



Educate  
Together



# **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT POLICY**

## ***ETSS WICKLOW***

***SCHOOL ADDRESS: THE GLEBE, WICKLOW TOWN***

***ROLL NUMBER: 68345R***

***SCHOOL PATRON: EDUCATE TOGETHER***

### **Introduction**

ETSS Wicklow is a voluntary secondary co-educational school located in Wicklow Town.

Our school is an Educate Together school. Our school's characteristic spirit is based on the vision and values of the Education Together Charter of a democratic, child-centred, co-educational and equality-based school. ETSS Wicklow seeks to build a culture of meaningful interactions for Parents/guardians with the school in the spirit of partnership and community and knowing that parental involvement enhances the possibility of achievement for students.

### **Rationale**

In keeping with the principles of equality-based education, our school is democratically run, and the involvement of all parents/guardians is sought and encouraged. We believe parents/guardians can make a significant contribution to their children's education by being involved in school life.

Parents/guardians 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 students at ETSS Wicklow. We invite parents/guardians to share their skills with us by getting involved in the school in many ways and at many levels, for example: serving on the Board of Management or through the Parent-Staff Association (PSA), helping us set up concerts and social events, fundraising, policy-making and bringing energy into school life through innovation and enthusiasm.

### **Benefits of Parental\* Involvement in School Life**

- Parental skills support and complement the work of the school
- Parental involvement actively supports and encourages the child's learning.
- It promotes a better level of understanding between home and school.
- It enhances communication, trust and respect between parents/guardians and teachers.
- Parents/guardians can learn more about the curriculum.
- Parental involvement allows children to see that school and home are connected.
- Parental skills can contribute to the smooth running and development of the school.
- Parental involvement provides the opportunity for making lifelong friends.
- Students tend to achieve better attendance and grades.
- Students show higher motivation toward school.

*\*Parental refers to parents/guardians*

### **How to Get Involved**

- Attend the PSA- all parents and guardians are automatically members of the PSA.
- Stay up-to-date on school events/ activities by reading emails/ following us on social media.
- Parents/guardians can work in conjunction with the teachers in a planned and coordinated way.
- Ongoing projects over several weeks can enhance and enrich student work.
- Parents/guardians can help in organising events.
- Parents/guardians can help with fundraising.
- Parents/guardians may get involved in extra-curricular activities- share your skills/ talents
- Parents/guardians can become Board of Management representatives.
- Parents/guardians may contribute to school newsletters.
- Parents/guardians can help create school policies.

### **Vetting Policy**

ETSS Wicklow welcomes all ideas for including parents/guardians in school life and will assist in the Garda vetting process for parents/guardians wishing to support school activities.

### **Communication Channels between Parents, Guardians and the School**

Important communication channels at ETSS Wicklow are:

- School Journal
- Parent-Teacher Meetings
- School Reports
- Weekly and End of Term Newsletters
- Information Evenings
- School Website
- Social Media Accounts
- Letters home
- Office 365
- VSWare

Communication channels operate in different formats:

- Zoom Conferences
- Face-to-Face Communications
- Telephone Conversations
- Written Communications
- Electronic Communications

The message and the purpose of communication can help determine which format is most appropriate. Generally, the more issues-driven and detailed the information is, the more direct the communication channel should be. Schools and families are encouraged to use direct communication channels such as face-to-face meetings and telephone calls when a topic is complex or requires dialogue. All school community members are asked to be mindful of the strengths and weaknesses of electronic communications.

Where a parent/ guardian is wishing to speak with a member of staff regarding an academic concern, they should in the first instance speak with the relevant member of staff i.e. the subject teacher. For any wellbeing concerns, please speak to the relevant Student Support Coordinator (Year Head). If it is a concern regarding additional educational needs, please speak to the AENCO or relevant Autism Class Coordinator.

#### **PROTOCOLS FOR EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS AT ETSS WICKLOW:**

- ETSS Wicklow uses Office 365 as the email system, and it is available for making appointments, seeking information, reporting factual issues such as whether homework is done or not, seeking clarifications about upcoming events, working on homework and projects and assisting the Parents/Guardians and teachers in keeping up to date with class activities - ***practical matters essentially***;
- We ask all school partners to remember the limitations of an email system and to note it is **NOT** a good way to work out issues arising from class or for having parent/teacher consultations – these issues require conversations;
- Again, mindful of the limitations of emailing and the care needed with wordings used - we would ask that in the case of misunderstandings, all school partners work based on ***an assumption of good faith*** in the first instance when seeking clarifications;
- We ask people to ***avoid Ccing others in their emails unless it is essential*** - the objective is to keep contact to essential information only;
- We welcome the flexibility outlook 365 provides in allowing everyone to communicate with the school at times convenient to busy schedules. We ask all school community members to make every effort to respond to communications promptly, whether the response is required from the home to the school, school to the home, or within the school. While there is no guarantee on the specific time frame for a response, generally, we advise a response within two business days.
- We ask for everyone's understanding that ***staff have the right to disconnect and are not expected to read and respond to communications outside of working hours***. So, though parents/guardians can send emails whenever convenient, it is important to note that such emails should not be expected to be read outside of school hours.

#### ***Respectful Communications***

There is a responsibility on all of us at ETSS Wicklow to ensure the best usage of all communication tools and to work out any issues which arise. Regardless of the communication channel used or the people involved, our communications aim to be welcoming, caring, respectful, and mindful of the responsibility to provide safe learning and working environments for everyone in the school community. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and dignity, whether it's a face-to-face meeting, a telephone conversation, or by email.

**Review:**

This policy will be reviewed every three years – the next review is 2028-2029