

School Communication Policy

1. Rationale

As a Catholic primary school, we value strong, respectful partnerships with parents and carers. Effective communication supports pupils' academic progress, wellbeing, and faith development.

Survey feedback shows that parents:

- Prefer **consistent, clear communication channels**
- Value **regular updates (predominantly weekly or frequent)**
- Want **essential information centralised** to avoid missed messages
- Appreciate **digital communication**, but some require **printed copies**
- Report issues with **multiple platforms, unclear messages, and inconsistency**.

This policy ensures clarity, consistency, and accessibility.

2. Communication Principles

All communication will be:

- **Clear and concise**
- **Timely (avoiding last-minute messages)**
- **Consistent across the school**
- **Accessible** (including printed copies on request)
- **Respectful and rooted in Catholic values**

3. Key Communication Channels

3.1 Monthly Newsletter (Primary Whole-School Communication)

- Sent **via email monthly**
- **Printed copies available upon request**
- Acts as the **main source of key information** to reduce confusion caused by multiple platforms

3.2 Class Dojo (Operational Updates)

- Used for:
 - Class-level updates
 - Reminders
 - Celebrations and achievements
- Not used for sensitive or confidential matters

3.3 Email (Direct Communication)

- Parents should **email class teachers directly** for:
 - Individual queries
 - Academic or pastoral concerns

This responds to feedback requesting more direct teacher communication and clearer responses.

3.4 App Messaging

- Used **only for urgent or time-sensitive information** (e.g., closures, last-minute changes)

4. Frequency of Communication

- **Monthly newsletter** – core structured update
- **Class Dojo updates** – regular (as needed, typically weekly)
- **Emails** – responsive and needs-based
- **Texts** – urgent only

5. Newsletter Content – “Standing Items”

Each monthly newsletter will consistently include:

5.1 Catholic Life and Mission

- Gospel reflection / prayer
- Liturgical events
- Catholic values in action

5.2 Key Dates

- Upcoming events
- Trips
- Non-uniform days
- Deadlines

5.3 Teaching & Learning

- Curriculum overview
- How parents can support learning at home

5.4 Safeguarding & Wellbeing

- Updates, reminders, or guidance

5.5 Behaviour & Expectations

- School expectations
- Positive behaviour focus

5.6 Attendance & Punctuality

- Whole-school updates
- Expectations and reminders

5.7 Celebrations & Achievements

- Pupil success
- Class highlights

5.8 Clubs & Wraparound Care

- Updates and availability

6. Best Practice Expectations for Staff

6.1 Consistency

- Use agreed channels only
- Avoid duplicating across multiple platforms unnecessarily

6.2 Timeliness

- Provide advance notice wherever possible
- Avoid last-minute communication

6.3 Clarity

- Use simple language
- Highlight key actions and deadlines

6.4 Inclusivity

- Be mindful of:
 - Parents with English as an additional language
 - Parents who may miss messages due to work

7. Parent Communication Expectations

Parents should:

- Check **email and Class Dojo** regularly
- Ensure contact details are **up to date** (Maintained on Arbor)

- Contact teachers via **email for individual concerns**
- Allow reasonable time for responses (typically 2 working days)

8. Escalation Path for Concerns

To ensure clear resolution of issues:

1. **Class Teacher**
 - First point of contact (via email)
2. **Phase Leader**
 - If issue is unresolved
3. **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**
 - Assistant Head / Deputy Head
4. **Headteacher**
5. **Governing Body (formal complaints procedure)**

This ensures concerns are addressed at the appropriate level and in a timely manner.

9. Accessibility and Inclusion

To address identified barriers:

- Printed newsletters available
- Clear, simple language used
- Key messages highlighted
- Consideration for translation or additional support when needed

10. Respectful and Appropriate Communication (Including Social Media)

The school is committed to maintaining a respectful, professional, and supportive environment for all members of the community. Positive relationships between parents, staff, and pupils are essential to this.

10.1 Expectations for Communication

All communication between parents and school staff should be:

- **Respectful and courteous in tone**
- **Constructive and solution-focused**
- **Free from abusive, aggressive, or discriminatory language**

Staff will respond in a professional and timely manner, and parents are expected to mirror this approach in all interactions.

