

Bohermore National School

Communications Policy

1. Policy Statement

At Bohermore National School, we believe that clear, respectful, and timely communication among staff, pupils, parents/guardians, and the wider school community is essential. Good communication builds trust, supports pupil development and well-being, and ensures a positive, collaborative environment. This policy outlines how we communicate, through which channels, responsibilities, and how parents/guardians can contact us.

2. Aims

- Ensure parents/guardians, pupils, staff and Board of Management are well informed about school matters (events, policies, pupil progress, changes).
- Promote two-way communication: giving information and listening to feedback, concerns or suggestions.
- Maintain consistent, respectful and professional communication.
- Ensure the privacy and confidentiality of pupils, staff and families in line with GDPR and related legislation.
- Use accessible channels so that all members of our school community can receive communications (considering digital/non-digital access).

3. Who This Policy Applies To

- All school staff (teachers, SNAs, administrative and ancillary staff)
- Pupils of Bohermore National School
- Parents/Guardians
- Board of Management
- Parent/Teacher Association or other supporting groups

4. Principles of Communication

Principle	What it Means in Practice
Clarity & Accuracy	Messages are understandable, free from jargon, checked for correctness before being sent.
Respect & Professionalism	Courtesy in tone, consideration of cultural/different backgrounds, speaking/listening respectfully.

Principle	What it Means in Practice
Timeliness	Information given in good time for planning: urgent matters communicated quickly.
Confidentiality	Sensitive information shared only with those who need to know: personal data handled under GDPR.
Accessibility	Use of multiple channels: printed notices for those without digital access; translation/clarification if needed.
Two-Way Communication	Encourage parents/guardians to ask questions, share concerns: provide feedback channels.

5. Communication Channels

Channel	Purpose	Frequency / Examples
Newsletter (print / email)	General updates, upcoming events, reminders	Weekly or fortnightly
Website / School App	Policies, calendar, news, resources	Updated continuously or at least monthly
Email	Detailed notices, parent communications, formal messages	As required
Phone Calls	Urgent or sensitive communications	When needed
Text / SMS Alerts	Reminders, emergency notices	As needed
Pupil Diaries / Homework Journals	Daily/weekly teacher-to-parent notes, reminders	Daily or weekly
Parent-Teacher Meetings	Discussion of pupil progress, issues, goals	Twice a year (or more if required)
Meetings for New Parents / Induction	Introduce school systems, staff, expectations	At start of school year or when child starts
Special Meetings (e.g. SEN / Behaviour / Support Plans)	Discussion of individual pupil's needs	As needed
Board of Management Reports / News	School governance, policy updates	Termly or per BOM meeting

6. Roles & Responsibilities

- **Principal:** Oversee that this policy is implemented: ensure staff know their communication responsibilities: act as a point of contact for parents: supervise crisis or urgent communications.
- **Teachers / SNAs / Staff:** Convey information clearly and on time: respond to parents/guardians within reasonable time: maintain confidentiality: use the agreed channels.
- **Office / Administrative Staff:** Manage bulk communications (newsletters etc.): maintain contact information database: ensure messages reach correct people.

- **Parents / Guardians:** Keep the school updated with current contact details; read communications; engage positively; use correct channels to raise concerns.
- **Board of Management:** Endorse and review this policy; ensure resources are available; monitor communication effectiveness.

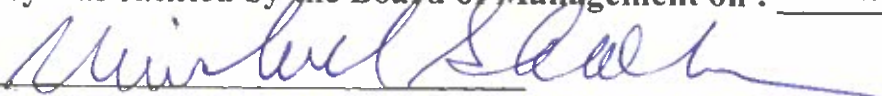
7. Procedures / Guidelines

- **Updating Contact Information:** Parents/guardians to notify the office of any changes in address, phone, email. School will verify and update database annually.
- **Email / Digital Communication:** Staff will use official school email addresses. Emails from parents will be acknowledged within 3 school working days. If more time needed (gathering information etc.), a holding reply will be sent.
- **Written Notices & Consent Forms:** Will include all necessary information (dates, times, costs, requirements). Sufficient notice given for events/trips so parents can plan.
- **Meetings:** By appointment where possible; meetings held in private; if parents cannot attend in person, offer alternative (phone, video call).
- **Complaints & Concerns:**
 1. Parent/guardian first speaks with the child's teacher.
 2. If still unresolved, contact the Principal.
 3. If still unresolved, contact the Chairperson of the Board of Management in writing.
 4. All communications to be respectful, documented, and addressed in a timely fashion.
- **Sensitive or Confidential Information:** Shared only with staff with legitimate need; parents to consent (when required); ensure privacy in communications.
- **Use of Social Media:** School will maintain official social media pages/accounts. Staff / parents should not use social media for confidential or negative comments. Parents must consent if children's photos are posted.

