**PARENTS AS PARTNERS POLICY**

**Introduction:**

The Board of Management and staff of Scoil Mhuire, Presentation Primary School, Parnell Street, Kilkenny genuinely value the wonderful relationship we share with the parents/guardians of the children in our school. We strive to ensure that the core values of respect, empathy and trust underpinning the relationship are maintained and nurtured.

The Board of Management and staff fully endorse the following statement in the Primary Curriculum:

 “Parents are the child’s primary educators, and the life of the home is the most potent

 factor in his or her development during the primary school years…..”

Regular consultation with parents helps teachers to come to a deeper appreciation of children’s needs and so to plan more effective learning experiences. It also provides the means by which teachers keep parents fully informed about children’s progress. Good communication between parents and school helps build a shared understanding of the principles of the curriculum, the learning goals of the school and the approaches and methodologies it adopts…..

In a more general context, the involvement of parents in the organisational planning of the curriculum and their active participation in the life of the school enhances co-operation and interaction between home and school. Parents also have a special contribution to make in creating and fostering a positive school spirit in which all members of the school community can feel a sense of belonging and have an interest in the school’s development.

**Aims:**

1. The Board of Management and staff fully accept that parents/guardians are the primary

 educators of their children.

2. Scoil Mhuire, Presentation Primary School promotes positive practical collaboration

 and co-operation with parents that result in improved teaching and learning opportunities

 for the children.

3. Management and staff are committed to open, honest and frequent communication with

 Parents/guardians.

4. Parents, as a group, have a range of talents, abilities and skills that have the potential to

 enrich and extend the educational opportunities provided for the children. It is our policy

 to identify parents with specific skills and to invite those parents to share their skills with

 us at a school and a class level.

5. Respect for the professional role of the teacher and the statutory responsibilities of the

 Principal, Patron and the Board of Management is always an important consideration.

**Guidelines/Ways to become involved:**

Parents are invited to become involved in the school in many ways and at many levels, for example:

 . Serving on school bodies (Board of Management, Parent Association).

 . Policy development e.g. Code of Behaviour, Relationships and Sexuality Education:

 Homework, Healthy Lunch Policy etc.

 . In the school during particular activities e.g. helping out at and coaching sporting

 activities, the school Book Fair, Sports Day, Concerts.

 . Fundraising.

We have an active and supportive Parents’ Association in our school. The Principal, staff and Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire, Presentation Primary School are fully encouraging of the Parent’s Council in the school. We welcome and listen to their input on school matters and assist in fundraising activities.

The Parent Council functions in accordance with the guidelines set out in the National Parents Council publication called *Working Effectively as a Parent Association.*

The Parent Council meet regularly during the school year and **all parents** are invited to attend. Parents have an opportunity to suggest items to be placed on the agenda before the meeting.

The Parent Council also help teachers to run fundraising events such as Bag Pack, Christmas Concert, Raffle, Fun Day, Sports Day and other events throughout the year. Occasionally they organise their own fundraising events.

**Board of Management:**

Our Board of Management is constituted of eight members, two of whom are Parent Representatives. These are elected following the Procedures and Guidelines for Boards of Management.

**Policy Development/Consultation:**

Parents are invited to take part in the review of policies in the school. Parental consultation regarding policies where appropriate is conducted through various methods including during Parents’ Council meetings. Parents are made aware of draft policies on our school website and a hard copy is also available on request. On occasion parents may be invited to form a subcommittee in the formulation/revision of certain policies e.g. RSE.

**Curriculum:**

. Parents are informed on curricular updates on an ongoing basis as the school recognises

 the importance of the parental role in supporting the learning of the child and the school

 plan.

. Parents support the child’s learning in many ways – by communicating to the school the

 child’s learning needs and progress/barriers to progress, through homework, shared reading,

 cpelling, independent reading, language development, preserving and raising self esteem of

 child, approaches to number operations, maths language, tables, ag spreagadh na paisti

 chun gaeilge a labhairt sa bhaile, poetry, local history, local geography, environmental

 awareness, living things etc.

. S.E.N. Support: Learning Support and Special Needs; Parents are facilitated on an on-going basis to support their child’s learning needs etc.

 The S.E.N. teachers consult with parents and class teachers when drawing up student

 support files. An agreed amount of general and specific targets are set. Parents and

 teachers sign an agreed support plan. Parents are informed of their child’s progress

 and are involved in the review and continuation of the plan at the end of each

 instructional period.

. Extra Curricular Activities: Parents play an important role in supporting teachers to

 develop, promote and manage extra-curricular activities e.g. sports, dance, music etc.

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**Communication**

We realise the importance of early and honest communication with parents and parents are invited to attend formal parent teacher meetings in the first term to discuss their child’s progress academically and socially. The support teachers in the school are also available to meet parents on that day. This is in accordance with Circular 14/04. To meet the needs of parents who are unavailable to meet parents on the selected dates an arrangement is in place to organise a meeting on a day that suits all parties involved. Informal meetings are held as frequently as needed and parents are encouraged (a) write a note in the homework journal if they wish to meet the teacher or (b) to arrange an appointment if the matter requires more time.

