



## ST MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL, NEWRY

### Parental Engagement Policy

September 2020

#### **Mission Statement:**

*'We will work in collaboration with other educational institutions and in partnership with parents and pupils to maximise academic and creative potential of pupils, enabling them to achieve the highest educational standards, thereby enriching their lives the community and the economy.'*

#### **Rationale:**

In St Mary's we provide high quality education where pupils are encouraged to develop independence in their learning and self-responsibility in a safe, secure and supportive learning environment. As a Catholic and Rights Respecting School, the school community works together to engender in our pupils positive attitudes and behaviours based on respect for self and others. We acknowledge the importance of our pastoral role in the welfare of all young people and through our mission statement and ethos every pupil is treated as an individual and every effort is made to ensure that each pupil achieves their full potential. Pupils learn in an environment where they feel secure, know that they are valued as individuals, and are encouraged in their learning, growth and social development.

The Department of Education's Policy for School Improvement *'Every School a Good School' April 2009*; states *'that there is ample research evidence which demonstrates that pupils achieve more where their parents take an active interest in their education, supporting and encouraging them and setting high expectations and aspirations'*.

In partnership with parents/carers, the Board of Governors, Principal and all Teaching and Non-Teaching staff have responsibility for the care and welfare of all pupils, maintaining a learning environment which is characterised by positive relationships and mutual respect between pupils and all members of staff.

In St Mary's working in partnership with parents/carers is at the heart of everything we do. As a Rights Respecting and Welcoming School, we are committed to developing our links with parents in the belief that enhanced school/home relations leads to improved educational attainments of our pupils. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to actively engage in their daughter's educational experiences.

## **Key Role of Parents:**

Parents are the primary educators of their daughters. The responsibility and impact of the home environment in the formative years is acknowledged as the most important influence on the development of pupils. In St Mary's, we believe parents play a crucial role in ensuring their daughter achieves her full potential in school. We encourage a strong working partnership between home and school through:

- Parent Teacher Meetings
- Pastoral meetings
- Communication through Letters, Website, Facebook and Twitter Accounts, School App, Bi-annual Reports, Truancy Call, Phone Calls, Newsletter, Prospectus;
- Transition Seminars
- Celebratory Events;
- Surveys/questionnaires;
- Extra-Curricular Activities;
- Open Door Policy.

## **Pastoral System:**

Each pupil is assigned a Form Tutor who assumes a mentoring role for their Form Class. In addition, a Year Head has overall responsibility for meeting the pastoral needs of their Year Group including monitoring each pupil's general wellbeing and academic progress. The Year Head and Form Teachers are available to individual pupils and their parents/carers to discuss matters of concern. Parents/Guardians are welcome to contact the school to make an appointment with their daughter's Form Teacher or Year Head when the need arises.

## **Pupil Diary:**

Each pupil is issued with a Pupil Diary at the start of each academic year. This serves not only as a homework diary but also as a method of communication between home and school. Parents/Carers are asked to read key information and use the diary for a number of purposes:

- To communicate on any issue with the Form Tutor, Year Head or Class Teacher
- To monitor and acknowledge their daughter's Assessment Results, Target Grades (KS4), Target % (KS3) and Attendance Records
- To request permission for their daughter to leave school early
- To review summaries of key pastoral policies
- To read and agree the school rules in relation to uniform and behaviour

**Parents are asked to sign their daughter's pupil diary weekly**

## **Reporting Absences:**

Our automated Truancy Call Service offers parents the opportunity to report their daughter's absence from school by leaving a message on the system's auto attendance voice mail. Parents are also requested to write a note to the Form Teacher explaining their daughter's absence on the day after she has returned to school. The school's Attendance Coordinator will communicate termly with parents to celebrate good attendance via postcards or highlight concerns relating to poor attendance via letter.

## **School App:**

The School App is the main method of communication with either a select group of parents or the entire parent body. The app is used to communicate important information, changes to planned events as well as provide reminders to parents/carers on a number of issues including school activities, examinations, revision classes etc. The app provides a range of information including:

- Information about the school
- Recent events
- Academic life
- Parent information
- Student voice
- Extra-curricular

## **School Website, Facebook and Twitter Accounts:**

The school Website, Facebook and Twitter Accounts are updated regularly to provide up to date, interesting information about the life of the school. It is intended to keep parents informed of recent and forthcoming events and provides general information about the school, its curriculum and pastoral policies.

## **Celebration Events:**

The many achievements and successes of our pupils can be viewed through the App, Website, Facebook and Twitter. Parents are invited to join us at our annual Senior Prize Giving in Term 1 to mark the many examination, pastoral and extra-curricular successes.

