

Policy on Staff Meetings

Introductory Statement

The following policy was devised by the school in April 2020 and will be presented to the BOM for ratification in May.

Rationale

The necessity for a comprehensive policy relating to staff meetings arose due to the need for

- a) Clearly defined procedures for such events
- b) Accommodating and giving a voice to all staff members including SNAs
- c) Adjusting to the requirements of Social Partnership Agreements (Circulars 25/03 and 14/04)
- d) Fostering collaborative decision-making.

Relationships to School Ethos

St.Paul's N.S. strives to provide a well ordered, caring, secure atmosphere. This is achieved through promoting the individual and collective personal and professional development of staff through regular structured staff meetings and staff development programmes.

Aims and Objectives

- To address collaboratively, school issues/problems as they arise
- To plan, effectively for school routines/policies both curricular and organisational
- To allow for a sense of ownership through appropriate delegation
- To involve all staff in the decision-making process.

Procedures

A staff meeting is held termly. It is the policy of the school that the principal is the chairperson. A secretary is appointed at the commencement of each meeting and decisions only are recorded. An agenda is drawn up beforehand. This is a collaborative exercise with each teacher having the opportunity to nominate items/issues for inclusion on the agenda. In addition 36 Croke Park Hours are completed by staff outside of school hours and many of these take a format similar staff meetings.

Special Needs Assistants may be required to attend staff meetings if issues relating to their work/responsibilities are included on the agenda. These issues are listed early on the agenda so that when they have been discussed and decisions taken, SNAs can leave and be assigned to other pre-ordained duties.

Guidelines for Chairing Staff Meetings

The Principal should

- Set the dates of the staff meetings at the start of each term. As the meetings are outside of school hours, it is essential that the entire staff have a say on which day suits
- In addition if it is possible, hold a staff meeting prior to the commencement of the school year and use 6 of the Croke Park hours for the next school year to facilitate this
- Make arrangements to ensure the safety of all the pupils as they leave the school premises and that safety measures already in place are also followed properly on staff meeting days
- Make a decision about the attendance of substitute teachers at the meeting
- Explain the format of the staff meetings to everyone at his/her first staff meeting each year. Tell them that the principal is the chair and the secretary is rotated amongst those who are willing and able to do it. This can be for just one meeting or a series of meetings. Explain that nobody will be put under pressure to take on the role but that the Principal would be very grateful if they did. It is also good practice to explain that some of the meeting time will be used for group work and that these discussions and/or decisions will be recorded and fed back to the meeting. A discussion on democracy and the importance of everyone having their say and being listened to respectfully may seem unnecessary but is often essential. A short discussion on decision making and how decisions will be arrived at can also be beneficial
- Inform your Board of Management of all the decisions made in relation to staff meetings
- Begin the agenda for the staff meeting at the In-School Management meeting to develop and broaden discussions that come up at the latter
- Keep a "next staff meeting" notebook or file
- From this process, develop a basic agenda for staff meetings at particular times of the year that can be modified as the need arises
- Divide the agenda into sections using the following as a guide:
 - Teaching and Learning (This section will usually have the longest time allocated to it)
 - Administration
 - Pastoral
 - House Keeping
 - Post Holders' Reports
 - INTO Rep's Report
- Take the time to examine the minutes of the last meeting and to determine what follow up actions were taken and how they are progressing. List these in his/her notes with

any other matters arising as they may have a bearing on the new agenda. This is particularly important in areas of teaching and learning as it may be connected to a continuum of school planning and the development section of your Plan Scoile

- Look over the minutes of the last BOM meeting and include the agreed report on the agenda of the next staff meeting
- Ensure that the agenda is not over-loaded. If too many items are submitted for consideration, prioritise the items with the In-School Management team and let everyone know why particular items were omitted. Ensure that these items are dealt with at the next In-School Management meeting or separately with the individual(s) who brought them to his/her attention. Include them in the agenda of the next staff meeting, even if they have been dealt with successfully so that everyone is aware of them and properly informed
- Designate an amount of time to each area on the final agenda so that the entire agenda is completed punctually
- If there are policies and documents or current practices to be reviewed at the meeting, ensure that each member of staff has a copy of them and a working knowledge of what current practice is
- Send out the Proposed Staff Meeting Agenda one week before the meeting is due to take place
- Give all members of staff a sufficient period of time to add to the agenda
- Remind everyone about the deadline of 3 days after receiving proposed agenda for adding to the proposed agenda
- Be sure to take the time to discuss contributions made to the agenda to ensure correct interpretation of the contributor's point
- Ask the person contributing the item if they would like the opportunity to explain or put forward their point at the meeting if appropriate.

