Home-School Communication Policy

Next review due by: September 2027

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1. **Introduction and aims**

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Reviewing this policy

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during school hours or their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are not expected to do so.

2.3 Parents

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- **Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times.**
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance.
- Responding to communications from the school in a timely manner.
- Reading and checking communications sent by the school.
- Following the school's communication, complaints and visitor behaviour procedures.
- **Treating all members of staff with courtesy, dignity and respect.**
- The school recognises that effective partnerships between home and school are built upon mutual trust and respectful communication. The school has a duty of care to provide a safe, professional and supportive working environment for all employees and to safeguard staff wellbeing, including emotional wellbeing.
- Staff will always strive to communicate with parents and carers in a professional, respectful and courteous manner. Parents and carers are expected to demonstrate the same standards when communicating with school staff.

- Communication that is considered disrespectful, aggressive, confrontational, abusive, intimidating or threatening will not be tolerated and will be managed in accordance with this policy, the school' Acceptable Visitors Policy.
- Parents should not expect staff to respond outside of school hours, during weekends or throughout school holidays. Staff are entitled to a healthy work-life balance and are not expected to engage with communications outside their contracted working hours.

School email address is office@holycrossallsaints.salford.sch.uk- please mark who your email is for the attention of and it will be directed to this staff member.

Staff responding to a parent via email should be sent via the school email system 'Teachers to Parents' The office staff or Mrs Bell may reply via the office email address.

3.2 Text messages
We will text parents about:
- Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day or after school activities
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Reminders from class teachers for their class
- Additional information

3.3 School calendar
Our school website includes the most recent newsletter for parents/carers with key dates.
Holy Cross and All Saints RC Primary School - Home

3.4 Phone calls
We will communicate with parents via phone calls to inform them if their child is unwell, to arrange meeting appointments or to provide answers to low-level questions raised by parents via the school office. On certain occasions a class teacher may phone a parent/carer at the request of their child, to inform them of an incident in school or have a conversation regarding an incident or the child's progress.

3.5 Letters
We send the following letters home regularly (usually by email):
- Letters about trips and visits
- Letters about events in school
- Consent forms
- Head teacher's newsletter or letters
- Class teachers may also put copies of the letters on Google Classroom so children and parents may access the information online.

3. Reading Record books & Homework
Children have their own Reading Record book so parents and school staff can communicate about the child's progress in reading. Staff communicate with the children and their parents on Google Classroom about homework and upcoming class events.

3.7 Reports
Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:
- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- Information on KS2 SATs tests results

We also arrange meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

3.8 Meetings

We hold two parents' evenings per year – the first in the Autumn Term and the second in the Spring Term. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

3.9 School website

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

3.10 Home-school communications

Our school office will send out text messages on our system when there is information to be given to any/all parents.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents should use the list in appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and email address.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need an immediate response, they should call the school office.

If a query or concern involves a confidential matter or a safeguarding concern, parents should always contact the school office by telephone and ask to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Mrs Bell/ Ms Richardson or Mrs Randle)

If a parent has an immediate safeguarding concern outside of school hours, they must contact The Bridge (Salford Children's Services) on 0161 603 4500

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should call the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact them as soon as possible. This will either be via a telephone call, or preferably a meeting before/after school.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a meeting or phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents have spoken to the appropriate member of staff at the earliest opportunity.

The school office will determine which member of staff is best placed to deal with the query, concern or question. There are times when other staff members are available or best suited to deal with any query, concern or question.

If the issue is urgent, parents should call the school office.
Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues
- Changes/delays in collecting children
- Reporting a child absent.

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should telephone the school office.
While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if parents need to speak to them urgently, teachers will decide if it is appropriate for a separate meeting to be arranged to discuss:

- Any concerns they have about their child's learning
- Updates related to pastoral support, their child's home environment, or their wellbeing

(Teachers are unavailable to attend any morning meetings as this is protected learning time)

4.4 RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION AND STAFF WELLBEING

Holy Cross and All Saints RC Primary School is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful and professional environment for pupils, families, visitors and staff.
The governing body and leadership team recognise that inappropriate behaviour towards staff can have a significant impact upon staff wellbeing and the school's ability to effectively carry out its educational responsibilities. All staff members have the right to work in an environment free from intimidation, aggression, abuse and harassment.

Expected Standards of Communication

- Parents and carers are expected to:
- Communicate in a respectful and courteous manner.
- Listen to explanations provided by staff.
- Raise concerns calmly and appropriately.
- Allow time for staff to investigate concerns before responding.
- Follow the school's complaints procedure where appropriate.
- Respect professional decisions made by school staff, even where they may disagree with the outcome.

