# Introductory Statement

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and parent/staff communication in our school. Staff/pupil communication is promoted through pupil’s emails and the use ofSeeSaw. The family and home are central to the social and intellectual development of the child and the nurturing of good, moral values. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other so that the child’s education can be effective. All the individuals aim to work for the benefit of the child and their learning.

# Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to:

* develop close links with the school
* ensure they have provided the school with 2 phone numbers and be contactable at all times
* download Seesaw for the applicable classes for remote teaching and communication purposes
* participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of the staff and all staff members in the school
* collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their children
* share the responsibility of seeing that the school remains true to its ethos, values and distinctive character
* participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

# Open Communication

Structures in place to facilitate open communication and consultation with Parents:

* parent/teacher, individual education plan (IEP), pupil profile plan (PPP) meetings
* parents receive school report of each pupil twice in the school year via IEP/PPP meeting and via the Aladdin communication system
* consultation throughout the year with the class teacher
* staff may communicate with parents and pupils through Seesaw
* staff may communicate with parents via their staff email or SeeSaw
* staff may communicate with pupils directly during remote teaching using their staff email or Microsoft Teams
* regular updates on our school website and Facebook keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school activities
* parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. school Masses, coffee mornings etc.
* involvement of parents in the ‘Grow in Love’ religion section for parents where applicable
* parents will receive a newsletter when issued by the school, informing parents of what is happening in the school.
* parents are also welcome to make an appointment any time throughout the year. If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the school secretary 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 adversely affect his/her education. In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians named on the enrolment form will be consulted by staff.

# Parent-Teacher/Individual Education Planning Meetings

Formal parent/teacher/IEP/PPP meetings will be held once a year for all classes during the first term. They will be initiated by the school staff and details regarding time, etc. will be worked out by the class teacher, in consultation with parents. The school will attempt to co-ordinate times where siblings are concerned at the request

of parents. Meetings usually take place in the classrooms. Meetings may take place over the phone through video-call or over emails or via Zoom if absolutely necessar, if parents are unable to attend in person. The teachers use prepared guidelines for the meetings and collaborate in advance about the progress of individual children. A short record of the meeting is maintained by each teacher. A diagnostic window template is available for this purpose.

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 meet demands for accountability
* to share with the parent the difficulties the child may have in school
* to review with the parent the child’s experience of schooling
* to learn more about the child from the parent’s 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
* to plan for the future learning of the pupil.

# Reporting to Parents

Circular 56/2011 outlines the initial steps in the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategy has been adopted by the Board of Management. References to parent/school communication, include reporting to parents. In line with legislation, parents have the primary responsibility for their children’s learning and development. Schools can strengthen the capacity of parents to support their children in this way by sharing meaningful information with parents about the progress that children are achieving in the education system. This information needs to draw on the different

sources of evidence that staff use, such as conversations with the learner, data collection and documented progress on objectives and milestones reached in their short and long-term planning, examination of students’ own self-assessment data, documented observations of the learner’s engagement with tasks, outcomes of other assessment tasks and tests, and examples of students’ work. In turn, parents will often be able to enrich the knowledge of staff of their students’ progress through providing further information about the students’ learning at home. Parents should always make the school aware of any difficulties they may have, with interpreting written communication. Alternative ways of communicating will be provided for these parents on request.

# Report Card Templates

The report cards provide for reporting in four key areas:

* + the child’s learning and achievement across the curriculum
  + the child’s learning dispositions
  + the child’s social and personal development
  + ways in which parents can support their child’s learning

All primary schools must report to parents on students’ progress and achievement at school. This is now completed via our Aladdin communication system.

# Formal Meetings

Formal timetabled parent/teacher meetings usually take place in October. 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.

All communication sent from the school will be sent via Aladdin, via staff email to an email address provided by the parent or when applicable to the child’s home address as given on the enrolment form, unless otherwise requested by parents. In the case

of separated parents, requests can be made by both parents to meet their child’s teacher(s) individually for parent/teacher meetings.

# Informal Parent/Staff Meetings

The school encourages communication between parents and staff. Meetings with the class teacher at the class door to discuss a child’s concern/progress are discouraged on a number of grounds:

* + - staff cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent
    - it is difficult to be discreet when so many children are standing close by
    - it can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to staff at a classroom door.

Occasions occur where a parent needs to speak to a staff member urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The principal will aim 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. If parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear etc, this can be done through the secretary’s office as it is important to keep class interruptions to a minimum. Parents are discouraged from taking pupils out of school during term time in order to facilitate family holidays.

# Staff Communication

Staff will be informed of daily activities/events by using Aladdin instant messaging. The whiteboards in the staff room can also be used on occasion ensuring that all staff are aware of what is happening in the school. Staff emails will also be used for

staff communication.

# Complaints Procedure

Please see parental complaints policy available on our school website. Initially it is best practice to speak directly to the individual that the complaint concerns. This should be done as a matter of courtesy to the individual concerned. As every individual has the right of reply.

# Structures in place to Facilitate Open Communication and Consultation

Please see Dignity in the Workplace Policy and the Dignity in the Workplace Charter for the Procedures in relation to respectful communication with one another.

# Behaviour of all Individuals in the School

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance in our school. This not only extends to the children but to all of our whole school community e.g. the staff, pupils, parents, support service providers and the wider community. Anyone entering our building should feel safe to do so. While the behaviour of children in our school is of vital importance, adults in the school community also have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children.

It is important that all individuals are responsible for their own behaviours in the school. Examples include:

* all individuals are expected to speak to each other with respect. Shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If a stakeholder displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building. In certain cases, the Gardaí may be called
* all individuals will treat our children with the utmost respect while on the premises
* staff should not be asked to speak about another parent’s child. The staff of the school will respect your child’s right to privacy, so it is asked that parents respect other children’s rights to privacy
* when individuals meet, it is important to respect that the time of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected
* staff are generally available to listen to a quick issue in the morning and after school. However, should a parent need to have a discussion or meeting, an appointment should be made at a convenient time for both parties. This ensures that issues can be resolved. School commences at 9:00 a.m. and classes begin at 9:20 and finish at 14:40 and this time should not be interrupted.

# Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 is an important piece of legislation for the Board of Management and for those who work in schools. The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 requires employers to ensure the safety and health of their employees. It is recognised that school staff may be at risk from violence in the form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults or other forms of intimidation. This behaviour may come from pupils, parents, guardians, other staff members or intruders. In this respect, all staff should be aware of **DES Circular 40/97** which deals with the procedures to follow if they feel they have been subjected to any of the above behaviours. A copy of this circular can be found on [www.education.gov.ie](http://www.education.gov.ie/).

# Equality

During the equality review in our school, it was recommended that we should include the following in all our school policies and plans in the future:

Our school will not discriminate on any of the nine grounds named in the Equal Status Act and any processes and procedures will not be applied in a discriminatory way. The school is committed to positive action for those who are disadvantaged or who need assistance that others do not need and the school should be alerted to the fact that

support is needed so it can be put in place. Discrimination under the nine grounds or harassment including sexual harassment is prohibited in our school.

# Ratified by the Board of Management

# Review and Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Francis Special School on\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The policy will be reviewed regularly in the light of experience. It will be reviewed by the full staff and Board of Management every two years. Next review of this policy will occur during the school year of 2023/2024.

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_                      Signed:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Principal: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:  \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_