

Holy Trinity
Primary School



Parental Involvement
and Community
Partnership Policy

“Holy Trinity Primary School regards our parents as valued and respected educational partners who are made to feel welcome at the school.”

Holy Trinity Primary School Mission Statement

Every child has a right to an effective education which enables them, individually and collectively, to develop their personalities, talents and abilities and to live a full and satisfying life within society (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2001). As the KLT (Kids Life and Times Survey 2013) results demonstrate, children’s happiness and success at school is affected by their parent’s attitudes towards, and involvement in, their child’s educational experience. Parents must be encouraged and supported in order to engage in a meaningful way with their children’s experience of education.

*Source – ARK Northern Ireland (Action Research Knowledge)
Research Update Number 85 November 2013*

Rationale

Holy Trinity Primary School is committed to playing our part in the local community. We are determined to help our children fulfil their potential and understand that this can best be achieved by establishing and maintaining a quality partnership with our children’s parents and carers and their wider family. All parents and carers are equally valued as part of our school community.

Aims

- To encourage parents and carers to be involved in the life of the school and in their children's education.
- To establish and maintain a partnership between parents/carers and school staff, which is based on mutual respect and understanding.
- To enhance the learning experiences of our pupils.
- To provide opportunities to parents and carers to develop further their own learning.
- To encourage parents/carers to support their children's education through their involvement in educational initiatives.
- To encourage parents/carers to celebrate the talents and achievements of their children through their education, involvement and success in sports, music, drama etc
- To ensure that parents/carers are encouraged to use their skills and knowledge to enrich our children's learning opportunities.
- To gain parents'/carers' assistance and co-operation in the implementation of our behaviour policy by promoting high standards of behaviour, tolerance and respect.
- To enlist parents'/carers' support to ensure homework is completed in line with school policy.

Welcoming the Parents

At Holy Trinity Primary School we aim to make the school a welcoming place for all our parents/carers and visitors. We pride ourselves in operating an 'open door' policy, which we believe helps to create a relationship based on mutual respect and understanding. Parents and carers can talk with teachers before and after school on an informal basis on most days. This can be useful in passing on some important information or to express a concern. We encourage new parents/carers to visit the school with their children to talk to the Principal and prospective new teacher/s and to take a tour of the school.

Communication

- **Newsletter**

Holy Trinity PS produces a newsletter each month which is distributed to all families of pupils. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep parents/carers informed of school events and news. It also celebrates the activities and achievements of our pupils and notifies parents of upcoming school events.

- **Test Messaging Service**

Our text messaging service has been established so that we can send important information to parents. This is very useful in the event of adverse weather conditions or to remind parents/carers of an important upcoming event.

- **Website**

Our website can be found at 'www.holytrinitybelfast.co.uk'. It is regularly updated and contains reports and photographs which celebrate the life of the school. It also contains policy documents which parents may wish to view.

- **Prospectus**

Our school prospectus is updated each year. Each family receives a copy of the prospectus when their child starts at the school.

- **Open Day**

We run an Open Day for the parents/carers of prospective P1 parents in December each year. This is advertised through the local press and through an advertising brochure which is distributed through local shops and organisations as well as through local nursery schools. Parents can look at children's academic work and observe the vast range of activities which our children engage in during and after school hours. They are also invited to visit the P1 classes and see our children and teachers at work. Members of our School Leadership Team are on hand to answer any questions.

- **General Notes**

When pupils are involved in an event or going on a trip a note informing the parent/carer will be sent home with the pupils. If a permission slip is attached this must be completed in order for the pupil to be allowed to partake in the activity.

- **Annual Board of Governors Report**

The Annual Report of the Board of Governors is produced each year and is presented at the school's Prize-Giving ceremony in Term One. It is available to all parents of pupils in the school.

