



Email: [info@htetns.ie](mailto:info@htetns.ie)

Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School

Address: 163-167 Rathmines Road Lower D06 R621

No: (01) 5292970

## **Positive Communication Policy**

### **Mission Statement:**

Harcourt Terrace ETNS is an Educate Together School, run in accordance with the Rules for Primary Schools of the Department of Education and Science. We at Harcourt Terrace ETNS, seek to provide an environment that is child-centred, co-educational, equality-based and democratically run. Our mission is to educate our pupils to their fullest potential while enhancing their self-esteem and creativity. All pupils are treated as individuals and their uniqueness is celebrated. All members of our school community are encouraged to respect themselves and others and we aspire to provide our children with the life skills necessary to become the best they can be.

### **Introductory Statement:**

The family and home are central to the social and intellectual development of the child and the nurturing of good, moral values. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other and aim to work for the benefit of the child and their learning so that the child's education can be effective.

This policy was developed by the Board of Management and staff of Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School, and in consultation with the Parents Guardians & Teacher Association in the school year 2023-2024. Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff communication including formal and informal parent/staff meetings.

### **Harcourt Terrace ETNS staff and Board of Management believe that:**

- Good communication between home and school is important because with positive and active partnership the child gets the best that primary education can offer.
- Teachers can do a better job where they are supported by and working closely with parents.
- We know from research that children do better, behave better and are happier at school where parents and teachers work closely together and when parents are able to give their children support at home.

*Referenced from: National Parents Council document: Working Effectively as a Parents Association*



Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School  
Email: [info@htetns.ie](mailto:info@htetns.ie) Address: 163-167 Rathmines Road Lower D06 R621  
No: (01) 5292970

**Harcourt Terrace ETNS staff and Board of Management are committed to:**

- Developing close effective links with parents
- Participating in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the central and fundamental role of parents as Primary Educators of their children. (Article 42 of the Constitution of Ireland)
- Maintaining the ethos, values and distinctive character of Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School
- Supporting and facilitating the Parents Guardian & Teacher Association.
- Encouraging and facilitating the participation of parents/guardians in school policy and decision making

Referenced from:

1. [12787 - Parents Council Booklet - NPCnpc.ie/attachments/cbdcfd37-98b5-4698-86aa-3f30c38fceed.pdf](https://www.npcnpc.ie/attachments/cbdcfd37-98b5-4698-86aa-3f30c38fceed.pdf) • to National Parents Council Primary must conduct their ... • Parents can do a - [PDF Document] (documents.pub)
2. Article 42 of the Constitution of Ireland

**Parents/guardians are encouraged to:**

- Develop close links with the school
- Collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their children
- Share the responsibility of seeing that the school remains true to its ethos, values and distinctive character
- Become actively involved in the school and Parent/Guardian & Teacher Association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

In all matters pertaining to the well-being and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians will be consulted by staff. It is essential that all parents and legal guardians are named on the enrolment form.

**Behaviour of all adults in the School:**



Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School  
Email: [info@htetns.ie](mailto:info@htetns.ie) Address: 163-167 Rathmines Road Lower D06 R621  
No: (01) 5292970

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This not only extends to the children but to all of the stakeholders e.g. the staff, parents and the wider community: anyone entering our building should feel safe to do so. Adults in the school community have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children. All adults will treat our children, staff and other parents with the utmost respect while on the premises.

- All adults within the school are expected to speak to each other with respect, shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If any adult displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building and/or school site. In severe cases, and if required, the Gardaí will be called.
- The school will respect all children and parents' right to privacy so staff should not be asked to speak about any child except your own.

#### **Things that the school needs to know to keep your children safe and healthy:**

- It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that may cause anxiety to your child and could affect his/her education. Your first point of contact should always be your child's class teacher.
- The school should at all times know who is collecting your child. Classroom teachers should have list of people and their contact information who you have authorised to collect your child on Aladdin. Should this change the onus is parent/guardians to inform the school of the change. You can provide this information by keeping your contact details up to date on Aladdin and contacting the school on Aladdin if necessary. Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone unauthorized/unknown to the school. If, at any time, parent/guardians alter the pick-up arrangements for their child, the school should be given written authorization through Aladdin by the parent immediately. In an emergency, the parent/guardian must leave a message on the answering service or speak with the school secretary/principal/teacher.

#### ***Structures in place to facilitate open communication and consultation with Parents.***

##### **Annual Consultation throughout the year including:**

- Welcome day for new Junior Infants and their parents annually.
- Teachers will communicate with parent/guardians of their class in September to introduce themselves, the team and outline briefly the curriculum, class rules and plans for the year.



Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School  
Email: [info@htetns.ie](mailto:info@htetns.ie) Address: 163-167 Rathmines Road Lower D06 R621

No: (01) 5292970

- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in November (a short, written record of the meeting is maintained by each teacher).
- Class teachers / SET meet with parents whose children have additional educational needs.

