

**ST. ATTRACTA'S SENIOR NATIONAL SCHOOL  
MEADOWBROOK, DUBLIN 16**



**PARENTAL  
INVOLVEMENT**



**SCOIL SHINSIREACH NAOMH ATHRACHT  
CLUAIN GHLAISE, ÁTH CLIATH 16**

**UIMHIR ROLLA: 19716B**

*Scoil Shinsireach Naomh Athracht, Cluain Ghlaise, Áth Cliath 16*  
*Parental Involvement in School*  
*St. Attracta's Senior National School, Meadowbrook, Dublin 16.*

## MISSION STATEMENT

St. Attracta's Senior National School is a Catholic co-educational primary school which provides a happy caring and secure learning environment in which the individual student is enabled to achieve his/her full potential.

St. Attracta's Senior National School promotes excellence in teaching and learning. The school community that we create is welcoming, collegial, safe, respectful and inclusive of all its members. All aspects of the child, academic, spiritual, moral and cultural are cherished.

## INTRODUCTION & RATIONALE

The Irish Constitution gives every child the right to an education. St. Attracta's Senior National School is a Catholic school and in line with the Church's teaching and the provisions of the Irish Constitution the Board of Management acknowledges that parents are the primary educators of their children.

It is widely recognised that parents have a key role to play in their children's education. Parents are their children's first educators and it is with parents that children have the closest personal, emotional and social ties. The care and attention children receive from parents and the example they are given have a powerful influence on their formation.

In St. Attracta's Senior National School, parents have been involved for many years in many ways and are regularly consulted in relation to policy development, school planning and pupil progress.

We welcome parental involvement in the education of their children because it presents enormous possibilities to enhance the existing educational partnership between teachers and parents. Parenting and teaching are two very different but closely related responsibilities. Generally, they are quite distinct, but there are also aspects of them which blur into home and school. It is essential therefore that there is understanding and mutual respect between teacher and parent.

'Parent' includes a foster parent, a guardian appointed under the Guardianship of Children Acts 1964 to 1977 or other person acting in loco parentis who has a child in his/her care subject to any statutory power or order of a court and, in the case of a child who has been adopted under the Adoption Acts, 1952 to 1998 or, where the child has been adopted outside the State, means the adopter or adopters or the surviving adopter.

Our school motto **Ar aghaidh le chéile**, comes to fruition when pupils, parents and teachers work together to ensure that children are achieving their full potential. The school therefore relies on the support and co-operation of parents, who are invited to keep in contact with the school in regard to all aspects of their child's development.

The Principal meets parents on an on-going basis and promotes the school and its pupils when and where possible. Attendance of parents at quizzes, performances and school events means a lot to pupils. Parents are very active in this area and also in the area of sports where many mums and dads provide transport and support for children at matches, and competitions. Parents also accompany classes on field trips, tour etc.

## **THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT & PARENTS**

The Board of Management strives to ensure that parents find St. Attracta's Senior School an open, welcoming, inclusive place. Parents are represented on the Board of Management and St. Attracta's Parents' Association plays an active role in the life of the school. We believe that there are potential rewards for teachers, parents and children in terms of trust and confidence- building when a strong home/school partnership is encouraged. Parents can also help promote the aims, objectives, ethos, values and overall work of the school.

## **HOMEWORK:**

The regular undertaking of homework provides a very obvious and practical way in which parents can demonstrate their interest in and commitment to their child's education. It provides an opportunity for parents to make a valued contribution to and influence the child's education. It is the most regular link between home and school and should therefore be seen as an ideal opportunity to develop a meaningful and workable partnership between home and school. Our Homework policy outlines ways in which school and home can work together to help children achieve their full potential.

On a practical level, the signing of the homework journal, copies, reading logs and tests demonstrates to children that school and home work in partnership.

## **COMMUNICATION STRUCTURES:**

It is our aim in St. Attracta's Senior School to develop practices which support and encourage worthwhile initiatives, particularly in the area of communication between teachers and parents in order to give realistic expectations of what our school can achieve and to provide real opportunities for parental participation within our school.

