

# Ashbourne CNS Communication Policy

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## Ashbourne CNS Communication Policy

### Version Control

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### Document Ratification

Function	Title	Version	Date
Board of Management	Chairperson	0.2	XX/XX/XXXX

## Ashbourne CNS Communication Policy

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## Ashbourne CNS Communication Policy

### 1. Overview

At Ashbourne CNS we are committed to our core values of courage, creativity, collaboration and care. Our school celebrates diversity of belief, language and cultural traditions and we all learn to respect, trust and encourage each other every day. We listen to each other and negotiate our differences. This makes it easy for us accept, respect and include every person for who they are.

‘Learning is the Heart of our Community’ and we are dedicated to the holistic development of every child. Our practice is informed by Glasser’s Caring Habits, Growth Mindset and a Restorative approach. By focusing on inter and intra-personal skills we seek to enhance relationships in our community and with the community. This holistic approach acknowledges that ‘learning takes place in a relationship’ and seeks to help children develop the resilience, self-esteem and relationships needed to overcome the many challenges on the road to adulthood.

We combine socio-cultural building blocks with high-quality approaches to teaching and learning in order to develop each child’s academic, social, moral, emotional, spiritual and creative capabilities. Thus, enabling each child to reach their full potential and play an active part in the local community and wider civic society.

Education is a partnership, and at Ashbourne CNS experienced teaching professionals, students and parents work together with members of the wider community in a welcoming educational environment which is safe, happy, stimulating, inclusive and reflective of the diverse modern society in which we live.

At Ashbourne CNS we seek to provide a safe physical, psychological and social environment that reinforces a sense of belonging to the school community and wider society. We strive to enable every student to realise their full potential regardless of any aspect of their identity, background or ability. We promote a fully inclusive education that recognises the plurality of identities, beliefs and values held by students, parents and staff. We seek to prepare open-minded, culturally sensitive and responsible citizens with a strong sense of social justice.

## Ashbourne CNS Communication Policy

### 1.1 Clarification of Key Terms used in this document

LMETB: Louth Meath Education and Training Board	COS: Continuum of Support
CNS: Community National School	SNA: Special Needs Assistant
BOM: Board of Management	SET: Special Education Teacher
AP2: Assistant Principal	CT: Classroom Teacher
PSP: Parent School Partnership	PA: Parent's Association

### 2. Purpose

This policy was developed by the staff of Ashbourne CNS in consultation with parents/guardians and the Board of Management in the school year 2023/2024. The purpose of this policy is to provide information and guidelines to all members of the school community. Good communication and confidentiality are essential to maintaining a positive working and learning environment. Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect in a happy, caring and supportive environment means that people feel included, consulted and informed. This requires that we use a variety of channels of communication so as to ensure that the members of our school community receive the necessary information.

At Ashbourne CNS, regular parent-teacher communication is welcomed throughout the duration of the pupil's education at the school and home-school links are actively encouraged.

The Communication Policy aims to:

- Build a school community that is supportive of all its members.
- Develop close links between home and school.
- Promote a culture of partnership.
- Establish procedures for sharing of information in relation to pupils to enrich their experiences and to develop their full potential.

## Ashbourne CNS Communication Policy

### 3. Scope

This policy applies to all members of our school community who engage with or support others with teaching and learning. This includes school leaders, teachers, SNAs, pupils, parents/guardians.

### 4. Policy

#### 4.1 Parents

Parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, in the best interests of their child, parents are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with the school.
- Participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner.
- Collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their children.
- Share the responsibility of upholding the school's ethos, values and distinctive character.
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

#### 4.2 Staff

The Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2012) applies to all teachers in Ashbourne CNS. The role of the teacher is to educate and to work in partnership with parents to facilitate learning. The ethical values of respect, care, integrity and trust underpin the standards of teaching, knowledge, skill, competence and conduct.

#### 4.3 Communication Procedures

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance in our school. This not only extends to the children but to all of the stakeholders, teachers, staff, parents and the wider community. Anyone entering our school building should feel safe to do so.