Curricular Involvement

- **Curriculum Meetings**

In September of each year parents are invited to the school for a 'Curriculum Meeting'. The Principal addresses each meeting. These are organised in year groups and gives parents an overview of teaching and learning programmes in that particular year group. It is a good opportunity to meet the pupil's teacher. At this meeting parents/carers will be given important information like the holiday list, a termly overview of the year group work programme, homework arrangements, the high expectations of the school etc.

- **Parent-Teacher Meeting**

Each year in December a formal meeting is organised between the teacher and the parent/carer. Teachers value this opportunity to inform parents/carers of their child's educational progress, celebrate successes, review learning targets and listen to parental views.

- **Annual Reviews**

Pupils who have a 'statement' of Special Education Needs have an 'annual review' meeting to assess improvements and establish plans for the future.

- **P1 Induction Meeting**

In June each year parents/carers of our new Primary 1 intake are invited to visit the school where they will meet their child's P1 teacher and have the opportunity to complete any necessary paperwork. This meeting will also be addressed by the Principal who will outline the high expectations and standards of Holy Trinity Primary School.

- **P7 Transfer Meeting**

In January/February parents/carers of our Primary 7 pupils are invited to meet the Principal to complete the necessary forms for their child to transfer from Primary to Post-Primary education. The Principal will provide any advice needed so that this transition will be as smooth as possible.

- **Annual Pupil Report**

An annual report on each child's academic and personal development is provided to parents/carers in June.

- **End of Term Attendance Report**

At the end of each term parents will be informed of their child's current attendance rate. This will also be accompanied by an explanation of what this means which is taken from the Department of Education's publication for parents 'School Attendance Matters – A Parent's Guide'.

- **Policy Documents**

Policy documents are available on request for parents/carers to view.

Involving Parents in the School

- **Parents' Room**

We have a coffee morning each Friday for parents/carers. We run a series of activities (practical and curricular) to encourage our parents/carers to get involved with the life of the school.

- **Parental Workshops**

We organise a series of activities/events at the request of our parents/carers. Each year a letter is sent to parents/carers asking them for their suggestions for courses/activities they would like to see in the coming year. Examples of activities that we have previously organised include jewellery making, art and craft activities, flower arranging, an M.O.T Health Check Up, financial advice, exercise class etc.

Curriculum workshops are organised to assist parents/carers in supporting their children's learning. Examples of workshops we have previously organised include Linguistic Phonics, Internet Safety, Amazing Brains, Fractions, Percentages and Decimals, Subtraction, Developing Reading, Bug Club, TTRS etc.

Holy Trinity also facilitates parents/carers taking part in further education study. We work with 'Job Assist' to promote 'Essential Skills' qualifications in I.C.T., English and Maths.

- **Events/Activities**

Families of pupils at Holy Trinity are invited to attend regular events and celebrations that are organised by the school. These include Monthly Mass, School Concert, Carol Service, Assemblies, Star of the Month Presentations, Prize Giving, Sports Events, Sports Day, Sacramental Ceremonies etc.

- **Trips**

Parents/carers offer valued support when they respond to invitations to accompany school groups on educational visits. Parents/carers are only allowed to work with children in the accompaniment of the teacher.

- **Consultation**

Our 'Home-School Agreement' signed by parents/carers and the school details the responsibilities and expectations of both parties.

The school will seek parental views in a survey/questionnaire every three years in preparation for the writing of the new School Development Plan. Parents are invited to give their opinions about school life, children's learning, after school activities, discipline and behaviour, various initiatives etc. This information is collated and then analysed by the School Leadership Team of the school.

- **Governance**

The Board of Governors will seek a parent/carer who is willing to serve as a member of the school's 'Governing Body'. This person will be elected by other parents/carers and will represent the views of parents/carers on the Board of Governors. The Parent Governor is elected for a fixed term period of 4 years.

