



## Positive Communications Policy

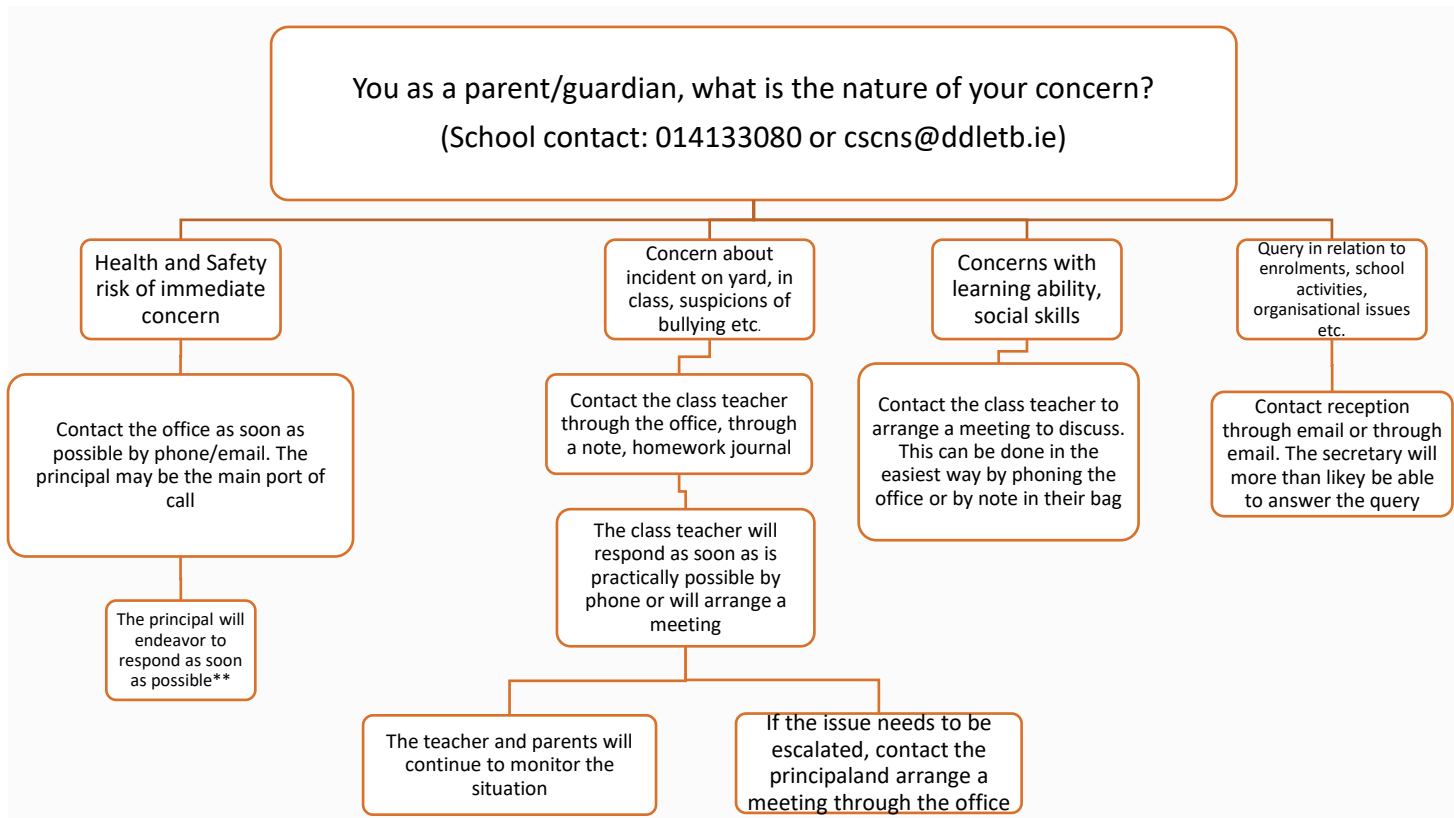
### Introductory Statement

This policy was developed by the Board of Management (BOM) and staff of Citywest & Saggart Community National School. The parents of children attending the school were also asked for feedback in the development of this policy. The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines on the communication which takes place between all stakeholders in Citywest & Saggart CNS. The Community National School model has the value of respect at its core, and so, this policy will guide the school community in ensuring the value of respect is lived out through the various modes of communication.

