**Harding Memorial Primary School**

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**Parent/Guardian**

**Teaching and**

**Non Teaching Staff**

**Home & School**

**Communication Policy**

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**Parent/Guardian and Teaching and Non Teaching Staff**

**Home & School Communication Policy**

Harding Memorial Primary School is part of the local community and is very appreciative of the support it receives from the various stakeholders in the school. Participation by Parent/Guardians and others from the community have a direct impact on the educational value of the school and is greatly appreciated by both governors and staff. Links between home and school are actively promoted. In recognising that the education of our children is a partnership between the home and school, the Board of Governors, Principal, Teaching and Non Teaching Staff seek to allow Parents/Guardians a clear right of access at all reasonable times to their child’s class teacher and the Principal. The Principal, as the day to day manager of the school, will seek to ensure that all such contacts are conducted in a manner which will promote the educational interests of the pupil and allow for the safety of all the children and staff. It should be noted that teachers have preparation time every morning and after school and have directed time duties at these times.

As parental attitudes to school and the teacher can directly influence the child it is important that all exchanges between school and home should be informed by a mutual respect for each others knowledge and concern for the pupil’s welfare.  Pupils have much to gain from the shared interest of parents/guardians and teaching and non teaching staff.  Each has an in-depth knowledge of the child in different settings and contexts and the sharing of this information in a positive way should help the pupil to feel valued and to achieve his/her full potential.  **It is vital that pupils feel secure in the working relationship between home and school**. We believe that it is very important that the relationship between parent/guardians and their child’s class teacher and school principal is a positive experience. Although there may be rare occasions when school and home may disagree about an incident that has occurred in school, a spirit of mutual respect with calm and mature co-operation should enable any potential miscommunication issues to be dealt with in a satisfactory manner. We would encourage the “modelling” of appropriate behaviour.

The means of expressing this working relationship are diverse but parents/guardians will appreciate that some guidelines are necessary as each member of teacher or non teaching staff has responsibility for a large group of children.  All exchanges between parents/guardians and school staff should be conducted in a co-operative and respectful manner and parents/guardians are asked to adhere to the school’s guidelines when seeking contact with their child’s class teacher.

The contact between parents/guardians and teacher may take the form of:

* **Written Information**

This communication may involve routine housekeeping procedures including news sheets and information letters from school and notes from parents e.g. dental appointments, illness etc. (In an emergency parent/guardians should contact the school secretary)

* **Special Events**

Parents will be invited to the school to attend such activities as seasonal services, concerts and open days.

* **Curriculum Meetings**

These meetings are held in the first month of the academic year and are held in the evening to allow for maximum parent/guardian participation.

* **Formal Parent/Teacher Interviews**

Formal parent/teacher interviews to discuss each pupil’s academic progress will take place twice a year. The first meeting will be held in October/November and the second meeting will be held in February/March. Transfer to secondary school procedure meetings for Primary 7 parents will be held in January/February.

* **Other Meetings**

Teachers may make informal contact with a parent/guardian at suitable occasions in order to provide immediate clarification about a specific incident (possibly at home pickup time).

**Formal Appointment**

If the school is concerned about a pupil’s performance, behaviour or progress, an appointment will be arranged with the parents/guardian.

**How Do I Make Contact With School ?**

* If a parent/guardian has a concern regarding their child this should be brought to the class teacher first. For the smooth operation of the school if a parent requires an extended conversation about an incident/event, an appointment should be made with the class teacher either through the school secretary or by letter. The issues should be clarified to enable the class teacher to make appropriate preparation.
* If the issue is not resolved a meeting with the principal may be arranged. If it is necessary to discuss something with a teacher, then a note should be written or a phone call made to arrange a mutually convenient time. Class teachers may be available at the beginning and end of the school day to speak briefly to parents.
* The school Board of Governors reserves the right to contact the Belfast Education and Library Board in order to put in place arrangements for addressing the most serious situations where the approach of a parent/guardian might amount to **harassment of teaching & non teaching staff in the workplace.**
* The school Board of Governors is fully supportive of the Teacher Negotiation Committee (TNC) 2011/2 policy statement on **Tackling Violence and Abusive Behaviour against Teachers.**

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* The TNC 2011/2 document is available to view using the web link below.

