

Dignity at Work Policy-Information for Parents

Dear Parents,

The Board of Management, as well as being ultimately responsible for the education of the pupils in Ballygarvan NS, also has a responsibility to the staff as their employer.

The BOM has recently approved a Dignity At Work Policy for all staff, as they are entitled to feel safe in their place of work.

There is a section of this policy that deals with how members of the school community treat each other, including a section on how staff are treated by parents.

I want to state clearly that the vast majority of parents who interact with staff are polite and respectful, and treat staff as they themselves would like to be treated.

This communication will set out some reminders for parents, and some new information relating to digital interaction and social media.

Contacting Teachers:

If you would like to speak to a teacher or make an appointment to meet a teacher, please ring the school office at 021 4888390 and the school secretary will set up an appointment for you. Alternatively, you can email the teacher directly.

Usually we ask the parents to speak to a teacher, before contacting the Principal, as the information or reassurance required can normally be provided by the teacher. If you wish to speak to the Principal, please contact the secretary for an appointment.

Email or other Digital Communication:

Since the Covid pandemic, (when parents couldn't enter the school building), most parents know the email address of their child's teacher, for communication purposes. Some teachers also send Aladdin notices or notices via Seesaw. The vast majority of these interactions are short, polite and friendly.

However, some can be fraught and difficult so we have laid out some ground rules to protect all concerned.

Please see the section on Digital Communication, (which is taken from the Dignity At Work Policy), below:

Digital Communication:

- Emails should be sent during working hours and if a parent or staff member composes an email at an unsocial hour, it should be scheduled to send during school hours.
- There should be a period of 3 school days allowed for a response to an email. (If the staff member is away, he/she can enable a "Vacation Responder" to let the sender know that they are out of the office and when to expect a response, or instructions as to who to direct their email to.)

- Staff are not expected to check their email after hours. Staff are instructed not to give themselves access to their school email after hours on their personal devices. The Board cannot be responsible if staff check emails after hours.
- Emails sent by and to staff members should be in a respectful tone. A staff member is entitled not to respond to an email that they, themselves, deem to be disrespectful in tone. It is recommended that a staff member that receives an email like this arranges to meet a parent face-to-face rather than responding to the content of the email.
- Emails from staff should not be forwarded to a third party, other than a parent, outside the school. This would be a breach of privacy and GDPR.
- “Mailbombing,” the excessive sending of emails to a staff member falls under this policy. All users of email should be aware that, despite best intentions, their actions may cause distress to their colleagues, or members of the school community. This can come in a number of forms:
 - Excessively forwarding on resources, links or information
 - Using Reply To All, where it is not appropriate
 - Excessive contact from an individual, e.g. checking in on a child everyday unless explicitly agreed.

Please note: Pupils in senior classes are expected to be able to bring messages home to their parents themselves, without the necessity of an email from the teacher.

- Any form of email that falls under the definition of harassment will be treated in the same manner as any other form of harassment.
- The same rules above apply to communication via any other Digital platform

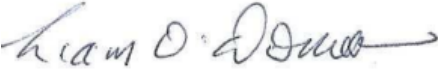
Re Whats App Groups and Social Media:

Some parents have set up Class Whats App groups to communicate with each other. All comments or chat within these groups should be respectful to all concerned. Comments about staff performance should not be made. It is not an appropriate forum. Please contact the staff directly or the Principal. We would appreciate it if other members of the group would guide their fellow parents to the correct procedure, if the need arises.

The above guidance also applies to Social Media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

The above information is meant as a reference for parents and to guide them to the correct procedures. As stated previously, in general there is a very respectful relationship between the staff and parents in Ballygarvan NS, and we hope the information above will help to maintain the current high standard.

We appreciate the co-operation of parents in this matter, and for all our endeavours in Ballygarvan NS.

Signed: 

Chairperson BOM



Principal

Date: 1/2/2