



**Scoil Cholmáin Tuairíní**  
**Maigh Cuilinn, Co. na Gaillimhe**

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## **Communication Policy 2024**

### ***Introductory Statement***

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 and aim to work for the benefit of the child and their learning so that the child's education can be effective.

This policy was developed by the Board of Management and staff of Scoil Cholmáin Tuairíní, and in consultation with our Parent's Association, Coiste Ceantar Tuairíní. Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff communication including formal and informal parent/staff meetings.

### ***Scoil Cholmáin Tuairíní staff and Board of Management believe that:***

- Good communication between home and school is important because with positive and active partnership the child gets the best that primary education can offer.
- Teachers can do a better job where they are supported by and working closely with parents.

We know from research that children do better, behave better and are happier at school where parents and teachers work closely together and when parents are able to give their children support at home.

### ***Scoil Cholmáin Tuairíní staff and Board of Management are committed to***

- Developing close effective links with parents
  - Participating in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the central and fundamental role of parents as Primary Educators<sup>1</sup> of their children
  - Maintaining the ethos, catholic values and distinctive character of Scoil Cholmáin Tuairíní
  - Supporting and facilitating the Coiste Ceantar Tuairíní
  - Encouraging and facilitating the participation of parents in school policy and decision making
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### ***Parents are encouraged to:***

- Develop close links with 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
- Become actively involved in the school and Parents Association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians will be consulted by staff. It is essential that all parents and legal guardians are named on the enrolment form.

### ***Respectful communication***

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This not only extends to the children but to all of the stakeholders e.g. the staff, parents and the wider community: anyone entering our building should feel safe to do so. Adults in the school community have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children. All adults will treat our children, staff and other parents with the utmost respect while on the premises.

### ***Things that the school needs to know to keep your children safe and healthy***

- It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that may cause anxiety to your child and could affect his/her education. Your first point of contact should always be your child's class teacher.
- The school should at all times know who is collecting your child. The school should have a list of people and their contact information who you have authorised to collect your child. Should this change the onus is on you to inform the school secretary of the change. You can provide this information by email. Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone unauthorised/unknown to the school. If, at any time, parents alter the pick-up arrangements for their child, the school should be given written authorisation by the parent immediately. In an emergency situation, the parent must leave a message on the school phone or speak with the principal/teacher.
- Children in older classes who are walking/cycling home must provide a written note/email to their class teacher/Oifig.

### ***Structures in place to facilitate open communication and consultation with Parents.***

#### **Annual Consultation throughout the year including:**

- Welcome day for new Junior Infants and their parents in late May each year
- September class meetings. Teachers meet with the parents of their class in September to introduce themselves and outline briefly the curriculum, class rules and expectations for the year.

- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in January (a short, written record of the meeting is maintained by each teacher).
- Class teachers / Support teachers meet with parents whose children have additional educational needs.

**Written communication including:**

- Weekly homework sheet, to inform parents about assigned homework and to relay messages between parents and teachers.
- Emails sent from class teachers to parents, through the Databiz and Gsuite systems.
- Emails sent from parents to class teachers, via the Gsuite.
- Regular emails from the Oifig and a calendar on our school website to keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays, decisions taken to change current policies and procedures or to introduce new ones and other school concerns
- School report for each pupil at the end of each school year.
- Eolas App text messages for general reminders (e.g school closures)
- Class blogs or other online platforms e.g. Seesaw/Class Dojo, for sharing class news.
- Regular postings to Twitter (X) and to our school website. Children's names are never used with identifying photographs.

***Generally, communication sent from the school will be 'paperless'. Emails sent from the school will be sent to the email address(es) provided at enrolment, unless otherwise requested by parents. All paper communication sent from the school will be sent to the child's home address as given on the enrolment form, unless otherwise requested by parents.***

**Other structures and processes including:**

- Parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies. Parents receive policies in draft form and provide feedback to the Board. The document once ratified by the Board is made available to all parents via the school website or in hard copy if requested. Any feedback arising is brought to the attention of the Board.
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Christmas plays/ Graduation/Book Week/Sports events
- Involvement of parents in curricular areas and focus weeks when appropriate
- The Eolas app. We encourage all parents to utilise this app. Through this app contact details can be updated, consent can be sought, absences can be explained, school reports can be viewed and payments can be made.

***Procedures for parents to initiate communication with the school***

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the school secretary, usually via email, to arrange a suitable time or contact the teacher's email directly. In the unlikely event that a parent has a complaint, our Disciplinary and Grievance Policy outlines the procedures to be followed.

Classes begin at 9am and finish at 1:40pm (Infants) and 2.40pm (1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>) and this time should not be interrupted. Meetings with the class staff at the class door or in the yard 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.

However, teachers and other members of staff may be available to listen to a quick issue in the morning and after school as long as confidentiality issues are not impacted. If matters raised cannot be resolved immediately or if the parent or staff member needs to discuss the matter further an appointment should be made at a convenient time for both parties.

On some rare occasions a parent may need 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 during class time etc, this can be done through the Oifig or by contacting the school mobile so that learning is not disrupted.