10.2 Use of Social Media

Parents and carers are asked to use social media responsibly when referring to the school, its staff, or its pupils:

- Concerns or complaints **must not be raised on social media**
- Social media should **not be used to criticise, name, or target staff, pupils, or other families**
- Parents should avoid sharing **confidential or sensitive school-related information online**

Any concerns should instead be raised through the school's **escalation procedure** to ensure they are addressed appropriately and fairly.

10.3 Managing Concerns Appropriately

We ask all parents to:

- Address concerns **directly with the school**, not through informal channels or public forums
- Allow time for investigation and response
- Work in partnership with the school to achieve positive outcomes

10.4 Unacceptable Behaviour

The school will not tolerate:

- Abusive language (in person, email, or online)
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour
- Harmful or defamatory comments on social media

Where communication breaches these expectations, the school may take appropriate action in line with its behaviour and complaints policies.

11. Contacting the School Office

The school office plays a vital role in ensuring communication between parents and staff is managed efficiently, safely, and respectfully. It is not always possible for teaching staff to respond immediately due to their responsibility for pupils during the school day.

11.1 Appropriate Use of the School Office

Parents and carers should contact the school office for:

- Reporting **absence or attendance matters**
- Sharing **urgent messages** for pupils
- General enquiries (e.g. clubs, trips, appointments)
- Arranging **appointments with staff**
- Submitting paperwork or documentation

The office will ensure messages are passed on to the appropriate member of staff.

11.2 Reasonable Expectations

We ask parents to understand that:

- Teachers are **not available during teaching time**
- Responses may take **up to 2 working days**
- Non-urgent issues will be dealt with in a timely but appropriate manner
- Face-to-face meetings should be **pre-arranged**

This ensures that teaching and learning are not disrupted.

11.3 Arranging to Speak with Staff

If a parent wishes to speak with a specific member of staff:

- An **appointment must be made via the school office**
- Staff will respond with a suitable time to meet or speak

This allows staff to give appropriate time and attention to the discussion.

11.4 Unacceptable Practice

It is not appropriate to:

- Arrive at the school office and **request or demand an immediate meeting** with a member of staff
- Attempt to bypass agreed communication routes
- Expect staff to leave lessons or duties to respond immediately

Such actions disrupt the school day and do not support respectful communication.

11.5 Supporting Positive Communication

By using the school office appropriately, parents help ensure that:

- Messages are handled efficiently
- Staff can prioritise pupils' learning and wellbeing
- Communication remains respectful, organised, and effective

12. Vexatious or Unreasonable Communication

The school is committed to working positively with all parents and carers. In rare cases, communication or complaints may become excessive, unreasonable, or vexatious in nature. This can place significant strain on school resources and impact the wellbeing of staff.

12.1 Definition

Vexatious communication may include (but is not limited to):

- Repeated contact about the same issue despite it being fully addressed
- Excessive frequency of communication that places unreasonable demands on staff time
- Persistent refusal to accept outcomes of investigations or decisions
- Communication that is unnecessarily hostile, accusatory, or undermining
- Raising trivial matters in a way that is disproportionate or escalated unnecessarily

12.2 School Response

Where communication is deemed vexatious or unreasonable, the school may:

- Limit communication to **a single agreed point of contact** (e.g. a member of SLT)
- Specify **appropriate times and frequency** for communication
- Respond only to **new and relevant issues**
- Decline to engage with repeated correspondence that does not raise new information

Any such actions will be communicated clearly to the parent or carer.

12.3 Maintaining Professional Boundaries

The school has a duty of care to protect staff from undue stress while ensuring that legitimate concerns are addressed. We will always:

- Treat concerns seriously and investigate appropriately
- Communicate decisions clearly
- Act fairly and proportionately

12.4 Right to Escalate

Parents retain the right to follow the school's **formal complaints procedure** if they remain dissatisfied. However, this process must be used appropriately and in line with published guidance.

13. Monitoring and Review

- Communication will be reviewed annually
- Parent feedback will continue to inform improvements