

Communications Policy

Date Created:	September 2022		
Approved by:	Headteacher	School Improvement Team	School Governors Committee
	Date: 21/08/2022	Date:	Date:
Last review:	September 2022		
Date of next review:	June 2023		
Linked Policies			

1.1 Rationale

St John's School recognises the importance of effective partnerships fostered through effective and efficient communication between school, parents and carers, students and the wider community in eliminating educational disadvantage caused by mobility.

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflects on the school's reputation. Parents and carers, trustees and pupils also have a part to play in reflecting the school's reputation. We strive to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and effective in their purpose.

2.1 Aims

St John's School aims to involve as many parents and carers in their child's education as possible by:

- Making the school as welcoming and inclusive as possible
- Ensuring signage is clear, informative and positive
- Accessible and inclusive written communications that avoid bias, stereotyping and any form of discrimination
- Responding to all written and telephone enquiries promptly; ensuring parents and carers can expect an acknowledgement within two working days.
- Variety in the forms of communication with parents and carers, for example by telephone contact, email, letter and text.
- Communicating with parents and carers for positive as well as negative reasons
- Informing parents as to how they can help and support their child's learning at school and home

3. Communication between the school and parents and carers

3.1 Choosing the correct member of staff to address a query

3.1.1 General Query

If you have a general query or concern, not specific to your child, please contact reception on 3888 or email your child's Tutor.

3.1.2 A query regarding my child's learning:

Please contact in order of escalation:

1. Subject Teacher (if concerning learning in only one subject)
2. Tutor (if concerning learning in multiple subjects)
3. Subject Lead (if concerning learning in only one subject)
4. Head of Key Stage (if concerning learning in multiple subjects)
5. Assistant Head Teacher for curriculum

If, following the communications route above you are still dissatisfied with the response you may complain to the school, please refer to the school's Complaints and Suggestions Policy available on the school website

3.1.3 A query regarding my child's wellbeing and/or behaviour

Please contact in order of escalation:

1. Form Tutor
2. Head of Key Stage
3. Deputy Head Teacher, Personal Development, Behaviour and Wellbeing

If, following the communications route above you are still dissatisfied with the response you may complain to the school. Please refer to the school's Complaints and Suggestions Policy available on the school website

3.2 Letters

Staff will always reply to a letter from parents and carers as quickly as possible. A response to acknowledge receipt of a letter or email will be made in the first instance by telephone or where this is not possible by email **within 2 working days and responded to within 5 working days**. Copies of correspondence with parents and carers that detail concerns around a child's wellbeing will be placed upon a student's safeguarding file (MyConcern).

Letters to parents/carers must be processed through the school administration team and approved by the Headteacher before emailing. Any letters of complaint should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

St John's School will use standard templates for letters. All published letters will be uploaded to the [school website](#)

Whole school information is included in a weekly newsletter, published on Friday each week during school term time. A link to an electronic copy of this is emailed to all parents and carers as well as being published on the school website. Hard copies of the newsletter are available from the school upon request.

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide the school with a current email address for prompt and effective communication.

The correct salutations must be used when writing to or emailing parents/carers/partnerships. The use of a parent, carer or staff member's first name is not appropriate; therefore, all communications will be to and from Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc and sign off is always full name Ms/Mrs/Mr/Dr Teacher Surname. Any relevant line manager / Head of Key Stage / Form Tutor must be copied into letters or emails.

3.3 E-mail

E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is a preferred method of communication. **Emails received will be treated in the same way as letters: acknowledged within 2 working days and responded to within 5 working days**. Emails should be short and clear and the same care and consideration should be given as when sending a letter.

Parents and carers may wish to contact the school via email for a general enquiry as an alternative to telephone or letter. The school email address is: SJS.Enquiries@MODSchools.org

Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils or parents and carers using their own personal email address.

3.4 Telephone Calls

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time and running clubs or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents and carers may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

In a non-emergency **a return call will be made within 2 working days, with any follow up action from the request /query/problem being dealt with within 5 working days.** Staff will make a record of a telephone conversation with a parent/carer on MyConcern if it is deemed to be linked to the wellbeing of a child.

