



Coláiste Pobail Acla

Reporting to Parents and Guardians Policy

DRAFT

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1. Introduction

Coláiste Pobail Acla recognises the important role of parents and guardians in supporting students' learning, wellbeing, attendance, participation and overall development.

Effective communication between the school, students, parents and guardians is an important part of the school's work. The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear, consistent and manageable framework for reporting to parents and guardians regarding student progress, achievement, attendance, engagement, behaviour, wellbeing and other matters relevant to a student's education.

The policy aims to ensure that communication is:

- timely and appropriate;
- clear, respectful and professional;
- proportionate to the matter being communicated;
- consistent across the school;
- supportive of student learning and wellbeing;
- cognisant of the roles and responsibilities of different members of staff; and
- managed in a manner that allows the school to operate effectively.

This policy should be read in conjunction with relevant school policies and procedures, including the school's Attendance Policy, Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy, SEN Policy, Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment, Acceptable Usage Policy and other relevant policies.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purposes of this policy are to:

1. establish clear arrangements for reporting student progress to parents and guardians;
2. provide parents and guardians with meaningful information regarding their child's progress and participation in school;
3. promote positive and constructive communication between home and school;
4. clarify the appropriate channels of communication within the school;
5. clarify the respective roles of teachers, Year Heads, Guidance, HSCL, SEN/SST personnel, Deputy Principal and Principal;
6. ensure that communication is managed consistently and efficiently;
7. support early identification of concerns relating to learning, attendance, behaviour, wellbeing or engagement;
8. ensure that parents and guardians are appropriately involved where a student requires additional support;
9. ensure that school leaders can delegate communication and follow up to the appropriate post holder or member of staff.

3. Principles

Coláiste Pobail Acla is committed to the following principles:

3.1 Partnership

Parents and guardians are important partners in their child's education. The school will seek to develop positive, respectful and constructive relationships with families.

3.2 Student centred communication

Communication should support the educational, social, emotional and personal development of the student.

3.3 Appropriate communication

The school will use the most appropriate communication method for the nature and urgency of the matter.

3.4 Professional responsibility

Communication concerning students should normally be managed by the member of staff with the appropriate knowledge, responsibility or delegated authority.

3.5 Proportionality

Not every issue requires intervention by the Principal or Deputy Principal. Matters should, where appropriate, be dealt with at the level best placed to address them.

3.6 Confidentiality

Information relating to individual students will be shared only with those who have a legitimate educational or professional need to receive it and in accordance with relevant legislation, school procedures and data protection requirements.

3.7 Respect

All communication between school personnel, students and parents/guardians should be courteous, respectful and focused on resolving issues constructively.

4. Reporting Student Progress

The school will provide parents and guardians with appropriate information regarding their child's progress through a combination of formal and informal reporting mechanisms.

These may include:

- formal school reports;
- parent/ guardian teacher meetings;
- assessment and examination results;
- school communication system -TYRO;
- attendance information;
- communication from subject teachers;
- communication from Year Heads;
- communication regarding behaviour or engagement where appropriate;
- meetings with Guidance, HSCL, SEN/ SST or other relevant personnel;
- transition and review meetings;
- direct communication where a significant concern arises;
- other appropriate school-based reporting mechanisms.

Reporting should provide a balanced picture of the student's progress, including strengths, areas for development and, where appropriate, suggested actions or supports.

5. Formal Reports

Formal reports will be issued to parents and guardians at appropriate points during the academic year after the administration of the 10/10/10 examination format.

Reports may include information relating to:

- academic progress;
- assessment outcomes;
- effort and engagement;
- homework/ study;
- attendance and punctuality;
- behaviour where relevant;
- participation;
- progress towards identified learning targets;
- other relevant information determined by the school.

The timing and format of formal reports may be reviewed by the school from time to time to ensure that reporting arrangements remain effective and manageable.

6. Parent/ Guardian Teacher Meetings

Parent/ guardian teacher meetings provide an important opportunity to discuss a student's progress.

The purpose of such meetings is to:

- provide information about student progress;
- identify strengths and areas for development;
- discuss attendance, engagement or behaviour where relevant;
- identify appropriate supports;
- provide an opportunity for parents/ guardians to raise relevant concerns;
- strengthen communication between home and school.

Parents/ guardians are encouraged to use the formal meeting arrangements provided by the school rather than seeking multiple separate contacts with individual members of staff about the same matter.

Where a matter requires further consideration following a parent/ guardian teacher meeting, the appropriate member of staff may arrange a subsequent meeting or communication.

7. Communication Regarding Concerns

Where a significant concern arises regarding a student's:

- academic progress;
- attendance;
- punctuality;
- behaviour;
- engagement;
- wellbeing;
- social or emotional development;
- learning support; or
- participation,

the school may contact the parent/ guardian.

Communication may be initiated by the relevant:

- subject teacher;
- Year Head;
- SEN Coordinator/SST;
- Guidance Counsellor;
- Home School Community Liaison personnel, where appropriate;
- Deputy Principal;
- Principal.

