

SAINT BRIGID'S GIRLS' NATIONAL SCHOOL

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Communication Policy-Separated Parents /Custody Issues

1. (a) The Board of Management recognises that the child is at the heart of every decision that is made in our school. Family structures vary and St. Brigid's GNS recognises the importance of both parent's/guardian's involvement in the child's life. St. Brigid's GNS promotes the involvement of both parents/guardians.
1. (b) St. Brigid's GNS recognises that relationships can often be fraught and emotional and as a staff we do the best that we can to ensure equality of access for all parents/guardians.

2. What can the school do?

2. (a) Parent Teacher meetings can be offered separately. Should parents/guardians require this option, contact must be made with the relevant class teacher through the school office, in order to appropriately schedule both meetings.
2. (b) Appointments can be made through the office should parents/guardians need to meet with their child's class teacher during the year.
2. (c) The school works to build the child's self-esteem as part of the SPHE programme.

2. (d) Sensitive information is transferred to the child's teacher/support teachers on a need to know basis.
2. (e) If in any doubt about the appropriate transferring of sensitive information, a teacher should seek advice from the Principal &/or Board of Management.
2. (f) The school is open and non-judgemental and will not take sides.
2. (g) The school will endeavour within reasonable time and available resources to upload notes onto the school website.

3. What can the school not do?

3. (a) The name on a child's birth cert is what the school place on the school register. The school cannot facilitate the name change if either parent asks us to do so unless there is a change by deed poll.
3. (b) The school cannot become involved in access issues between parents. The school can only adhere to court orders and these papers must be furnished to the school. The school does not take advice from solicitors who are guiding parents.
3. (c) The school cannot be asked to withhold a child from either parent e.g. at collection time, in the absence of a custody arrangement or Court Order.
3. (d) While the school is supportive to the child if it is aware of issues, the school or teachers will not become involved in personal issues between parents. If a parent has a genuine concern and reports this to a staff member, this concern can be reported to the HSE for family support.
3. (e) Both parents/guardians are welcome to attend all events in the school, but the teacher will not allocate parents to

different events. This is between both parents/guardians to discuss outside of the school.

- 3.(f) The school cannot partake in either verbal or written communication regarding a child, with anyone other than the child's legal guardians and outside agencies entitled to receive such information in pursuance of their statutory functions.

4. What can Parents/Guardians of the child do?

- 4.(a) Inform the school of any changes in the family structures in order to support the child.
- 4.(b) Try not to speak negatively regarding the other parent/guardian.
- 4.(c) Keep in touch with events in school by sharing school information with each other.
- 4.(d) Recognise that the school must treat each parent equally irrespective of personal issues that are occurring outside of the school.(If court order/s are in place please refer to points 3.(b) & 3.(c)).
- 4.(e) Remember that the school is here to support all girls attending St. Brigid's GNS. Should Parents/Guardians feel that their daughter is having any difficulty, an appointment should be made to meet with the class teacher. This should enable both parents/guardians and school to work together to best support the child.
- 4.(f) Where possible try and work together in supporting your child's education, regardless of your own relationship.
- 4.(g) It is important that the Principal and the child's teacher are kept up to date with custody arrangements.

5. What can all Parents/Guardians in our school do?

5. (a) Have sensitivity around the different family structures that exist.
5. (b) Do not discuss adult issues /issues regarding other families in the school around your own child.
5. (c) Recognise that not all family structures are the same as your own and respect this.
5. (d) Day to day communication with parents/guardians regarding their child will be with the parent/guardian with whom the child principally resides.
- 5.(e) Regarding notes, school communication via schoolbags, notes home in school journal etc., will be with the parent/guardian with whom the child principally resides. Only one paper copy of the above mentioned written communications will be issued to each child.(Please also refer to point 2. (g)).

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the 10th April 2014.