8. Monitoring & Review

- This policy will be reviewed every 1–2 years or sooner if needed (e.g. after communication breakdowns, complaints, or legislation changes).
- Feedback will be sought from staff, parents/guardians, and pupils about how well communication works.
- Adjustments will be made based on feedback. Updates will be approved by the Board of Management and communicated to the school community.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on : 16/10/2025

Signed: 

Michael Sheahan, Chairperson

9. Sample Communication Forms

Appendix A: Parent-Teacher Meeting Request Form

(Used when parent/guardian requests a meeting with teacher/Principal)

Field	Details
Date of Request	
Child's Name / Class	
Parent/Guardian Name	
Contact Details (phone / email)	
Preferred Time / Date for Meeting	
Reason for Meeting	(Academic progress / Behaviour / Other – please specify)
Who you wish to meet	Teacher / Principal / Other
Additional Information / Notes	

Field

Details

Appendix B: Parent Communication Request / Feedback Form

Field

Details

Date

Parent/Guardian Name

Child's Name / Class

Contact (email / phone)

Subject / Topic

Nature of Communication Information / Concern / Suggestion / Compliment
Details

Preferred Response Method Email / Phone / Meeting

Signature / Date

Bohermore National School

Employee-to-Employee Complaint Procedure Policy

1. Policy Statement

Bohermore National School is committed to creating a safe, respectful, and professional workplace for all employees. From time to time, disagreements or conflicts may arise between colleagues. It is essential that such matters are addressed fairly, promptly, and in accordance with recognised procedures.

This policy is based on:

- **Department of Education Circular 0072/2011** (*Grievance Procedure for Special Needs Assistants in Recognised Primary and Post-Primary Schools*).
- **Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations** (INTO & CPSMA, 2011).
- **Relevant Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures** as agreed nationally between management bodies and trade unions (INTO, Fórsa, etc.).

2. Aims

- To provide a clear process for resolving employee-to-employee complaints (including those involving the Principal).
- To protect the dignity of all staff members in line with the *Dignity at Work* charter.
- To support early and informal resolution where possible, while providing a fair formal procedure if required.
- To ensure consistency with Department of Education guidance and agreed industrial relations procedures.

3. Scope

This procedure applies to all staff of Bohermore National School:

- Teachers
- SNAs
- Ancillary/administrative staff
- Principal

It applies to complaints concerning workplace relationships, treatment at work, or breaches of professional conduct. Issues of bullying, harassment, or child protection must follow the relevant statutory procedures.

- Agreement between parties.
- Mediation/facilitated agreement.
- Recommendations for changed practice.
- Referral to the school's **disciplinary procedures** (if misconduct is established).
- No further action (if complaint not upheld).
- Both parties will receive a written summary of the outcome.
- Either party may appeal the decision to the **Board of Management**.

6. Complaints Involving the Principal

- Complaints made against the Principal should be addressed in writing to the **Chairperson of the Board of Management**.
- The Board will manage the process, ensuring fairness and compliance with *Working Together* and relevant circulars.

7. Confidentiality

- Complaints will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Records will be kept securely and separately from personnel files, except where disciplinary action results.

8. Malicious Complaints

- Complaints found to be vexatious or made in bad faith may themselves be subject to disciplinary action.

9. Review

- This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if necessary, in consultation with staff, management, and unions.

Appendix A – Employee-to-Employee Complaint Form

Confidential

Complainant Name

Position / Role

Person Complaint is Against

Position / Role

Date(s) of Incident(s)

Details of Complaint

Informal Steps Taken

Desired Outcome

Signed & dated: _____