### Summary of this Positive Communications Policy

<b>General</b>	Communication within the school community is important to ensure both staff and families are fully informed about the progress of the children and the day-to-day running of the school.
<b>Internal Communication</b>	Staff will communicate internally through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Email – to be checked daily</li> <li>2. WhatsApp – between hours of 8 am and 4 pm</li> <li>3. Intercom – Minimised during instructional time</li> <li>4. Staff meetings – on several occasions during the year formally and informally</li> <li>5. Noticeboards – in the staffroom for social and upcoming events</li> <li>6. Google Calendar – Online calendar for events</li> <li>7. Aladdin</li> </ol>
<b>Communication between home and school</b>	Parents and school can open two-way communications through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Information meetings – in September and January</li> <li>2. Parent-teacher meetings – In November and for infants in Term 2</li> <li>3. Written notes – In the homework journal or on paper in the homework folder</li> <li>4. Phone – Through the main office phone</li> <li>5. Face-to-face – meetings should be arranged in advance</li> <li>6. School reports – Once per year in June</li> <li>7. Websites/social media – Updated regularly <a href="http://www.cscns.ie">www.cscns.ie</a></li> <li>8. Aladdin Connect App and the Seesaw app</li> <li>9. Email can be used on occasion through <a href="mailto:cscns@ddletb.ie">cscns@ddletb.ie</a></li> </ol>
<b>Communication with External Agencies</b>	Communication with external agencies can be made through phone and email. Email would be used preferably to ensure adequate trail of discussions and decisions is maintained.
<b>Communication Etiquette</b>	Communications must be positive and constructive at all times. Negative communications will be brought to the attention of school management and procedures to deal with this will be invoked.

## Trail of School Communication



**\*\*Where the principal is unavailable, the Deputy/Acting principal will act in their place**

## Rationale

To provide information and guidelines to parents and teachers on parent/teacher meetings and parent/teacher communication in Citywest & Saggart CNS.

To build a school community which is supportive of pupils, staff and all members of the school community who serve the school.

To establish procedures for the sharing of information about pupil progress, needs and attainment.

To promote a culture of partnership in the education of our children.

## Communication between Staff Members

There are some communication tools which are used internally between staff members. These include email, WhatsApp, intercom, staff meetings, staffroom noticeboard and cubby holes, Google Calendar, Aladdin Notifications. School management endeavour to communicate with staff in more than two ways to deliver messages. This ensures all staff are sufficiently briefed on school matters. Staff must respond to particular communications promptly to ensure adequate lines of communication remain open.

### Email

An email will be the primary mode of communication between staff in the school. Emails should only be used for school business and staff should limit the sending of emails to 8 am – 5 pm. Staff are to check their emails each morning and afternoon to stay abreast of school issues. However, should an email be sent outside of these hours, the receiving staff member should not feel obliged to respond. School email may be used for:

- Sending agendas and meeting minutes
- Providing information about special events
- Invitations to meetings
- Requesting information

- Sharing resources

## WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a messenger app for smartphones. This app is used for internal communication amongst staff members. Our school has two groups, namely 'CSCNS Social' and 'CSCNS Notice Board'. The CSCNS Social group is used to discuss social matters about the school and staff e.g. inviting staff to tea/coffee after school, cinema, theatre etc. The Notice Board is used for professional related school business e.g. informing staff of an INTO meeting, a school break-in etc. and should only be used between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm.

New staff will be added to these groups upon joining. Should a staff member leave she/he will be removed from the group. The group administrator will seek the staff member's permission in advance of adding her/him to these groups. Should a staff member not have a smartphone, provisions will be made to inform them about the information that they should be aware of. Please see the **Acceptable Use Policy** concerning the use of mobile phones.

