengthy discussion.
- The period from 08.30 – 08.45 may be used to make an appointment if parents/guardians have an issue regarding their child whom they want to raise with the class teacher.

- Whether the issue warrants an appointment or not can be left to the discretion of the teacher or parent at that time.
- When making an appointment, the person requesting the appointment should give a brief indication of what the concerns are and the purpose of the meeting.
- Any information a parents/guardians wish to communicate to the class teacher relating to their child should be done directly to the teacher and not through the Special Needs Assistants.

However, if there are issues of a confidential nature regarding a child, which the parents would wish to discuss with the principal, they will of course be accommodated.

Where parents/guardians have a complaint, however minor, regarding their child's teacher, this complaint should be dealt with according to the procedures set out in the appendix on Grievance Procedures.

#### **4. Other Queries**

Any queries regarding After-School Activities or the Sibling Hour should be directed to the people running these activities.

Any other queries related to an issue on another sub-committee should, as far as possibly, be directed to the contact person on that committee.

A list of the people to contact and their numbers is provided on a separate sheet, distributed with this document.

#### **Grievance Procedures**

The grievance procedures set out below are in accordance with the procedures agreed by the INTO and management bodies.

All communication between parents and staff must be courteous and non-aggressive on both sides, however urgent the issue(s) might be.

If a parent/guardian has a complaint against any member of staff the following process should be followed:

Parents/guardians should first approach the member of staff concerned and make an appointment to discuss the issue.

If the issue or issues cannot be resolved between the parent(s)/guardian(s) and that member of staff then it is open to either parent or staff member to go to the Principal with a view to resolving the issues.

If things have not been resolved by this time, then the Chairperson of the Board of Management may be approached by either party. All parties involved must be made aware of this in advance of contact being made with the chairperson.

If an agreement still cannot be reached, the complaint should follow the remaining stages laid out under the complaints procedure in Appendix 50

If a parent/guardian has a complaint against the Principal,

He/She should first approach the Principal with a view to resolving the issue.

If the issue/issues cannot be resolved, then the chairperson of the board of Management may be approached by either party. All parties involved must be made aware of this in advance of contact being made with the chairperson.

If an agreement still cannot be reached, the complaint should follow the remaining stages laid out under INTO/Management Complaints Procedure [attached].

All complaints should be addressed as soon as possible.

Criticism of a member of staff expressed to another member of staff by a parent/guardian undermines the ethos of the school and should not happen. Instead, the above procedure should be followed where there are disagreements.

It is equally inappropriate for a teacher to criticise a child or a parent to another parent.

In order to maintain the best possible relationship between parent/guardian and classroom teacher and all other staff members, it is really important that these stages are followed.

#### INTO/Management Complaints Procedure

The INTO and management have agreed on a procedure for dealing with complaints by parents against teachers. The purpose of this procedure is to facilitate the resolution of difficulties where they may arise in an agreed and fair manner. The agreement lays out in five stages the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed at each stage.

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:

- on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education and Science;
- frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
- 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**

1. 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.
2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher s/he should approach the principal with a view to resolving it.
3. 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**

1. If the complain is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further s/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the chairperson of the board of management.

2. 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 with five days of receipt of the written complaint.

### **Stage 3**

1. 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:
2. supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint; and
3. 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**

1. 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(b).
2. If the board considers that the complain is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within three days of the board meeting.
3. If the board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:
4. the teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
5. the teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;
6. the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board in response to the complaint;
7. 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;
8. 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
9. the meeting of the board of management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3(b).

### **Stage 5**

1. 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.
2. The decision of the board shall be final.
3. The Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years.

4. CPSMA or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party three months' notice of intention to do so.

In this agreement 'days' means school days.

Note: The vast majority of complaints are resolved locally and informally. However, in certain circumstances, for example, where a complaint is considered to be serious in nature, or where the teacher is required to submit a written response to his/her board of management, the teacher should contact his/her INTO District Representative or INTO Head Office for advice and assistance.

In advising a teacher, the INTO will be anxious to ensure that there is due process and fair procedures applied, which generally include:

- that the teacher is fully appraised of all matters being considered by the board of management, including being provided with copies of all relevant documentation;
- the right to respond and adequate time to prepare a response;
- entitlement to be represented by the INTO, if necessary.

Where a teacher contacts the INTO in relation to a complaint(s) made against him/her, the officials involved will generally meet with the teacher and require him/her to provide detailed written information and documentation on the matter. The officials will assess the case and decide if additional specific legal advice or a legal consultation is required. Specific legal advice is obtained for members in accordance with the Rules of the INTO and the conditions prescribed by the CEC.

At this juncture, the INTO/CPSMA Complaints Procedure is under review by the partners in education, including the DES in accordance with the provisions outlined in The Education Act (1998).

**Annexe 1:** This contact list will be updated annually, phone numbers of committee members may be obtained from school office.

### **Board of Management of Dublin 7ET**

The Board of Management (BoM) comprises of:

- Two direct nominees of the patron (Educate Together).
- Two parents/guardians of children enrolled in the school.
- Two community Nominees.
- School Principal.
- Staff Nominee.

The tenure of the board is four years.

### **Sub-Committees**

(When contacting any of the committees listed below, it would be helpful if people could text before calling, where possible.)

**After-schools Activities:** Claire Moloney, Gráinne MacLochlainn, Colette Woods, Sarah Hanley and Maria Elena Costa Sa. Contact: Clare Moloney

**Fund-raising:** Pat Garland, Larisse Edwards, Niamh Synott, Emma Kenny, Olwyn Mannix and Madeline Coleman - Contact: Pat Garland

**Policies:** Geraldine Neill, Richard Daly and Jo Ryan. Contact: Jo Ryan- 869 0002 (School)

**Premises:** Lisa Kilbride, Pierce Fahy, John McDaid, Susan Dennehy, and Patricia Clerkin.  
Contact: John McDaid

**IT:** Des Carbery, John McDaid, Tom Hickey, Nabard Mohieden, Joe Kellegher. Contact: Des Carbery

**Safety:** Deirdre Prince, Richard Daly and Ken Moore. Contact: To be decided.

**PTA:** Gerry Corcoran, Carmel Maddock and teachers' representative, Clare Eustace. Contact: Gerry Corcoran