

St Mary's C of E Primary School



Home-school communication

Committee responsible	CWC
Approval required by	CWC
Statutory or Recommended	Recommended
Frequency of review	2 Years
Date approved	November 2023
Date of next review	November 2025
Display on website	Yes
Link with other policies	Complaints policy Unreasonable & serial complaints policy Safeguarding policy Acceptable internet use policy
Signed by the Chair of Governors:	Jack Foster
Signed by the Headteacher:	Emmeline Lawlor

St Mary's Primary School, Church Lane, Chessington, KT9 2DH

<https://www.stmaryschessington.co.uk>

1. 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 a response as quickly as possible

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

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 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

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- › Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's 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 and as soon as practicably possible. 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 core hours, but they are **not expected** to do so.

2.3 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 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, or during school holidays.

3. 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.

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

3.1 Weduc email messages

We use Weduc email messages to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, school term/holiday dates, staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Trips and visits
- Updates regarding your child's attendance & punctuality
- School newsletters
- Lunch information
- school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

3.3 School calendar

The Weduc app and school website have a full school calendar on them which parents and carers are encouraged to check regularly

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)

Any such event will be included in the school calendar and parents will receive a notification for this (providing this feature on the Weduc app has not been turned off by the parent or carer)

3.4 Phone calls

From time to time, it may be necessary for a member of our team to contact parents via telephone.

We may call for the following reasons: (this list is not exhaustive)

- In case of emergency
- To inform you that your child is unwell or has experienced a head injury
- If your child has not arrived at school and we do not have an explanation for this
- If your child is involved in a behavioural incident and staff feel it is imperative to speak to the parent before the end of the school day
- If your child has not come to school equipped with the correct uniform, equipment or lunch
- To make a face to face appointment with a parent or carer.

3.5 Weduc Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Our school newsletters
- Attendance & punctuality information

3.7 Reports

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

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement across the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- A report on KS2 Standard Assessment Tests
- A report on your child's attainment in the Phonics Screening Check (End of year 1)
- A report on your child's attainment in the Multiplication Timestable Check (End of year 4)
- We also arrange regular meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

3.8 Meetings

We hold 2 parents' evenings per year. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum, their child's wellbeing, or any 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, wellbeing or behaviour.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEND), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to support these additional needs.

3.9 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
- Information about before and after-school provision

3.10 Home-school communications app - Weduc

We are always looking for new ways to improve communications with our parents and carers.

Our main home-school communications app is 'Weduc'. Some of the key features of Weduc include:

- In-app messaging
- Newsfeed (whole school events, news)
- Noticeboard - targeted so that you only see notices relevant to your child's year group
- Calendar (same as our website calendar)
- Resource Hub - to view important info/letters
- Parent Portal - to view attendance data
- Forms - complete and sign digital forms (change of contact info, medication consent, school trip consent, etc.)

4. 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.

4.1 Email

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 days.

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

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email or call the school office and the relevant member of staff will aim to contact them within 2 working days.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time.

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

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address (see appendix 1), or call the school to book an appointment.

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

Please note that the member of staff may request that you meet them at a different time, depending on the nature of your query and whether they feel it appropriate to deal with the matter at that time or place.

Please note that members of staff may require to obtain information from another member of staff or Senior leaders to answer a query you have – and therefore cannot be expected to commit to any firm responses at the point of asking.

5. 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 available in the following languages:

- English

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

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages (via the Weduc app settings)
- Interpreters for meetings

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

6. 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.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- Acceptable use
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints policy
- Staff wellbeing

