

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Home-School Communication Policy



Bishop Wilkinson
Catholic Education Trust
Through Christ, in Partnership

Headteacher: Mrs V Ramshaw

Chair of Governors: Mrs M Dale

Date: March 2024

Review: March 2027

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we strive to create a welcoming, friendly and inclusive environment, committed to encouraging every pupil to fulfil their potential no matter what his/her background or personal circumstances. We believe that every child with his/her individual needs is a unique gift from God.

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 the most appropriate response

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

Roles and responsibilities

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)
- Checking all communications from the school
- Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with BWCET Parent Code of Conduct (on the school website)
- Parents **should not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours, or during school holidays

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's IT 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 8.30am – 4.30pm, 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.

The headteacher is responsible for:

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

How we communicate with parents and carers

The following sections explain how we keep parents up-to-date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

We request that parents monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

School newsletter

Parents are kept informed about the following things via a regular newsletter which is emailed and published on the school website:

- Upcoming school events
- Extra-curricular activities, e.g. themes lunches; charity events
- Feedback on school surveys or consultations
- Class activities
- Whole school requests for help

Arbor / E-mails

We will e-mail parents about:

- Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Reminders of events

School calendar

Our school newsletter includes a diary dates section.

We will endeavour 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).

Phone calls

Parents will be contacted by phone for the following reasons:

- In the case of pupil illness or serious injury while in school
- To clarify collection arrangements
- To discuss concerns

Letters

The following letters are either sent to parents by post, via e-mail or are published on the school website:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Data information forms

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
- A report on Key Stage KS1 (Y2) and KS2 SATs tests (Y6)
- Phonics Screening Check (Y1) and Multiplication Tables Check (Y4)

Parent Teacher Consultations

The statutory requirement is for schools to provide **one parents evening and one written report** per year. Here at St. Mary's we provide our parents with the opportunity to attend three parents evenings per year.

In the autumn term parents are invited into class for an open evening where they have the opportunity to:

- meet with the class teacher informally to discuss how well their child has settled into their new class
- ask any questions they may have about curriculum or schemes of work
- look at their child's work in books

In the spring term, parents are invited to make an appointment to speak to their child's teacher about their child's achievement and progress.

Parents may also request a meeting in the summer term to discuss any concerns they may have with their child's end of year report with the class teacher.

The school may also contact parents 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. Alternatively, they will be given a longer time slot during parent's evening.

School website

The current website includes:

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

How parents 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.

Non-urgent issues – email or phone call

Parents should always email the school admin. address or the main office in the first instance.

- Emails or phone calls will be acknowledged within **2 working days**.
- A full response will be received within **5 working days**.
- Where a meeting needs to be arranged, this will take place within **10 working days**.

Urgent issues – family emergencies, safeguarding or welfare issues

Parents should phone the school number: 01207 502657

In order to determine whether the issue requires an immediate response, you will be asked for details so that the concern can be directed to the right member of staff. **Anything discussed will be kept strictly confidential.**

- We will respond within **1 working day**.
- Serious concerns will be passed on to a senior member of staff **immediately**.

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with the class teacher in addition to the three parent teacher consultation meetings, they should email them directly. If this is not possible, they should call the school.

Teachers will schedule a meeting within **10 working days** of the request.

While teachers are sometimes available at the start or end of the school day for urgent matters, their priority at the start of the day is to settle the class and begin teaching, so this is not always possible. We recommend that parents contact the school office to book an appointment to discuss:

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

If parents feel that meetings with the class teacher have not alleviated their concerns or answered their questions adequately, then they should contact the school office by email or telephone. The details will then be forwarded onto the most appropriate senior leader who can deal with the query effectively.

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:

- 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.

Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy when it is deemed necessary.

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

Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

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

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

- Email the most appropriate address
- Include your child's full name in the subject line

I have a question about:	Who you need to contact:
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Class teacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Class teacher
Bullying and behaviour	Class teacher
Attendance and absence requests	Contact the school office if you need to report your child's absence or would like to request approval for term-time absence: call: 01207 502657
Payments	School office smb@smb.bwcet.com
School trips	School office
Uniform/lost and found	School office
Before and after-school clubs	School office
Hiring the school premises	School office
School events/the school calendar	School office
Local Governing Committee	School office
Special educational needs (SEN)	School office

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in the BWCET Complaints Policy on the school website.