

# Home-School Communication Policy

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy,  
Derby



Approved by:	The Local Governing Body	Date: 08.03.22
Last reviewed on:	18.02.22	
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## Mission Statement

*Our Mission Statement says: By working together at St Mary's School, we aim, through Jesus Christ, to share God's love, helping our community to learn, to grow and make a difference.*

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

## 1. Roles and responsibilities

### 1.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

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

### 1.2 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 core school hours (7.30am – 5.00pm), or their working hours (if they work part-time). Staff will not be expected to reply to messages during teaching time (8.45am – 3.10pm). 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. Any communication received through ClassDojo, staff will aim to respond/comment between 7.30am – 8.45am and 3.10pm – 5.00pm.

### 1.3 Parents

Parents 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
- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our parent code of conduct.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours (7.30am – 5.00pm), over the weekend or during school holidays.

## **2. How we communicate with parents and carers**

The sections below explain how we keep parents up-to-date with their child's education and what is happening in school. All communications take into account separated parents as a result of the systems in place in school (ClassDojo / text messaging service). Both parents have access to information at the same time. Parents should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

### **2.1 ClassDojo**

We use ClassDojo to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Newsletters
- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests

However, whilst using ClassDojo, there is an expectation that parents and carers will use this platform in a respectful manner. St. Mary's remains the right to remove individuals if the Code of Conduct is not upheld.

### **2.2 Text messages**

We will text parents about:

- Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- When important messages have been uploaded onto ClassDojo

### **2.3 School calendar**

A school calendar can be found on our website and is updated throughout the year as events are planned. Term dates for the academic year can also be found on our website as well as in our weekly communications to parents through ClassDojo. At the end of each newsletter, parents will have access to a list of upcoming events.

Where possible, we try to give parents at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials); at least 6 weeks' notice for confirmation of INSET days.

### **2.4 Phone calls**

We will make phone calls to parents for the following reasons:

- Attendance
- Medical reasons
- To arrange meetings
- To report behaviour incidents if staff unable to speak to parents face to face at the end of the school day

### **2.5 Letters**

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms

Letters will be uploaded and sent through ClassDojo.

## 2.6 Reports

Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An annual mid-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- Parent Evening Forms covering their current academic status, strengths and next steps
- A report on Key Stage (KS) 1 and KS2 SATs tests
- A report on the results of public examinations

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

## 2.7 Meetings

We hold 2 parents' evening(s) over the academic year: one in the Advent term and another in the Pentecost term. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum, 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 who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs (SEND), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

All meetings take into account separated parents. Both parents have the same opportunity to meet with staff in order to ascertain information about their child's learning, attendance and well-being.

## 2.8 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

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

# 3. 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.

## 3.1 Email

Parents should always email the school via the school office using the following email address – [admin@stmarys.derby.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stmarys.derby.sch.uk) about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 2 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 working (school) days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school.

## 3.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office ([admin@stmarys.derby.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stmarys.derby.sch.uk)) and the relevant member of staff will contact them when they are next in school.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 5 working (school) days of your request.

If the issue is urgent, parents should call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

### **3.3 Meetings**

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff (see appendix 1), they should email the school office ([admin@stmarys.derby.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stmarys.derby.sch.uk)), or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within 5 working (school) days of the request.

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if parents need to speak to them urgently, we recommend they book appointments to discuss:

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

## **4. Inclusion**

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school.

We currently make whole-school announcements and communications through ClassDojo where announcements can be translated.

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

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

## **5. Monitoring and review**

The Headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 2 years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

## **6. Links with other policies**

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Home-school agreement
- Staff wellbeing
- Separated Parents Policy

## Appendix 1: school contact list

### Who should I contact?

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

- Email or call the school office on [admin@stmarys.derby.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stmarys.derby.sch.uk) / 01332 554831
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for emails)
- We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff

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

We try to respond to all emails within 2 working days.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher or Mrs Andrews (Family Liaison Officer)
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: 01332 554831  If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact the school office
Bullying and behaviour	Mrs Novak-Lemmings via the school office
School events/the school calendar	School office
Special educational needs (SEN)	Mrs McCready
PTFA	Mrs Chipu Mutokonyi - Secretary of the PTFA
Governing board	Chair of Governors - Mrs Emma Farmer via the school office
Catering/meals	School office

### Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy. This can be found on our website.