[**http://www.deni.gov.uk/policy\_statement\_on\_tackling\_violence\_against\_teachers\_tnc2011\_2.pdf**](http://www.deni.gov.uk/policy_statement_on_tackling_violence_against_teachers_tnc2011_2.pdf)

* TNC 2011/2 clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Employing Authority, the Board ofGovernors, the Principal and teachers when dealing with issues of violence or abusivebehaviour against teachers in schools
* The aim of this TNC 2001/2 policy statement, which has been agreed by the employers andteachers’ side of the teachers’ salaries and conditions of service committee, is toaffirm that violence and abusive behaviour against teachers is totally unacceptable.
* The Board of Governors has statutory obligations to provide a safe workingenvironment and safe working practices for all their staff.The Board of Governors will not accept or condone violence or abusive behaviouragainst staff and acknowledges that no member of school staff **should work in fear of violence or abuse.**
* **Definition of Work Related Violence -** The Health and Safety Executive of Northern Ireland’s definition of work related violence is ‘***any incident in which* *a person is abused, threatened or* *assaulted in circumstances relating to* *their work.'***
* **Where the approach of a parent/guardian might amount to harassment of school staff in person or on the phone this will not be tolerated**.
* **Under no circumstances should school staff be contacted at home or approached outside school concerning matters to do with school. Only parents or legal guardians have the right to request an interview with school teaching staff concerning a child.**
* **Under no circumstances should children be approached by an adult, other than school staff or their parents or guardian, while in school relating to any incident which has occurred in school.**
* **Pastoral Care**

We regard the welfare of all the pupils at Harding Memorial as the responsibility of all staff – teaching and non teaching. The school encourages a caring commitment from all adults who come into contact with pupils. The welfare and happiness of the child is central to the ethos of Harding Memorial. Parents are seen as a vital part of pastoral care and are encouraged to liaise closely with the school regarding all aspects of their child’s welfare.

Our child protection policy outlines the procedures to be followed if a child’s safety is in jeopardy. **The Designated Teacher for child protection is Mr Cumper and the Deputy Designated Teacher is Mrs Baird.** Any concerns related to a child’s safety should be reported to either Mr Cumper or Mrs Baird.

* **Promotion of Pupils’ Attendance and Good Behaviour**

We adopt a positive attitude to discipline at Harding Memorial Primary School, expecting pupils to behave in a responsible manner by showing consideration, courtesy and respect for other people at all times. This high standard of behaviour is expected inside school as well as on the way to and from school. The positive support of parents is essential in maintaining good discipline and co-operation is sought in relation to pupil attendance, punctuality, school homework, school uniform and attitude towards learning. All school staff are committed to the positive aspects of discipline by giving praise where it is due. School staff will always try to be fair, consistent and sensible if breaches of our positive behaviour policy occur.

* **As Parents you can assist in our Home / School partnership by:**
* Encouraging your child/children to take care of all books and keep them out of reach of younger children and pets.
* Writing down any messages you wish to send into school.
* Reminding your child to give your note to the class teacher.
* Looking in the schoolbag to ensure notes are received.
* Sending ‘break’ or packed lunch in a separate container.
* Placing money in a sealed envelope with your child’s name and indicating the purpose of the money.
* **How Do I Make Contact With School ?**

If it is necessary to discuss something with a teacher, then a note should be written or a phone call made to arrange a mutually convenient time. Class teachers may be available at the beginning and end of the school day to speak briefly to parents.

* **How Will School Make Contact With Parents ?**

If something is going to happen in school, which affects pupils, then parents will be informed. Please check schoolbags daily for information notes. If the school has a concern relating to a particular child, the class teacher will contact the parent either by writing a note in the child’s homework diary, or by telephone. The Principal may also make direct contact with parents.

* **Our professional interest as teachers is identical to yours as parents - that is to give each child the best opportunities we can provide. We are trying to create an environment where children will behave sensibly, act reasonably and thus learn constructively and harmoniously.**
* **Your child will benefit from your active support throughout his / her time at school. If you have any queries or worries concerning your child's education, please do not hesitate to contact the school at your earliest possible convenience.**



Everyone employed in Harding Memorial Primary School has been vetted (checked by the police) and all school staff are trained in how to identify abuse including what must be done if they or someone else is worried about a child.

The teachers who have responsibility for dealing with child protection in a school are known as **Designated Teachers for** **Child Protection**.

* **Mr Cumper is the Designated Teacher for Child Protection and Mrs Baird is the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection.**

Our school child protection policy will explain the actions that you or the school must take if either of you are worried or concerned about a child. This will include how concerns are recorded and how they might be reported to Social Services or the police. School staff will listen to and work closely with parents to make sure their child feels safe and protected in the school environment. As a parent you are the most important person in keeping your child safe. As a parent you should:

* Feel confident about raising any concerns with the school principal that you may have in relation to your child – both educational and pastoral.
* Be aware of our school’s anti bullying, positive behaviour and child protection policies.
* Inform the school if your child has any medical conditions.
* Make the school aware of any court orders relating to your protection or your child’s protection.
* Inform the school if there is any change in your child’s circumstances for example: change of address, change of name or change of parental responsibility.