### ***Online and Social Media Communication***

Scoil Cholmáin Tuairíní has a website and a vibrant Twitter (X) page. Parents are encouraged to visit these sites regularly to keep up to date on school matters, comment and contribute to posts and share information to help publicise the school and the achievements of our children.

The school name or anything that identifies the school should not be used online or on social media by members of the public including parents without express written permission from the principal or Board of Management. Scoil Cholmáin Tuairíní will request removal of any online or social media sites that are not approved by the school.

### ***Communication between staff***

Staff meetings take place once a month, follow a set agenda and minutes are taken.

Staff also hold other scheduled meetings during each month which are allocated to planning, SEN planning and an area of focus.

Staff operate a WhatsApp group which is used for sharing general school updates, social news and events.

Staff communicate via school email and Gsuite for all school-related matters. Personal emails are not used for school communication.

Communication is considered to be a strength among the staff and the informal communication before, during and after school is an integral part of the collegial and professional school atmosphere.

### ***Communication between School/Board/Coiste Ceantar***

Representatives of the Board of Management and the Coiste Ceantar meet annually.

There is a teacher representative who attends (part of) the Coiste meetings. This representative also brings items back to the staff/Principal for discussion.

The Principal and the Chairperson of the Coiste meet regularly.

Email communication between School and the Coiste is generally limited to:

- Principal to Chairperson/Secretary
- Principal/Treasurer to Treasurer
- Some necessary contact made between members of the Coiste and the school secretary and staff where it is required (including photos for website/school calendar etc).

### ***Communication with outside agencies***

Scoil Cholmáin Tuairíní enjoys and benefits from links with state and patron agencies including: NEPS / NCSE / HSE / Tusla / EWO/ GEC/CPMSA/IPPN

Scoil Cholmáin Tuairíní also enjoys strong links with the community through:

- Links with local schools (Principal meetings, pupil events)
- Links with Cumann Camógaíochta/Cumann Peil na mBan/GAA/Cumann Cispheile
- Links with local organisations

### ***Parents – Staff Communication***

Emails can be sent by teachers directly to parents using the Databiz or Gsuite systems. Staff members' private mobile phone numbers, email addresses or social media accounts, including WhatsApp, should never be used to contact staff in relation to school business.

All contact with staff should be via the main school email address [oifig@scoilcholmaintuairini.ie](mailto:oifig@scoilcholmaintuairini.ie) or the staff member's professional email address which will be sent to you at the beginning of every academic year. All staff email addresses are also available on the school website.

### ***Communication by email - response time***

Response times to emails from the school secretary can vary depending on the demands in the office at any given time. It is considered reasonable that 3-5 school days are allowed for a response (with the exception of holiday periods during which email is only checked intermittently).

Response times to emails to the Principal can also vary greatly depending on the demands at any given time. Priority must be given to the pupils, staff and overall running of the school. A response time of 5-7 school days is considered to be reasonable.

Teachers are in class during the day and will not have time to access emails. They may be engaged in planning, meetings or personal matters after school hours and so again 3-5 school days is considered to be a reasonable response time.

There may be occasions where a parent is trying to contact the school by phone and/or email and are not receiving a response. Office hours are limited. We do not have a secretary in the office every day and the principal is teaching four days per week. We ask for patience during these times.

## ***Parent/Teacher Meetings***

### ***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 share with the parent the problems and 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 get general feedback from the parents regarding the school
- 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 according to school policy.

### ***Organisation of parent - teacher meetings***

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes, usually in January at the beginning of the second term. If a parent wishes to arrange an additional meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by contacting the school secretary or by emailing the class teacher.

Scoil Cholmáin Tuairíní uses prepared guidelines to give structure to the meetings. These can vary from teacher to teacher but must include feedback on attendance, behaviour, punctuality, standardised test results (where applicable) and overview of progress through the curriculum. Parent/ Teacher meetings will take place in classrooms or support rooms (or through on-line platforms when necessary). Each meeting is allocated a 10-minute time slot. If a longer meeting is required these should be scheduled for another day.

In order to facilitate the operation of the school and the needs of children and other parents, it is important that meetings should be kept to the allocated time. Times of meetings are agreed beforehand and should be adhered to so that all parents are seen on time in so far as is possible.

### ***Planning meetings for School Support Plans***

For children with designated special educational needs, formal scheduled parent/staff meetings relating to the child's **School Support Plan** will take place in September/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. *In the case of separated/ divorced parents, Scoil Cholmáin Tuairíní will facilitate requests made by parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for parent/teacher meetings.*

### ***School Reports***

Scoil Cholmáin Tuairíní produces formal reports for reporting to parents on students' progress and achievement at school annually in the third term using report card templates as required by the National Council of Curriculum and Assessment ([www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)). The reports are issued by post or by hand two weeks prior to school closing for the summer break to allow parents time to ask for clarification with the school teacher on anything contained in their child's report. The report will cover

- 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

Reports for children in their final year of primary school (sixth class) will be in the form of an **Education Passport**. These support the transfer of pupil information from primary to post-primary and follow a standard template.

### **Ratified by the Board of Management**

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

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