## Intercom

The school has an intercom system with speakers in classrooms, communal areas and the schoolyard. Announcements may be made to the whole school or specific classrooms via the intercom. It is used to communicate important announcements that require prompt attention. Other announcements may be made from time to time however to minimise the disruption to teaching and learning, announcements during pupil contact hours will be kept to a minimum.

## Staff Meetings and Briefings

Staff meetings are held often during the year to communicate information to staff. These meetings have an agenda and minutes circulated afterwards. However, more informal staff briefings may be held in the event of incidental events.

## Staffroom Noticeboard/Cubby

There are several noticeboards in the staffroom which may have information for staff members. There is a Wellbeing Noticeboard and Professional Development Noticeboard, where teachers can post information to be communicated to others. The staffroom also has a whiteboard with a calendar for the following 6 weeks. This is to communicate upcoming events to the staff. Cubby holes are also used for leaving notes and letters for staff members.

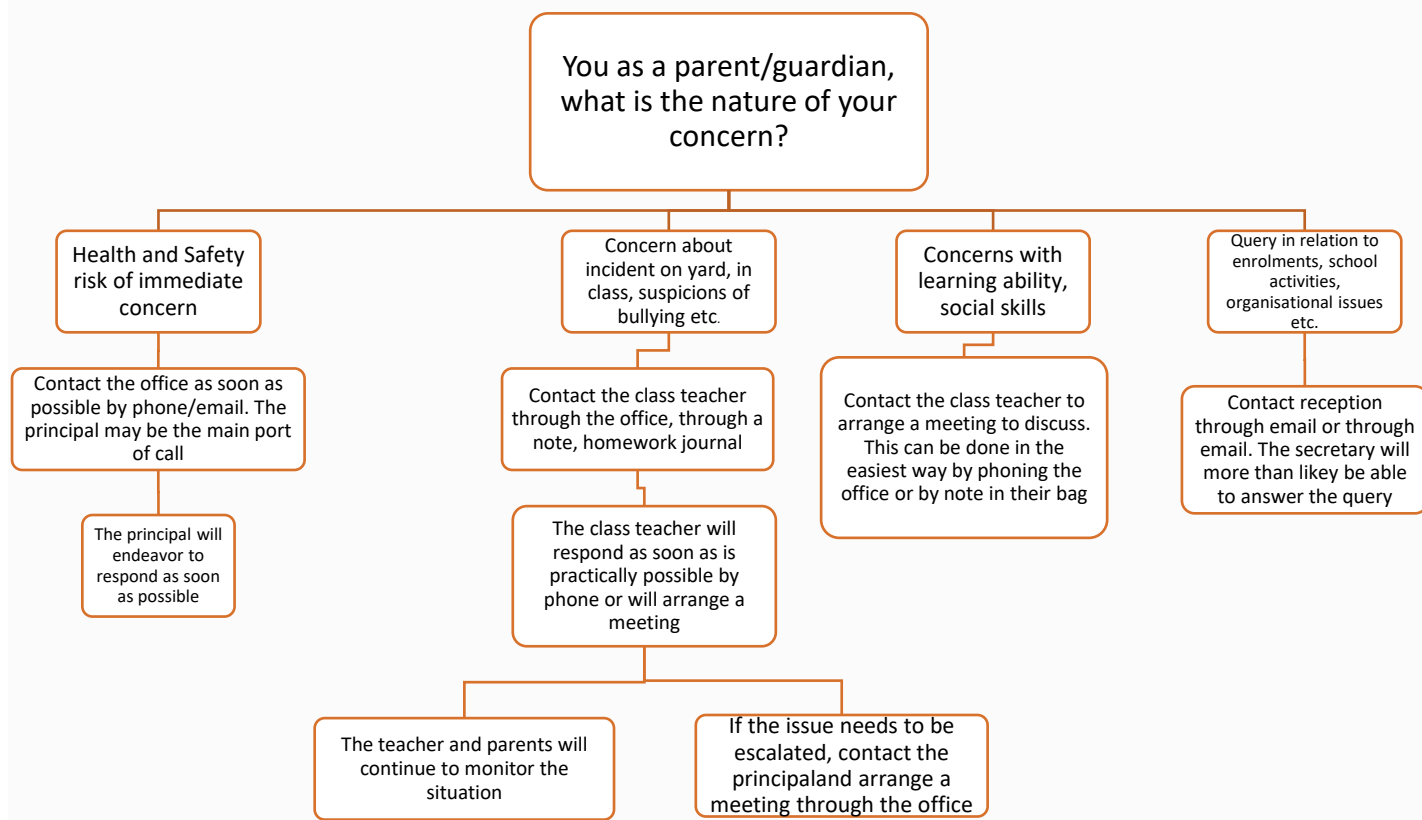
## Google Calendar

Google calendar is used for long term planning of events. It details events, notices, meetings, absences and announcements particular to the day and date for the duration of the school year. It is managed by the principal and deputy principal. Staff are encouraged to update/add to it as appropriate. Staff are responsible for adding their approved EPV days to the Google Calendar. Google Calendar informs the Staff Notice Board

## Written Notes/letters

Communication between teachers may take the form of a written note. This can be used where the sharing of resources of urgent messages must reach a colleague.

## Communication between School and Parents/Guardians



Communication between school and home ensures that both parties are kept in the loop regarding children's progress and welfare. The teachers will keep parents informed as much as possible regarding the progress of their child. More frequent communication may be warranted in the case of additional needs. The following section will outline the two-way communication between home and school. Parents need to note, that schools are very busy places and communication may not always be instantaneous or possible at a moment's notice. If the matter is immediately concerning i.e the Health and Safety of the child is at serious risk, the principal will make efforts to make contact as soon as possible.

### Information Meetings

The school holds information evenings in September. These meetings allow the teachers to communicate the expectations concerning the curriculum and daily routines in the classroom. There is also an opportunity for parents to ask questions to ensure they are fully informed of what is being done on a day to day basis in their child's classroom. Information meetings are also held for the parents of prospective junior infants in January previous to the children starting school.

