



# **Cara Community Special School Enfield, Co. Meath**

## **Communication with Parents/Guardians Policy**

## **1. Introduction**

This Communication with Parents/Guardians policy has been developed to provide information and guidelines to parents/guardians and teaching staff on communication from Cara CSS to parents/guardians of pupils attending the school and from parents/guardians to members of management and teaching staff at Cara CSS.

## **2. Aims of this Policy**

Through the development and implementation of this Communication with Parents/Guardians Policy, Cara CSS aims to:

- Develop close links between parents/guardians and the school
- Provide structured opportunities for parents/guardians to collaborate with the school in developing their son/daughter to their full potential
- Encourage and support parents/guardians in becoming actively involved in the school
- Keep parents/guardians up to date with what is happening in the school
- Promote partnership with parents/guardians as outlined in the Education Act 1998 and the Education Welfare Act 2000

## **3. Facilitating open communication and consultation**

It is important that pupils attending the school understand that communications between home and school are regular and provide for opportunities to further develop the educational relationship between school and parents/guardians who are both working together to provide the best possible education for the young people attending Cara CSS. The following measures are in place at Cara CSS to support the facilitation of open communication and consultation with Parents/Guardians of students attending the school:

- Supporting the work of the Parents Association: The Parents Association at Cara CSS is an integral part of the school community. Section 26 of the Education Act, 1998 states that the parents of students of a recognised school may establish, and maintain from among their number, a parents' association for that school and membership of that association shall be open to all parents of students of that school. The Parents Association makes a vital and valuable contribution to the school's promotion, growth and development as the Parents Association provides for the formal involvement of parents in the affairs of the school. Parents are kept informed of the work of the school through a report provided at each of the Parents Association meetings. The school website incorporates a section for Parents/Guardians.
- Parent Teacher Meetings take place once a year. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to attend these meetings as they provide valuable opportunities to meet with the school's teaching staff and identify areas where their son/daughter is excelling as well as discussing and identifying

additional supports that may be needed to ensure a student can achieve their potential during their time at the school. These meetings also provide opportunities for parents/guardians to inform teachers on how their son/daughter is coping outside of the school context.

- **Aladdin Schools Software:** Cara CSS uses Aladdin Schools software service [www.aladdin.ie](http://www.aladdin.ie) for administrative purposes. The Aladdin Connect portal is part of this and gives parents and guardians secure access to messages from the school and to details of their children's attendance, permission for school trips, reports cards etc. via secure login from your internet browser. Aladdin Connect enables parents to stay connected and informed about their child's education by:
  - Ensuring schools has their most up to date contact information
  - Keeping parents apprised of their child's attendance
  - Keeps parents up to date on school and classroom news via noticeboard messages
  - Allow parents to view what items their child has for homework
  - Allows parents view their child's approved report card
  - Gives parents the option to opt in to share contact information with their child's classmates parents via the Parent Privacy option for the class list.
  - Allow parents to enter absence reasons and send attendance notes to the school if their child will be arriving late / leaving early
  - Allow parents to send notes to the school/teacher
  - Allow parents to grant permission for school trips and activities
  - Allow parents to book a time slot for parent teacher meetings
  - Help improve attendance by allowing parents view just how many school days their child may have currently missed, along with late arrival and early leaving information
  - Help the school/ teachers communicate with parents when the need arises
  - Aladdin Schools uses state of the art security to safeguard information entered by the school and data is stored and processed in strict compliance with Irish data protection laws.
- **Contacting the School:** The School office can be contacted on for queries relating to school policy, enrolment or general enquiries.
- Aladdin Connect allows parents to send notes to the class teacher/School. Parents/Guardians should direct any messages on Aladdin to the class teacher for the following: Concerns regarding the welfare of their child, Concerns regarding to their child's learning, To arrange a meeting with the class teacher/Deputy Principal/Principal (Please be mindful that it is likely that teachers will not be able to view this message during teaching time). Teachers will respond as soon as is possible during their working day.



