



# Parent School Engagement Policy

## Contents

1. Rational: “It takes a village to raise a child” .....	3
2. Aim of Policy .....	3
3. Strategies for Success: .....	3
4. Fostering effective family-school partnerships .....	3
4.1. Ethos.....	3
4.2. Environment.....	3
4.3. Policies.....	3
4.4. Staff & Leaders .....	3
4.5. Events .....	4
5. Communicating & consulting effectively .....	4
5.1. Newsletters & website .....	4
5.2. Home School Communication.....	4
5.3. Processes for contacting staff .....	4
5.4. Progress & Performance .....	4
5.5. CPD .....	4
5.6. Parent voice.....	4
6. Enabling parental engagement in learning .....	5
6.1. Attitudes & Impact .....	5
6.2. Curriculum assessment and progress .....	5
6.3. Wider impacts on learning & workshops.....	5
7. Empowering parents and carers to develop their own skills .....	5
7.1. Sharing Practice.....	5
7.2. Volunteer opportunities.....	5
7.3. Parent Support Group / Parents Forum.....	5
8. Supporting successful transitions .....	5
8.1. Entry to school .....	5
8.2. Within school.....	6
8.3. Leaving school .....	6
9. Measuring Impact.....	6
10. Roles and Responsibility .....	6

## 1. Rational: “It takes a village to raise a child”

At Castlebar School we believe that when school and home work closely together can we achieve the best for our children. We value all parents and carers equally within our school community and strive to maximise their participation in the life of the school.

By fostering excellent relationships and shared partnership between home and school, children are given a solid framework to grow, learn and maximise their full potential. Therefore the school is fully committed to ongoing dialogue with parents and carers to improve the school’s knowledge of their children and to support their family.

## 2. Aim of Policy

- To provide a partnership between home and school, ensuring parents feel supported, welcomed and valued.
- To encourage parental involvement in parental meetings, parenting groups, workshops, clubs and the daily life of the school community.
- To support parents and carers as their children’s first and most important educators.
- Parents/Carers to feel a part of the school, and recognise that they have a pivotal role in their child’s education and overall developmental achievements.
- To encourage parents to contribute to their child’s education by sharing achievements and events at home and supporting shared strategies and approaches to learning.

## 3. Strategies for Success:

The Parent School Engagement Policy identifies a series of key strategies designed to support parents as partners so that parents have the opportunity and the skills, knowledge and tools, to engage with all education partners in fulfilling the core priorities for education.

## 4. Fostering effective family-school partnerships

### 4.1. Ethos

- Everyone in school values building trusting relationships with parents.
- Everyone in school believes that pupils will achieve more when the school works closely with families and communities.
- Everyone in school makes an effort to understand the needs of families and the school community.
- Staff members are welcoming to all parents, and actively try to involve fathers and male carers, as well as parents who typically do not actively participate in the school community.

### 4.2. Environment

- The school strives to provide visitors with a clean, tidy and welcoming entrance, with an active display board and welcoming staff.

### 4.3. Policies

- All policies are available on the school website and reviewed regularly by the governing body which includes parent governors.

### 4.4. Staff & Leaders

- Members of the Senior Leadership Team are visible and available to parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
- Class teachers and support staff feel confident to build relationships with parents.
- There are many opportunities throughout the year in which parents are invited to the school and able to meet the staff.
- The school employs a school social worker to support parents.
- The school has three parent governors who share the responsibility for parental engagement.

#### 4.5. Events

- The school has regular opportunities for parents to attend celebration events such as school assemblies, holiday plays, music concerts, school discos, international celebrations.
- The school has regular opportunities for pupils to share their learning with parents and carers through assemblies and termly parent/teacher meetings.
- The school holds regular community or fundraising events which bring people together.
- The school provides opportunities for families and children to learn together, such as stay and play, workshops, school fair, school discos and international week.

### 5. Communicating & consulting effectively

#### 5.1. Newsletters & website

- The school has a monthly newsletter which is distributed to all parents/carers through the school bag and is available on the school website.
- A school text messaging system is used regularly to remind parents/carers of events and meetings.
- The school website is easy to navigate and contains key information for parents and is updated regularly.

