



# Communication Policy

*Of Firhouse Educate Together National School*

Address: Ballycullen Drive, Firhouse, Dublin.24.

Telephone: 01 406 1010

Email: firhouseetns@gmail.com

Roll Number: 20411J

This policy was drawn up in consultation with the staff, parent/guardian representatives and the Board of Management in January 2015 and updated annually.

## **Rationale:**

In keeping with the principles of multi-denominational education, FETNS is democratically run. This means that the democratically elected Board of Management run the school and involvement of all parents is sought and encouraged at many levels. A high level of parental involvement is a feature of our school and requires commitment from all parents.

This is a whole school policy for the school community. It deals with communication within the school and between the school and our partners. To contribute to ensuring inclusivity and co-operation this policy emphasises maintaining and improving the current channels of communication among the users of the school and with the partners in education.

Good communication is essential to maintaining a positive working and learning environment. Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect in a happy, caring and supportive environment means that people feel included, consulted and informed. This requires that we use a variety of channels of communication to ensure that the relevant people receive the necessary information.

## **Aim of this policy:**

This policy aims to improve effective communication within the school, with the Board of Management, with parents and guardians and with the local community, to maintain a good working, social and personal environment. This will promote efficiency and contribute to achieving the objectives of the school.

Overall approach to effective communication:

- All parties will be communicated with through a variety of agreed channels of communication
- The target audience will be involved actively rather than passively where possible in the communication.
- There will be provision for reinforcement and repetition if required.
- There will be opportunity for feedback to check that information is being received and understood.

### **Means of communication:**

This policy encourages the use of the most effective communications mechanisms, depending on context, while ensuring the rights of staff, students and parents.

- The school encourages openness in internal communication and the sharing of relevant and appropriate information through a variety of mechanisms: formal and informal meetings / open days / cultural and fund-raising events / telephone calls / text / email / website / social media etc.
- The school is committed to consultation with staff and students on school matters
- The staff recognise the importance of face-to-face communication in that it can frequently be more effective than written communication.
- The school seeks constantly to improve communication and will consult staff and students to share their views.
- All internal communications should be expressed clearly.
- As far as possible staff and/or students are informed of important school issues no later than the media or other external bodies.

### **Use of email and the web:**

- The school website <http://www.firhouseetns.ie/> is updated regularly and has information on important dates and events in the school including the school calendar, principal's newsletters, information from the BOM and the various sub-committees and the PGTA, as well as material about extra-curricular activities, fund-raising, and school policies.
- Google Apps email and calendar are used daily as modes of written communication for all staff who are required to sign in to Aladdin/Google Apps each morning when in school. (Internet access permitting)
- General communications from school to parents is by email and the school website.
- Class padlets can be used to provide parents with information on work being undertaken in class and on additional resources to support children's learning.
- As per Code of Positive Behaviour and Grievance Procedures all communication, regarding pupils' progress/behaviour/concerns, a parent/guardian wishes to discuss, must begin with an informal chat with the class teacher.
- Provision of hard copies is made for communicating with those parents/guardians who do not have IT access.
- Personal data is protected in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988.
- The privacy of personal communications is preserved in accordance with the Human Rights Act.
- Some categories and items of information regarding both staff and students need to be kept confidential. All staff are bound to take care with the handling and transmission of confidential information, with regard to how and to whom the information is transmitted.
- Internal communications using electronic media must be conducted under the internet usage policy of the school..

## Staff Communication

### **Staff members**

Teachers meet before or after school to plan and collaborate. Teachers and SNAs meet regularly to discuss strategies for supporting children with additional needs. Class teachers and special education teachers meet weekly to discuss and plan for supporting all children. The whole staff meet at least once per month to discuss whole school matters and to share what is working well across the school.

Sharing of expertise is promoted in the school. Staff are encouraged to share best practice. If a staff member attends a course, they are encouraged to share key information with other staff members.

Peer mentoring is also facilitated throughout the school. This allows staff members to visit one another's classrooms to see what is working well and to enhance their own practices.

Key information is communicated by email with all staff members to ensure that all staff receive the information at the same time.

Google Apps Calendars will be shared between Principal, Secretary and all Staff to ensure whole school awareness of meetings, parental involvement, other visitors to school etc.

The Principal meets with staff members regularly and staff members are encouraged to come and ask if they have any questions/queries/comments or need support in any area.

New teachers are offered an induction course at the start of the year. A padlet with key information for new staff and substitute teachers is also provided.

The agenda for a staff meeting is sent in advance and any staff member can add items to the agenda or these can be discussed at the end of the meeting as appropriate.

### **Senior leadership team**

The senior leadership team is comprised of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal 1 and two assistant principal 2. Each member of the team is responsible for different areas in the leadership and management of the whole school. The leadership team meet at least once per month to discuss key information and progress as part of the whole school plan.

### **Procedure if Unable to Come to Work**

The following process must be followed if a staff member is unable to come to work:

1. Staff must ensure the Principal/school management is contacted by text message to the school phone number.
2. If a staff member is absent from work for any reason the School Principal should be informed the night before where possible or within thirty minutes of the staff member's start time, on the first day of absence and the afternoon before (during School time), where possible, each day thereafter.

### **Request for Leave**

1. Requests for all leave must first be discussed with the Principal in private.
2. The Principal will input the leave on the substitute google calendar with the substitute who has been booked to cover the leave.