The principal should

- Ensure that the venue and furniture arrangements are comfortable and appropriate
- Ensure the security of the rest of the building while the meeting is taking place.

At the meeting, the chairperson should

- Provide each person attending the meeting with a copy of the Final Agenda
- Have all documentation for the meeting in the correct order to match the agenda
- Be responsible for beginning the meeting promptly, sticking to the agenda and ending the meeting on time
- Be aware of the importance of fairness and sufficient formality
- Encourage discussion and participation
- Facilitate the discussion in a manner which allows everyone to contribute and to be listened to

- Decide what needs to be recorded, addressed, reported and what needs further work and discussion
- Remain in charge of the meeting
- Control the speed of the proceedings
- Clarify for the recording secretary if necessary
- Enable decision making by using agreed strategies e.g. consensus, majority wins, votes etc. If decisions are not reached, plan further discussions, be open to further information and clarity and outside/expert help and advice

The secretary should

- Record minutes of decisions take at the meeting
- Oversee the typing of the minutes
- Distribute the minutes to the entire staff within a week of the meeting

After the meeting the Principal should

- Inform others of the decisions taken when necessary e.g. the BOM, the parents, Parents' Association etc.
- Monitor the follow up actions on targets set and decisions taken
- Modify the Plean Scoile to reflect the decisions taken in consultation with the BOM and the Parents' Association
- Get agreed policy changes re-ratified at the next BOM meeting
- Facilitate further work on areas where decisions were not arrived at
- Safely file a copy of the minutes in a secure place
- Ensure the minutes, matters arising, targets, decisions and actions are followed up at the next In-School Management and Staff meetings.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have a role in the implementation of this policy which was ratified on 18th May 2020.

Success Criteria

- Participation and delivery by all staff
- Co-operation and consensus
- Monitoring and assessment of procedures
- Staff 'feel good' factor
- School 'feel good' factor.

Communication

Parents have been notified of the fact that such a policy exists and can access it through the school secretary.

Resources

"Positive Staff Working Relations" P117

Ratification

The Board of Management of St. Paul's N.S. ratified this plan on 18th May 2020.

Signed. Canon Andrew Ison

Date. 18th May 2020

Sample Staff Meeting Agenda

1. Prayer/Reflection
2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising
3. Agreed report from last BOM meeting (if timely) and issues arising
4. Teaching and Learning
 - Priority Issue 1
 - Priority Issue 2
4. Administration
 - Issue 1
 - Issue 2
 - Issue 3
5. Pastoral
 - Issue 1
 - Issue 2
6. Posts of Responsibility - short report from individuals. (It is unnecessary to get a report from every post holder at every meeting)
7. INTO Representative's Report
8. House Keeping Issues
9. Summary of decisions taken and targets to be met before the next meeting
10. Reminder of the date of the next meeting and any proposed change in format and Chairperson/Recording Secretary.

Staff Meeting Minutes Template	
Date of Meeting:	
Venue:	
Meeting Chaired by:	
Minutes taken by:	
Present (initials):	
Apologies (initials):	
Meeting Start & End times:	

Issue / Topic	Decision / Action	By Name / Date:
Teaching/Learning-Issue 1 Introducing shared reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to begin with R1 and R2 • Research best practice from local schools • Budget for SR from BoM 	
Teaching/Learning-Issue 2 Inconsistency in the teaching of subtraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish which methods are taught by each teacher and rationale for same • Consult with cuiditheoir for advice • Sub-committee to recommend a whole-school approach 	
Administrative-Issue 1 Review of the Child Protection Policy and Adoption of the new guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of reporting procedures with the entire staff at the next staff meeting • Review of policy at each September staff and BOM meeting followed by a report to parents and the Parents' Assoc. 	
Pastoral Issue 1 Bullying prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anonymous questionnaire to children from R3 to R6 • Teachers to conduct 'circle time' with all classes to revisit school anti-bullying code • Letter to parents to inform re. actions being taken in the school 	
Pastoral Issue 2 Staff Christmas outing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-committee to research and recommend options, including date, venue etc. 	
Date and time of next meeting (and change in officers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	