#### 5.2. Home School Communication

- Senior Leaders and teachers communicate frequently with parents using a variety of means (i.e. home school diary, letters, email, telephone, in-person, newsletters).
- The home/school diaries all have a key information sheet in the inside cover includes information on swimming, incidents, absence and therapists. It is a quick reference guide for parent and carers.
- The Home/School Expectations leaflet outlines what home support is expected from parents and carers

#### 5.3. Processes for contacting staff

- Clear information is provided to parents so they know how to reach teachers directly and know how to make an appointment with the class teacher and other professionals working at the school.
- There are clear processes for parents to voice concerns or complaints and parents receive prompt responses.

#### 5.4. Progress & Performance

- The school's development priorities are shared with parents regularly through the School Improvement Plan.
- The school provides parents with pupil performance data and supports them to understand it.
- The school encourages parents to let the school know how events in the home may affect their child in school.
- Individual parents /carer meetings are held with all parents a minimum of 3 times per year with follow-ups as needed.
- Where parental responsibility is shared all communication is sent to both parents.

#### 5.5. CPD

- The school provides staff development on building positive relationships with parents.

#### 5.6. Parent voice

- The school conducts an annual survey of parent and carers, the results of which are shared with all stakeholders including agreed actions.
- After all workshops, clubs and holiday clubs, feedback is gathered and considered in future planning.

- The school has a parent support group, which meets monthly and is independently facilitated by a parent governor.
- Questionnaires and feedback are gathered through this support group and fed back to the appropriate professionals.

## 6. Enabling parental engagement in learning

### 6.1. Attitudes & Impact

- The school believes that all parents have the capacity to support their children's learning.
- The school lets parents know how important they are to their children's learning.

### 6.2. Curriculum assessment and progress

- All parents are given information each year on the content of the curriculum.
- All parents are given information each year on expectations for pupil progress (end of year assessment goals).
- All parents are given information each year on how progress will be measured or assessed.

### 6.3. Wider impacts on learning & workshops

- All parents are given information each year on other ways they can support their children (i.e. sufficient sleep, nutritious food, sensory diet, visual timetables, Makaton signs and PECS resources, etc.).
- There are opportunities for parents to engage in workshops and activities which help them to practice the skills needed to support learning and development at home. (There were over 20 workshops or programmes offered in 2015/16 academic year.)

## 7. Empowering parents and carers to develop their own skills

### 7.1. Sharing Practice

- The school offers a "stay and play" scheme which offers hands on learning through play for parents and children.
- The school offers a 10 -week parenting programme, *Families Links Parenting Programme*.
- The school offers additional services such as yoga and swimming lessons at the weekends.

### 7.2. Volunteer opportunities

- There are regular opportunities for parents to volunteer in school such as:
  - Parents volunteering to improve the school environment.
  - Parents sharing their skills, knowledge and talents by talking to classes or running activities.

### 7.3. Parent Support Group / Parents Forum

- The school has a parent group which is accessible to all Castlebar families.

## 8. Supporting successful transitions

### 8.1. Entry to school

- The school provides opportunities for parents to come into school both before and after children have been offered a place.
- Home visits or individual family meetings are carried out to all children at point of entry to the school.
- The school provides informational workshops and induction events for parents to support their child's transition into school.
- The school provides additional support for those families with children entering the school outside standard admission times.

- The school provides additional support for those families with children entering the school who are new to the British education system.

### **8.2. Within school**

- The school provides opportunities for parents to share information about their child early in the academic year.
- The school provides information and support to parents to enable successful transitions between key stages and year groups.

### **8.3. Leaving school**

- The school provides advice, information and workshops for parents whose children are transferring to secondary school.
- In year 5 secondary placement is discussed with parents and carers and their wishes and views are put forward to the Local Authority in the annual review documents.

## **9. Measuring Impact**

- Evaluations and questionnaires are used for workshops and stay and play activities.
- Parent feedback is obtained annually through the annual review process.

## **10. Roles and Responsibility**

- It is the responsibility of the school and entire Castlebar community to ensure this policy is upheld and executed.
- Specific responsibilities are held by the Parental Engagement Governors, School Social Worker and Extended School Lead.