### Parent-teacher meetings

Parent-teacher meetings will be held once a year for children in 1st - 6th class in November. An additional parent-teacher meeting will be offered to parents of children in Junior and Senior infants in the second term. The teacher will facilitate two separate meetings if requested by the mother and father of the child. This face to face communication is to allow discussing the progress and wellbeing of the child. This is a 10-minute slot. Should it require more time, a further meeting should be arranged with the teacher. Support teachers and class teachers will also arrange to meet parents when updating and reviewing support plans for children who receive additional help.

### Written Communication

Written notes in the homework journals and/or on headed paper is also an acceptable means of communicating with parents. Good notes home, information and updates on a child's progress at school are

ways in which teachers can use written notes. Likewise, parents are encouraged to use the homework journal to inform the teacher of home issues, to ask questions, to organise meetings etc.

### Email

Parents are welcome to communicate with the school through email using the address [cscns@ddletb.ie](mailto:cscns@ddletb.ie). Parents should not email teachers work email directly as the teachers will not be replying to such emails. When a parent emails the above address, it will be forwarded onto the relevant teacher. Emails should only be used when other means of communication are unavailable.

Teachers may also email parents through the Aladdin Connect App. This method is used to inform groups of parents of upcoming events, asking for permissions etc.

**\*\*In the case of sudden and emergency school closures, temporary email addresses may be set up which will allow parents to directly contact teachers. These email addresses will be disabled once school returns. Terms of use of such emails will be stated at the time of closure.**

### Phone

The quickest and most convenient way to contact the school is through the office phone. A message can be left with the school secretary for the attention of the principal/teacher. Teachers will not be able to take a phonecall during instruction times but the teacher can return the call at a time convenient to both parties. Teachers may use the phone numbers on our system to contact parents to inform them of any accidents or important issues which would not be suited to text or letter.

### Face-to-face

As well as the face-to-face communication at parent-teacher meetings, teacher and parents may wish to arrange face-to-face meetings during the year to talk about sudden incidents and/or child's progress. The parents may arrange these meetings in advance through a phone call, letter in the journal etc. Meetings cannot usually be arranged during instruction time with teachers. It is not convenient either to greet a teacher in the morning as they bring classes into the building as this distracts from adequate supervision of the children and takes from instruction time.

