



Selskar College

POLICY FOR COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Board of Management, College Management and Staff of Selskar College, encourage close links with Parents/Guardians and the community. We believe that students benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one.

2. PROTOCOLS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS COMMUNICATING WITH COLLEGE PERSONNEL

2.1. Providing Contact Details

Address, relevant telephone numbers and alternative 'emergency' numbers must be given to the College and these must be updated as necessary with a phone call to the College.

2.2. Organising a Meeting with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Home School Community Liaison Person, Year Head, Class Tutor and/or Subject Teacher

If a Parent/Guardian wishes to meet with someone in the college an appointment must be made beforehand; except in the event of an emergency. An emergency is a situation that poses an *immediate risk* to health, life, property, or environment.

A phone call should be made to the College Secretary. Name and contact number should be left with her ***and*** details of the reason for requesting a meeting. The person in question will then respond at their earliest convenience.

If the matter is of a sensitive or private matter it should be referred to the Principal in the first instance.

Should a Parent/Guardian wish for a family member/friend to attend a meeting they must inform the Principal beforehand.

2.3. Use of the Student Journal

Any absence by a student should be notified to the College in writing in the Student Journal of the reason for all student absences. Such notice should be provided prior to the absence if possible or otherwise immediately afterwards. Telephone or oral messages relating to student absences must be confirmed in writing as soon as possible. (The school reserves the right not to permit students returning from an absence to attend class until a written explanation is furnished as described above).

If homework is not completed, an explanation note should be written in the Student Journal giving the reason why and when the work will be completed.

2.4. Parent Teacher Meetings

Notice of all parent teacher meetings are given at the start of the school year on the School Calendar. A letter or text message will also be sent home with advance notice of the meeting. In the event a Parent/Guardian cannot make the meeting the Year Head should be contacted.

2.5. Parent's Information and Celebration Events

These are held for parents of different year groups at various times during the year. Letters of invitation and information will be sent out in advance. In the event a Parent/Guardian cannot make the meeting the school should be contacted. Every effort will be made to communicate relevant information from the arranged meeting.

3. PROTOCOLS FOR REPORTING STUDENT ABSENCE:

3.1. Protocol for the student who is absent for one or more days from school

- I. Note to be written in the relevant section of the Student Journal and signed by the parent/guardian. Medical Certificate to be attached if possible. This is particularly relevant for LCA students.
- II. Note to be presented to the Class Tutor at roll call who will initial the note and record the excuse on the eportal system.
- III. Student is responsible for catching up on any work missed. Subject Teachers will support where necessary.

3.2. Protocol for the student who is late in the morning or afternoon

- I. Student to sign into the Late Book. Late Stamp to be put in Journal and penalty sheet issued. Students with notes - late is recorded but no sanction issued. Year Head monitors lateness patterns.

3.3. Protocol for the student who is signing out during the school day

- I. Parent/Guardian must write an explanatory note in the student's Journal. The note must state why the student is signing out early, what time the student needs to leave at.
- II. The note is to be presented to the Year Head for signing.
- III. The student must present the signed note to the Subject Teacher of the class they will be leaving.
- IV. The student should then report to Reception and wait to sign out.

- V. In the event of an emergency a phone-call should be made to the school detailing the emergency, what time the student will be collected and by whom.
- VI. Please try to make all Doctor and Dental appointments first thing in the morning or in the evening so little disruption is caused to the school day.

4. PROTOCOLS FOR DEALING WITH AGGRESSIVE OR VIOLENT PARENTS/GUARDIANS TO THE SCHOOL

This section of the policy is informed by Circular Letter M18/99 – Guidelines on Violence in schools. The vast majority of Parents/Guardians, carers and others visiting the school are supportive of the school. However, on occasion, a Parent/Guardian can have a negative attitude towards the school and sometimes, this can result in aggression, verbal and/or physical abuse towards school staff.

The school expects its staff to behave professionally in these difficult situations and attempt to diffuse the situation where possible, seeking the involvement as appropriate of other colleagues.

However, all staff have the right to work without fear of violence and abuse and the right, in extreme cases, of appropriate self-defence.

The school expects Parents/Guardians and other visitors to behave in a reasonable way towards school staff. This policy outlines the steps that will be taken where Parents'/Guardians' behaviour is unacceptable.

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of unacceptable behaviour.

- Spreading malicious gossip
- Shouting at school staff, either in person or over the telephone.
- Physically intimidating a member of staff e.g. standing very close to him/her.
- The use of aggressive hand gestures.
- Threatening school staff
- Shaking or holding a fist towards another person.
- Writing abusive comments about a member of staff on paper or online
- Swearing at a member of school staff
- Pushing
- Hitting, e.g. slapping, punching or kicking.
- Spitting
- Racist, sexist or personal comments
- Breaking the school's security procedures

Unacceptable behaviour may result in the Gardaí being informed of the incident.

5. IMPLEMENTING PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH AGGRESSIVE/VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR ON SCHOOL PREMISES OR AT A SCHOOL-RELATED EVENT:

When a Parent/Guardian or member of the public behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school staff, the Principal or an appropriate senior staff member will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continues, or where there is an extreme act of violence, threatened violence or refusal to leave the premises, a parent/guardian may be banned by the Principal and the Board of Management from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review.

Prior to being banned the following steps will be taken:

- I. The Parent/Guardian will be warned, in writing, that she/he may be banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, e.g. that an injunction may follow.
- II. Where an assault, threatened assault or refusal to leave the premises has led to a ban, a statement indicating that the matter has been reported to the Gardaí will be included.
- III. Where appropriate, arrangements for students being delivered to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified.

6. CONCLUSION

Students learn best when there is a positive partnership between home and school. Adherence to the above protocols can and will strengthen this partnership. Whilst every effort will be made to work with Parents/Guardians, this will only be possible where Parents/Guardians behave in an acceptable way. Where a Parent's/Guardian's behaviour is either unacceptable or serious it will not be possible to continue working with him/her and, as a final resort, legal action may be taken. The school will take action where behaviour is unacceptable or serious and breaches this policy or health and safety legislation.

7. REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE POLICY

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of the College on 13th March 2014.

The Board of Management and/or Principal reserves the right to amend the policy if required. This Policy will be reviewed and evaluated in March 2016.