

# **Gorey Educate Together NS**

## **Parental Involvement Policy**

Ratified by our Board of Management 26<sup>th</sup> January 2011, following consultation with the Parent-Teacher Association, staff and a random sample of parents who volunteered in our classrooms over the past several months. The various guidelines in the policy should help to ensure that activities involving parent volunteers continue to bring maximum benefits for the school.

### **1. Introduction**

In keeping with the principles of multi-denominational education, our school is democratically run. This means that democratically elected committees run it, and the involvement of all parents is sought and encouraged.

Parents as a group have a range of talents, abilities and skills that have the potential to enrich and extend the educational opportunities provided for the children. It is our policy to identify parents with specific skills and to invite those parents to share their skills with us at school and at class level.

Respect for the professional role of the teacher and the statutory responsibilities of the Principal, Patron and the Board of Management is always an important consideration.

Parents are invited to become involved in the school in many ways and at many levels, for example: Serving on school bodies (Board of Management, Parent-Teacher Association, Educate Together Board of Directors, E.T. National Forum,) Fundraising, Organising Social Events, Policy-making, e.g. Code of Behaviour, Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy, Policy for Special Classes for Children with Autism, Parent-Teacher Association Constitution and volunteering in our classrooms.

### **2. Benefits of Parental Involvement**

Children benefit from greater diversity in the classroom.

Parental skills may support and complement work already taking place.

Parental involvement actively supports and encourages the child's learning.

A wide range of activity is facilitated. This can be interesting and fun, and can lead to a broader and more holistic education.

It promotes 'good parent/teacher relationships and a better level of understanding between home and school' (National Parents' Council.)

It enhances communication, trust and respect between parents and teachers.

Parents can learn about the Curriculum.

Parental involvement allows children to see that school is an extension of home and therefore fosters the idea of the 'school family.'

Parental skills can contribute to the smooth running and development of the school.

Parental involvement provides the opportunity of making lifelong friends.

### **3. How to Get Involved**

Parents are, first of all, invited to consider their skills, interests and time available, and communicate this information to the class teacher, the principal and/or to the PTA.

Parents can consult, by appointment or in writing, with the class teacher about hobbies, skills or interests they can share with the class bearing in mind that needs change from year to year.

Parents can work in conjunction with the teachers in a planned and co-ordinated way. Should any differences or difficulties arise, the school's existing grievance procedure should be utilised.

Ongoing projects over a number of weeks may enhance and enrich the work the children are involved with in the classroom: parents are encouraged to discuss any ideas they may have with the teacher.

Parents can help with swimming, tours and trips, organising the school library, art and P.E. resources, and may also like to make costumes for school concerts.

Parents may get involved in many extra-curricular activities such as chess, yoga, football, music and art, and they would be particularly welcome to initiate project work with the children in the areas of the school garden, a children's newsletter etc.

Opportunities are endless – baking, woodwork, cultural exchanges and discussion... the school welcomes all ideas.

Please note that an appendix to this document contains guidelines for **parents volunteering in the classrooms** and a confidentiality form.

## Appendix

### Guidelines for Getting Involved

Parents come into the classroom at the invitation of the teacher, by prior arrangement and for an agreed purpose. The classroom teacher, in consultation with the Principal, holds the final decision on the suitability and viability of all suggestions.

The happiness, welfare and safety of the children are our primary concern. A child's personal history and academic achievements are strictly confidential: it is important not to discuss your thoughts on how a pupil might be doing [academically/behaviourally/socially/emotionally] with any party. (Uncertainties in this area should be discussed with the class teacher or principal only.)

Respect for the teachers in their professional capacity is essential.

Discipline/behaviour remains the responsibility of the teacher.

All work will be supervised by the teacher.

Parents who participate should be conscious of and sensitive to the needs of the entire class, not just the needs of their own child.

Parents coming into the classroom must consult with the teacher before inviting other parents/individuals to participate.

In the interests of safety, toddlers and younger children cannot be accommodated during a classroom activity.

The highest standard of adult behaviour and language is expected.

Punctuality and consistency are crucial.

No fees are payable. Any expenses that you wish to reclaim must be sanctioned in advance by the Board of Management, and must be accompanied by receipts.

In the case of an ongoing project that takes place over a number of weeks, parents will meet with the teacher to discuss the activity. It remains the responsibility of the teacher to determine its appropriateness (e.g. is it suitable for the age group; has something similar already been done, etc.)

The teacher has the final say in the event that he/she feels an activity is falling short of its original aims and objectives.

The school ethos must be upheld at all times and it is important to keep in mind that the school is multi-denominational, co-educational, child centred and democratic. Consequently, respect for all the partners in education - children, teachers and parents - must be upheld at all times.

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#### For parents & guardians volunteering in the classrooms at Gorey Educate Together NS

I am familiar with the school's Parental Involvement Policy.

**Confidentiality:** I will not discuss my thoughts on how a pupil might be doing [academically/behaviourally/socially/emotionally] with any party. (Uncertainties in this area should be discussed with the class teacher or principal only.)

Parent/guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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