. Parent Teacher Meetings:

 Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes (Circular 14/04).

 Where possible, they will be held in the first term. They will be initiated by the school

 staff and details regarding time etc will be worked out in consultation with the parents.

 The school will co-ordinate times where siblings are concerned and also where pupils

 are attending learning support/resource. The teachers use prepared guidelines for the

 meetings and collaborate in advance about the progress of individual children. A short

 written record of the meeting is maintained by each teacher. Separated parents will be

 facilitated in meeting the teacher individually if they wish to do so.

 The purpose of the Parent/Teacher meeting is:

 . To establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents.

 . To let parents know how their children are progressing in school.

 . To help teachers/parents get to know the children better as individuals.

 . To help children realise that home and school are working together.

 . To share with the parent any concerns the teacher may have about the child.

 . To learn more about the child from the parents’ perspective.

 . To learn more about parental opinions on what the school is doing.

 . To identify ways in which parents can help their children.

 . To negotiate jointly decisions about the child’s education.

 . To inform the parents of standardised test results according to school policy.

 Aside from the Parent/Teacher meeting Parents are also welcome to make an appointment

 anytime throughout the school year. If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher he/she

 can contact the school office to arrange a suitable time.

 It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that

 cause anxiety to your child and therefore may affect his/her education and well being

 in school e.g. bereavement, separation, illness etc.

. Homework Diaries/Notes home:

 Homework diaries are used from 2nd class to 6th class as an effective means of

communication between parent and teacher. In the infant classroom parents are asked to check their child’s bag every night for notes. These provide an effective means of

 daily communication between parent and teacher. Notes are sent home regularly to

 keep parents informed of school developments. All notes home are stapled into

 homework diaries so that parents receive them.

. Welcome Letter:

 The Principal sends out a ‘Welcome Letter’ at the start of the school year. Parents

 are also reminded of the importance of school attendance and punctuality in this

 letter.

 The incoming junior infant pupils and their parents are invited into the school for

 an open day in June. Parents are invited by letter. Parents receive an Induction

 Pack on this day. School policies and information are provided. This meeting also

 provides a forum to allay any fears they may have regarding their child’s learning

 and happiness. Parents are made aware that Scoil Mhuire, Presentation Primary

 school is a very open school that encourages and fosters good communication

 between all the partners in education. Parents’ questions are invited and answered

 at this meeting. Early in September an information meeting for new parents is held.

 Principal and infant teachers attend and information is provided on how Scoil Mhuire

 operates and the content of the primary curriculum is explained with particular

 emphasis on the infant programme. Teas and coffees are provided afterwards by the

 Parent Council.

 Parents/Guardians receive an End of Year Report Card in June every year. This

 report Card outlines each pupil’s progress for the year including his or her

 performance on Standardised Tests (1st – 6th). Parents are directed to the school

 website to find out more about standardised testing. On the first morning the

 new infant comes to the school the Parent Council organises teas/coffees in

 the hall and chat to the new parents in an attempt to make the first day more

 stress free.

. Website:

 This is an excellent means of communication between parents and school. All

 organisational policies that are of relevance to parents are in the Policies section

 under the Parents Information. When these draft policies go on the website,

 parents are invited to suggest additions and amendments to the policy. The

 website is used to celebrate activities, achievements, examples of pupils’ work

 etc. in the school and also to disseminate information and school news. It is

 updated regularly.

. Newsletter:

 Parents receive newsletters regularly throughout the year. They are kept informed

 of all the schools activities/achievements. Parent Council contribute to these

 newsletters.

. Text a parent and Email:

The school has contact numbers of the parents and uses text-a-parent as another means of communication.

. School Events:

 The school hosts many events during the year to encourage the participation of

 parents/guardians in school life. Examples of these include Sports Day, Book

 Fair, Christmas Concert. Parents are also encouraged to participate in the

 preparation of the children for the Sacraments of Communion and Confirmation.

 Occasionally the school will organise guest speakers on matters of relevance

 e.g. Healthy Eating, Internet Safety etc.

. Liaising with other agencies:

 Parents are made aware of the role of the Education Welfare Officer in

 communicating with parents whose children have missed more than 20

 school days, in relation to placement of pupils in other schools.

**Success Criteria:**

. Parents feel welcome in the school and feel comfortable approaching a teacher

 With any issues that have arisen.

. Benefit to pupil Learning.

. Feedback from parents/staff.

. Parental involvement in school activities is increased.

**This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Chairperson Board of Management**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Principal**

**This Policy will be reviewed by Staff and Board of Management every September.**

**Presentation Primary School**

**Parnell Street**

**Kilkenny**

**PARENTS AS PARTNERS**

**POLILCY**

**February 2017**