**Parental Partnership Policy**

**Galbally National School**

**Introduction:**

Both at home and at school we want the best for the children in our care. Parents and guardians want their children to have the best opportunities so that they can easily and effectively become members of the school and wider community. Galbally National School strives to provide pupils with the environment and support they need to achieve all their potential.

Effective partnership between home and school is key to these aspirations. Parents and carers are the most important influence in a child’s life, and the school needs to listen to and communicate with parents effectively to build the trust and understanding needed for pupils to achieve their best. The school needs to be a resource for the community it serves.

**Relationship to School Ethos:**

At Galbally National School we believe that children benefit most from education and care when parents and schools work together in partnership. We are committed to ongoing dialogue to improve our knowledge of the needs of children and to support families in meeting these needs in the best possible way.

**Rationale:**

Studies show that schools must change from the traditional understanding of parental involvement to the organisation of school-based strategies based on school, family, and community partnerships to ensure student success. This policy further strengthens Galbally National School’s plans and practices of family and community engagement linked to school goals for student learning and development. We welcome the fact that the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills has sought in recent years to involve the voices of parents to a much greater extent in the school inspection process The introduction of school self-evaluation in all schools offers many more opportunities for schools and parents to work even closer together to improve learning for children.

**Aims/Objectives:**

* To enhance and widen our children’s education through the involvement of parents and the community when possible.
* Foster and promote a two way partnership based on mutual respect between parents, children and all those working within our school.
* Ensure that Galbally National School is a culturally appropriate environment that values parents and carers and is sensitive to family needs.
* Recognise that parents and carers are the most important influence in a child’s life and that school is most effective when there is partnership between parents, children and school.
* Provide helpful communication with parents about their child’s holistic experience in Galbally National School.

**Initial Communication: Protocol & Procedure:**

Enrolment Form:

The availability of enrolment forms is communicated to the whole school community during the second term each year. Parents interested in enrolling their child in Galbally N.S. are requested to complete an enrolment form which provides the school with contact information for prospective pupils. Information about the school is provided to each parent who requests this form. Parents are invited to give information that will enable the child settle into school. It is imperative at this stage that any important information is made known to the school. This includes any assessments, reports already complete or pending.

Meeting for New Junior Infants:

All parents of children enrolled in Galbally National School for the coming year are invited to a general information meeting. The meeting will have the following format

* Introduction to Galbally NS. (General and Practical Information)
* Introduction to Curriculum (Emphasis on Literacy, Numeracy etc.)
* Extra curricular and after-school activities.
* Tips for September
* Information from Parent Association
* Questions.
* AOB

Open Day:

Parents and pupils are invited to the school in June each year to meet with the infant teacher and visit the infant classroom. An opportunity is offered for new parents to find out more about the curriculum and speak to staff about any concerns they may have.

**Ongoing Communication: Protocol and Procedure:**

Informal Parent/Teacher Meetings:

Communication between parents and teachers is to be encouraged.

* Arranging parent/teacher meetings within the school day while children are in school is difficult. However, parents are welcome to speak to the Principal or teacher(s) at an appointed time before school.
* Meetings with the class teacher at the class door to discuss a child’s concern/progress is discouraged on a number of grounds.
  + A teacher cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent
  + It is difficult to be discrete when children, staff etc. are close by.
* Occasions occur where a parent needs to speak to a teacher urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The Principal will make every effort 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.

Formal Parent/Teacher Meeting

Formal parent/teacher meetings take place in Term 1. Parents are given sufficient notice. However, if a parent wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by prior appointment.

The aim of the Parent/Teacher meeting is to:

* Let parents know how their children are progressing in school
* Inform teachers on how children are coping outside school
* Establish an ongoing relationship and communication with parents
* Help teachers/parents get to know the children better as individuals
* Help children realise that home and school are working together.
* If issues need further discussion, parents are welcome to arrange a further consultation with the class teacher.

Notice regarding the parent teacher meetings will be sent to the family home with each child . If a parent not living in the family home wishes to meet with the class-teacher, this arrangement will be facilitated and should be made with the class teacher.

Parents, guardians and teachers are encouraged to communicate queries, concerns or issues which may be affecting the child at the earliest opportunity.

Such communication should follow direct lines: Each parent must communicate directly with their child’s teacher or principal on each issue affecting their child. There is no system of ‘representation’ on such matters – i.e. members of the Board, the PA, or any other group have no such function. Again, individual parents should feel free to approach their child’s teacher at an early stage

School Notes/ Bulletins:

All 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. Parents will receive regular text messages informing them of daily/weekly school events, incidental information etc.

Newsletter:

School news relating to school activities and administration are published and delivered to parents at beginning and end of each school year.

The school newsletter is brought home by the youngest child in each family. Each class teacher endeavours to put newsletters in the folders for infant classes and homework journals for older classes.

Class-Teacher Communication on Curricular Approaches to Learning.

From time to time, particularly in the infant classes, teachers will send out information to parents/carers regarding a particular aspect of the curriculum/their child’s learning. We invite parents/carers to communicate with the school about such information and provide feedback in relation to the way in which they supported their child’s work and the overall shared learning experience.

Home/School Literacy Pack.

This folder provides a focused link between home/school for junior & senior infant pupils.

Pupils take home visual aids/charts re: phonics, key words, sight vocabulary, reading books etc. Other essential information may be transferred between home and school in the reading pack.

School Journal

Each pupil from Junior Infants to 6th class has a school journal. The journal provides the most practical conduit between home and school.

All homework to be completed is written in the journal.

Any additional notes for parents are also written into journal.

Parents use the journal to brief the teacher, request a meeting with the teacher, and explain any school absence.

Parents are obliged to explain any school absence under the NEWB guidelines.

Parents are requested to sign the homework journal each night having checked homework. As detailed in Galbally N.S.’s Homework Policy. Parents are asked to communicate any difficulties with particular aspects of homework completion in the pupil homework journal.

**Parent/School Partnership:**

Galbally National School has an active Parents Association with whom we work with closely throughout the year. Each year parent representatives are also elected and assigned to a class. These representatives meet with the teachers regularly to discuss any ideas, issues, queries etc. relating to the specific class group. These parent representatives are also involved in the formulation of certain school policies e.g. Substance Abuse, RSE, Homework, Bullying and SPHE etc. Parent and community groups regularly communicate with the children in each class (or on a whole school basis) in relation to upcoming events, the work of community groups, incidental issues etc. The implementation of this policy will nurture the existing links between school and home and foster an environment where partnership is central.

**Implementation Date:**

This policy is effective from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Review/Ratification/Communication:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It will be reviewed at the end of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school year and amended whenever it becomes necessary.