While the behaviour of children in our school is of vital importance, adults in the school community also have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of our pupils and detailed in our Code of Positive Behaviour.

All stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviour in the school building.

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- It is vital that the school is informed of family events/situations that may cause anxiety to a pupil and that may adversely affect his/her education and welfare.
- In all matters pertaining to the welfare and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians named on the Admissions Document can be consulted by staff. Parents can nominate a family member, friend/translator to ease communication during meetings with staff members.
- The Child Protection Policy of Ashbourne CNS informs our communication and confidentiality surrounding welfare issues.
- There can be no unannounced visits to classrooms at any time.
- All visitors to the school must use the main door and report to reception. They must sign-in and wear a visitors' lanyard.
- Meetings with any members of staff at the school door, in yard or outside of school are discouraged in the interests of discretion, confidentiality and class supervision.
- Insofar as possible meetings between parents and teachers should be arranged outside of teaching time. Classes begin at 9.10a.m. and finish at 1.50p.m. for infant classes and 2.50p.m. for senior classes. Parents can email the school office to arrange a time that suits both parties.
- Under no circumstances can staff involve themselves in the resolution of conflicts between parents.
- Except in the case of exceptional circumstances and/or if deemed necessary by the school Principal, all meetings with parents will be conducted on a case-by-case basis following a prearranged appointment.
- When staff and parents meet, it is important that the time of meetings be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand, and these should be respected.
- Staff should never be asked by a parent to speak about another child. The staff of the school will respect all children's right to privacy.
- All stakeholders and visitors to the school must treat our children and staff with the utmost respect while on the premises or while present at school related activities.

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- All stakeholders must speak to each other with respect. Aggressive tones or demeanour, verbal abuse, threats or intimidation are not acceptable in Ashbourne CNS.
- If a parent/visitor displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building.
- The involvement of the Gardaí remains at the discretion of the Principal and/or the Board of Management.
- The Board of Management of Ashbourne CNS recognises the right to privacy of all staff, pupils and parents. Malicious rumours, gossip, inappropriate online social networking will be considered by the Board of Management under the Guidelines of Circular 40/97 Assaults of Teachers/School Employees and Circular 60/2009 Procedures in Relation to Professional Competence Issues and General Disciplinary Matters.
- Under no circumstances can a parent or unannounced visitor to the school grounds directly approach a pupil during school hours.
- Parents are discouraged from directly approaching a pupil regarding incidents in school that are being dealt with as detailed in our Code of Positive Behaviour, and or Anti-Bullying Policy.

### 4.4 In-School Communication Methods

The following tools of communication are in place in Ashbourne CNS:

- Oral communication between staff.
- Oral notices to teachers by the Principal.
- Staff meetings.
- Staff emails.
- Regular classroom visits by the Principal.
- Staff Room noticeboard and calendar.
- School-related events.
- Assembly.
- School intercom system.



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### 4.5 Procedures for Staff Meetings

A whole-school staff meeting is held on average every four weeks or as the need arises.

- This is a collaborative exercise with each staff member having the opportunity to nominate items/issues for inclusion on the agenda. Staff are asked to submit any items for the agenda to the Principal prior to the meeting. Some additional items are decided upon at the monthly In School Leadership Team meetings, at meetings of the Board of Management (BOM) or by the Principal. An agenda is drawn up by the Principal beforehand and distributed to each staff member at the meeting.
- All teachers have the opportunity to chair the meeting or take minutes (secretary). These duties are organised at the end of the previous staff meeting by the outgoing Chair, Deputy Principal, or another member of the middle management team in the absence of the Deputy Principal.
- The minutes of the meeting are recorded using a clear statement of the decisions made, actions to be undertaken and the delegation of responsibilities.
- The minutes are posted to the Staff Meeting Teams channel by the minute taker of the meeting for all staff to access. An AP2 with responsibility for digital learning is responsible for maintaining these soft files in an orderly fashion.
- The Principal keeps a record of all staff meetings including the date, details of the meeting and the meeting's duration. This is also recorded in the minutes.
- Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) and other ancillary staff are required to attend staff meetings if issues relate to their work/responsibilities are included on the agenda. When they have been discussed and decisions taken, SNAs and other ancillary staff can leave and be assigned to other pre-agreed arrangements.