If meaningful home-school relationships are to be constructed then communication is the cornerstone. In our school, we endeavour to ensure good communication with parents by

- sending home monthly newsletters about the different events happening in school, e.g. holidays, achievements of classes or children, extra-curricular activities taking place and fund raising for the school or worthwhile causes)
- updating our school website regularly
- informing parents of specific activities in which their children are involved
- using the homework journal to communicate short specific child-related messages
- meeting parents on a regular basis, e.g.
  - ✚ New parents Coffee Morning in September
  - ✚ Open Evening and Information Meeting for parents of new pupils
  - ✚ Transition to Second Level Schools
  - ✚ The Sacrament of Confirmation
  - ✚ Development of Aspects of the Curriculum
  - ✚ ESafety and Anti-bullying talks
  - ✚ Meetings with psychologist/learning support teachers

The transition from the Junior or other school to the Senior School is made as easy as possible for pupils, parents and teachers by meeting with parents of new pupils when necessary, prior to enrolment. In particular if a child with special educational needs is enrolling in the school, the principal will meet with individual parents.

In addition to the above, the following initiatives ensure a smooth transition into the school for the child,

- Eolas booklet
- School prospectus
- School website
- School newsletters etc.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Guidelines on Communications.

## **POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

It is clear that the parents in our school want to be positively and productively involved in the life and work of their children in school. Our teachers therefore have a professional obligation to create and nurture structures that will support and develop positive parental involvement and participation in the life and work of our school.

We value parental opinion on issues of concern and to that end, we regularly consult with parents. Consultation sometimes takes the form of questionnaires and the feedback we receive is invaluable.

On other occasions we seek input and feedback on school policies. In recent years, we have consulted with parents on many policy documents and guideline statements which are available from school and on the school website. They include

- Anti-Bullying Initiatives
- Arrival & Dismissal of Pupils

- Book Rental Scheme
- Child Protection
- Code of Good Behaviour
- Communications
- Healthy Eating & Active Living
- Homework Policy
- Internet Safety
- Literacy and Numeracy
- Parental Involvement
- Pupil Attendance Strategies
- Relationships & Sexuality Education
- School Uniform

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

As well as having a voice in organisational planning for the curriculum, there are many other ways in which parents participate in the life of the school. A large range of activities are undertaken to promote parental involvement in St. Attracta's.

As a school, we are dependent on and grateful to parents for their assistance with, attendance at and involvement in:

- Baking & Crepe-making
- Book Fairs
- Book Pool Database
- Book Rental Scheme
- Book Sale in June
- Book Week
- Cake Sales
- Choral Initiatives
- Class & School Performances
- Class projects
- Club Gaelge
- Coffee Morning for New Parents
- Craft Classes
- Crepe Days
- Easter Bonnets/Hallowe'en Hats
- Environmental Projects
- Extra Curricular activities
- Fundraising
- Gardening
- Green Schools' Project
- Helping with tea/coffee at many annual events
- Library/Real Books
- Paired Reading Project
- Podcasting
- Project Work
- Quiz Nights
- School Masses and Religious Services, e.g. Carol Service, The Way of the Cross
- School Tours, Trips and Excursions
- Science Week
- Second Hand Book Sales
- Skipathon
- Sports Day & Sport for All Day
- Supervision
- Write a Book
- You Shall Be My Witnesses Confirmation Programme

## **MEETINGS WITH PARENTS**

### **Informal Meetings**

Informal parent teacher meetings may be initiated by either party when it is felt that one is necessary. These meetings are personal in nature and our teachers are open to meeting parents as often as is deemed necessary and in particular if either teacher or parent has cause for concern about the child. Frequent, unscheduled interruption of classes or the holding of long meetings during class time is less than ideal as it is unfair to pupils and teachers alike whose work is interrupted by such meetings.

While a great deal can be achieved through informal contacts between teachers and parents that take place for example when children are being dropped to or collected from school, by their nature these meetings are brief, informal, at best semi-private and unsuitable for in-depth discussion. Under no circumstances should parents discuss child or school concerns inside or outside the classroom in earshot of other pupils, Teachers do not have non-contact hours free from class teaching duties, therefore we recommend making an appointment at a mutually convenient time for both parents and teachers.

### **Formal Meetings**

The confidence, co-operation and good will of the parents in the school is important to us and we are at all times prepared to discuss individually or otherwise, any matter relevant to the education of their children. Formal meetings, arranged in advance, to which each party can bring their concerns are arranged by appointment.

The teacher - in consultation with the principal - will make appropriate arrangements for cover. In St. Attracta's Senior School a dedicated meeting room next to the principal's office is always available for parents and teachers to meet in comfort and to ensure privacy.

### **Parent Teacher Meetings**

Parents are encouraged to meet teachers at the formal parent/teacher meetings, which are held each year in November. The main purpose of these meetings is to report to parents on the child's educational, personal and social development.

If a parent has a genuine concern which needs to be addressed in a longer meeting, then it is advisable to make an appointment before or after the official parent teacher meeting.

