



Scoil Náisiúnta an Easpaig Ó Gealbáin

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Communications Policy

This Communications Policy has been formulated by school staff in collaboration with the Parents' Association, before final ratification by the Board of Management on 25th November 2024.

Rationale

Good communication is essential to the smooth running of an efficient school. In recognition of this fact, BGNS has in place a policy on communication between the various individuals, groups and organisations connected with the school.

Mutual Respect

The policy reflects the ethos of the school, and is based on respect, clarity and openness. In the same manner that good manners and mutual respect is expected from pupils, this is also applicable to staff, parents, Board members and visitors. Mutual Respect through communication whether face to face communication, on the phone, or through writing is ingrained in our ethos. This ethos can best be encouraged where there is a high level of collaboration and cooperation between staff, pupils and parents.

Aims

BGNS works to promote and support good communication structures between the following:

- *Staff*
- *Children*
- *Parents/Guardians*
- *The wider school community (for example, Board of Management & Parents' Association) and staff, parents/guardians*

All members of the school community are expected to familiarise themselves with the Communication Policy. It is considered that everyone has a responsibility to make him/herself aware of where and how to seek information and updates as the need arises and should seek to keep themselves informed of all school matters.

Staff Communication

-Regular staff meetings are held and members of the ISL team (In School Leadership) meet weekly and monthly to work on the school's priorities and the School Self Evaluation (SSE) process.

-In addition to the formal communication that takes place during staff meetings, the Principal issues a daily email to all staff members, with key information and reminders for the school day.

-The noticeboard in the staffroom is also used for key information for staff members, and should be checked regularly by staff.

-Emails are only used for circulating information internally between staff members, or when linking with outside agencies. Teacher email addresses are not used for communication with parents.

-Teachers carry out informal meetings on a daily basis, before, during and after school. This process of communication is ongoing and continuous.

Formal inter-teacher communication takes different forms:

- Teachers at different class levels have a stream planning meeting once a month. All mainstream teachers and SETs (Special Education Teachers) are expected to attend.
- Regular whole-staff meetings are held. An agenda is drawn up and PowerPoints and decisions made are circulated/added to the staff Drive.
- The INTO staff rep regularly updates staff as necessary.
- All staff members are expected to communicate with each other in a respectful professional manner.

Staff and Children

Teachers/SNAs communicate with children on an ongoing basis while teaching and supporting learning. This is carried out in a positive, respectful manner. Children are expected to speak in a respectful manner to all staff in the school.

Children and Children

-Children communicate with each other formally and informally throughout the school day. Children are expected to speak to other children in a respectful manner.

-Communications between children regarding out of school activities i.e. celebration of festivals, birthday parties/outings/trips etc. should take place before or after school time. This also includes the exchange of cards and presents between children.

Communication between Parents and the School

-Parents' contact details, including emergency contact details, must be provided to the school. These contact details are used only for the purpose of communicating with parents on issues relating to their child(ren). It is vital that the school is aware of any changes to details of communication with families and/or changes to family circumstances. The responsibility for informing the school of a change of address/phone numbers/email and/or family circumstances rests with parents/guardians. During the first term of each school year, parents will be asked to update their contact details as held by the school via *Aladdin Connect*.

-An information and introduction session is held for all new parents (of 3rd class) in the school in Term 3 preceding the school year in which children begin their education in BGNS. Here, the Principal and members of the In School Leadership team provide them with a wide range of information about the school, focussing on a range of school policies, and including the use of Restorative Practice as part of the Code of Behaviour. All parents must sign up to this Code every year as a condition of enrolment.

-A weekly notification (Friday Update) is issued to all parents. It includes key information about what's happening in the school and any general reminders.

-Text messages to parents are generally only sent when there is urgent information. Otherwise, all communication is via *Aladdin Connect* notification.

-Communication with the class teacher is primarily via *Aladdin Connect*. All mainstream class teachers send out a Monday Message. This generally includes information relevant to the class, and any reminders. Replies are on, which enables parents to correspond with the teacher if necessary. Messages are received and sent within a timeframe of 8am-4pm.

-A request for a phone call/meeting with the class teacher is made via *Aladdin Connect* or directly by phone to the school secretary. The purpose of the return call/meeting must be referenced in advance.