## **Parent Teacher Meetings:**

Parents of pupils in each Year Group, in addition to individually arranged meeting with Year Heads should the need arise, have an opportunity to meet with Subject Teachers at the annual Parent Teacher Meeting to discuss their daughter's progress. These are held at the following times of the year:

- Year 8 – Term 1 (Prayer Service and PTM)
- Year 9 – Term 2
- Year 10 – Term 2
- Year 11 – Term 2
- Year 12 – Term 1
- Year 13 – Term 1
- Year 14 – Term 1

### **Transition Seminars:**

Parents of pupils making the transition from one Key Stage to another are invited to attend the following events which provide key educational information relating to each Key Stage:

- KS2 to KS3: Incoming Year 8 meetings prior to arriving in St Mary's High School (June)
- KS4 Options Morning: Information for Year 10 pupils and parents about new GCSE subjects in KS4 (February)
- KS3 to KS4: Induction information morning for Year 11 pupils and parents (August)
- Post 16 Options Morning: Information for Year 12 pupils and parents about GCE subjects in Post 16 (February)
- KS4 to Post 16: Induction information morning and meeting with Subject Teachers for Year 13 pupils and parents (August)

### **Pupil Progress Meetings:**

Parents/carers may be invited to attend a Progress Meeting with their daughter's Form Teacher, Year Head or with a member of the Senior Leadership Team if their daughter is identified as underachieving.

### **Learning Support:**

In addition to the involvement of all parents in their daughter's learning, the parents of pupils with identified additional education needs are encouraged to take a very active role in the planning/decision making progress involving their daughter. These may include:

- Initial agreement (phone call or letter) to the placement of their daughter on the school's Learning Support Register
- For those pupils with statements an agreement on the targets of their daughter's IEP
- Involvement of outside agencies to work with their daughter
- Contribution to the future planning for their child during Annual Review meetings and Transition Plans
- Regular discussions on issues initiated at the request of either parent, SENCO or SLT
- Reading Partnership Programme

### **Newcomer Support:**

The parents of Newcomer pupils are encouraged to take a very active role in the planning/decision making progress involving their daughter. The Newcomer Classroom Co-ordinator liaises with parents of Newcomer pupils encouraging them to participate fully in all PTM, activities or events associated with their daughter.

### **Parents, Teacher, Friends Association (PTFA):**

The PTFA consists of a group of parents and is led by the Parent Engagement Coordinator. The aims and objectives of the PA are to advance the education and wellbeing of the pupils of the school by providing or assisting in the provision of facilities for education at the school. They also:

- Support the Principal, Staff and Pupils in St Mary's
- Promote close co-operation and communication between parents and teachers
- Study and discuss matters of mutual interest relating to the education and welfare of pupils
- Engage in activities which support and advance the education of the pupils attending the school, including fund-raising and after school activities or contribute to the education of the pupils by organising and assisting in fund raising activities
- Encourage parental involvement in the life of the school
- Support each other as parents
- Discuss ways of raising money for local and global charities and school related fundraising.

### **Consultation with Parents:**

Parents, as a whole body or as a consultative group representing the parents of our pupils, are invited to contribute their ideas/opinions when major school policies are drawn up or under review. This can occur at specially convened meetings or through parent questionnaires. Parents are also invited to contribute to the review of the School Development Plan.

### **School Events:**

A warm invitation is extended to parents to become involved in a number of school events which include:

- Parent Association activities and events
- Year 8 Prayer Service
- Drama Productions
- Summer School Dram Production
- Annual Leavers' Mass
- Presentation Events
- Parent Teacher Meetings
- School Meetings: Pastoral or Curriculum
- GCSE/AS/A2 Art Exhibition
- Careers Conventions
- Parenting Information Evenings
- Transition Seminars and Talks
- Parent Evening Classes

### **Dissemination of the Policy:**

The Parental Engagement Policy was disseminated to and agreed by the Parents Association and is available on the school's website.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:**

Mr Fitzpatrick, the Vice Principal is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the implementation of the Parental Engagement Policy. Mr Fitzpatrick will:

- # Liaise with the Parental Engagement Coordinator and the Parents Association;
- # Liaise with other staff, external agencies to enhance and support the parent programmes in school;
- # Review the implementation of the policy and advise the Principal and SLT on a regular basis;
- # Liaise with Form Teachers, Year Heads and other staff to evaluate and change provision as necessary;
- # Liaise with key Coordinators including Behaviour Management, Raising Standards, SENCO and Newcomer;
- # Evaluate parental attitude towards pastoral issues through use of questionnaires and other forms of surveys;

Signed by Chair of Governors: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Review: \_\_September 2023\_\_\_\_\_