The member of staff initiating the communication will be determined by the nature of the matter and the school's internal responsibilities.

8. Communication with the Principal and Deputy Principal

Parents and guardians may contact the Principal or Deputy Principal regarding matters of genuine significance or where they consider that the matter requires consideration at school leadership level.

However, the fact that a parent or guardian contacts the Principal or Deputy Principal directly does not mean that the Principal or Deputy Principal will necessarily respond personally to the communication.

Where appropriate, the Principal or Deputy Principal may:

- respond directly;
- ask another member of staff to provide the relevant information;
- refer the matter to the appropriate Year Head, teacher, HSCL, Guidance/ SEN/ SST personnel or other post holder;
- delegate responsibility for following up the matter to an appropriate post holder;
- determine that no further response is required.

This is an important part of ensuring that matters are dealt with by the person best placed to address them and that school leadership can manage the overall operation of the school effectively.

8.1 Direct Emails to the Principal

Parents and guardians may send specific emails directly to the Principal.

However, an email sent directly to the Principal should not be understood as creating an expectation that the Principal will personally reply.

The Principal may, at their discretion, delegate the matter to an appropriate post holder or member of staff. In such circumstances, the delegated staff member may communicate with the parent/ guardian and/ or take whatever appropriate action is required.

Similarly, where a communication is directed to the Deputy Principal, the matter may be dealt with by the Deputy Principal or delegated to the appropriate member of staff.

The school's commitment is to ensure that appropriate matters are considered and addressed, rather than that every communication must receive a personal response from the Principal or Deputy Principal.

9. Appropriate Communication Channels

Parents and guardians should normally raise matters with the member of staff or school structure most directly responsible for the issue.

The following provides a general guide:

Matter	Appropriate Initial Contact
Subject progress / homework / assessment	Subject Teacher
Year group issue	Year Head
Attendance / punctuality	Year Head / designated attendance personnel
Behaviour	Subject Teacher / Year Head / relevant school structure
Learning support / additional needs	SEN Coordinator / SST / relevant personnel
Guidance / subject or career guidance	Guidance Counsellor
Wellbeing concerns	Year Head / Guidance / Chaplain
General school administration	School Office
Significant or unresolved matter	Year Head / Deputy Principal / Principal as appropriate
Serious or complex matter	Principal / Deputy Principal

This structure is intended to facilitate timely resolution and does not prevent a parent or guardian from bringing a matter to the attention of school management where appropriate.

10. Email Communication

Email is an important communication tool but is not intended to replace all other forms of communication.

Parents and guardians should:

- use appropriate school email channels;
- provide sufficient information for the matter to be understood;
- communicate respectfully;
- avoid sending multiple emails regarding the same issue to different members of staff;
- recognise that staff may not be in a position to respond immediately;
- understand that some matters are more appropriately dealt with by telephone, meeting or another agreed communication method.

Staff will endeavour to respond to appropriate communications within a reasonable timeframe having regard to the nature and complexity of the matter.

The school does not expect staff to provide an immediate response to routine communications.

11. Matters Requiring Urgent Attention

Email should not be relied upon for urgent matters requiring an immediate response.

Where a matter is urgent or relates to an immediate concern regarding a student's safety or welfare, parents/ guardians should contact the school through the appropriate urgent communication channel.

Child protection and safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Child Safeguarding Statement and relevant procedures.

12. Communication Regarding Student Support

Where a student is receiving additional support, communication with parents/ guardians may involve relevant members of the school's support structures.

This may include:

- Year Head;
- SEN Coordinator;
- Student Support Team (SST);
- Guidance Counsellor;
- Chaplaincy;
- Home School Community Liaison personnel;
- School Completion Programme, where relevant;
- other designated school personnel;
- external agencies where appropriate and in accordance with relevant procedures and consent requirements.

Provision and progress may be reviewed through the school's Student Support Team and appropriate communication with parents/guardians.

13. Attendance and Engagement

Parents and guardians have an important role in supporting regular attendance, punctuality and engagement.

The school may communicate with parents/guardians where there are concerns relating to:

- attendance;
- persistent lateness;
- patterns of absence;
- disengagement;
- unexplained absence; or
- other factors affecting participation in education.

Such communication may be undertaken by the appropriate Year Head, attendance personnel, HSCL, SCP or another designated member of staff.

14. Behaviour and Code of Behaviour

Communication relating to behaviour will be managed in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Depending on the circumstances, communication may be undertaken by:

- the subject teacher;
- Year Head;
- Deputy Principal; or
- Principal.

Parents/ guardians will be informed where the school's procedures require communication or where the school considers that parental involvement is appropriate in supporting the student.

15. Confidentiality and Data Protection

The school will respect the confidentiality of information relating to students and families.

Information will be communicated only where there is an appropriate educational, safeguarding, administrative or legal basis for doing so.

Parents/ guardians should also recognise that school staff cannot provide confidential information concerning other students or families.

Where an issue involves multiple students, the school will communicate only information that it is appropriate and lawful to share.