Telephone calls from school to home is the preferred method of communication and staff are required to attempt contact with home by telephone in the first instance. Where this is not possible or attempts unsuccessful an email communication will be made.

3.5 Texts

Automated texts from BromCom are sent to parents/carers (including in the event of an emergency closure of the school) but are not used for general communications from members of staff and staff should not respond by text to a text message received from a parent/carer (but should respond using an alternative means of communication such as email or telephone if appropriate).

3.6 My child at school App

In the autumn of 2022 St John's will launch our My Child at School App, supported by BromCom. Once launched parents will be able to use this online portal to view their child's performance in school in real time. This will include attendance data, assessment, student reports, letters, timetable and upcoming events. Further information is expected in November 2022.

3.7 Meeting with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers wishing to meet a member of staff must contact the school to make an appointment. **This request should be responded to within 2 working days.**

Parents and carers should report to school reception prior to meeting with a member of staff and sign in. A member of staff may ask a senior colleague to accompany them.

Staff should call a meeting to a close in the event of the parents or carers becoming angry or abusive. This should be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

3.8 School Visits

The school offers opportunities that alternate each week for parents and other stakeholders to visit.

Week 1 – School Tours

Parents, carers and stakeholders are invited to visit between 0900 – 1100 on a Friday of Week 1 to join a tour of the school. The tour will be followed by the opportunity to join a member of SLT for tea, coffee and biscuits and an informal question and answer session.

Week 2 – Headteachers Surgery

Parents, carers and stakeholders are invited to visit between 0900 – 1100 on a Friday of Week 2 for the Headteachers Surgery, similar to an MP's Surgery each drop in allows parents, carers and stakeholders to raise concerns and/or issues that may have arisen and require the Headteacher's attention.

3.8 Social Networking

The School has a Facebook and Twitter account which is used to provide updates to parents and pupils who wish to subscribe to this. It is not compulsory to do so and therefore any key messages will be relayed through formal school communication channels.

3.9 Positive Communication

Significant emphasis is placed upon the need to communicate with parents and carers for positive reasons. To support this, staff are required to send a positive email home following each and every lesson. The recipient could be one or multiple students. These communications are populated from templates and sent using BromCom.

3.9 Reports and Progress

Parents and carers receive six progress reports providing information about their child's progress in each academic year. These are in addition to Progress Test reports produced by GL Assessment. These reports will be accessible online through the My Child at School App, launched in October 2022.

In addition, parents and carers have the opportunity to meet their child's subject teachers twice a year, at parents evening. Parents and carers should contact the school if issues arise about their child's progress or wellbeing. **The first point of contact should be the child's Form Tutor.**

We welcome the presence of any other adult a parent or carer wishes to invite to a school meeting for support or to act as an interpreter.

3.10 School Website

The school website provides a range of information about the school, 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
- School Prospectus

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

3.10 Google Classroom in Google Apps for Education

The Google platform is a powerful tool for motivating students as it gives them more choice and flexibility about when and where they complete their learning. It also encourages parent and carer involvement in learning, especially with extended learning tasks. Parents are able to have parental access to see work being set and their child's progress towards tasks set.

4. Communication between the students and staff

Two way communication between students and staff is an important aspect of school life. The school welcomes and encourages students to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school. When communicating between one another:

- members of staff and students should stand facing one another and make eye contact;
- members of staff and students should be respectful, do not talk over, raise voice or walk away before the conversation has ended.
- Students must address the member of staff using their formal name e.g. Mrs Smith, never referring to a member of staff by their first name;
- When communicating with students' staff should use students first names and full names of staff (Mr Surname and Ms/Mrs Surname) in front of pupils. Try to avoid generic terms of: Sir and Miss to convey politeness.

Pupils may also email staff on their school accounts in relation to their learning. All students are taught email protocol:

- Complete the subject line
- Use Ms/Mrs/Mr and Surname as salutation
- Use Standard English
- Avoid abbreviations
- Sign off with Thank you or Kind Regards.

Correspondence is to remain professional at all times.

Staff are never permitted to use personal email accounts when communicating with pupils. Pupils are expected to check their emails daily and delete / archive regularly.

