Home School Community Liaison Policy

Coláiste Bríde,
Enniscorthy,
Co. Wexford.

Ratified by the Board of Management

Board of Management

Secretary,
Board of Management

MISSION STATEMENT

"We are working to promote a secure and caring environment; Where Respect, Responsibility and Christian commitment grow, Drawing forth the positive of each individual"

Coláiste Bríde is a Catholic School founded by the Mercy Order under the trusteeship of CEIST. It has a long tradition of academic excellence and is committed to the development of the whole student. It offers a curriculum designed to meet fully the needs of the student.
The school wishes to cater for the academic, spiritual, moral, aesthetic, interpersonal and physical needs of the student. The characteristics of the school are the pursuit of tolerance, compassion and a sense of justice and equality for all.
We aim to develop in each student, confidence, self-respect and respect for others.
The school and its staff value its partnership with parents in meeting the personal and educational requirements of students and staff alike.

The core values of CEIST are:

Promoting Spiritual and Human Development

We believe a knowledge of and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

Achieving Quality in Teaching and Learning

We are committed to excellence and to continually improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Showing Respect for Every Person

We respect the unique and intrinsic value of every person.

Creating Community

Our schools are faith communities of welcome and hospitality where Gospel values are lived and where there is special care for those most in need.

Being Just and Responsible

We seek to act justly and responsibly in all our relationships.

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School Mission Statement

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Relationship to School's Mission Statement

This policy works within the mission statement of Coláiste Bríde and is directly linked to its aim to treat every person equally and to help all students to achieve their full potential at the school. The school's mission statement states:

Coláiste Bríde provides a Christian environment where all persons are valued and assisted to reach their full potential.

Rationale

The Home School Community Liaison Scheme is an integral part of the Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) initiative in Coláiste Bríde and is a targeted intervention aimed at addressing educational disadvantage within the school.

Goals

- To maximise active participation of all students in the learning process, in particular those who might be at risk of failure.
- To promote active co-operation between home, school and relevant community agencies in promoting the educational interests of the student.
- To raise awareness in parents/guardians of their own capacities to enhance their children's education process and to assist them in developing relevant skills.
- To enhance the students' uptake from education, their retention in the educational system, their continuation to post-compulsory education and third level education and their lifelong attitudes to learning.
- To develop a caring, open environment where information and guidance are provided and shared among the whole school community.

Policy Content

The Home School Community Liaison Policy includes:

1. Introduction
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Principles
4. The work of the Home School Community Liaison scheme 5. Success Criteria

1. Introduction

The Home School Community Liaison scheme seeks to promote partnership between the home and the school, parents/guardians and teachers/staff. The purpose of this partnership is to enhance the students' learning opportunities and to promote their retention within the educational system.

This purpose is pursued by identifying and responding to parent /guardian needs by creating a greater awareness in teachers of the complimentary skills of parents in their children's education.

The Home School Community Liaison scheme seeks to promote active co-operation between home, school and relevant community agencies in the education of young people. The scheme focuses directly on the salient adults in the students' educational lives and seeks indirect benefits for the students themselves; that is, to develop the parent/guardian as an educator.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- School Staff

1. Be aware of the positive effects of the parent/guardian - teacher partnership.
2. Keep parents informed of the students' progress, programmes and other school related issues.

3. Be aware of the importance of providing positive and constructive feedback to parents/guardians with regard to all areas of the school life of their daughter.
4. Enable parents/guardians to actively participate in their child's education through informal meetings, encouraging contact, listening to suggestions and making relevant changes where possible and appropriate.
5. Work closely, and provide regular feedback, to the co-ordinator as a support for the student's home.

- Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Co-ordinator

1. Encourage, support and facilitate partnership between parents/guardians and teachers in the education of their children.
2. Work with staff to develop an understanding of educational disadvantage and promote innovative approaches and methodologies to address it.
3. Actively develop and promote parental/guardian involvement as an integral part of the school development/DEIS planning process and in their work, to support the development, implementation and review of the DEIS Action Plan. 4. Establish structures to identify the needs of parents/guardians.
5. Work with parents/guardians to prepare and support them as a resource to their own children and also to the wider community.
6. Visit the homes of students in order to:
    - Build bonds of trust between home and school.
    - Encourage parents/guardians to become involved in their child's education.
    - Provide and distribute information about the school and services available in the community.
    - Seek out potential parent/guardian leaders, who are willing to participate in the
    - HSCL scheme's activities and to be a resource to other parents/guardians.
7. Monitor the effectiveness of intervention, which have been put in place.
8. Facilitate the provision of leisure, curricular, parenting and personal development programmes for parents/guardians.
9. Work with the Educational Welfare Service (NEWB) and the School Completion Programme (SCP) in a unified way, to address issues, which impinge on the attendance, participation and retention of children at risk of educational disadvantage and early school leaving.
10. Establish and maintain appropriate structures to facilitate the involvement of parents/guardians in their children's learning in school and in the home in areas such as literacy, numeracy, leisure/curricular courses, personal development, parenting etc.
11. Liaise with voluntary and statutory agencies in the community.
12. Establish/maintain/participate in the Local Education Committee which seeks to respond to school related issues at community level, that impinge on learning and to strive to address these issues, by working collaboratively with parents/guardians, students, voluntary and statutory agencies.
13. Plan, monitor and evaluate HSCL interventions and programmes.