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### 4.6 Home-School Communication Methods

The school endeavours to ensure clear communication and cooperation between school and home using the following forms of communication.

School to home communication	Home to school communication
Aladdin Connect notices	Email the school office for general enquiries; ashbournecns@lmetb.ie
Aladdin Connect texts	By phone
Aladdin Connect emails	School homework notebooks (3 <sup>rd</sup> Class up)
School Office emails	Parent-School Partnership (via meetings)
By phone	Parents' Association (meetings)
By post	School Diaries
School website – www.ashbournecns.ie	
School Twitter - @ashbournecns	
School newsletter - Termly	
Surveys	
School homework notebooks	
School Diaries (CT, SNAs & SET)	

**Please note:**

- Any messages from the Board of Management, Parent-School Partnership, Parent's Association, in-school committees, teachers or other relevant external agencies will also be communicated from time to time via Aladdin Connect
- Any email that is sent to the office about a particular incident or a child's progress will be passed on to the child's teacher. The teacher will subsequently respond to the matter via email or phone.
- Correspondence with parents is kept on file and attached where relevant to the child's Aladdin profile.

**It is essential that parents update their contact details via Aladdin Connect or by informing the office of any changes i.e. current email address, home address, phone number and emergency contact details.**

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### 4.7 Informational Meetings

- Open school meetings for parents of prospective Junior Infants take place during the school year.
- Open Day for in-coming Junior Infants take place in June preceding a child starting in the school.
- Class parent information meetings for parents of Junior Infants to 6<sup>th</sup> Class will be held in September. These meetings will take place in the mornings.

### 4.8 Parent -Teacher/SNA Informal Meetings

- The school encourages communication between parents and staff. Meetings between parents and staff in the morning at the class door to discuss a child's concern/progress are discouraged on a number of grounds:
  - Staff cannot adequately supervise their class/child while at the same time speaking to a parent.
  - It is difficult to be discreet when so many children are standing close by.
  - It can be unsettling or embarrassing for a child when their parent is talking to staff at a classroom door or school gate.
- Occasions may occur where a parent needs to speak to a teacher urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The Principal will aim to facilitate such meetings, while making every effort to ensure that children do not lose out on any of the teaching/learning time.
- Regarding any changes in collection arrangements of children from school - it is requested that parents/guardians email or contact the school office during opening hours.
- If parents need to drop in forgotten lunch boxes, sports gear etc., this can be done through the secretary's office as it is important to keep class interruptions to a minimum.

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### **4.9 Parent/Teacher Formal Meetings**

- Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes (Circular 14/04). Parent-Teacher meetings will normally take place in January.
- They will be initiated by the school staff and details regarding time, etc. will be worked out by the class teacher, in consultation with parents. The school will endeavour to co-ordinate times where siblings are concerned and being cognisant of individual home-life situations.
- Meetings may take place in classrooms or support rooms if necessary. They may also take place on Microsoft Teams if necessary.
- The class teachers prepare for the meetings and collaborate in advance with other teachers working with a child about the progress.
- A brief written record of the meeting may be maintained by each individual teacher and recorded on Aladdin.
- In the case of parents who are separated, requests can be made by both parents to meet their child's teacher.
- Standardised test scores will be communicated where relevant.
- Focus is the holistic development of the child in line with school values.

#### **The purpose of the Parent/Teacher meeting is:**

- To establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents.
- To let parents know how a child is progressing in school.
- To provide parents with an opportunity to let the teacher know how a child is coping with their school work from their perspective.
- To help teachers/parents get to know the children better as individuals.
- To help children realise that home and school are working together.
- To share with the parent the problems and difficulties the child may have in school.
- To review with the parent the child's experience of schooling.
- To learn more about the child from the parent's perspective.
- To learn more about parental opinions on what the school is doing.
- To identify areas of tension and disagreement.
- To identify ways in which teachers or parents can help a child.
- To negotiate jointly decisions about the child's education.
- To define and clarify roles and responsibilities about the child's schooling.