-It is not possible for a mainstream class teacher to return a phone call during school time (9.00am-2.40pm). The teacher will return the call/book a meeting as soon as is possible for him/her (generally 1-5 days).

-Teachers may also communicate frequently with individual parents on matters of concern. On occasion, teachers will seek a meeting with parents to discuss a plan for supports at school and at home for the child. Alternatively, teachers may phone a parent for the same purposes.

-Parents may request a meeting with the Principal through the school office or via email at secretary@bishopgalvin.ie. The purpose of the meeting must be referenced in advance. It is generally advised that parents communicate with the class teacher in the first instance.

-Formal Parent Teacher meetings are held once a year, generally in November. The purpose of the meeting is to share information about how the pupil has settled into their new class, and how his/her learning can be supported in school and at home for the school year. It is essential that parents attend this meeting. A written School Report on each child's progress is sent to each parent at the end of the school year.

-If a pupil accesses School Support Plus i.e. where there is an Individual Education Plan in place, review meetings are held twice a year to discuss and set learning targets. These meetings generally take place in October and February, and involve parents, the Special Education Teacher (SET) and the mainstream class teacher.

-The school is aware that Parents What's App groups can be set up for a range of reasons. Parents are reminded of the importance of responsible digital citizenship i.e. engaging online safely, ethically and respectfully. Please note that this messaging platform is not part of the BGNS Communication Policy. Therefore, for clarity, the school crest should not be used as a profile picture. If a parent has a query about pupil learning, the school strongly encourages parents to contact the class teacher directly via *Aladdin Connect*. If a parent has a query about other school matters, the school strongly encourages parents to contact the school by email (secretary@bishopgalvin.ie) or by phone 01-4566652.

-When a child is absent parents are requested to inform the school via *Aladdin Connect*. An automated notification is sent, and parents fill in the reason for absence from drop down menu. Parents are notified when a pupil is absent for 15 days. This is automated and is sent as a reminder of the reporting procedures for all schools i.e. when any pupil is absent for 20 days or over, a report is sent to NEWB (National Education and Welfare Board).

-The Collection of Children: Parents put in place arrangements for the collection of their child(ren). If, at any time, the pick-up arrangements are altered for a child, the school should be notified and authorization provided in writing by the parent/guardian via *Aladdin Connect*.

-Information regarding all school-related activities, including coaching, matches, sacrament preparation, etc. are communicated to parents via notification on *Aladdin Connect*.

-After School Classes are a separate private arrangement where the school building is used as a venue only. Contact details for teacher(s) running each class are sent to parents of pupils who register for a class, and all communication is responsibility of this teacher.

Communication with the Board of Management

-The Board of Management hold regular meetings. The agenda is set and notice of the meeting sent to each board member. Minutes are recorded. All documents are uploaded to a password protected Drive and accessed via a dedicated email address used by Board members only.

-If there is a request for the Board to discuss a matter, it should be forwarded, in writing, to the Chairperson of the board at least 10 days before the next planned Board of Management meeting.

-The Board members receive updates from the Principal via the Principal's Report to give them an insight into daily school life.

-Board members are expected to speak to each other in a respectful manner

Parent Association [PA]

Planning meetings are held with the PA twice a year, attended by principals of BGNS and BSNS. A calendar of events is discussed and agreed. Any issues arising of relevance and feedback from parents and the schools are also discussed. This also provides an opportunity for the Principal to convey BOM decisions to the parent body. The PA AGM is held once a year.

School Information

Information and updates about a variety of topics is circulated to all parents every week-Friday Update. The school website is currently under review to be updated, and will include key policy documents and information.

The school has one social media account, on X. All information is posted and monitored by the Principal.

Department of Education and other Agencies

Generally speaking, communication to the school is addressed to the Chairperson of the Board or the Principal or both. The school deals with a wide range of departments within the Department of Education and Skills, from those dealing with employment matters to those concerned with funding to those dealing with curriculum.

There is regular two-way communication with a wide range of other organisations/ agencies such as the Health Board, Psychological Services, Social Services, Gardaí, National Education and Welfare Board and the County Council.

The Inspectorate

The Principal or Chairperson communicates with the Inspectorate by phone call or in writing.

Archbishops' House and Parish Office

The school maintains close contact with its patron body, Archbishop's House. This can be done through the Principal, the Chairperson or the patron's nominee on the Board of Management.