### School Reports

Once a year, teachers will provide a full written report to each child's parents on their progress. This report identifies areas of strength and future development. The report will also include recommendations on how the parent may help in the development of their child's learning. This report will be made available through the Aladdin Connect App.

### Website and Social Media

The school has a website [www.cscns.ie](http://www.cscns.ie) and very active Facebook and Twitter accounts. The platforms are updated regularly by the school. This platform is used for a variety of communication features, some of which are listed:

- Class Web Page (Current and Previous)
- Links to Other Websites
- Newsletters
- Notice Board (About Important Information)
- Parental Information
- Principal's Blog
- School Calendars
- School Policies

Teachers may use their Class Web Page to communicate to parents, guardians and the wider members of the school community to describe the teaching and learning that is/has taken place in their classroom. Such web posts from teachers may be written and/or pictorial. They may also contain videos and links to other websites.

*Please note that our school is not responsible for the accuracy or content of any sites linked from our website.*

## Aladdin Connect

Aladdin Connect is an app which can be downloaded to smart devices. The app allows for two-way communication between school and home. There are several features which allow for good communication:

**Attendance** - Parents can write explanations to the teachers for late arrivals and days absent

**Text/email** – The school and individual teachers can write texts to parents for urgent matters

**Notifications** – The school can release notifications to parents regarding school events

**Updates** – Parents can update their details as to keep the school informed of changes

**Reports** – School reports are released through the app in June

**Meetings** – Meetings can be scheduled through the app and parents are allowed to choose from slots

## Communications with External Agencies

Communication with external agencies can be made through phone and email. Email would be used preferably to ensure adequate trail of discussions and decisions is maintained. Notes must be taken of conversations with external agencies and added to the child's Aladdin profile or their classroom file.

Face-to-face communications with agencies may also be necessary e.g. psychologists, occupational therapists etc. Written notes of these meeting must also be retained. Any written communication of a sensitive nature should be kept in a secure place:

- Child protection – principal's office
- Additional needs reports – Deputy Principal's office
- Enrolment details – Child's classroom file (locked filing cabinet)

## Communications Etiquette

Professional and courteous communications must be at the heart of the school to maintain a good working relationship between staff, and between the staff and the school community.

### Communication of Staff

Should a mode of communication be uncourteous or disrespectful, the staff members should make attempts to deal with the matter themselves. This should be done professionally and clearly as to ensure the matter is dealt with. Should the situation escalate, DDLETB has a set of grievance procedures which can be invoked and led by the principal.

### Communication between school and parents

Again, communication between school and parents should remain courteous and professional at all times. Citywest & Saggart CNS, as well as being the choice of school for children, is also a place of work for the staff. Abusive, sarcastic and disrespectful communications towards teachers, SNAs, ancillary staff or the principal will not be tolerated and the matter will be referred to the board of management. Contact may be made from the principal in the first instance via phone/email to remind the parent of our positive communications policy. Should parents have concerns, they should follow the lines of communication as outlined above and ensure the communication is respectful and constructive. If negative communications continue from the same individuals, they will be prevented from contacting the school by that particular means of communication.

On the other side, the communication from teachers and staff to parents must be respectful, professional and courteous. If an incident of significance has occurred during the school day, the teacher/principal will make contact as soon as is reasonably possible. Parents should refer to the *Complaints Procedures* on the school website.

## Implementation

### Roles and Responsibilities / Implementation

All stakeholders have a role to play in the implementation of this policy especially pupils, parents and teaching staff.


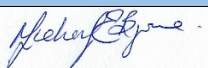
### Success Criteria

Feedback from teachers, pupils, parents.

Positive communications between all invested parties

### Timetable for Review

This policy will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended in the academic year 2022/2023 or sooner if required.

This policy was ratified by the school's Board of Management	
Signed:  Chairperson	Signed:  Principal
Date: 21 <sup>st</sup> April 2020	Date: 21 <sup>st</sup> April 2020