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- If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can contact the school secretary to arrange a suitable time.
- Parents with questions or issues about school policy or practice will be referred to the class teacher or the Principal.

### **4.10 Continuum Of Support Meetings**

Continuum Of Support meetings between parents, SET and/or classroom teachers take place in September and are reviewed again in December/January and May/June. Parents will be invited to attend a meeting with the child's SET and /or class teacher. Special Needs Assistant may also attend this meeting if deemed necessary. Any other relevant professionals may also be invited to attend (Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapist, Educational Psychologist, etc.). However, if a parent wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by prior appointment. Appointments can be made by contacting the school office by email. For further information, please see the schools' Special Educational Needs Policy.

### **4.11 School Reports**

School reports are given out at least one week before the end of the summer term to ensure that any follow-up meetings can be facilitated if necessary. The school uses a standard NCCA report card template. As all reports are completed on Aladdin, teachers use the translate option as necessary. Reports are issued in soft copy via Aladdin Connect and parents can print a copy of the report if they choose.

The report cards provide for reporting in four key areas:

- The child's holistic development (social and personal development).
- The child's learning and achievement across the curriculum.
- The child's learning dispositions.
- Ways in which parents can support their child's learning.

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### **4.12 Complaints Procedures**

While complaints are infrequent, in the event of such, the school would wish that a complaint be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. This usually serves to minimise distress for all involved. The complaints procedure should follow these steps:

- Parents should always go to the class teacher first. In most cases, things can be resolved at this level. The teacher will inform the Principal of any serious complaints.
- At this stage, if a parent feels that the issue has not been resolved, they are welcome to make an appointment with the Principal to discuss the matter further.
- If a parent still feels unhappy with the outcome, they can bring their concerns to the Board of Management of the school. In order to do this, the concerns must be put in writing and addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Management. Please see [LMETB Complaints Procedure](#) for further information.

### **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **5.1 Ashbourne CNS Staff**

Ashbourne CNS staff members will ensure compliance with all aspects of the Communication Policy are adhered to.

#### **5.2 Principal**

The Principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school and is accountable to the Board for that management and implementation of the Communication Policy.

#### **5.3 Parents/Guardians**

Parents/Guardians will be responsible for adhering to and promoting the guidance provided in this Communication Policy.

#### **5.4 Board of Management**

The Board is responsible for ratification of the Communication Policy.

Chairperson of the Board on the date of its ratification by the Board signs the policy document.

## Ashbourne CNS Communication Policy

### **6. Policy Review**

The policy will be reviewed annually.

### **7. Appendices**

Aladdin Connect Guide

Anti-Bullying Policy - <https://ashbournecns.ie/patronage-board-of-management/school-policies/>

ACNS Code of positive Behaviour - <https://ashbournecns.ie/patronage-board-of-management/school-policies/>

ACNS Child Safeguarding Statement - <https://ashbournecns.ie/patronage-board-of-management/school-policies/>

ACNS SEN Policy - [https://ashbournecns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/ACNS-Special-Education-Needs-Policy\\_ratified.pdf](https://ashbournecns.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/ACNS-Special-Education-Needs-Policy_ratified.pdf)

LMETB Complaints Procedure - <https://www.rstc.ie/images/2019-2020/LMETBComplaintProcedureApprovedbyBoardofLMETB.pdf>





**BOM & LMETB Ratification/Resolution Process for  
This Policy**

**BOM Ratification**

*Ashbourne LMS Communications Policy*

<b>Date Ratified by the Board of Management:</b>	<i>29/06/2023</i>
<b>Proposed By:</b>	<i>John Ellis</i>
<b>Seconded By:</b>	<i>Simon XU</i>
<b>Signed:</b>	<i>John J. Ellis</i> (Chairperson, BOM)
<b>Scheduled Date for Review of the Policy:</b>	<i>June 2025</i>

**LMETB Ratification/Resolution of the ETB Board**

<b>Date of Resolution of ETB Board</b>	
<b>Signed</b>	(Chairperson)

