



External Communication Policy

2019-2022

1. Introduction

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, with other schools, with the community, with outside agencies, and within the school. Good communication between the school and the home is essential, and children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can naturally help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve.

In our school, we aim to have clear and effective communications with all parents and with the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values, through keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting the school.

We will try to make written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions to our society by all cultural groups represented in our school.

2. Aim

To ensure that St. Catherine's Catholic Primary School is a thriving and successful school, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents/guardians and with other members of the wider community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

3. Principles

All communications at St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents, Governors and other stakeholders well informed.
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all
- Be actioned within a reasonable time
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.
- Take account of relevant school policies.

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- *Be compatible with our core values as reflected in our Mission Statement and Strategic Development Plan.*

4. Responsibilities

This section details the responsibilities of the different groups within the school.

School

The school will try to ensure that:

- *Parents and children have clear lines of communications*
- *We respond to telephone communications within a reasonable period (usually 2 school days)*
- *We respond to written communications within a reasonable period (usually 10 school days)*
- *The curriculum is clearly communicated to parents*
- *Parents are informed of forthcoming events within appropriate timelines*
- *All communications will be treated as confidential within the school context*

Parent/Guardians/Carers

Parents will undertake to:

- *Read the key communications issued by the school*
- *Raise issues or concerns at the earliest opportunity with the school in the appropriate manner and with the appropriate member of staff*
- *Allow adequate time for any issue to be investigated and responded.*
- *Act on the communication (for example, attending special meetings)*
- *Ensure that any concerns are addressed directly with the school and not discussed via social media platforms or other public forums*

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5. Communications with Parents / Guardians

Open Door Policy

At St Catherine's, we operate an open door policy. This means that members of staff, where possible, will make themselves available at the end of the school day. However, please be aware that there will be instances in which it is not possible to meet with a staff member. Where this is the case, please refer to the 'Appointment' section of this policy.

Email

We ask parents to email admin@st-catherine.herts.sch.uk. For the purposes of administration, we require all emails to go to a central email address. However, all emails will be treated with full confidentiality and the responses will be made by the member of staff addressed. Please note all emails should specify the member of staff to whom the query is addressed.

Staff will not respond to direct emails to their personal accounts – all communication must be through the school office/ admin@ email.

Letters

Letters can be handed into, or posted to, the school office. As with emails, all letters will be treated with the appropriate degree of confidentiality and the responses will be made by the member of staff addressed or the SLT. Please note all letters should specify the member of staff or SLT to whom the query is addressed. Please let the office staff know if the letter contains information about your child which you would like the class teacher to receive urgently.

Telephone

This would be appropriate where enquiries are deemed more urgent by the parent, such as communicating particular information about the child to the school. We ask parents to phone the school on 01923 676022. If the call requires a response from a member of staff, we aim to contact you within 2 school days to confirm that the message has been passed on.

If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, we contact a parent (by telephone, if possible) to find out the reason for the absence.

VERITAS

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Mobile Phone (Texting)

To inform the office of absence, lateness or child arrangements, please text the school mobile phone (07887 422516) including your child's name and class.

Appointments

If necessary, parents can visit the school to ask questions, gain support or to have the opportunity to talk about their child/home issues with either the child's class teacher or the Senior Leadership Team. Parents are asked to phone the school office on 01923 676022 to make an appointment. This allows the school time to organise cover to make staff available to speak to the parents. We will aim to make appointments within 10 school days. In the first instance, please contact your child's class teacher to discuss any day to day matter via the school office. If a concern is not dealt with to your satisfaction following a meeting with the class teacher, an appointment may be made with an Assistant Head.

Parents are asked not to approach staff to discuss their child if they meet them outside of school as this does not allow for a confidential discussion and also infringes on staff's right to a private life.

Absence Requests

We will not authorise absences for holidays (please refer to the Attendance and Punctuality Policy). We ask parents to write a letter requesting term time absence – we require this to be given to the school a minimum of 10 school days before the requested date, in order to receive a response before the date of the absence.

Parental Feedback

We welcome feedback from all stakeholders in our school community. This should be sent by email to feedback@st-catherine.herts.sch.uk

4. School prospectus and website

Our school prospectus and website contain a range of specified information to give parents and carers, and the wider public, a full picture of provision at our school. This is updated annually.

5. Home-school communication

St Catherine's utilises three primary communication channels:

- School website for long and medium term information (Home-School/Communication section which includes Events, Head's Newsletter, as well as the Parents area which hosts our policies amongst other useful information)

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- *ParentPay Mail is being used for unforeseen last minute notifications.*
- *Twitter is used to capture the exciting learning going on at school and can be viewed directly on Twitter or via the school website.*

Events

A calendar of school events is produced at the start of each term and maintained throughout the school year via the school website.

We welcome and value all feedback from parents and carers about our school's policies and practices. We conduct a review of all policies, in line with their review date.

We arrange regular curriculum meetings for parents and carers. These are either morning or evening meetings to explain various areas of our curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning. We hold a meeting for new parents/carers each June, and for Year 6 and Year 2 parents and carers every year, concerning the national tests. All residential visits that children make will involve a meeting with parents and carers beforehand in relation to the planning and content of the visit.

6. Parents' Consultations & Reports

Parents will receive two updates over the course of the academic year in the form of a ten-minute consultation with their child's class teacher. This is focused on details of the child's attainment and progress in the core subjects and their attitude to learning. Should you wish to discuss any non-teaching and learning related matter, please make a separate appointment. There is a more in depth report in the summer which gives feedback on all areas of the curriculum.

7. ParentPay Mail

We encourage all parents to inform the school of their current e-mail address, to allow them access to ParentPay Mail, which is a quick and efficient method for the school to communicate with parents. Those who do not have access to ParentPay Mail will receive a paper copy of any correspondence.

ParentPay Mail is used to send out a variety of information, either to a targeted group, or to all parents on ParentPay Mail (this includes but is not limited to school newsletters, information about school events some specific communications regarding trips and events to the relevant groups of parents).

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8. Governors

A notice board detailing the names of governors is on the school website. Governors should be contacted via the school (email: admin@st-catherine.herts.sch.uk) or by written communication left at the school office. Please note that governors support the school in a strategic role. Therefore, depending on the nature of the request they receive, a governor might advise you to contact the school instead, if they feel that is appropriate.

9. Communication with the Community

Members of the local community are invited to school functions such as Special Assemblies, Masses, Christmas Fairs, Christmas Carol Services and School Productions.

The school may also arrange for guest speakers from local churches, community organisations and charities to come into school to speak to the children.

10. Communication within our school

Staff are required to follow the school's Internal Communication Policy.

11. Communication with other Schools

The school regularly communicates with staff and children of other primary schools. Such communication may be by means of personal contact with specific staff or through more formal contact such as cluster groups and by means of sports fixtures and other inter-school events.

Communication with the local secondary schools is predominantly for Y6 children. We have particularly close links with St. Michael's Catholic High School.

12. Communication with Outside Agencies

Close contacts are maintained with support agencies in our area. Please contact the office if you require further information on this.

13. Confidentiality

We store useful information about pupils in our school and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Details are available about the types of data we hold, why we hold that data, and who we may pass it on to. This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Parents have a right to view the information we hold and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

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14. Monitoring and review

This policy will be regularly monitored, and will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required.

This policy has been created with input from the Governing Body and approved by a sub-committee.

Approved by: Governing Body

Approved Date: October 2019

Review Date: October 2022 (Covid amendments 2020/21)



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