



# **Holy Family Junior School**

## **Parent/Guardian/Staff Communication Policy**

**November 2024**

## **Holy Family Junior School – Vision and Mission Statement**

Holy Family Junior School is a Catholic co-educational primary school, situated in the heart of Ennis town. We are committed to creating a nurturing, happy, secure and stimulating learning environment in which all members of our diverse school community can learn and can feel safe, happy and valued and achieve their true potential. We strive to create a welcoming school based on trust, respect, love, concern for others, understanding and acceptance. Based on our aims and objectives, the staff and parents/guardians try to ensure that the children's experience here is as positive and rewarding as possible. Holy Family Junior School is a very happy place for both children and staff. Parents/guardians are active partners in their children's education. Regular contact between school and home ensures that this connection is maintained.

### **Introduction**

In line with our school vision and mission statement above, this policy was developed by the staff of Holy Family Junior School, the Board of Management and the Parents' Association in November 2024.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents/guardians and staff on parent/guardian/staff meetings and parent/guardian/staff communication in Holy Family Junior School. The family and home are central to the social and intellectual development of the child and the nurturing of good, moral values. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other so that the child's education can be effective. All the stakeholders aim to work for the benefit of the child and their learning.

### **Parents, Guardians and Teachers are encouraged to:**

- Develop close home-school links together
- Mutually participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of the staff in the school and the pivotal role of parents in supporting the education of their child
- Collaborate to develop the full potential of the children
- Share the responsibility of seeing that the school remains true to its ethos, values and distinctive character
- Actively support the Parents' Association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

## Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with parents/guardians:

- Parents/guardians are always welcome to make an appointment with the teacher at any stage throughout the year. If a parent/guardian wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the school secretary to arrange a suitable time
- An open evening for parents/guardians of new Junior Infants takes place in May each year
- One-to-one informal parent/guardian/teacher meetings are held in November for Junior Infant pupils
- One-to-one formal parent/guardian/teacher meetings for Junior Infants are held in March and for all other pupils in February
- End of year pupil reports are issued on children's progress in all classes in June using a standard NCCA report card template.
- In the first term each year, meetings are held with parents/guardians whose children have additional needs and thereafter, at any stage throughout the year, as needed.
- *Aladdin*, our two-way home-school communication app is used to share texts and emails with up-to-date information for parents/guardians and for parents/guardians to message school staff in relation to their child.
- The school phone is used to inform parents/guardians of accidents, arrange appointments etc.
- Homework is shared with all parents and guardians through Aladdin, our home-school communication app.
- Through the Parents' Association, parents/guardians are invited to contribute to/collaborate in the drafting and review of school policies.
- Our up-to-date school website [www.holyfamilyjuniorschool.com](http://www.holyfamilyjuniorschool.com) provides important information about our school to our whole school community and beyond.
- Our Holy Family Schools Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/hfssennis> shares news on upcoming and recent events
- Regular newsletters keep Parent/Guardians up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns
- Parents/Guardians are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Sports Day, courses, school concerts etc.
- The Board of Management Agreed Report is shared on our school website after minutes of the previous meeting have been approved by the Board.

## **Rationale for positive home school communication**

- To establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents/guardians
- To let parents/guardians know how their children are progressing in school
- To help staff/parents/guardians get to know the children better as individuals
- To help children realise that home and school are working together.
- To share with parents/guardians the successes/problems/difficulties the child may have in school
- To review with parents/guardians the child's experience of schooling
- To learn more about the child from the parent's/guardian's perspective
- To identify ways in which parents/guardians can help their children
- To negotiate jointly decisions about the child's education

**It is vital that parents/guardians inform the school immediately if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to their child and therefore may adversely affect their education. Such information will be handled with sensitivity.** In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians named on the enrolment form will be consulted by staff.

## **Parent/guardian/teacher meetings**

### Formal parent/guardian/teacher meetings

Formal parent/guardian/teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes (Circular 14/04). They will be initiated by the school and details regarding time, etc. will be worked out by the class teacher, in consultation with parents/guardians. Parents/guardians will be given the opportunity to select preferred times through Aladdin, our home-school communication app. The school will attempt to co-ordinate times where siblings are concerned. Meetings usually take place in classrooms and support rooms.

### Informal parent/guardian/teacher meetings

The school encourages communication between parents/guardians and teacher, however meetings with the teacher at the class door to discuss a child's concern/progress are discouraged on a number of grounds:

1. The teacher cannot adequately supervise her class while at the same time speaking to a parent/guardian
2. It is difficult to be discreet when so many children are standing close by

3. It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent/guardian is talking to teacher at a classroom door.

Occasions occur where a parent/guardian needs 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.

### **Minimising Disruption to teaching and learning time**

If a child is late for school, he/she must be signed in at reception, from where he/she will be escorted to class by a staff member. This ensures that class interruptions are kept to a minimum.

If parents/guardians wish to drop in lunch boxes etc, this can be done through reception also, as once again it is important to keep class interruptions to a minimum.

### **Complaints Procedure**

Complaints are infrequent but the school would wish that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. Please click on this link to read the agreed complaints procedure to be followed in primary schools [https://holyfamilyjuniorschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/January-2024\\_Parental\\_Complaints\\_Procedure\\_final.pdf](https://holyfamilyjuniorschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/January-2024_Parental_Complaints_Procedure_final.pdf)

### **Behaviour of all Stakeholders in the School**

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This not only extends to the children but to all the stakeholders e.g. the staff, parents/guardians and the wider community. Anyone entering our campus and building should feel safe to do so. 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.

It is important that all stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviours in the school. Examples include:

- 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 building. In certain cases, the Gardaí may 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/guardian's child. The staff of the school will respect all children's right to privacy so parents/guardians are asked to respect other children's rights to privacy.
- When stakeholders meet, it is important to respect that the length 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/guardian need to have a discussion or meeting, an appointment should be made at a convenient time for both parties. This ensures that issues can be resolved.

### **Safety, Health and Welfare at Work**

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act became operative on 1 November 1989. 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. A copy of this circular can be found in the school's Health and Safety Statement.

### **Ratified by the Board of Management**

Chairperson: *Allen Flynn*

**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> January 2025**