### **Information Meetings**

Information meetings for parents are held when deemed necessary. Parents are encouraged by the principal and staff to be involved in their child's education. They do this in many ways in St. Attracta's, but in particular they support the school by attendance at general information meetings such as those previously discussed.

### **AR AIS AR SCOIL**

Ar Ais ar Scoil is an opportunity for parents to regularly visit the school to see their children's work on display. This happens during Book Week, Parent Teacher Meetings, Open Day, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Science Week, Christmas Carol Service etc.

A number of other initiatives are in place in our school to promote and develop parental involvement and to improve home-school links. This involvement extends to the local community and so we also invite parents to keep in touch with the school - even when their children leave!

## **TUISMITHEOIRÍ LE CHÉILE**

We have always enjoyed the co-operation and support of the parent body. However in recent years, parental involvement in the school has gone beyond the core activities of fundraising and supervision. Parents are involved in supporting children's learning, responding to questionnaires and reviews, giving honest and helpful feedback, liaising in relation to social issues and assisting with educational initiatives (cooking, athletics, science, art, paired reading, etc.)

The In School Management Team put forward as a priority for the school year 2014/2015 an initiative called the TLC programme (Tuismitheoirí Le Chéile). The aim of TLC is to involve parents more in their children's learning and to invite parents to volunteer during the school day in areas in which they are comfortable.

This invitation was extended to the parent body and the response was tremendous. This type of parental involvement has been a contributory factor to the excellent relations that exist between parents and teachers in our school.

## **THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION**

We have a very strong and active Parents' Association, who are wholly committed to the school and with whom we have an excellent working relationship.

The Parents' Association in St. Attracta's represents parents in both schools and holds its AGM in October each year, during which a committee is elected. The committee provides support to the school in many ways and the Chairperson of the Parents' Association liaises regularly with the principal on a regular basis throughout the year. School policy and issues relating to school are listened to and discussed.

While fundraising is part of the work of Parents' Associations', it is not its sole raison d'être. The Parents' Association consults with the Board of Management (BoM) about fundraising for the school or school projects. Expenditure of these funds is by the BoM in consultation with the parent association. This ensures there is full accountability.

The Parents' Association is actively involved in many of our school activities and they provide a very useful service to parents through the operation the Pupil Insurance Scheme and after school Swimming and Chess lessons.

In order to support the work of the Parents' Association, a teacher attends their monthly meetings and acts as a link between the school and the parents. This ensures that projects which the parent association may undertake are compatible with the way the school runs on a day-to-day basis and also opens a channel of communication to keep the staff informed about the Parents' Association activities.

## **THANK YOU!**

At the end of each school year, the Senior & Junior schools jointly invite all parents who have assisted us throughout the year to a Thank You Evening for Parents. This is hosted by the teachers, who provide sweet and savoury creations for the parents to enjoy. During the evening we take the opportunity to thank the parents for their constant help and support.

## **MONITORING/EVALUATION/REVIEW**

This policy document will be reviewed occasionally and as deemed necessary. We believe in a strong working partnership with our parents to ensure each individual child and parent is happy with the education we provide. Therefore, the views and opinions of the partners in education are welcome at all times.



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**TLC**

**TUISMITHEOIRÍ LE CHÉILE!**

**PARENTS TOGETHER!**



Dear Parents,

Traditionally, St. Attracta's Senior School has received fantastic help, support and encouragement from the parent body, without whom we would not be able to do all that we do. It is one of the cornerstones on which our school is built. Many of you have recently approached me and other teachers, offering to help us in various ways and many of you say you'd like to be doing something practical to help your children in the school.

As explained in our October newsletter, we would like to put a better structure on parental involvement in the school and to invite those parents who would like to help in the school to have the opportunity to do so. If you have a bit of free time and if you think you can help with any of the areas listed below, please tick your preferences and we will get back to you in due course.

Without you – the parents – we wouldn't be where we are today so please accept our renewed thanks on behalf of both pupils and teachers. Go raibh mile maith agaibh go léir!

Le gach dea-ghuí,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Muireann Máirtín, Príomh Oide

20<sup>th</sup> October 2014

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent of: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Class: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to help with the following:

	✓	Please specify/elaborate
Arts & Crafts		
Baking & Cookery		
Book Rental		
Computers & IT Issues		
Gardening		
Library & Resources		
Music, Drama, Storytelling		
Paired reading from 10.45 – 11.00 or from 1.00 – 1.30p.m.		
Science & Nature		
Sports		
Supervision on class trips and excursions/ school tours		
Other		