#### **Written communication including:**

- Homework diary (1<sup>st</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> class), to inform parents about assigned homework, to confirm that homework has been completed and to relay messages between parents and teachers.
- Emails sent from class teachers to parents, through Aladdin system.
- Emails sent from parents to class teachers, via the office ([info@htetns.ie](mailto:info@htetns.ie)).
- Regular newsletters keep parents up to date with school events, holidays, decisions taken to change current policies and procedures or to introduce new ones and other school concerns
- School report for each pupil at the end of each school year (shared via Aladdin).
- Text messages for general reminders (e.g school closures, coffee mornings)
- Some SEN pupils may have a home school diary. This is not a means of reviewing academic/social progress but rather serves as a useful tool to share information between home and school.
- Class blogs or other online platform e.g. Class Dojo, for sharing class news.

**Generally, communication sent from the school will be ‘paperless’. Emails sent from the school will be sent to the email address(es) provided at enrolment, unless otherwise requested by parents. All paper communication sent from the school will be sent to the child’s home address as given on the enrolment form/Aladdin, unless otherwise requested by parents.**

#### **Other structures and processes including:**

- Parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of school policies. The PGTA receive policies in draft form and provide feedback to the Board. The document once ratified by the Board is made available to all parents via the school website or in hard copy if requested. Any feedback arising is brought to the attention of the Board of Management.
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Sports Day and school concerts.



Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School  
Email: [info@htetns.ie](mailto:info@htetns.ie) Address: 163-167 Rathmines Road Lower D06 R621

No: (01) 5292970

- Involvement of parents in curricular areas and focus weeks when appropriate eg. STEM Week / Intercultural Week / World Book Day / Aistear / Guided Reading; sharing knowledge or reading groups etc.
- The Aladdin Connect app. We encourage all parents to utilise this app. Through this app contact details can be updated, consent can be sought, absences can be explained, school reports can be viewed, payments can be made and other useful applications.

### **Procedures for parents to initiate communication with the school.**

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she can:

- Contact the school via Aladdin, if the message relates to all staff associated with the class. For general updates please use the Aladdin app.
- Contact the school Secretary at [info@htetns.ie](mailto:info@htetns.ie) if the message relates to an individual staff member. Our school secretary will then arrange an appointment with all parties.
- Contact the principal at [principal@htetns.ie](mailto:principal@htetns.ie) if the matter needs to be addressed by the principal.

Classes begin at 8:30am and finish at 1:10pm (infants) and 2.10pm (1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>) and this time should not be interrupted. Meetings with the class staff at the class door or in the yard to discuss a child's concern/progress are discouraged on a number of grounds:

- Staff cannot adequately supervise his/her class 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 embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to staff at a classroom door.

However, teachers and other members of staff may be available to listen to a quick issue in the morning and after school as long as confidentiality issues are not impacted. If matters raised cannot be resolved immediately or if the parent or staff member needs to discuss the matter further an appointment should be made at a convenient time for both parties.

On some rare occasions a parent may need to speak to a staff member urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The principal will aim to facilitate such meetings making every effort to ensure that the children in the class do not lose out on any of the teaching/learning time.

If parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear during class time etc, this can be done through the secretary's office so that learning is not disrupted.

### **Online and Social Media Communication:**

Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School has a website <https://htetns.ie/>, Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/harcourtterraeetns>) and a page on



Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School  
Email: [info@htetns.ie](mailto:info@htetns.ie) Address: 163-167 Rathmines Road Lower D06 R621  
No: (01) 5292970

X(<https://x.com/HarcourtTerrace?t=QdFfBRPMYiLp15CrOLV2HA&s=09>). Parents are encouraged to visit these sites regularly to keep up to date on school matters, comment and contribute to posts and share information to help publicise the school and the achievements of our children.

The school name or anything that identifies the school should not be used on online or on social media (for example class Facebook page which might be set up by parents) by members of the public including parents without express written permission from the principal or Board of Management. Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School will request removal of any online or social media sites that are not approved by the school.

### **Communication between staff**

Staff meetings take place once a month in the school, usually on the first Wednesday of each month.

Staff also have three other scheduled hours during each month (Croke park hours) which are allocated to planning, AEN planning and an area of focus.

Staff operate a WhatsApp group which is used for sharing general school updates, social news and events.

Communication is considered to be a strength among the staff and the informal communication before, during and after school is an integral part of the collegial and professional school atmosphere.

### **Communication between School/Board of Management/PGTA**

Representatives of the Board of Management and the Parent Guardian & Teacher Association Committee meet annually.

There is a teacher representative on the Board of Management who attends meetings monthly.

There is a teacher representative on the PGTA who attends the PGTA meetings monthly. This representative also brings items back to the staff/Principal for discussion.

The Principal and the Chairperson/joint chairs of the PGTA meet monthly.

