



# Ballinadee National School Communication Policy

## Introductory Statement

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 and aim to work for the benefit of the child and their learning so that the child's education can be effective.

This policy was developed by the Board of Management and staff of Ballinadee NS, in the school year 2022-2023. Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff communication including formal and informal parent/staff meetings.

Ballinadee NS staff and Board of Management believe that:

- Good communication between home and school is important because with positive and active partnership the child gets the best that primary education can offer.
- Teachers can do a better job where they are supported by and working closely with parents.

We know from research that children do better, behave better and are happier at school where parents and teachers work closely together and when parents are able to give their children support at home.

National Parents Council document Working Effectively as a Parents Association <sup>1</sup>

Ballinadee NS staff and Board of Management are committed to

- Developing close effective links with parents
- Participating in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the central and fundamental role of parents as Primary Educators<sup>2</sup> of their children
- Supporting and facilitating the Parents Association.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.npc.ie/attachments/cbdcfd37-98b5-4698-86aa-3f30c38fceed.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Article 42 of the Constitution of Ireland

Parents are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with the school
- Collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their children
- Become actively involved in the school and Parents Association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians will be consulted by staff. It is essential that all parents and legal guardians are named on the enrolment form.

Things that the school needs to know to keep your children safe and healthy.

- It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that may cause anxiety to your child and could affect his/her education. Your first point of contact should always be your child's class teacher.
- The school should at all times know who is collecting your child. The school secretary should have list of people and their contact information who you have authorised to collect your child. Should this change the onus is on you to inform the school secretary of the change. You can provide this information by email. Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone unauthorized/unknown to the school. If, at any time, parents alter the pick-up arrangements for their child, the school should be given written authorization by the parent immediately. In an emergency situation, the parent must leave a message on the answering service or speak with the principal/teacher.

Structures in place to facilitate open communication and consultation with Parents.

**Annual Consultation throughout the year including:**

- Welcome day for new Junior Infants and their parents in late May / early June each year
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in November (a short, written record of the meeting is maintained by each teacher).
- Class teachers / SET meet with parents whose children have additional educational needs. As they meet regularly with parents of children with additional needs, parents do not need to attend annual parent teacher meetings.

**Written communication including:**

- Homework diary (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class), to inform parents about assigned homework, to confirm that homework has been completed and to relay messages between parents and teachers.
- Emails sent from parents to class teachers, via the office (admin@ballinadeens.ie).
- Regular newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays, decisions taken to change current policies and procedures or to introduce new ones and other school concerns.
- School report for each pupil at the end of each school year (shared via Aladdin).
- Aladdin messages for general reminders (e.g school closures, coffee mornings)
- Some SEN pupils may have a home school diary. This is not a means of reviewing academic/social progress but rather serves as a useful tool to share information between home and school.

**Generally, communication sent from the school will be ‘paperless’. Emails sent from the school will be sent to the email address(es) provided at enrolment, unless otherwise requested by parents. All paper communication sent from the school will be sent to the child’s home address as given on the enrolment form, unless otherwise requested by parents.**

**Other structures and processes including:**

- Parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of relevant school policies. The document, once ratified by the Board, is made available to all parents via the school website or in hard copy if requested. Any feedback arising is brought to the attention of the Board.
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Christmas concerts, performances, Grandparents’ Day, etc.
- Involvement of parents in curricular areas and focus weeks when appropriate eg. STEM Week / Intercultural Week / World Book Day / Aistear / Guided Reading; sharing knowledge or reading groups etc.

Procedures for parents to initiate communication with the school.

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the school secretary, usually via email, to arrange a suitable time. Parents are to give a very brief note as to what the phone call / in-person meeting pertains to. When a suitable time is arranged between teacher and parent, the parent waits in the reception area on day of meeting. The secretary accompanies the parent to the classroom.

Classes begin at 9.20 am and finish at 2:00pm (infants) and 3.00pm (1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>) as this is contact time, teachers cannot speak to parents unless that parent has made a prior appointment.

If parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear during class time etc, this can be done through the secretary's office.

### On-line and Social Media Communication

Ballinadee N.S. has a website <http://www.ballinadeens.ie>. Parents are encouraged to visit these sites regularly to keep up to date on school matters, news and information.

## **Communication between staff**

Staff meetings take place once a month and staff follow the outline of the 'staff meeting policy' during these important meetings.

Staff also have three other scheduled hours during each month (Croke park hours) which are allocated to planning, SEN planning and an area of focus.

Staff operate a whatsapp group which is used for sharing general school updates, social news and events.

Communication is considered to be a strength among the staff and the informal communication before, during and after school is an integral part of the collegial and professional school atmosphere.

It is imperative for staff to not discuss sensitive school business on messaging or social media apps e.g. what's App, viber, etc due to GDPR considerations.

## **Communication between School/Board**

There is a teacher representative on the Board of Management who attends meetings (5 in a year).

## **Communication with outside agencies**

Ballinadee N.S. has enjoyed and benefited from links with state agencies. These include:

NEPS / NCSE / SESS / SENO / HSE / Tusla / EWO

Ballinadee N.S. also aims to make links with the community through:

Links with local schools (Principal meetings, pupil events)

Links with the community Gardaí

Links with local events

## **Communication through the school office**

All incoming emails are communicated through the office ([www.ballinadeens.ie](http://www.ballinadeens.ie)). The class teacher does not respond from their personal email to these.

## 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 attached to the school's Health and Safety policy.

### Reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management

Chairperson: 

Date: 19/3/24

Secretary of BoM: 

Date: 19/03/24