Parents'/Carers' Responsibilities

In order to have a successful partnership based on mutual respect and understanding parents/carers are asked to:

- Show respect towards all school staff and expect that all issues can be resolved in a courteous manner;
- Ensure that their child always attends school and arrives punctually with all the resources necessary to undertake the day's work;
- Notify the school on the first day of absence;
- Support the school's Behaviour Policy;
- Support the school's Uniform Policy;
- Ensure that children are collected on time at the end of the day;
- Support the school's Healthy Eating policies;
- Provide an environment at home conducive for homework to be completed;
- To encourage their child to complete homework to the best of their ability;
- Encourage their child to read independently at home;
- Attend parent meetings and any meetings arranged with the school;
- Inform the school of any medical conditions of your child;
- Inform the school of any concerns that might affect your child's work or behaviour;
- Keep the school up to date with any changes to address, phone numbers and other contact details.

School Responsibilities

In order to have a successful partnership based on mutual respect and understanding Holy Trinity Primary School will:

- Provide a safe, secure and welcoming environment;
- Provide a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum to meet the needs of all our pupils so that each child fulfils their potential;
- Show respect to all parent/carers and expect that all issues can be resolved in a courteous manner;
- Keep parents informed about events and activities taking place in the school;
- Inform parents/carers of any concerns or problems that may affect their children's work;
- Be available to parents/carers to discuss matters of concern, pupil progress or provide advice;
- Provide appropriate homework in line with school policy;
- Consult with parents/carers both formally and informally, about their views on school life, children's learning and new initiatives.

Community Involvement

Rationale

Holy Trinity Primary School recognises that we do not operate in isolation; we are part of a local, regional, national and international community. We wish our pupils and staff to contribute positively to our community and engage with the community to enhance learning opportunities and develop our children's sense of belonging.

Aims

- To develop close links with our school community.
- To maintain our strong links with Holy Trinity Parish Church.
- To harness the expertise of the community to provide enhanced learning opportunities for our pupils, staff and parents/carers.
- To encourage our pupils to see themselves as active citizens in their community and to care about their local environment.
- To encourage our pupils to take greater responsibility for the direction of their school and to be prepared to express their opinions.

Our Pupils

We wish our pupils to have pride in Holy Trinity Primary School and to be ambassadors for our school when they wear our school uniform and especially when they move on from our school. Therefore we want them to play a greater part in the life of the school and develop leadership qualities.

Pupil Council

- Our Pupil Council gives pupils from each class from P4-7 a voice that is heard by the management of the school. Their voice is respected and can effect change.

ECO Committee

- Our ECO Committee has promoted respect for our environment and this year their efforts were recognised with the award of the ECO-Schools Green flag Award.

After School Clubs

- Our staff provides a range of after school activities to develop our children's interests and talents. These clubs are provided free of charge. Many of the clubs (sports, language, drama, music etc) give our pupils opportunities to represent the school in the local community and wider afield.

UNICEF

Our aim is the creation of a happy and successful school where every aspect of our pupils' wellbeing is fostered and encouraged. Therefore we are working towards Level One 'Rights Respecting School Award'. The award is given to schools on behalf of UNICEF (The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund).

Our Neighbours

We thank the local residents for their help to monitor the security of the school building and grounds. We will continue to work with our local residents on issues regarding parking and ensuring our pupils leave the area in an orderly and mannerly way, in-keeping with the high expectations of Holy Trinity Primary School.

Educational Links

Holy Trinity Primary School maintains close links with educational services and agencies to strengthen and support the education we provide for all of our children. We have links with:

- Education Authority
- CCEA
- C2KNI
- Educational Psychologist
- Educational Welfare Officer
- Oakwood Services
- Harberton Outreach
- Harberton Behaviour
- Clarawood
- St Gerard's Outreach Service
- CIDS Team
- Peripatetic Service
- Mitchell House
- School Nurse
- Child Welfare Services
- Whiterock Children's Centre
- Speech Therapists

Holy Trinity Parish Church

Holy Trinity Primary School maintains strong links with our parish priest We have:

- School mass each month
- Visits from the parish priest
- First Penance
- First Communion
- Confirmation
- Christmas Carol Service
- P7 Leavers' Mass

Holy Trinity Youth Club

Holy Trinity Primary School maintains a close link with Holy Trinity Youth Club. Pupils and staff use youth club facilities for sport. The youth leader runs a P7 Leavers Disco in our assembly hall in June. Our teacher, Mr Armstrong, sits on the Board of Trustees.