Email communication between School and PGTA is generally limited to:

- Principal to Chairperson
- Treasurer to Treasurer
- With some necessary contact made between other members of the PGTA and the school secretary (including photos for website or information about upcoming PGTA/school events etc).



Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School  
Email: [info@htetns.ie](mailto:info@htetns.ie) Address: 163-167 Rathmines Road Lower D06 R621  
No: (01) 5292970

- On occasion, by agreement, there may be links with the Deputy Principal if a certain area falls under his/her remit (e.g mobility management).

### **Communication with outside agencies**

Harcourt Terrace Educate Together has enjoyed and benefited from links with state agencies since 2018. These include:

NEPS / NCSE / SESS / SENO / HSE / Tusla / EWO

Harcourt Terrace ETNS also aims to make links with the community through:

Links with local schools (Principal meetings, pupil events)

Links with the community Gardaí

Links with local events

Rental of school hall

### **Communication through the school office**

Through the Aladdin system emails can be sent by teachers directly to parents. All incoming emails are communicated through the office ( [info@htetns.ie](mailto:info@htetns.ie) ). The class teacher does not respond from their personal school email to these.

### ***Communication by email- response time***

Response times to emails from the school secretary can vary depending on the demands in the office at any given time. It is considered reasonable that 3-5 school days are allowed for a response (with the exception of holiday periods during which email is only checked intermittently).

Response times to emails to the principal can also vary greatly depending on the demands at any given time. Priority must be given to the pupils, staff and overall running of the school. A response time of 5-7 school days is considered to be reasonable.

Teachers are in class during the day and will not have time to access emails. They may be engaged in planning, meetings or personal matters after school hours and so again 3-5 school days is considered to be a reasonable response time.



Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School  
Email: [info@htetns.ie](mailto:info@htetns.ie) Address: 163-167 Rathmines Road Lower D06 R621

No: (01) 5292970

There may be occasions where a parent is trying to contact the school by phone and/or email and are not receiving a response. Office hours are limited, and the secretary is not always at the desk. We ask for patience during these times.

### **Parent/Teacher Meetings**

The purpose of the Parent/Teacher meeting is:

- To establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents
- To let parents know how their children are progressing in school
- 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 get general feedback from the parents regarding the school
- To identify ways in which parents can help their children
- To negotiate jointly decisions about the child's education
- To inform the parents of standardised test results according to school policy.

### **Organisation of parent/teacher meetings**

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes, usually in the first term towards the end of November. If a parent wishes to arrange an additional meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by contacting the school secretary.

Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School uses prepared guidelines to give structure to the meetings. These can vary from teacher to teacher but must include feedback on attendance, behaviour, punctuality, standardised test results (where applicable) and overview of progress through the curriculum. Parent/ Teacher meetings may take place in classrooms, offices, support rooms or through on-line platforms when necessary. Each meeting is allocated a 10-minute time slot which parents can book through the Aladdin Connect app. If a longer meeting is required these should be scheduled for another day.





Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School  
Email: [info@htetns.ie](mailto:info@htetns.ie) Address: 163-167 Rathmines Road Lower D06 R621

No: (01) 5292970

In order to facilitate the operation of the school and the needs of children and other parents, it is important that meetings should be kept to the allocated time. Times of meetings are agreed beforehand and should be adhered to so that all parents are seen on time in so far as is possible.

### **Planning meetings for Support Plans**

For children with designated special educational needs, formal scheduled parent/staff meetings relating to the child's **Support Plan** will take place in September/October. 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.

**In the case of separated/ divorced parents, Harcourt Terrace Educate together National School will facilitate requests made by parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually/collaboratively for parent/teacher meetings.**

### **School Reports**

Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School produces formal reports for reporting to parents on students' progress and achievement at school annually in the third term using report card templates as required by the National Council of Curriculum and Assessment ([www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)). The reports are issued by email/ through the Aladdin app in the two week period prior to school closing for the summer break to allow parents time to ask for clarification with the school teacher on anything contained in their child's report. The report will cover:

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

Reports for children in their final year of primary school (sixth class) will be in the form of an **Education Passport**. These support the transfer of pupil information from primary to post-primary and follow a standard template.

### **Safety, Health and Welfare at Work**



Harcourt Terrace Educate Together National School  
Email: [info@htetns.ie](mailto:info@htetns.ie) Address: 163-167 Rathmines Road Lower D06 R621

No: (01) 5292970

copy of this circular can be found at this link: [gov - Assaults on Teachers/School Employees \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov-assaults-on-teachers/school-employees/www.gov.ie)

**Ratification and Communication:**

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management on 23-May-24.

Date of next policy review: May 2026.

Signed on Behalf of the Board of Management:

Chairperson: Sylvia O'Halloran Date: 23-May-24.

Principal: Tomy Walsh Date: 23-May-24.