Unacceptable Conduct

The following behaviours are unacceptable and will not be tolerated:

- Raised voices or shouting.
- Aggressive or confrontational behaviour.
- Repeated interruptions during discussions.
- Verbal abuse or offensive language.
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour.
- Personal insults directed at staff.
- Discriminatory or harassing comments.
- Hostile, excessive or demanding emails.
- Recording staff members without permission.
- Publishing derogatory comments about staff on social media.
- Persistent or repeated contact after a matter has been fully addressed.
- Any behaviour which causes a member of staff to feel threatened, distressed or unsafe.
- **The school operates a zero-tolerance approach towards abusive, intimidating or threatening behaviour directed towards any member of staff.**

Managing Unacceptable Behaviour

Where communication becomes aggressive, disrespectful or confrontational:

1. The member of staff may remind the parent of the expectations outlined within this policy.
2. The conversation, telephone call or meeting may be ended immediately.
3. The parent may be asked to leave the school premises.
4. A member of the Senior Leadership Team may take over future communications.
5. Future communication may be restricted to written correspondence.
6. Meetings may only take place by appointment and with a senior leader present.
7. The incident will be recorded and monitored.

Restriction of Communication

- Where a pattern of unacceptable behaviour is identified, the Headteacher reserves the right to:
- Require all communication to be directed through the school office.
- Require communication to be made in writing.
- Restrict communication to a nominated member of staff.
- Refuse unscheduled meetings with staff.
- Arrange meetings only in the presence of a senior leader.
- Implement measures outlined within the school's Visitor Behaviour Policy.
- In serious cases, where staff wellbeing or safety is compromised, restrictions may be placed upon a parent's access to the school site. The withdrawal of permission to enter school premises may be considered in accordance with the school's Acceptable Visitor behaviour Policy

Staff Rights

No member of staff should be expected to:

- Tolerate verbal abuse.
- Remain in a conversation that is aggressive or intimidating.
- Respond to excessive or unreasonable communication.
- Meet with a parent where they feel unsafe.
- Accept behaviour that would be considered unacceptable in any professional workplace.
- Staff are entitled to end any communication that they reasonably believe is becoming abusive, threatening or inappropriate and seek support from senior leaders.

5. Inclusion

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school. Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

6. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every two years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Acceptable adult visitor behavior policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Policy for managing serial and unreasonable complaints

- Home-school agreement
  - Staff wellbeing
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - Violence and Aggression at Work Procedures

Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

As a school, we believe that any issues and concerns are best addressed via face-to-face discussions with the relevant member of staff. If this cannot be facilitated, staff can call you to have a discussion on the phone. In the first instance this is usually with your child's class teacher.

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

- Call the school office on 0161 789 4386

Remember: check our website first, much of the information you need is posted there.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT…	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher. Most questions can be answered at the end of the school day, but you may have to arrange a face-to-face meeting to discuss issues in more detail, this can be done by contacting the school office or emailing the school email address office@holycrossallsaints.salford.sch.uk
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Contact the school office and they will direct your concerns to the relevant member of staff.
Payments	School office
School trips	School office
Uniform/lost and found	School office
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 0161 789 4386 – School office. If the phone is not answered please leave a message. If you want to request approval for term-time absence, the relevant form (available from the school office) will need to be completed at least 2 weeks before any planned absence.
Bullying and behaviour, incidents during the school day.	Request an appointment with the class teacher, or member of the Senior leadership team, via the school office/ school email.
School events/the school calendar	Check website/Newsletter/Emails before ringing the school office.
Special educational needs (SEN)	Please speak with your child's teacher in the first instance. If you need further support, contact the school office and they will ask Ms Richardson the school SEND Leader to contact you. Communication will be via phone call or email through the school email system.
Before and after-school clubs	Treehouse After School Club Manager- Louise Irvine Treehousestmarys@outlook.com
Governing board	Chair of Governors: Mr Eugene Connolly who can be contacted via the school office
Catering/meals	Citywide Catering www.citywideservices.co.uk

Escalating Concerns
If you need to have a further discussion or wish to escalate an issue, please ask to speak your child's class teacher, our Assistant Headteachers Ms Richardson or Mrs Randle. You can request a meeting with Mrs Bell the Headteacher by contacting the school office.

Complaints
If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy which is available on the school website or from the school office.