St Vincent De Paul

Holy Trinity PS advertises the services of St Vincent De Paul (child care, homework club, breakfast club) in our newsletter and our VP sits on the Board of Management.

Global Community

We wish our pupils to help build a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds is appreciated and valued. We wish to equip our children to live and thrive alongside people from many different backgrounds.

St Andrew's Kampala, Uganda

We wish our staff, children and parents/carers to see the role we can all play in the international community. We have developed strong links with our 'partner' school, St

Andrew's, Kampala in Uganda and we play an active role as a member of TUNISP (The Uganda and North of Ireland Schools Partnership).

Every year, through funding from the British Council, two Holy Trinity teachers visit St. Andrew's and two Ugandan teachers spend a week in Holy Trinity, exchanging ideas and promoting co-operation. Over the years the schools have worked together on joint curriculum projects enabling them to learn together about the issues and themes that affect us all. Presentations by our staff and visiting teachers aim to show our pupils how we can play a part in helping others and make a difference to other children's life opportunities. Through pen pal letters friendships have been established and are continually developing.

Our school community also supports the pupils of St. Andrew's by raising money for them to harvest and grow maize. 'The Maize Project' means that every pupil in St. Andrew's is provided with a daily meal.

Charitable Work/Trócaire

As part of our charitable work each year our school community raises funds for Trócaire and some local charities. Our aim is to encourage our pupils to see the difference our local community can make to help the lives of others.

Friendship for Integrated Development Association

Holy Trinity pupils take part in the FIDA soccer tournament. FIDA helps children attend school in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and provides them with a meal during the school day

International School Award

In June 2015 Holy Trinity Primary was awarded the 'International School Award' by the British Council in recognition of our work to bring the world into the classroom. This award is made to schools which demonstrate a commitment to providing our children and community with an international dimension to their education through introducing global themes into the school curriculum so that young people gain the cultural understanding and skills they need to live and work as global citizens. The assessor commented:

'This is an outstanding Impact Evaluation and confirms your commitment to international education as reflected in the high quality of the work you describe. You have met the success criteria for the ISA and it is our pleasure, therefore, to recommend Holy Trinity Primary School for the Accreditation level of the International School Award.'

Environment

In 2015 Holy Trinity was awarded the **ECO-Schools** Green Flag because of our efforts to promote sustainable living and cutting down on waste. We have developed our Sensory Garden, grow plants, fruits, vegetables and flowers for use within our school; we have introduced a number of initiatives to cut down on paper waste and promoted recycling of paper products; we have litter picking in the school grounds; we have encouraged healthy living and also promoted energy conservation at school and at home. Many of the activities around our schools were completed in partnership with **Conservation Volunteers**.

Links with Third Level Education

Holy Trinity Primary School feels it is very important to harness the expertise that is available in our third level institutions to enhance our children's learning. We also want our pupils to be aware of the great opportunities that are available for our pupils through education.

Queen's University Belfast

- Medics in Primary Schools (medical students deliver Science lessons to P7 pupils on the theme of the body)
- Professor Fluffy (and outreach programme from Queen's to promote university study to our pupils. Pupils get the opportunity to visit Queen's and see around the buildings).

University of Ulster, Jordanstown/Coleraine

STEPS (Science and Technology Experts in Primary Schools) – STEM experts visit our school to help develop pupils' positive attitudes towards the STEM subjects and help them gain knowledge about careers that involve these subjects. STEM experts demonstrate how they apply science to their everyday work in industry or research. Pupils develop a related school project and the experts help them find the resources required, keeping in touch with them as their project develops.

