

# Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Policy



### Introduction:

It is our belief in St Joseph's GNS that best practice education revolves around the partnership between child, home, school and community. We believe that parents, teachers and children working together create a winning formula for all. The close co-operation between school and parent is essential for a positive working environment.

Parents are the primary educators so we make a conscious effort to involve them as much as possible so as to maximise effective learning, good student behaviour and also help the children to obtain their full potential as worthwhile members of the community. This HSCL policy will highlight existing good practice.

### Rationale:

This policy statement has been formulated following consultation between parents, principal, teachers and the Board of Management. The policy is an acknowledgment of their mutual role and commitment to further the partnership links between them in order to promote positive learning experiences and maximise the potential of the pupils. The Home School Community Liaison Scheme is an integral part of the DEIS Plan and is a targeted intervention aimed at addressing educational disadvantage within the school.

### Aims of the HSCL Policy:

1. To facilitate a communicative relationship between teachers, parents and community that will ultimately benefit our pupils.
2. To establish procedures for the sharing of information in relation to pupil's progress and well being.
3. To create a school environment where parents and guardians feel welcome and free to discuss their child's progress with the teachers and seek support in relation to their children's education.
4. To maximise active participation of the children in the learning process in particular those who might be at risk of failure.
5. To raise awareness in parents of their own capacities to enhance their children's educational progress and to assist them in developing relevant skills.
6. To encourage all parents to become involved in
  - School Parents Activities
  - Parent and Child designed classroom activities
  - School based adult education
  - School Policy formation.
  - The education of their children both at home and in school
7. To enhance the children's uptake from education, their retention in the educational system, their continuation to post-primary education and their attitudes to life long learning.

8. To disseminate the positive outcomes of the scheme throughout the school system generally.
9. To increase attendance, participation and retention in school in conjunction with outside agencies such as School Completion Programme.

Basic principles:

The Home School Community Liaison Scheme is based on the principle of partnership between homes, schools and communities. This partnership should be a working relationship that is characterised by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and willingness to negotiate. This implies a sharing of information, responsibility, skills, decision-making and accountability.

- The Scheme consists of a partnership and collaboration of the complementary skills of parents, teachers, pupils and the wider community.
- The thrust of the Scheme is preventative rather than curative.
- The focus of the Scheme is on adults whose attitudes and behaviours impinge on the lives of the children- namely parents, teachers and other agencies.
- The basis of activities in the Scheme is the identification of needs and in having these needs addressed.
- The Scheme develops teacher and staff attitudes in the areas of partnership and 'Whole-School' approach.
- The Scheme promotes the fostering of independence, self-empowerment and enablement.
- Home visitation is a crucial element in establishing bonds of trust with families.
- The Scheme promotes an integrated delivery of services to marginalised children and their families through networking and co-ordinating the work of voluntary and statutory agencies.
- Community ownership of the scheme is promoted through the development of
  - (i) The development of Local Committee
  - (ii) Involvement in the Parent's Partnership.
  - (iii) Involvement in Policy formation.
- St Joseph's GNS sees the Home School Community Liaison Scheme as a full-time undertaking and supports the co-ordinator in his/ her vital role as an agent of charge.

## Objectives:

The primary purpose of the scheme is the promotion of partnership in the children's education. Parents can also frequently identify needs which are not directly concerned with the education of their children. Every effort is made to meet those critical needs as far as is practical. This can be a primary step in developing parent's awareness of their capacities, in fostering their self-confidence and in promoting their self-empowerment.

Our school undertakes many activities which meet pupils and parent's needs including but not exclusive to:

- Inviting parent representatives to be members of the board of Management.
  - Establishing and supporting an active Parent's Partnership.
  - Regular home visits by the HSCL Co-ordinator. Home Visits take place on a structured and regular basis and on request by the principal/teacher/parent. These visits are positive and preventative.
- Responding to attendance issues in conjunction with the principal and Assistant Principal.
- Regular Parent/Teacher meetings.
  - Organising courses and classes which encourage parent participation at school and classes that help parents to assist and encourage their children in their schoolwork, homework, projects etc.
  - Organising and facilitating programmes which encourage Parental involvement in curricular activities e.g. Maths for fun, Literacy for fun, Family IT etc.
  - Provision of Parent's Room as point of contact and welcoming meeting place. This room is available for parent courses, parent meetings and other parent activities. The room may be used for other school activities when necessary. It is also used as a 'drop in' centre by parents (provided there is not a class in progress) from 99:30am each morning.
  - To ease the transition for children/parents from pre-school and children/parents from primary to secondary. This includes an extensive enrolment process for Junior Infants and a transition programme for Sixth Class in conjunction with School Completion Programme (SCP) and the Home Youth Liaison Service (HYLS).
  - That there is ongoing development in teacher understanding of educational disadvantage and of partnership, that there is development in new methods and practices in schools so that pupils can reach potential.

- Involvement of parents in extracurricular activities as far as is practical. (e.g. educational tours, sports day, Parent & Child After-School Activities and school celebrations such as Communion and Confirmation parties).
- HSCL Teacher in conjunction with the Principal to co-ordinate and assign activities/projects to School Completion Project Worker and to liaise with teachers and parents in relation to participants on the target list.
- HSCL Teacher in conjunction with the Principal to co-ordinate and assign activities/projects to the Home Youth Liaison Officer and to liaise with parents in relation to participation.
- That HSCL co-ordinator will produce term plans incorporating targets to meet the key objective.

#### Responsibility

The HSCL Teacher and the principal have responsibility for the development and implementation and review of this policy.

#### Success criteria

Level of involvement of parents in school

Attendance levels of pupils

Attendance levels of parents at meetings/programmes

A positive attitude towards education and the school

A positive relationship between home and school

#### Assessment

Continual assessment will take place

H.S.C.L. Co-ordinator assesses the participation of parents in activities related to their children's education. Feedback from parents Improved attendance.

Greater parental involvement in school

Higher expectations

#### Equality of access and participation

It is the policy of Our Lady of Mercy Primary School to provide equal opportunity of access to all parents, within the guidelines laid down by the H.S.C.L. scheme.

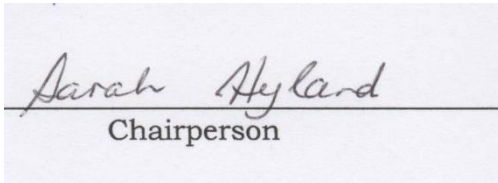
Review

This policy statement will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed at regular intervals in light of changing information, legislation, developments in the HSCL Scheme and feedback from the relevant partners in the Scheme.

Ratification

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management.

Signature of Chairperson



*Sarah Hyland*  
Chairperson

Date : 16/1/19