



Saint Jérôme
Church of England
Bilingual School

Positive Communication Policy

Policy created:	May 2021
Policy reviewed and updated:	September 2026
Date of next review:	September 2027
Review cycle:	Annually, and following any significant incident or update to national guidance.
Linked policies:	Complaints Policy, Health, Safety and Security Policy, Behaviour for Flourishing Policy, Online Safety Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Version history

Date	Version	Summary of changes
May 2021	V1	Original policy.
September 2026	V2	Full review following DfE Regions Group correspondence (ref CI-0396675 / CI-0392641). Added a legal framework section, grounded in new DfE non-statutory guidance on parent-on-staff bullying and harassment (2026), the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, the Equality Act 2010 and UK GDPR. Added a section on social media and recording staff. Removed a duplicate set of 'unreasonable behaviour' criteria and cross-referenced the Complaints Policy and Health, Safety and Security Policy instead, so all three stay consistent. Fixed a broken link to the Complaints Policy. Added an explicit no-evening/weekend-reply expectation and a simplified escalation ladder, following DfE's Workload Reduction Toolkit example. Updated governance titles and named individuals.

Headteacher:

Kate Schutte

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(Kate Schutte)

Co-Chairs of Governors: Approved by Governors on 17th September 2026

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(Vas Lappas and Edward Stowell)

1. Introduction and Legal Framework

This policy (and the expectations set out within it) applies to all parents, carers and visitors; it is set and approved by the Governing Body and is not open to negotiation. It sets out how everyone in our community is expected to communicate with the school, in person, by phone, by email or online, and the standards the school in turn commits to.

At St. Jérôme Church of England Bilingual School we strive to build strong relationships with parents, carers and visitors. This helps create a stimulating, happy and safe learning environment which continues from school to home and the wider community, providing all our pupils with the opportunity to achieve their personal best. The trust, support and co-operation of parents and carers is fundamental to the continued success of our school.

All members of the St. Jérôme community have the right to work and learn without fear of abuse, violence or harassment, at all times.

This policy has regard to the following legislation and current guidance:

- DfE non-statutory guidance on preventing and responding to bullying and harassment of school staff (2026), including by parents and carers
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988 and section 127 of the Communications Act 2003, which cover threatening or grossly offensive messages sent by post, phone or online
- The Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled parents and carers in how we communicate with them
- UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, which apply to any record the school keeps of calls, emails or meetings

This policy should be read alongside our Complaints Policy, Health, Safety and Security Policy, Behaviour for Flourishing Policy, Online Safety Policy, and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

2. Expected Standards for All Staff

All employees of St. Jérôme Church of England Bilingual School:

- Are required to demonstrate the highest possible professional standards at all times
- Deal with all pupils fairly and consistently
- Communicate with all parents, carers and visitors with professional courtesy
- Are aware of and conform to all safeguarding routines in the school
- Uphold the professional integrity of the school and teaching profession at all times.

Our staff come to work to educate and support our pupils, and we believe it is important for everyone involved with school life to communicate in a respectful and productive manner, whether in person, on the phone, or online. Staff, pupils, parents, carers and members of the public are expected to always behave respectfully to each other, which helps to promote the most constructive working and learning environment.

3. What We Ask of Parents, Carers and Visitors

St. Jérôme Church of England Bilingual School asks parents, carers and visitors to:

- Positively support the ethos of the school by setting a good example in their speech and behaviour, including online, towards all pupils, staff members and other adults
- Work constructively with staff members to resolve any issues of concern, including clarifying specific events in order to bring about a positive resolution
- Always communicate by telephone, email, or in meetings in a constructive and respectful manner
- Refrain from communicating in a manner which could be perceived as threatening or unreasonable
- Work alongside the school to support their child's behaviour where necessary, understanding and accepting that a behaviour policy is fundamental to a safe and purposeful learning environment
- Make reasonable requests for meeting times, and not expect to see any member of staff without a prior appointment. We will always try to accommodate a meeting or phone call as soon as possible, but staff have

many commitments, including teaching, throughout the day, and we would ask that you understand and respect this

- Agree to meet with the appropriate member of staff in the event of a dispute or disagreement, following the same escalation used elsewhere in school: class teacher, then Phase Leader, then a member of the Senior Leadership Team, then the Headteacher, depending on the stage and scale of the concern. We will not accept demands to communicate with a particular individual outside of this order
- Make every effort to positively promote the school to the wider community, and not publicly undermine the school or the implementation of school policies, or publicly raise complaints or criticisms online, on any social media platform, including but not limited to WhatsApp and Facebook, and in other public forums.

Whilst we welcome feedback and regularly consult with a range of stakeholders in making key decisions, ultimately the school has to make decisions in good faith, which we deem to be in the best interests of our pupils. It is not always possible to secure agreement or consensus, and schools are not duty bound to do so.

Decisions around behaviour expectations, uniform, teaching and learning strategies or strategic direction are at the discretion of the Headteacher, and do not require consensus or parental approval.

4. Expected Behaviour

We expect that all parents, carers, visitors and members of the public will treat each other, staff members, pupils and external agencies with dignity and respect.

Parents and carers should be aware of school policies, and know that copies are available via the school website or from the school office directly. When raising a concern, we would ask parents and carers to act in accordance with school policies and to maintain a positive approach at all times, whilst on the school premises and in their communications with the school.