STEP UP (Step-Up is an interventionist programme that provides new learning opportunities for young people who live in areas of social and economic disadvantage. The programme aims to raise pupil's aspirations, expectations and academic performance,

thereby enabling them to progress to Higher Education. Its main focus is on developing children's interests and curiosity in the world of Science.

Sportability (Raising awareness and respect for disability through the medium of sport)

Sport for Life (P5 classes are involved in an all island research study to determine the fitness levels of children and to help promote a healthy lifestyle through diet, exercise, sleep etc)

St Mary's University College

- Teaching Practice students
- Professional Development courses
- Gaelic games coaching
- Volunteer Reading Tutor Programme (with Primary 2)

Stranmillis University College

- Teaching Practice students
- Professional Development courses

Further Education

Each year students from local Further Education colleges complete their training in Holy Trinity PS.

Post-Primary Education

Holy Trinity Primary School will continue to develop fruitful links with our post primary schools.

- Work experience students
- Developing links with subject co-ordinators

- Accessing subject expertise and facilities to enhance our pupils' educational experiences and learning
- Corpus Christi College invite us to taster days on theme of Science and Healthy Eating
- St Rose's invite our pupils to take part in art activities
- CBS have produced and edited films and music with our pupils using the iPad.
- St Mary's CBGS have brought our pupils up to experience Science related projects
- St Louise's organise a 'STEM Day' in Holy Trinity.

Transition

- In Primary 6 our pupils get opportunities to visit schools to partake in 'Taster Days'.
- Post Primary schools are invited to Holy Trinity to talk to Primary 7 pupils who will have the opportunity to ask questions and find out about the subjects and facilities which the schools have to offer.
- Encourage parents/carers and children to go to Post Primary Open Days. We will distribute dates and times of these events.
- P7 teachers play a major role in transition arrangements. We invite the Year 8 Co-ordinators to visit Holy Trinity to talk to the P7 teachers to share information/data about the pupils they will be receiving to ease the pupils' transition from Primary 7 to Year 8.

Primary Schools

Holy Trinity Primary School recognises that there is a lot to be gained by meeting with other local primary schools to share information and experiences. Therefore Holy Trinity is committed to playing an active part in:

- Cluster meetings
- Extended schools cluster meetings
- West Belfast Area Learning Community
- Nurture Group Schools in Belfast (FAROUK meetings)
- E Learning Partnership (via C2K) with Cumran PS, Killough Co. Down.

Nursery Schools

Our Primary One Year Leader and Head of Key Stage One visit the local Nursery schools (Matt Talbot and St Martin's) to meet the teachers and engage with the pupils through learning activities. We will also visit to watch special events eg: Christmas plays, graduation ceremonies etc.

Holy Trinity teachers will meet with staff from feeder Nursery schools to gain information which will smooth transition arrangements for our new intake of Primary One pupils.

ICT

- iTeach- Teacher Training Program
- iLearn- yearly conference for teachers in the use of iPads
- BELB iPad Pilot- link to Stranmillis and 5 Belfast Primary Schools
- ‘Nerve Belfast, Creative Learning Centre’ for ICT Training
- e-learning partnerships via C2k
- Involvement with CCEA UICT Moderation Team
- Involvement with the C2k Video Conference Steering Group
- Fronter links- the Northern Ireland Schools Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)
- School Podcasting.org- to create and share podcasts
- Links with NAACE- ICT Mark and 3rd Millennium Learning Award

Local Press

Our PRO notifies the local press (written and television) of special events and activities taking place in Holy Trinity, preparing a press release and facilitating photography. Events include:

- Prize Giving
- P1 and P7 class photographs
- Visits from Government ministers
- Fund raising presentations
- Sporting achievement
- Success in ‘The Arts’

Industry/Business

Holy Trinity Primary School seeks to strengthen our relationship with local industries and businesses. These are linked wherever possible, to curriculum topics. Examples include:

