



St Elizabeth's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Communication Policy

November 2020

1. Introduction

To ensure that we are a thriving and successful academy, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents and with other members of the wider community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of our community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

2. Definition of Communication

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. Thorough, effective and interactive communication ensures that information is transmitted, understanding is developed and shared, trust is built, confidentiality respected and action coordinated. We should also remember the importance of listening. Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflects on the academy's reputation. Communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated; not only the responsibility for communication but also how effectively that responsibility has been carried out.

3. Principles and Aims

All communications at St Elizabeth's Catholic Voluntary Academy should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents, governors and other stakeholders well informed.
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional.
- Use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all.
- Be actioned within a reasonable time.
- Use the methods of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.
- Ensure that staff are fully informed of all relevant activity within the academy to enable them to be as effective as possible in their role.
- Take account of relevant policies with the academy.
- Be compatible with our Franciscan values and School Development Plan.
- Written communications with parents and other external contacts must comply with agreed practice and be checked by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher before being sent out.
- Consultation issues, plans and changes which may affect the work of the academy should be inclusive of all appropriate stakeholder groups.

4. Responsibilities

This section details the responsibilities of the different groups within the academy.

Senior leadership

- To ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels, where practicable face to face.
- To ensure that staff have the relevant information available to communicate with colleagues effectively.
- To maintain open channels of two-way communication and to listen to feedback and comment from all staff.
- To keep governors informed of developments and concerns.

All staff

- To communicate regularly with each other, where possible, face to face, to ensure information is available and understood within the context of the classroom and working environment.
- To ensure they are informed and have access to information in order to be as effective as possible in their role and to support their work within the academy.
- To use open channels of two-way communication to keep the leadership team and colleagues informed.
- To be proactive in keeping informed and up-to-date about all aspects of academy life.

5. Internal methods of communication

- All staff receive a Staff Handbook, updated annually, providing them with important information about organisation and procedures within the academy.
- An integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff both formal and informal: e.g staff meetings, weekly briefings, SLT meetings etc.
- All formal meetings should be structured and minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda.
- Senior Leaders meet on a weekly basis to share information, strategically plan ahead, monitor, evaluate and to clarify forthcoming tasks, deadlines and events. Senior leaders have a responsibility to share updates with their Phase team and to ensure consistency of understanding within their phase.
- Time put aside for structured opportunities for staff to engage in team working and to contribute to subject leaders' reflection on priorities, activities and future plans.
- Information and notification of initiatives are communicated through the use of email, CPD and staff briefings. where appropriate. Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information however it should not replace face to face meetings where discussion is required (subject to government guidance).
- Written communications should be placed in pigeon holes in the staffroom, which staff must check daily or be handed to staff personally or emailed.
- Staff meetings take place every week. These are minuted and these are accessible to all via the Headteacher's office.
- All staff have access to an electronic diary for the term ahead as well as an in depth overview of the forthcoming fortnight in their briefing notes.
- Events are discussed in advance at meetings but staff also have the responsibility to check future actions.
- The diary for the coming fortnight is discussed within weekly briefing meetings.
- Within each individual class, class teachers organise their own methods of communicating information, but this will primarily be through class email and class twitter pages.
- Reminders or letters to individual parents are sent out via email.
- Some communication may take place at the end of collective worship. All staff must be informed of messages given to the children. This takes place at weekly briefing meetings.

6. Methods of communicating with the academy

Lines of communication:

Topic	Person	Method
General enquiries or absence messages	Mrs Donna Hyde	01773 822278 info@st-elizabeths.derbyshire.sch.uk
Class, curriculum or pupil specific matters	Class teacher	[insertclassname]@st-elizabeths.derbyshire.sch.uk
SEN matters	SENCo – Mrs Heath (Support Mrs Clemens)	senco@st-elizabeths.derbyshire.sch.uk
If your enquiry warrants further support or clarification beyond the remit of the class teacher	The relevant phase leader (All are members of the Senior Leadership Team)	deputy@st-elizabeths.derbyshire.sch.uk phaseuks2@st-elizabeths.derbyshire.sch.uk

	EYFS and Key Stage 1 – Mr Ward (Deputy) Year 3 and Year 4 – Mrs Alton and from January, Mrs Fitzpatrick (Phase lead for Upper Key Stage 2) Year 5 and Year 6 – Mrs Fitzpatrick	
If your enquiry warrants further support or clarification beyond the remit of the phase lead.	Head of School	head@st-elizabeths.derbyshire.sch.uk
Head of School will refer further matters beyond this remit to the Executive Headteacher		

If you wish to make a formal complaint at any stage, please refer to the Complaints Policy on our school website.