*Cara CSS  
Communication with  
Parents/Guardians  
Policy*

- **Homework Diary:** Pupils will have a homework diary which is used to log homework given and signed by parents/guardians each evening upon completion of homework.
- **Written Reports on Pupil Progress:** These will be issued to parents/guardians in June each year. Reports will be posted directly to the Aladdin system.
- **School Related events:** Parents/Guardians will also be invited to attend school concerts, sports days, sporting activities, open days, graduations and other relevant talks/information sessions facilitated by the school and/or outside speakers.
- **Policies:** All Cara CSS school policies are published on the school website and are available in hard copy on request from the main office at the school.
- **Board of Management Report:** An agreed report will be prepared by the Board of Management at the end of each of their Board of Management meetings. This will provide information for parents/guardians pertaining to matters of interest to them which were discussed at each Board meeting. This report will be distributed to the Parents via an Aladdin Notice. This report will also identify school policies which have been developed and reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management.
- **Social Media:** Regular posts on twitter, facebook and instagram will update parents/guardians on school activities and student achievements. It is recommended that parents follow Cara CSS on X, Facebook or Instagram.
- **School Website:** The school website is an additional means of communication with parents and the wider community. Information on policies, calendar, news and events, projects and enrolment are maintained on the website.
- **School Calendar for the Academic Year:** A detailed School Calendar for each Academic Year will be published by June of each year on the school website. This calendar will also be posted to the Aladdin App. A hard copy of the Calendar will also be available from the school office on request.
- **Student Direct Costs from Parents/Guardians:** These will be collected through the Way2Pay system, which is a system capable of tracking payments made and providing receipts to parents/guardians. Monies collected through the online payments system will be lodged directly to the LMETB bank account as LMETB schools are cashless schools.

#### **4. Family events/situations which may cause anxiety for a pupil attending Cara CSS**

Throughout the school year there will be times when our pupils' families are experiencing and dealing with situations that may cause anxiety for their son/daughter. Management and staff at Cara CSS would like to assure you of our support for your child at these difficult times. It is important to inform us of any such situation which may cause anxiety for your child, cause a deterioration in their school work and result in increased absenteeism. We will work together with families and other external agencies, where relevant, to support the child through the difficult time.

#### **5. Pupil Emergencies while attending Cara CSS during the school day**

In the event of a pupil emergency while at school, the parents/guardians of the pupil will be contacted by phone. In the event that the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact person on file as per enrolment form/Aladdin system, will be contacted. Please ensure that the Aladdin system is up to date with contact numbers for parents/guardians and emergency contact persons.

#### **6. Dropping off lunches/sports gear for pupil's during the school day**

We ask parents/guardians to work with their son/daughter in ensuring that when the child arrives at school they have all the necessary books, resources, lunch box and sports gear with them for the day. Should a situation arise however that a parent/guardian needs to drop something in to the school for their son/daughter we ask you to call to the school during break or lunch time. You will appreciate that this will ensure that class interruptions are kept to a minimum and parent/guardians will appreciate that this approach supports the school in the implementation of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

#### **7. Informal Meetings with the Class Teacher**

There will be occasions where a parent/guardian needs to speak to a class teacher urgently. Sometimes these meetings will need to take place without prior notice. The Principal teacher will in exceptional situations facilitate such meetings whilst making every effort to ensure that the pupils in the class do not lose out on any of their teaching/learning time.

In general, unscheduled meetings with the class teacher at the school door to discuss a concern pertaining to a pupil is discouraged for the following reasons:

- The class teacher is responsible for the health, safety and welfare of the students in his/her care. Teaching staff are regularly reminded not to leave their classroom at any time while they have

pupils in the classroom. The class teacher cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent at the door

- A pupil may also feel quite uncomfortable if their parent/guardian is speaking to the teacher at the door of the classroom while their peers observe the interaction between parent/guardian and class teacher
- Sensitive conversations regarding concerns about pupils' behaviour, academic progress, mental health and wellbeing are best dealt with in an appropriate space e.g an office where there are less opportunities for distractions during the conversation/meeting

### **8. Formal Meetings with the Class Teacher**

If a parent/guardian wishes to make an appointment at any stage throughout the school year to discuss their child's progress, they may do so by prior appointment. In the case where parents/guardians are separated, a request can be made to meet with school personnel together or individually.

### **9. Holidays during School Time**

As outlined by TUSLA, Education Welfare Services, taking a holiday during term time means that children miss important school time. It will be difficult for them to catch up on work later on. As a result, they may fall behind with school work and lose confidence in their abilities. We strongly advise parents/guardians do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time.

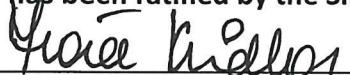
### **10. Accessing copies of the school's Communication with Parents/ Guardians Policy**

A copy of the school's Communication with Parents/Guardians Policy will be available to download on the school's website. A hard copy of this policy will also be available on request from the school's main office.

### **11. Monitoring and Review of this Policy**

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier, where deemed necessary or as required by legislation or Department of Education Circular.

This policy has been ratified by the Single Manager of Cara CSS on 25 July 2024

Signed:  Single Manager

Date: 25/7/24

Signed:  Principal / Secretary to the Board of Management