5. How to Contact Us

5.1 Email

Email is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is the school's preferred method of communication. During term time the school will aim to acknowledge emails within 2 school days and respond within 10 school days. These timeframes may be longer during school holidays.

Staff are not expected to check or respond to school email outside their working hours, including evenings, weekends, and school holidays. Sending a message outside these times will not result in a faster response, and we would ask parents and carers not to expect one.

Parents and carers should contact the school via office@stjeromebilingual.org for a general enquiry, as an alternative to telephone or letter. Please send emails directly to the office email address rather than to a staff member's personal email address, to ensure continuity and efficiency of response, unless explicitly authorised by the relevant member of staff.

If the school does not receive a reply to an email within 2 school days, we will assume no further action is required and that the matter has been resolved to the parent or carer's satisfaction.

5.2 Telephone

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a challenge in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time, leading clubs, or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. In a non-emergency, we aim to return a call within 2 school days, with any follow-up action from the request, query or problem being dealt with within 10 school days. Staff will log a telephone conversation with a parent or carer on the school's management system.

5.3 Face to Face or Virtual Meetings

Arranging a face-to-face or virtual meeting, outside of pre-arranged Parent Consultation meetings, can sometimes be a challenge in a school for the same reasons. Requests should be emailed to the school office; if the matter is urgent, or concerns a safeguarding matter, please telephone the school office instead. Staff will log a meeting with a parent or carer on the school's management system, in line with our data protection obligations.

6. Social Media and Recording Staff

Unkindness or harassment of staff on social media, including in parent WhatsApp or Facebook groups, is treated as seriously as any other form of harassment, in line with current DfE guidance on preventing bullying and harassment of school staff.

- Staff should not be named, photographed, filmed or discussed in a way that could identify or embarrass them on any public or semi-public platform, including closed parent groups
- Recordings of staff, whether audio or video, must not be made on school premises without the prior knowledge and consent of the school, except where the law specifically allows this
- Sharing a recording, or an out-of-context screenshot of a conversation, in a way intended to harass or embarrass a member of staff will be treated under this policy and, where appropriate, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 or section 127 of the Communications Act 2003
- Where online conduct also raises a safeguarding concern, staff follow our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

7. Excessive Contact and Unreasonable Behaviour

We are committed to working positively with parents and carers to resolve issues and concerns, but we do not have the capacity to engage in excessive communications or lengthy, repetitive meetings. Once the school has given a reasonable amount of time to address an individual issue or concern, we will not engage in further communication regarding matters to which we have already responded, other than in a genuine emergency.

What counts as serial, persistent, unreasonable or vexatious contact, and how the school manages it, follows the same criteria and process as our Complaints Policy (see its "Serial, Persistent, Unreasonable and Vexatious Complainants" section), so that a parent or carer is treated consistently whether their contact is a formal complaint or general communication with the school.

- If parents or carers are rude, abusive, or speak in an inappropriate tone over the telephone, our staff will politely end the call
- If an email is rude or inappropriate in tone, we reserve the right not to reply, or to take the action outlined within this policy
- If parents or carers are rude, abusive, or speak in an inappropriate tone during a face-to-face or virtual meeting, our staff will end the meeting and, if on the school site, ask the parent or carer to leave the premises
- In any of these circumstances, the school will forward a copy of this policy to reiterate our expectations
- Where the school has listened to, considered, and shared the outcome of a request, but the matter continues to repeat, the school reserves the right to cease communication or to limit its reply to a repeat of key messages already shared. A face-to-face or virtual meeting will normally be offered first, to attempt to resolve the issue
- Following reasonable attempts by the school to arrange a meeting at a mutually convenient time, if a meeting is refused or not attended, communication on that issue will cease.

This policy does not affect the right of parents and carers to make a formal complaint under our Complaints Policy. Once the school has received a formal complaint, the issues within it are handled under the Complaints Procedure, not through general correspondence.

8. If Behaviour Crosses Into Violence, Threats or Abuse

Where a parent, carer or visitor's behaviour amounts to violence, a threat, or abuse towards a member of staff, this is managed under the "Violence and Assault Against Staff" section of our Health, Safety and Security Policy, not just this policy. Staff must report any such incident to the Headteacher on the same day, regardless of how minor it may seem; the Headteacher will ensure an appropriate response, which may include restricting that person's access to the premises or referral to the police.

9. Monitoring and Equality

Current guidance highlights that staff from ethnic minority backgrounds, and staff with a physical or mental health condition, are more likely to report experiencing bullying or harassment from parents and carers. The Headteacher monitors incidents recorded under this policy for any such pattern, and will consider whole-school training, communication, or other action where one is identified, in line with our Equality Scheme and Accessibility Plan.

10. Complaints

This policy does not impact the right of parents and carers to make formal complaints via our Complaints Policy, available at www.stjeromebilingual.org/policies or from the school office.

If any parent or carer behaves in a manner inconsistent with the standards in this policy, such as, but not limited to, abusive, aggressive, inappropriate or excessive contact, the school may take appropriate action in line with our legal position, including forwarding a copy of this policy to the individuals concerned. This is to ensure that parents and carers are aware of our expectations for future behaviour, the school's position, our legal rights and protections, and any action we might choose to take.