



## **Parental / Volunteer Involvement (Policy to be ratified in consultation with parents)**

One of the key pillars of the Educate Together ethos is parental involvement. All Educate Together schools have been set up by volunteer groups of parents in a community. As a result, parents have a vital role in the operation of the school and its ethos reflects this. The Charter of Educate Together obliges the school's Board to encourage and welcome this involvement whilst balancing it with an equal obligation to positively affirm the professional role of the teacher / principal.

Parents within Riverview ETNS are encouraged and welcome to become involved in school life in a variety of ways –

1. Contributing towards and being available for consultation on school policies
2. Serving on school bodies such as the Board of Management, the Parent-Teacher Association Committee and or other sub committees
3. Volunteering as part of the school day (within teacher led activity)
4. Volunteering as part of the school day (as a parent led activity)
5. Volunteering afterschool for an activity with the children
6. Being an active member of the PTA – assisting with activities organised by the PTA committee e.g. fundraising

The benefits of parental involvement are many and varied. Parental skills may support and complement work already taking place. It promotes 'good parent/teacher relationships and a better level of understanding between home and school' (National Parents' Council). Parental involvement actively supports and encourages the child's learning, as parents can learn about the curriculum. Lastly parental involvement may lead to a greater diversity of activity within the school for the children given the wide skills and interest base of the parents.

The BoM propose to set out a Parental/Volunteer Involvement Policy for Riverview ETNS so that all parents understand how they may become involved and the parameters for the various types of involvement (as listed above).

The happiness, welfare and safety of the children is the primary concern of the Board of Management. Any parent volunteering for activities involving unsupervised access with the children must be Garda Vetted.

### **How to Get Involved**

- Volunteering as part of the school day (within teacher led activity)

Teachers may identify activities during the school day to which parents could make a valuable contribution. They will make contact with parents directly, and parents simply respond to the class teacher if they are willing and available to help out. Parents who



participate should be conscious of and sensitive to the needs of the entire class, not just the needs of their own child. Confidentiality regarding children's behaviour etc. is expected.

- Volunteering as part of the school day (as a parent led activity)

If a parent feels they have a particular skill or experience to share that is complimentary to the curriculum they should email the Principal with the following details – what the activity is (i.e. a short talk about a particular country / a demonstration of a musical instrument), indicative time i.e. a once off activity for 20mins, 3 visits over the course of the school year) and the grouping for which the activity is intended i.e. Junior or Senior Infants.

No activity can take place without prior consultation and agreement. Arrangements for classroom projects /activities are agreed with the class teachers.

- Volunteering afterschool for an activity with the children

Ideas for parent led activities should be submitted by email to the Principal in line with the 'Use of School After Hours' Policy.

### **Guidelines for Getting Involved**

All Parents wishing to volunteer must abide by the following guidelines, must complete the Parental Involvement volunteer form (Appendix A) and undergo Garda vetting (refer to Garda Vetting Policy).

- Parents come into the classroom at the invitation of the teacher, by prior arrangement and for an agreed purpose. The classroom teacher, in consultation with the Principal, holds the final decision on the suitability and viability of all suggestions.
- A child's personal history and academic achievements are strictly confidential: it is important not to discuss your thoughts on how a pupil might be doing [academically/behaviourally/socially/emotionally] with any party. (Uncertainties in this area should be discussed with the class teacher or principal only.)
- Respect for the teachers in their professional capacity is essential.
- Discipline/behaviour remains the responsibility of the teacher.
- All work will be supervised by the teacher.
- Parents who participate should be conscious of and sensitive to the needs of the entire class, not just the needs of their own child.
- Parents coming into the classroom must consult with the teacher before inviting other parents/individuals to participate.
- In the interests of safety, toddlers and younger children cannot be accommodated during a classroom activity.



- The highest standard of adult behaviour and language is expected.
- Punctuality and consistency are crucial.
- No fees are payable. Any expenses that you wish to reclaim must be sanctioned in advance by the Board of Management, and must be accompanied by receipts.
- In the case of an ongoing project that takes place over a number of weeks, parents will meet with the teacher to discuss the activity. It remains the responsibility of the teacher to determine its appropriateness (e.g. is it suitable for the age group; has something similar already been done, etc.)
- The teacher has the final say in the event that he/she feels an activity is falling short of its original aims and objectives.
- The school ethos must be upheld at all times and it is important to keep in mind that the school is equality based, co-educational, child centred and democratic. Consequently, respect for all the partners in education – children, teachers and parents – must be upheld at all times.



Appendix A – Parental Involvement Volunteer Form

I have read and Understood the school's Parental/Volunteer Involvement policy

**Confidentiality:** I will not discuss my thoughts on how a pupil might be doing (Academically / behaviourally / socially / emotionally) with any party.

(Uncertainties in this area should be discussed with the class teacher or Principal only).

I have completed the Garda vetting form.

Parent/Guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_