- Bombardier (theme of Flight)
- Park Centre (Prize Giving, Carol singing)
- Sainsbury’s (PE equipment, Healthy Eating initiatives, establishing a business venture)

Through the development of business links and developing our own business initiatives Holy Trinity Primary School will strive to help our pupils understand the way the world of work functions:

- Selling bouquets of flowers (buying bulbs, planting, growing, picking the flowers and arranging them for sale)
- Virgin Money Project – ‘Make £5 Grow’ (Establishing business ideas and encouraging entrepreneurship)

Belfast City Council

- Park Life Education Project in association with Ulster Wildlife;
- The Recycling Bus
- Anti-Litter campaign

Majorie Boxall Quality Mark Award

A nurture room was set up in the school in November 2013 to provide full time support, four days a week to P1 and P2 pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school was awarded The Majorie Boxall Quality Mark Award in June 2015. Wendy Roden, the chief assessor, was very impressed with the commitment from staff and support from parents. In her written report she said,

“The adult support for the children’s emotional, social and cognitive development was clear during the visit and through the evidence provided. The overwhelming feeling was of warmth and sensitivity, not only for the children, but the school community including parents, carers and all staff.”

Sporting

As part of our Healthy Living initiatives Holy Trinity Primary School is committed to working with community coaching initiatives to encourage our pupils and parents/carers to pursue a healthy and active lifestyle.

- Gort na Mona (provision of coaches for hurling/camogie and football in after school activities; use of grass pitch and other facilities; development of 3G pitch; visits to our assemblies)
- Active Community Coaches (parents/carers exercise programme; Gaelic Games coaching; P1/2 Fundamental Movement Skills)
- Ulster GAA (Gaelic Games coaching)
- Antrim GAA (Gaelic Games coaching)
- Ulster Rugby (Tag Rugby)
- St Mary's U.C. (Gaelic Games coaching)
- UUJ (Sportability)
- Swimming for P5, 7 and LSC classes with coaches at Andersontown Leisure Centre.
- Energy Fitness (Fitness Freddy)
- Whiterock Leisure Centre (use of 3G pitch)
- FIDA soccer tournament – The Patsy Owens Cup (Friendship for Integrated Development Association)

Holy Trinity Primary School participate in Cumann na mBunscol competitions (Boys Football, Girls Football, Hurling and Camogie - 11-a-side League and Championship; indoor 5-a-side). We also take part in Belfast Representative Teams (to play Dublin; half-time games in the Ulster Senior Football and Hurling Championships).

Irish Language

Glor na Mona

- Workshops promoting the use of the Irish language
- Cúpla Focal (P5 classes gaining basic knowledge in the Irish Language)

Feis Bhéal Féirste

- P4 pupils (conversational Irish)
- P5 pupils (Poetry recital)

New Era Academy

Pupils who participate in our after school Drama Group have the opportunity to enter for a graded exam in Speech and Drama with the New Era Academy.

Music

City of Belfast School of Music

- Brass tuition
- Entrance for grades exams
- Sing Out programme

Barnardo's

Barnardo's staff provide Holy Trinity Primary School with a range of activities and services to enhance the learning opportunities of our pupils:

- 'Time 4 Me' counselling service which is available for pupils (their parents/carers) and Holy Trinity PS staff.
- Parenting Programme (Incredible Years)
- Extended Schools Support
- Literacy and Numeracy support
- All Stars (P6 Character Education; P7 Challenge Programme)
- Transition programme for our Primary 7 pupils.

Other Organisations

- Dairy Farm
- Job Assist (Upper Springfield)
- Upper Springfield Development Trust
- Healthy Living Centre
- Mencap (Primary 5 'Super Me' programme aimed at raising personal self-esteem)
- Amazing Brains
- NSPCC (Child Protection)
- De La Salle Pastoral Centre (Transition)
- Full School Community Network

Monitoring of the Policy

The Co-ordinator will review the policy every two years and present any changes to the Principal, Governors and staff. The policy will be available for parents to view.