16. Communication with Separated Parents/ Guardians

The school will seek to communicate appropriately with parents/ guardians in accordance with the information available to the school and applicable legal requirements.

Where there are specific legal arrangements, court orders or other relevant circumstances affecting communication or access to information, parents/ guardians should provide the school with the relevant documentation.

The school will act in accordance with its legal obligations and relevant Department of Education guidance.

17. Meetings with Parents and Guardians

Where a meeting is considered necessary, the school may determine:

- who should attend;
- the appropriate timing and location;
- whether the meeting should take place in person or remotely;
- whether another member of staff should attend;
- what information should be considered in advance.

Where appropriate, a parent/ guardian may be asked to attend a meeting with a member of the school's support or leadership team.

The school may also determine that a meeting with a particular member of staff is more appropriate than a meeting with the Principal or Deputy Principal.

18. Communication Boundaries

The school recognises the importance of maintaining appropriate professional boundaries.

Staff are not expected to:

- respond to communications outside reasonable working arrangements;
- engage in prolonged email exchanges where a meeting would be more appropriate;
- respond personally to every communication directed to school management;
- discuss confidential information about other students;
- provide immediate responses to routine enquiries.

Where communication becomes repetitive, unreasonable or disproportionate, the school may determine an appropriate communication process for managing the matter.

19. Complaints and Grievances

Where a parent/ guardian wishes to make a formal complaint, the ETB's agreed complaints procedure should be followed.

A parent/guardian should not use repeated emails to different members of staff or directly to the Principal as a substitute for the ETB's formal complaints process.

Where appropriate, the Principal may acknowledge a matter and direct the parent/ guardian towards the relevant formal procedure.

Nothing in this policy prevents a parent/ guardian from raising a legitimate concern or complaint through the appropriate agreed ETB procedure.

20. Role of the Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

The Principal will:

- establish appropriate reporting arrangements;
- oversee communication systems;
- ensure that responsibilities are appropriately allocated;
- delegate communication and follow-up where appropriate;
- monitor the effectiveness of reporting arrangements; and
- review the policy in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

The Principal retains discretion to determine how individual matters are managed within the school's organisational and governance structures.

21. Role of the Deputy Principal

The Deputy Principal supports the Principal in the implementation of the policy and may:

- manage designated areas of student support and reporting;
- communicate with parents/ guardians;
- coordinate follow-up on identified concerns;
- delegate matters to appropriate post holders or staff;

- support Year Heads and other relevant staff;
- undertake other duties assigned by the Principal.

22. Role of Teachers, Year Heads and Other Post Holders

All staff have a responsibility to communicate appropriately with parents/guardians within their role.

Teachers, Year Heads, Tutors and other post holders should:

- provide accurate information;
- communicate professionally;
- record significant communication where appropriate;
- refer matters beyond their remit to the appropriate person;
- maintain confidentiality;
- work collaboratively to support students.

23. Record Keeping

Where communication relates to a significant student concern, support intervention, attendance issue, behaviour matter, safeguarding concern or other matter requiring follow up, an appropriate record should be maintained in accordance with school procedures and data protection requirements.

Records should be factual, professional and proportionate.

24. Review of Reporting Arrangements

The school will periodically review its reporting arrangements to ensure that they remain:

- effective;
- manageable;
- consistent;
- accessible to parents/ guardians;
- supportive of student outcomes;
- aligned with the school's wider School Development Plan.

Feedback from students, parents/ guardians and staff may inform the review process.

25. Communication Expectations – Summary for Parents and Guardians

Coláiste Pobail Acla welcomes appropriate communication with parents and guardians.

Parents/ guardians are asked to:

1. use the appropriate communication channel for the issue;
2. contact the relevant teacher or post holder in the first instance where appropriate;

3. provide sufficient information to allow the school to understand the matter;
4. allow reasonable time for a response;
5. understand that the Principal or Deputy Principal may delegate a matter to another appropriate member of staff;
6. understand that a direct email to the Principal or Deputy Principal does not necessarily result in a personal response from them;
7. use the school's formal complaints procedure where a formal complaint is being made;
8. respect the confidentiality of other students and families; and
9. engage constructively with school staff in the interests of the student.

26. Policy Approval

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Mr. Martin O'Reilly

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Mr. Jason Ó Mongáin

Board Secretary & School Principal

Appendix 1 – Reporting and Communication Pathway

Student / Parent Concern



Relevant Teacher // Year Head / Designated Post Holder



Further support required?

→ **No:** Matter resolved / communication concluded

→ **Yes:** Appropriate school support structure / SST / Guidance / SEN / HSCL / SCP



Further management involvement required?

→ **Deputy Principal / Principal**



Principal/Deputy Principal determines appropriate response

This may include:

- direct response;
- meeting;
- referral;
- delegation to an appropriate post holder;
- further investigation;
- implementation of an existing school procedure;
- direction to the appropriate formal complaints or other school process.

Key principle: The aim is that each matter is addressed by the person or structure best placed to respond. A direct communication to the Principal or Deputy Principal does not automatically require a personal response from school management.