Appendix 1

School Contact List

Who should I contact?	
I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/progress/attainment/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher
School lunches & payments	Mrs Dunne, School Finance Administrator
School trips & payments	Mrs Dunne, School Finance Administrator
Uniform/lost and found	Your child's class teacher
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call the school office on: 020 8397 9597 Please do not email or pass a message on via your child's class teacher or support staff. If you want to request approval for an exceptional leave of term-time absence, contact Miss Campos, Attendance Officer
Concerns about any behaviour incidents that have involved your child	Your child's class teacher in the first instance. The teacher will determine whether this requires to be escalated to a more senior member of staff using our Behaviour Policy processes.
School events/the school calendar	School Office Team (Miss Campos & Mrs Dunne)
Special educational needs (SEND)	If you are concerned about your child's attainment or progress; and think they may have a special need, please speak to your child's class teacher in the first instance. They will refer you to the school SENCo once a preliminary conversation has taken place. It is important not to bypass your child's class teacher in the first instance as they are best placed to discuss how your child is progressing in their day to day learning.
Before and after-school clubs	School Office Team
Hiring the school premises	School Finance Administrator or School Business Manager
PTA	pta4stmarys@gmail.com
Complaints It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. Many issues can be resolved informally, without the need to use the formal stages of the complaints procedure. St Mary's C of E Primary School takes concerns seriously and will make every effort to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.	If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy .

Appendix 2

Parent/Carer Code of Conduct

At St Mary's Primary School, we value our strong relationship with parents and carers. Together this helps us achieve the very best for the children in a mutually supportive partnership between parents, class teachers and the school community.

As a partnership, our parents understand the importance of a good working relationship to equip their children with the necessary skills for adulthood. For these reasons, we continually welcome and encourage parents or carers to participate fully in the life of our school.

To truly create the best outcomes for children requires the relationship between home and school to be based on the principles of care, integrity, trust and mutual respect. The maintenance of this relationship is important to ensure that a child/children are safe (please read our Safeguarding Policy) and not open to undue distress and anxiety.

As well as holding the above principles in mind, parents, carers and visitors are reminded:

- To respect the caring ethos and the values of the school.
- That both teachers and parents need to work together for the benefit of their children.
- Approaching school staff for help to resolve an issue is done in an appropriate manner.
- All members of the school community are treated with respect using appropriate language and behaviour.
- To correct their child's actions, especially where it could lead to conflict, aggressive or unsafe behaviour – both on and off the school premises.

In order to support a peaceful and safe environment the school will not tolerate parents, carers or visitors exhibiting the following:

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes or threatens to interfere with any of the school's operation or activities anywhere on the school premises.
- Any inappropriate behaviour on the school premises.
- Using loud or offensive language or displaying temper.
- Threatening, in any way, a member of school staff, visitor, fellow parent/carers or pupil.
- Damaging or destroying school property.
- Sending abusive, harassing or threatening emails, text/voicemail/phone messages, or other written communications to anyone within the school community.
- Defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the pupils/parent/staff, at the school, on Facebook, WhatsApp or other social media sites.
- Using social networking sites to single out individuals or to distribute untruthful or malicious information or comments (Appendix 3)
- The use of physical or verbal aggression towards another adult or child.
 - Approaching someone else's child in order to discuss or chastise them because of the actions of this child towards their own child. (Such an approach to a child may be seen to be an assault on that child and may have legal consequences)
- Verbal abuse
- Physical abuse
- Malicious gossip

Should any of the above occur, the school may feel it is necessary to take action by contacting the appropriate authorities and/or sadly, consider banning the offending adult from entering the school premises.

Appendix 3

Inappropriate use of social media platforms

Inappropriate use of social network sites and social media websites are being used increasingly to fuel campaigns and complaints against schools, Headteachers, school staff and in some cases, other parents or pupils.

The Department for Education/Government and the Governors of St Mary's Primary School considers the use of social media in this way as unacceptable. Any concerns you may have about the school or your child/children must be raised through the appropriate channels, where they will be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

Libellous or defamatory posts

In the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a child/children at St Mary's Primary School is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on any social networking sites or chats, they will be reported to the appropriate "report abuse" section of the network site.

All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report content or activity which breaches this. The school will also expect that any parent/carer or pupil remove such comments immediately.

Cyber bullying

We take very seriously the use of cyber bullying by a child or a parent to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry. We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying. The school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse on social networking and other sites.