5. Communication between SJS Staff

Verbal

Staff are to use first names when communicating with each other and full names (Mr/Dr/Ms/Mrs Surname) in front of pupils. Avoid generic terms of: Sir and Miss to convey politeness.

Email

- consider whether an email is appropriate when face to face communication may be more conducive;
- avoid exclusive email correspondence without requesting or organising a face to face meeting;
- avoid send or reply all unless necessary;
- line managers are to be copied in;
- keep emails concise, use Standard English and bullet points if necessary.
- Staff to check emails twice a day.
- Use group emails as appropriate. Email groups are as follows:
 - All Staff Teaching staff (to include TA/HLTA)
 - SLT
 - English Faculty
 - Maths Faculty
 - Science Faculty
 - Humanities Faculty
 - MFL Faculty
 - Creative Faculty
 - PE Department
 - PSHE Team
 - Subject Leads
 - Pastoral Leads

Staff should not send non-urgent emails before 8am or after 8pm. Emails should instead be saved as drafts and sent during work hours.

A weekly bulletin will be sent to all staff on Friday afternoon to plan for the following week.

Agendas for all staff meetings are to be circulated in advance. The minutes of the meeting to be circulated to all relevant parties where possible within two weeks of the meeting using the universal template.

6. School trips, visits and activities

The school will endeavour to publish all proposed trips, visits and activities on the school calendar at the start of each academic year. Parents and carers will be notified by letter of trips, visits and activities that their child/children may wish to participate in as early as possible, and within at least six weeks of the proposed trip, visit or activity. Occasionally opportunities arise during the academic year to offer pupils additional trips, visits or activities that were not known or available when the school calendar was published. The school will always ensure parents and carers are notified of any additional opportunities for their child as soon as possible to ensure parents and carers have adequate time to plan for such events.

7. Emergency closure

In the event of emergency closure communication will be made to parents and carers via text or email. Parents and carers should also tune in to local radio and check the school website and social media channels (e.g. Twitter).

8. Prospective parents/carers

The school prospectus is published on the website. Prospective parents and carers may request a printed copy.

Prospective parents and carers are invited to make contact by emailing SJSAdmissions@MODSchools.org to arrange an online meeting and/or school visit.

9. Parent Forum

The Parent Forum meets every six weeks on the dates published in the school calendar. The forum attended by parents discuss agreed themes and/or initiatives with members of the school's leadership team. It is also a focus for 2022-23 academic year to empower the forum to explore and run events and activities that can help generate funds. Parents may contact the Parent Forum Committee by emailing: SJSParentForum@stjohnsschoolcyprus.com

10. Supporting parents and carers of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The school recognises the importance of positive relationships with parents and carers of all pupils with additional needs. The SEND Code of Practice emphasises the importance of positive, supportive attitudes to parents and carers and user-friendly information and procedures. All staff will make every effort to ensure effective communication with parents and carers.

All staff within the school are expected to help parents and carers understand how to contribute effectively to their child's education and will make every effort to ensure that parents understand their rights and responsibilities. All relevant information will be provided in a way for all to understand and respond to.

When students who have special educational needs are making less than the expected progress or if they are experiencing behavioural difficulties, we would expect to meet with parents and carers more regularly. Parents and carers are encouraged to communicate immediately where they have a concern about their child's needs being met and should also refer to the [Inclusion section of the website](#).

11. Communication with other Schools and outside agencies

We recognise that children have diverse needs, and where required we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals including medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), educational psychologists, health professionals and specialists and various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare and British Forces Social Work Service. We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school must provide a safe and secure environment (see the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy copy available on the policy page of the school website).

We hold information on all students in our school and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. All personal data is held and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation for full details see our Data Protection Policy.

12. Investigating incidents

When investigating an incident involving pupils, school members of staff interview all pupils involved and ask them to complete a written account. The school will only share any information that would identify any pupils in accordance with data protection regulations and legislation and our policies.

13. Monitoring, evaluation and review

A member of the senior leadership team and the Department for Children's Services will review this Policy at least every three years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The Policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

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