**Parents as Partners Policy**

**St Lachteens National School**

**Ratified February 2014**

**1.0**

**Introduction**

St Lachteens National School is committed to ensuring that every child receives a quality education. We want to work with parents/guardians to ensure that we support their child’s learning in whatever way we can. We acknowledge the role of parents as partners in education. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the life of the school. It is crucial to the success of our pupils that the school fosters parental interest and support. Communication between school and home should be open and positive. St Lachteens National School acknowledges that the parents are the primary educators of their children and we endeavour to create an open and welcoming atmosphere in our school at all times. This policy outlines strategies adopted by the school to promote positive home-school relations.

**2.0**

**The policy’s relationship to the school’s mission statement and ethos**

St Lachteens NS aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the pupil: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral, emotional and spiritual, including a living relationship with God and other people. We endeavour to equip each child with the skills and positive self-esteem to empower them to contribute to their community and become lifelong learners. We believe that a positive working relationship with parents/guardians is fundamental to the achievement of this aim.

**3.0**

**Parent-teacher communication**

3.1Parent-teacher meetings

Parents are welcome in our school and are encouraged to keep in regular contact with class teachers and learning support/resource teachers. We realise that early communication often prevents a later difficulty arising and is in the best interests of our pupils. Parents are encouraged to write a note in the Homework Journal or contact the school office to arrange an appointment with class teachers.

Parent-teacher meetings are held annually in accordance with Circular 14/04. Parents/Guardians have an opportunity to have an individual meeting with their child’s

teacher and discuss their child’s progress both academically and socially. Parent/guardians will be given advance notice of this date(s) .A note confirming times will be sent to parents/guardians closer to the time of the meetings. Arrangements will be made in the school to ensure that meetings for siblings will be synchronized, insofar as possible, to accommodate parents/guardians . Learning Support/Resource teachers will also be available during Parent-teacher meetings. To meet the needs of parents who are unable to attend on the specific date(s) of the Parent-teacher meetings parents can make alternative arrangements through the school office.

3.2Homework journals

The school will provide personalised Homework Journals to pupils. These Homework Journals contain the School Calendar as well as other school information.. Most importantly, the Homework Journal provides an effective means of daily communication between parent and teacher. These journals are for pupils from Rang 1 upwards. Communication at the infant level will be through notes.

3.3Home School communication

Parents are informed during the final term of the school calendar, classes and requisites for the next academic year. The Principal sends a welcome letter to all parents/guardians at the beginning of the school year, similarly there is specific communication at other times in the year. As needs arise parents are informed of various activities /events through notes/Text-a-parent. Each family receives a monthly calendar of events at the beginning of each month outlining the various activities that will occur.

3.4Induction meeting for new parents

An Induction Meeting is held in the latter half of the school year for the parents/guardians of the prospective Junior Infant class for the coming school year. Parents are invited to this meeting by letter( where possible). Posters are also displayed in the local shop, post-office and pre-schools. This meeting is typically attended by the Principal and the Junior Infant teacher. Parents receive the Induction Booklet for New Parents at this meeting. School information and pertinent school policies are also discussed. Most of all, this meeting provides a forum to allay the fears and anxieties of new parents. It provides an opportunity to assure parents that their child’s happiness and welfare is of vital importance to the teachers and staff of the school. In St Lachteens we realise that children learn best when they feel happy and secure. To this end, parents are encouraged to keep in close contact and communication with the school. Parents’ questions are invited and answered at the Induction Meeting. Parents of Junior Infant pupils also meet with the Junior Infant teacher within the first few weeks of the term so as answer any specific questions and to outline in general the plan of work for the year ahead.

3.5End of Year Report Cards

Parents/Guardians receive an End of Year Report Card in June every year. This Report Card outlines each pupil’s progress for the year including their performance on Standardised Tests (1st-6th) as outlined in our Assessment Policy. An explanation is also included on the Report Card to explain standardised test scores.

3.6Newsletters

The Newsletter is an excellent means of communication between parents and school and is published at the end of the school year.

3.7Textaparent

The school has established a database of mobile phone numbers for parents on the textaparent.ie website. This facilitates the sending of text messages to all parents or specific groups of parents.

3.8Notice Board

There is a specific notice board for the Parents Council within the school. Similarly there is a notice board for both current and community news. These are regularly updated with notices relating to school events and events in the local community. Parents are encouraged to view same.

**4.0**

**Parental involvement**

We believe that meaningful parental involvement of parents/guardians in school life is crucial to the success of our school as a learning community. The following structures have been put in place to facilitate parental involvement in the life of our school.

4.1Parents’ Association/Council

We have an active and supportive Parents’ Association in our school. Our Principal/Deputy Principal, insofar as possible, attend such meetings . The chairperson on the committee of the Parents’ Association liaises with the Principal after each Parents’ Association meeting to discuss pertinent issues. A synopsis of the meeting is circulated to all parents within the school. Parents are actively involved in activities such as Grandparents Day, the Holy Communion Breakfast and Fundraising. Parents are involved in various committees that operate within the school such as The Green Schools Committee, The Health Promoting school committee, The Critical incident committee and the Parents Council Fundraising committee etc. Parents also have an active roll in terms of PR and assist in keeping various local media informed as to significant school events.

The role of the parent in terms of school improvement plans is noted and parents are consulted in various ways such as questionnaires, questions at parent teacher meetings etc. Parents are informed in relation to School Improvement Plans as required.

4.2Policy sub-committees

Parents take part in the review of policies in the school. One such mechanism is done through the setting up of sub-committees for specific policies. Parents can volunteer to sit on the sub-committees of relevant policies as they are reviewed. Some policies are presented at parent-council meetings for comment.

4.3School events

The school hosts many events on different occasions to encourage the participation of parents/guardians in school life. Examples of these events have included the Book Fair, Christmas performances and concerts, Sports Day, art ( make and display) exhibitions, school garden, school sports, etc. Parents are also encouraged to participate in the preparation of the children for the Sacraments of Communion and Confirmation.

**5.0Review and evaluation procedures.**

We will keep this policy under review and revise it according to its success in encouraging partnership between school and parents/guardians.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date)

Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of the Board of Management Principal

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