

# School Policy on Parental Involvement in Student Learning

## Our school Mission Statement

St. Aidan's C.B.S. promotes the Edmund Rice Charter through nurturing *faith*, promoting *partnership*, excelling in *teaching*, creating *community* and inspiring *leadership*.



## Our school

St. Aidan's C.B.S. is a voluntary secondary school for boys. We are located in north Dublin and we currently have an enrolment of over 700 students. Our school is a Catholic school operating under the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (E.R.S.T.). The characteristic spirit of our school is based on the vision and values of the E.R.S.T. Charter as outlined above in our mission statement. This is reflected in the operations of our school and in our school policies.

## Rationale

Parents can make a significant contribution in the education of their children. According to Borgonovi and Montt (2012) "children of involved parents show higher motivation, a better sense of control over academic performance and positive perceptions of academic competence".

## Aim

It is the aim to encourage parents to become more actively involved in the learning of their children. The goal is to help improve the academic and social performance of the students by enlisting the help of the parents.

## **Definition of Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement is defined as parents' active commitment to spend time in the academic and general development of their child.

Parental involvement in children's education contributes significantly to the social and academic success of children in school (Kavanagh, 2013).

According to the Education Act 1998, "parent" includes a foster parent, a guardian appointed under the Guardianship of Children Acts, 1964 to 1997, or other person acting in *loco parentis* who has a child in his or her care subject to any statutory power or order of a court and, in the case of a child who has been adopted under the Adoption Acts, 1952 to 1998, or, where the child has been adopted outside the State, means the adopter or adopters or the surviving adopter.

## **The benefits of parental involvement**

### ***For students:***

- Students tend to achieve better grades.
- Students tend to achieve better attendance.
- Students consistently complete their homework.
- Students have better self-esteem, are more self-disciplined and show higher motivation towards school.
- Students have a positive attitude about school and this results in improved behaviour in school.
- Students whose parents are involved are less likely to drop out of school.

### ***For parents:***

- Parents will increase discussion with their children and are more responsive to the child's social, emotional and intellectual developmental needs.
- Parents may feel more equipped to help support their son's education.
- Parents will become more aware of school policies that affect their children's education, and when requested by the school feel part of the decision making team.

### ***For teachers:***

- Improved communication between the parents, teachers and the school.
- Teachers will provide a more informative reporting system for parents to enable them to become more involved in their child's education. For example, instead of a simple comment at the end of term report, teachers will explain to parents where exactly their sons can improve.
- Teachers and principals acquire a better understanding of the families' culture and diversity.
- Teachers gain a deeper respect for parents' abilities and time.
- Teachers earn greater respect from parents.

### **For the School:**

- Schools establish a better reputation in the community.
- School programs that encourage parental involvement do better than schools who do not involve parents.

### **Parents could become more involved in helping their child to have a positive learning experience by**

- Providing support to their son to ensure a timely arrival to school. This allows time for him to organise books and to visit his locker.
- Helping their son to organise themselves for school. This could include planning for lunch and helping with organisation of materials for classes.
- Checking and signing the school journal as often as possible.
- Signing school tests to show they are aware of their son's academic progress (*checking and signing journals is of particular benefit to junior students*).
- Providing a quiet space for their son to complete homework assignments.
- Encouraging their son to develop good habits in meeting homework deadlines.
- Helping their son with challenging homework.
- Encouraging their son to apply subject content to life outside school.
- Communicating with their son about school. This could provide an opportunity to celebrate successes but also to identify any difficulties that he may be experiencing.
- Communicating to the school any difficulty the child may have that is preventing learning to take place.
- Attending parent teacher meetings. If a parent cannot attend they can communicate this to the school to make alternative arrangements.
- Showing interest in education and offering encouragement.

## **Other ways for parents to be involved:**

- Attend parent teacher meetings.
- Attend parents' council meetings.
- Attend information evenings for First Year parents.
- Attend Transition Year information evening.
- Discuss Fifth Year subject choices at home.
- Attend the school open evening.
- Attend school sporting events.
- Help and participate in school fundraising activities.
- Attend Third Level options open evening for Sixth Year parents.
- Attend talks/workshops for parents targeting specific areas for development.
- Attend guest speaker events.
- Be involved in schoolwork/homework.
- Attend debating competitions.
- Support extra-curricular events e.g. sporting events.
- Support Catholic Schools Week in Holy Child Church in January.
- Participate in international week by helping the student to make a traditional meal from the household country of origin.
- Provide feedback in developing reporting procedures (NCCA 2018).
- Participate in school surveys for School Self-Evaluation.

## **Impact of greater parental involvement**

- Parents feel more welcome in the school.
- Communication between the school and the parents will improve.
- Parents will have a greater involvement in the life of the school.

The state acknowledges that the **primary and natural educator of the child is the family** and guarantees to respect the inalienable right and duty of **parents** to provide, according to their means, for the religious and moral, intellectual, physical and social education of their children. (Government of Ireland, 1937, Article 42.1).

## **Communication, involvement and dissemination**

This policy was written by working group on parental involvement. A process of collaboration followed involving the policy co-ordinator, school management, staff, students' council, and the parents' council. This policy incorporates elements of the school communications policy, the importance of communicating to parents is essential in order to encourage greater parental involvement in student learning.

## **Encouraging authentic engagement with parents'**

The engagement of parents in learning in the home is most likely to result in a positive difference to learning outcomes (Harris & Goodhall 2008).

According to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) March 2018; Parents are valued as key partners in developing reporting arrangements in the school.

In response it is the aim of our school to:

- Provide regular, timely and accurate information about their child's intellectual and personal development.
- For example the JCPA certificates are issued to student's which demonstrate their results from the Junior Certificate exams, Classroom Based Assessments (CBA's) and other areas of learning showing a thorough understanding of what the students have achieved.

## **Evaluation**

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of our school policies. Specifically important to this policy is:

- Pupil feedback
- Staff feedback
- Parental feedback

## **Ratification**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on the 25<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

## **Review and Development**

We are also committed to the review and development of our school policies. As part of our ongoing review process, this policy will be examined to reflect feedback from our evaluation practices and also to ensure legal compliance and the maintenance of best practices.