



Brannoxtown CNS

Communication with Parents¹ Policy

Brannoxtown Community National School (CNS) is a primary school under the Patronage of the Kildare and Wicklow Education and Training Board (KWETB). Brannoxtown CNS opened in September 2018 with a new Principal, Dr. Sarah FitzPatrick. Brannoxtown CNS operates within the regulations laid down by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and follows the Primary School Curriculum (DES, 1999) which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998). The Principal and the Board of Management fully subscribe to the principles of partnership, accountability, inclusion, respect for diversity, parental choice and equality, in developing and implementing all school policies.

1. Introduction and Rationale

This policy on Communication with Parents has been developed to provide information and guidelines to parents and to teaching staff about communications from Brannoxtown CNS to parents of pupils attending the school, and from parents to members of management and teaching staff at Brannoxtown CNS.

2. Policy Aims:

This policy is developed to:

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

3. Facilitating collaborative communication and consultation with Parents

It is important for children attending the school to understand that communications between home and school are important to support their learning and ultimately to provide the best possible education for all children at our school. The following actions (currently underway and planned) at Brannoxtown CNS will support the facilitation of open communication and consultation with parents of students attending the school.

Actions currently underway:

Parent Teacher Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Parent Teacher Meetings</u> are held for each child during the first term of the academic year. Parents are encouraged and supported to attend these meetings as they are a valuable opportunity to discuss their child's learning and development. The meetings are an opportunity to discuss areas where their son/daughter is excelling as well as additional supports that may be needed to ensure their child can achieve their full potential during their time at our school. These meetings also
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¹ The word 'Parents' refers both to Parents and Guardians of children attending Brannoxtown CNS.



	<p>provide opportunities for parents to talk to teachers about their child's development and life outside of the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Individual Meetings with Parents</u>: 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 with the school secretary (by phone or email) or with the class teacher (via the child's homework notebook). In the case where parents are separated, a request can be made to meet with school personnel together or individually.
<p>Written communications</p> <p>Text Messages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Written Reports on Pupil Progress</u>: Reports issue to parents in June each year. From June 2020, reports are posted directly to the pupil's home address unless otherwise requested by parents. • <u>Homework Diary</u>: Each pupil attending Brannoxtown CNS receives a homework diary which is used to log homework given and is signed by parents each evening upon completion of homework. The Homework Diary also provides a facility for school and home to interact via the weekly notes section. Parents are asked to complete absence notes in the diary when their son/daughter has been absent from school and ideally to inform the class teacher of planned absences in advance. • <u>Emails and phone calls</u>: In addition to the Homework Diary, parents may communicate with the school by email or phone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Email: brannoxtowncns@kwetb.ie. ○ Phone: 045-483729. <i>Parents may phone the school landline and leave a voicemail if the secretary is not available at the time of the call.</i> • <u>Texts</u>: From September 2019, the school has purchased a subscription to the Aladdin software system which enables us to send pre-scheduled school text-messages to parents from PC/laptop. These messages are sent to the contact number provided by parents in their child's Enrolment Form. Parents are asked not to communicate with the school via text to the school phone in non-emergency situations. Children's learning and development is the priority at Brannoxtown CNS and time spent reading and responding to parents' texts takes from valuable planning and teaching time. Following the appointment of a part-time School Secretary in September 2019, parents can contact the school via the school office (in person) the school landline number (above) or the school email (above). We will endeavour to respond to parents' queries as soon as possible. We very much appreciate parents' understanding in this regard.
<p>Newsletters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Half-term Newsletters</u>: All children are invited to share stories about their learning in our student-produced newsletters which issue each half term: October, December, March/April and June. The newsletters update parents on school activities and student achievements. The newsletters are printed for each family and available on the Brannoxtown CNS website in the 'Parents' section of the site and also under the link to 'News'.
<p>Policies and Events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Policies</u>: All Brannoxtown CNS school policies are published on the school website and are available in hard copy on request



	<p>from the main office at the school. When appointed the Board of Management will manage a schedule for development, review and implementation of all school policies, beginning with the most important policies for children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>School Related events</u>: Parents are invited to attend and contribute to school events including open days, sporting activities, graduation night and other relevant talks/information sessions facilitated by the school, parents themselves and/or outside speakers.
Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Parents' Webpage</u>: The parents' section of the school website includes the above newsletters as well as information about the school uniform, booklists, additional resources of interest to parents and the school calendar: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A detailed School Calendar for the next Academic Year is published in June each year on the Parents' section of the school website. A hard copy of the Calendar is provided for each family at the end of June for the following year. • <u>Homepage</u>: The homepage for the school site: www.brannoxtowncns.ie is updated weekly. It includes a Facebook and twitter feed so parents and members of the public can see children's learning and development in action. It also includes a school noticeboard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ From February 2018, important dates and developments are added to the BCNS noticeboard, which is easily accessible on our homepage. BCNS Noticeboard.
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Facebook - Brannoxtown CNS</u>: From September 2018, weekly updates on developments in our school are posted our school Facebook page: Brannoxtown CNS. • <u>Twitter - Brannoxtown CNS</u>: From January 2019, our school's Twitter account, Brannoxtown CNS is used to share our learning and teaching experiences with others.