### **Staff Meetings**

Staff meetings will be held at least once per month.

One staff member will act as the chairperson and timekeeper and another staff member will act as secretary (record the minutes of the meeting). Meeting minutes will be uploaded to Google Drive after the meeting.

### **Home school communication**

Emails to whole school community/whole class must first be discussed with the Principal. Day to day emails e.g. looking for resources or reminders etc. do not need to be discussed with the Principal.

Emails to classes are sent through the Aladdin app only. Responses to these emails will go directly to the office and be forwarded to the relevant person.

Staff members must not share email address/phone numbers etc. with parents and guardians.

### **Accident/Incident**

All head injuries must be reported to the school secretary immediately. She will email the parents to notify them of this and ask them to collect their child if deemed necessary.

In the event of a serious accident or incident, this is recorded using the approved template. [\(LINK\)](#)

A copy of this is also shared with the child's parents/guardians (no other child should be mentioned in the report) which is signed and uploaded to Aladdin.

The teacher must also email the Principal to inform her of this report. Child's initials are used in the email. (E.g. Incident Report AB). The principal will then read the report, speak to the teacher and those involved if deemed necessary.

### **Absences/Leaving school early**

If a child needs to leave school early, a written note should be sent to the child's teacher that morning. The child must be collected from school at the agreed time and the parent/guardian will sign the child out using the early leaving/late arrival notebook.

If a child is absent from school, parents/guardians should enter the reason and a brief explanation on Aladdin. There is no need to email or call the school when a child is absent.

### **Additional home school communication**

Additional home school communication may be needed to best support a child.

Home school communication notebooks may be used as deemed necessary, the principal should be made aware of the use of these type of notebooks before this is put in place.

The Autism classes use Seesaw to share key information about the school day and provide photographs of what has happened in school each day to enhance communication at home.

### **Birthday Invitations**

We request that birthday invitations are not distributed at school as this can lead to upset and unnecessary disappointment for some children. Please distribute all invitations in your own time

### **Parent/Guardian - Teacher Meetings/report cards**

These are formally arranged once per year, usually in November to discuss children's progress and targets for the school year.

Meetings/ phone calls occur between teachers and parent/s at the request of either party at a time

convenient to both parties.

Short conversations between parents/guardians and teachers may occur at the end of the school day as appropriate.

If there is an issue that requires discussion, parents are advised to make an appointment to see the class teacher. This can be arranged by writing a note to your child's teacher.

Teachers report to parents in the end of year reports, at parent teacher meetings and at other times as appropriate.

### **School Office**

The administration staff is involved in a wide range of supporting activities for all staff, students parents/guardians and Board of Management. They assist with the smooth running of the school on a day-to-day basis.

Parents/guardians should email the school office with any questions/queries. The email will then be forwarded to the relevant person (principal/deputy principal/teacher etc.) who will respond by a phone call/email as soon as possible.

Currently the school secretary is in the office between 08:30am to 2:00pm.

The school office is closed during holidays. Any emails received during this time will be responded to when the school reopens.

### **Right to disconnect**

It is important that all staff members and families have the right to disconnect. It is best to contact the school via email. Emails will be responded to during school hours (8.20-2.05pm) and we will endeavour to respond within 48 hours (during weekdays/term time).

Staff members may plan or work at different times after school. Emails should not be sent after 6pm and should be scheduled for the following work day.

### **Steps for positive communication of concerns from parents/guardians:**

- **Step 1:** Any concerns/issues in relation to your child need to be discussed with the class teachers.
- **Step 2:** If, following the meeting with the class teacher, a parent feels that the matter has not been resolved, an appointment should be made with the Principal.
- **Step 3:** If a parent feels that the issue has not been resolved following the first two stages it is necessary to communicate with the Board of Management. A letter should be written and addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. The letter will be read out at the next Board of Management meeting and the members will consider and discuss the issues raised. The Board members will work towards finding a resolution and will respond directly to the parent.
- If the parental concern relates to whole school issues, Step 1 above may be skipped and the parent should come directly to the Principal.

**If approached, PGTA members and Board of Management members will promote the procedures outlined**

**above for dealing with suggestions and concerns in relation to the school.**

**Board of Management:**

It is crucial that Board of Management members, subcommittee members and all parents generally communicate school related information in the correct manner.

The Board of Management will hold meetings at least once per term.

**The Principal:**

- Has a responsibility within the school environment to ensure all the relevant parties are informed about all events and that all communications of a personal and/or confidential nature are treated accordingly.
- Meets daily with staff to discuss school development, planning, issues etc.
- Communicates with class teachers in relation to academic progress of students
- Liaises with Programme Co-ordinators – SEN / Learn Together / Green School / SPHE / Mentoring / After-School Programme / Forest School / Droichead / Human Rights
- Meets with Special Education Team once a month
- Liaises with outside welfare agencies – SENO, NEPS, Social Workers, Child and Family Centres
- Makes referrals to private counsellors / educational psychologists when necessary
- Communicates with Parents/Guardians / Board of Management

**Special Education Teachers (SET):**

SET play an important role in supporting children with additional needs. They will communicate with class teachers and parents to support the child in the school. SET will meet with parents to set targets as part of the child's individual education plan.

**This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management in May 2022.**

**Date of next review: January 2024.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Francis Fullen: Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Niamh Byrne: Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_