- Principal/Deputy Principal

1. Encourage both parents/guardians and staff to participate and support all activities and ideas in developing a whole school approach to the Home School Community Liaison scheme.
2. Support the HSCL co-ordinator in the activities of the HSCL scheme.

3. Principles

The following outlines the principles of the Home School Community Liaison policy:

1. The scheme consists of a partnership and collaboration of the complementary skills of home and school, of parents/guardians and teachers.
2. The scheme is unified and integrated at both primary and secondary levels.
3. The approach of the Home school community Liaison scheme is preventative rather than curative.
4. The focus of the Home School community Liaison scheme is on the adults whose attitudes and behaviours impinge on the lives of children, namely, parents/guardians and teachers.
5. The focus of activities in the scheme is the identification of needs and working to meet these needs.
6. The Home School community Liaison scheme develops teacher and school staff attitudes in the areas of partnership and a whole-school approach.
7. The Home School Community Liaison scheme promotes the fostering of self-help and independence.
8. Home visitation is a crucial element in establishing bonds of trust with families.
9. Networking with and promoting the co-ordination of the work of voluntary and statutory agencies increases effectiveness, obviates duplication and leads to an integrated delivery of service to marginalised children and their families.
10. The Home School Community Liaison co-ordinator is an agent of change.

4. The work of Home School Community Liaison scheme

- Home Visitation:

1. Home visitation is at the heart of the HSCL scheme's focus on partnership. The ultimate purpose is to maximise the student's involvement and their retention in the education system.
2. Through home visits the co-ordinator endeavours to extend the welcoming and friendly face of the school through the context and circumstances of daily life.
3. The HSCL co-ordinator aims to be friendly and non-judgemental in their approach while carrying out home visits.
4. It is important for the co-ordinator to show willingness to listen and to stay as long as is necessary.
5. During the visits, the HSCL co-ordinator gives information and establishes a rapport with the parents.

6. The HSCL co-ordinator aims to help parents express their fears around approaching school, and seeks to break down negative attitudes among parents/guardians towards school and education.
7. Referrals for home visits will come from senior management, student support team, teachers, pastoral care team and parents/guardians.
8. Teachers who express concerns and would like a home visit to a particular family, may refer to the HSCL co-ordinator.

- Classes/Courses:

1. A needs analysis is held at the beginning of each school year to identify courses that could be beneficial to parents.
2. Parents/guardians can frequently identify both direct and indirect needs concerning their children's education. These courses will allow parents/guardians to improve their life skills, to foster their self-confidence and should develop the parents'/guardians' awareness of their capacities as educators.
3. Scheme activities, which meet the parents'/guardians' needs include classes and courses –

a) Personal development courses such as parenting courses, assertiveness courses, etc.
b) Leisure activities
c) Educational courses such as digital literacy, basic literacy, etc.

The co-ordinator will have a number of issues to consider, i.e. time, venue, availability of a tutor, funding, resources needed and suitability of the course for the parents. Essential duties of the co-ordinator include:

1. Setting up the venue
2. Organising refreshments
3. Purchasing resources
4. Inviting and contacting parents by text, phone call or letter
5. Networking with local community agencies

- Cluster Meetings:

The HSCL scheme arranges local and family cluster meetings. The schools organise themselves geographically for family clusters and also meet as a City and County cluster. These meetings help co-ordinators to share resources, to organise common courses for parents and to prepare transfer programmes.

- Other Duties:

1. To regularly communicate with the principal and school staff.
2. To develop links with feeder primary schools.
3. To liaise with the SCP Project workers.
4. To liaise with feeder primary schools re transfer information.

5. Health and Safety:

The health and safety guidelines for all HSCL activities are those of Coláiste Bríde. In addition to those, the following guidelines will be adhered to by the HSCL coordinator:

- A fully charged mobile phone is to be taken on all visits.
- The principal, deputy principal or school's secretary will be informed of all out of school activities, meetings, home visits etc.
- The HSCL co-ordinator will return or make contact with the school before going home at the end of the day.
- It will be the responsibility of the HSCL co-ordinator to strictly adhere to these guidelines.

6. Success Criteria

Success indicators will be

- Teacher/parent/guardian/ community feedback.
- Greater involvement of marginalized parents/guardians in the education of their children.
- Improved communication between home and school.
- A more positive attitude towards the school from those at risk families.
- Improved attendance.

References

- Information Booklet for DEIS Schools Participating in HSCL
- Circular 0016/2019
- From Vision to Best Practice
- Mo-scéal
- My Child My Vision
- EWS attendance documents etc.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chairperson
Board of Management

*Reviewed on:*_____ *Date of Review*_____