Planned Actions:

Parents Association and representation on the school Board of Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Parents Association</u>: The Parents' Association at Brannoxtown CNS will be an integral part of the school community. Section 26 of the Education Act, 1998 states that, <i>...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.</i> The Parents Association will make a vital and valuable contribution to the school's promotion, growth and development. Parents will be kept informed of the work of the school through a Principal's Report provided at each of the Parents Association meetings. The school website will incorporate a section for Parents. • <u>Board of Management</u>: Two parent nominees (one male, one female) will be invited to represent parents on the new Board of Management which will be established following constitution of the new KWETB Board in October 2019. An agreed report will be prepared by the Board of Management at the end of each of their Board of Management meetings. The report will
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	<p>provide information for parents on matters of interest to them, discussed at the Board meeting. For example, the report will identify school policies which have been developed, reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management. The report will be published on the school website and available for parents to access and distribute among members of the Parents Association.</p>
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4. Informal Meetings with the Class Teacher

There may be occasions when a parent 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 while making every effort to ensure that the pupils in the class do not lose out on any of their teaching and learning time. In general, meetings with the class teacher at the class door to discuss a concern pertaining to a pupil are 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 aware of the need to remain in their classroom when they are responsible for the children there. The class teacher cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent at the class door.
- A pupil may also feel quite uncomfortable if their parent is speaking to the teacher at the door of the classroom about them or a matter relating to them, while their peers observe the interaction between their parent 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 or empty classroom with fewer opportunities for distractions during the conversation/meeting

5. Family events/situations which may cause anxiety for a pupil attending Brannockstown CNS

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

6. Pupil Emergencies during the school day at Brannockstown CNS

In the event of a pupil emergency while at school, the child's parents will be contacted by phone. In the event that the parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact person named on the child's Enrolment Form, will be contacted. Parents are asked to ensure that the school has up-to-date phone numbers for both themselves and their child's emergency contact persons.

7. Dropping off lunches/sports gear for pupil's during the school day

We ask parents to work with their son/daughter in ensuring that when the child arrives



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at school they have all the necessary belongings: books, resources, lunch box and sports gear with them for the day. However, if a parent needs to drop something in to the school for their son/daughter we ask you to report firstly to the school office if/when open. The school secretary will then make arrangements for the item to be passed on to your son/daughter. If parents need to visit the school on a day when the secretary is not working, the child's belongings can be taken to his/her classroom. As our school grows, we wish to minimise class interruptions. Parents will appreciate that this approach supports the school in implementing our Child Safeguarding Statement.

8. Planned absences during term-time

As outlined by TUSLA, the Education Welfare Service, taking a holiday during term time means that children may miss opportunities to develop key concepts and skills. Consequently, it may be difficult for children to catch-up when they return to school. Children may fall behind with school work and lose confidence in their abilities. We advise parents to keep children in school during term time. In exceptional circumstances where absences are planned and cannot be avoided, it is very important that parents inform the school in advance that teachers can plan to support children upon their return to school.

9. Communications with Parents Policy: Monitoring and Reviewing

a. Success Criteria

Practical indicators of the success of this policy will be evident in very effective communications between home and school to benefit all children at Brannoxtown CNS.

b. Implementation and Timetable for Review

When finalised, this policy will apply from October 2019 at Brannoxtown CNS. This policy and related policies will be reviewed annually (or in line with a change in Department legislation) and amended if/as necessary.

c. Ratification and Communication

Following discussion and engagement with staff and informal discussions with parents, a print copy of the policy was provided for parents on 24th September and parents were introduced to the new school secretary whose role has enabled us to draft this policy. Feedback was invited by Friday, October 11th on how the policy may be improved to benefit children of Brannoxtown CNS. Following feedback, the policy was finalised and posted on the school's website. Hardcopies of the policy are available to parents on request.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Brannoxtown CNS on 5th December, 2019.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Ms. Deirdre O' Donovan
Chairperson

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Dr. Sarah FitzPatrick
Principal