



# SAINT NICHOLAS SCHOOL

## STAFF COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

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*Note: This policy applies to all sections of the School including EYFS*

Reviewed February 2021

Review Date February 2023

### 1. RATIONALE

At Saint Nicholas School we recognise that developing good teacher and parent relationships is an essential part of ensuring excellent educational provision which we aim to provide. Ensuring clear and effective communications is fundamental to good School- parent partnerships.

### 2. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

#### 2.1 Communicate often and early

Assure parents that you will inform them immediately about any concerns you might have with regard to their child. Early communication is generally appreciated by parents and can avoid parental concerns developing.

#### 2.2 Manner of communication

Negative information must be delivered face-to-face wherever possible. Where such face to face communication is not possible telephone conversations are acceptable. Emails and written communication should only be used to arrange an appointment.

#### 2.3 Follow up communication

It is vital to follow up on discussions to inform parents of developments.

#### 2.4 Document every communication

The importance of documenting cannot be underestimated. It doesn't have to be anything in depth. It needs to include the date, parent/student name, and a brief summary. You may never need it, but if you do, it will be well worth the time. Use the standard meeting record form wherever possible. Copies should be placed on the child's file and a copy to the relevant Head of Section/form teacher where relevant.

### 3. PARENTAL COMMUNICATIONS

#### 3.1 Face-to-face meetings with parents

- Dress professionally.
- Create a comfortable atmosphere and let the parents know that you care about their child and their concern.
- Listen carefully and try not to interrupt.
- Be prepared and have your agenda ready together with any supporting materials.
- Be professional when asked about other children or teachers.

- Aim at a constructive conclusion and way forward with time lines if appropriate and ensure follow up.
- Never feel pressured to make an important decision, evaluation, or assessment.
- If the situation becomes difficult, consider seeking support from a member of SLT.
- If a meeting deteriorates, remember that you are the professional in the room and you have the right to end the meeting. Should this be required, try to remain calm and assure the parent that a further meeting will be arranged with a member of the SLT in attendance to support the process.
- Keep notes of your meeting. Record the date, time, reason, and key points discussed in the conference. Use the standard meeting record form wherever possible.

### **3.2 Telephone calls**

Telephone calls received from parents/carers should be returned within 24 hours. Ideally acknowledge the call immediately or ask the office staff, so that parents know that you are aware of their contact. If parents/carers wish to speak to a certain member of staff and they are not available within this timescale, the office will endeavour to pass the message on to another member of staff to deal with or provide details of when that particular member of staff will be available to return the call.

### **3.3 Emails**

Email communication can be very helpful and parents increasingly choose this form of communication. However this is no substitute for a phone call or face-to-face meeting. Keep email dialogues short and for routine matters. If a concern is raised then it is usually best to contact the parents by phone.

Please check all written communication for spelling or grammar errors before sending and ensure that the tone and content of the email cannot be misconstrued.

Please consider data protection principles when emailing parents.

### **3.4 Other written communications with parents**

- All letters or notes to parents should be proofread before the note is sent home.
- After the letters have been proofread they need to be checked by the Head of Section for final approval.
- A copy needs to be made and put in that child's file of each letter or note sent home.
- All written communication should be professional, courteous, and have contact information to get back in touch with the teacher.
- If the letter/note is hand written, make sure that it is legible. If it is typed, make sure that it is at least standard 10-pointfont.

### **3.5 Use of Tapestry in EYFS**

The use of Tapestry, an online Learning Journal, helps develop a strong partnership with parents highlighting how their child is progressing against the EYFS developmental stages. Care must be taken to ensure that entries are grammatically correct and accurate.

### **3.6 Show my Homework / Homework diaries/ Planners**

Teachers must ensure that pupils complete their diaries and planner accurately. Any messages from staff should be checked for accuracy and grammar.

### **3.7 Social media**

The School uses Facebook and Twitter to communicate, announcing and reporting on School events. Only the School's official Twitter account should be used to communicate and these should be directed through the School's Publicity Officer. Staff should never accept pupils or parents as 'friends' or communicate with them via social media.

### **3.8 The School website**

The School website will be used, on occasion, to communicate information and, if that is the case, parents will be informed that the information is being communicated via the School website.

## **4. GUIDELINES TO STAFF – WRITTEN REPORTS**

Staff should adhere to the School's House Style for Report Writing an up to date version of which can be found on the staff shared drive. Please read carefully this guide to report writing when producing reports.

### **4.1 Reporting progress**

See the Staff Area for information on:

- Written reports
- Parents Evening