

School Policies in Shellybanks ETNS

School planning in all schools is a continuous process. The BOM has the overall responsibility for school policies. School authorities, in developing their own policies, take account of the specific circumstances and the environment in which each school operates. All school policies form part of the Whole-School plan.

The School Plan is made up of:

1. Mandatory policies such as Child Safeguarding, Enrolment, Health and Safety and Anti-bullying.
2. Curricular plans for each subject that form part of the school plan.
3. Procedural and organisational policies that form part of the school plan- such as Garda Vetting, Mobile phone policy, Communication policy, Staff absence procedure etc.
4. Areas for development
5. Timetables etc

The majority of school policies are reviewed on a four-year basis. Some policies need to be reviewed annually. This is dictated by the Dept of Education.

The BOM and staff are responsible for preparing a plan for policy writing and reviews each year. This is based on the most pressing needs of the school, Dept of Education changes/updates, and the stage of development of which the school is at. Developing schools have a huge amount of policy work to complete in their initial years. Other factors include staff turnover, new school projects, building works etc. All policy work is completed as an

additional task, after school hours. This is planned for, taking into consideration the circumstances of the school in a given year.

There is a clear process in place for policy development:

1. Each year the BOM agree of the Policy Plan for that school year.
2. Policy work in school begins with the In-school Management team.
3. Teams of staff are assembled to form a working group. Where relevant, committees may be formed which include parents, staff, children etc. For example, in the past Shellybanks formed a committee to work on Commercialism policy. This could include staff members, parents and BOM members. The IT plan which is being worked on this year will have input from parents, children and staff.
4. If new policies are being formed, all of the relevant legislative, curricular and Departmental guidelines are used.
5. The working group may review policies from other schools.
6. An initial draft is prepared and shared with the rest of the staff
7. Staff review the policy at staff meetings.
8. Changes are made and an agreed draft is formed
9. Where relevant, consultation takes place with other stakeholders such as the children, PTA or through the weekly bulletin. These policies may include Anti-Bullying, Homework, Child Safeguarding, Communication.
10. This policy is sent to the BOM for review and approval
11. Policies are ratified at BOM Meetings.

Policy Reviews:

1. If a policy is being reviewed, staff members will investigate which elements of the plan are working well and which need improvement.

2. Staff feedback, assessments, pupil work and observations are some tools staff use to review the effectiveness of the plan.
3. The working group may review policies from other schools.
4. All of the relevant legislative, curricular and Departmental guidelines are reviewed.
5. Changes are made to a draft format.
6. Staff review the policy at staff meetings.
7. Where relevant, consultation takes place with other stakeholders such as the children, PTA or through the weekly bulletin (same as above).
8. Changes are made and an agreed draft is formed
9. This policy is sent to the BOM for review and approval

Parents and staff make a big contribution to the education of the children in school. The school can work in partnership with the parents, through the PTA, in the development and review of some school policies such as the Homework, Code of Behaviour, Child safeguarding etc. Any suggestions made by parents, students, staff etc are brought back to the working group and discussed further. Any changes that need to be made at this stage are discussed at BOM level and decisions are made at this point.

There are also a number of school procedures in place for various aspects of school life. These are reviewed very regularly as the needs of the school change. Parents can make suggestions about issues that may require a review of current school practice eg. issues with the yard before school, safety on the road near the school, safety at the school gate etc.

Schools, where possible, address as many policy and procedural issues that arise. In order for a policy or procedure changes to be embedded in

school culture, enough time needs to be given in order for all stakeholders to become familiar before it is reviewed. It should be noted, that for developing schools, the list of policies and procedures that need to be implemented is huge! Therefore, not all issues that are brought to the school's attention can be dealt with at that time. However, any ongoing issues are always noted. Issues of major significance that have an impact on the children's learning or the health and safety of the children are always prioritised.

The majority of the school policies which directly impact parents are posted to the school website once they have been ratified by the BOM. All school policies are available from the school if requested.

If a parent requires additional information about school policies or wishes to make a suggestion or bring something to the attention of the school, this should be done through the PTA or discussed directly with the principal.