6.2. Email

We ask parents to email info@st-elizabeths.derbyshire.sch.uk for general enquiries. Parents may also email more specific learning or class related questions to their child's teacher via the class email addresses. Class email addresses are the classname@st-elizabeths.derbyshire.sch.uk. We will respond to parents' emails within 2 working days during the working week, between the times of 8.30am-5pm (within term time only). This means that emails submitted on a Thursday before 5pm will be responded to by Monday 5pm and emails submitted on a Friday by 5pm will be answered by Tuesday at 5pm. We ask that parents are mindful that the first duty of our teaching staff is the delivery of the curriculum and therefore we kindly ask that emails are succinct and polite, with an eye to the workload of staff.

6.2. Letters

Letters can be handed into, or posted to, the school office. As with emails, all letters will be treated with full confidentiality and the responses will be made by the member of staff addressed. Please note all letters should specify the member of staff to whom the query is addressed. Please let the office staff know if the letter contains information about your child which you would like the class teacher to receive urgently. We will respond to letters within 2 working days (during term time; to cover sickness and investigations).

6.3. Telephone

This would be appropriate where enquiries are deemed more urgent by the parent, such as in the case of absence. We ask parents to phone the school on 01773 822278. If the call requires a response from a member of staff, we aim to do this within 2 working days.

6.4. Appointments

Parents and carers are always to arrange an appointment (either telephone or video call), to ask questions, gain support or to have the opportunity to talk with either the child's class teacher or the Senior Management Team. Appointments can be made by telephoning the office on 01773 822278. This allows the school time to organise cover to make staff available to attend appointments. We will aim to make appointments within 3 working days and are willing to meet either before (from 8.15 am) or after school (3.30 – 4.30 pm) to fit in with parents.

7. Academy Website

Our website contains a range of specific information to give parents and carers, and the wider public, a full picture of provision at our academy. We update this regularly.

8. Home-school communication

- A calendar of events will be produced at the start of the term/year and this will be updated each term and communicated via newsletters and on the website. A newsletter is sent to parents on a fortnightly basis. It contains general details of events and activities taking place. We send other letters when necessary.
- At the beginning of each term, all teachers write to the parents or carers of the children in their classes with details of the work to be covered during the forthcoming term.
- We welcome and value all feedback from parents and carers about our academy's policies and practices. We conduct an annual survey to canvas the views of parents and carers about our academy and report back on the outcomes.
- We arrange regular curriculum meetings for parents and carers. These are evening meetings to explain various areas of our curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning. We hold a meeting for new parents/carers each June/July, and for Year 2 and 6 parents and carers, concerning the national tests. All residential visits that children make to involve a number of meetings with parents and carers regarding the planning and content of the visit, and a post-visit review.
- If a child is absent and we have had no indication of the reason, we will contact the parent/carer (by telephone) to find out the reason for the absence by 9.30am.

9. Written Reports

In the second half of the Pentecost Term, parents and carers receive a written report on their child's attainment and progress which gives feedback across all areas of the curriculum.

10. Parent Consultation Evenings

Parents and carers meet with their child's teacher twice during the year for Parent Consultation Evenings. These take place in the Autumn and Spring term and include the teacher and parent/s or carers. This is an opportunity for all parties to discuss progress, attainment and next steps in the child's learning. A variety of afternoon and evening appointments are available to book online a fortnight in advance via our School Cloud system. If you require support with making an appointment, please contact the office team.

For separated parents, we are happy for parents to book separate appointments using the School Cloud system.

11. Teachers2Parents

- We encourage all parents to inform us of a mobile phone number we can use for the Teachers2Parents text message service. This allows parents to access a quick and efficient method of communication with the Academy. The onus is on the parent to let us know and to keep us up to date with their mobile number.
- Teachers2Parents text message service is used to send out a variety of information, either to a targeted group, or to all parents. It is always a text message.

12. Governors

A page detailing the names of governors is on the school website. Governors should be contacted via the academy (email: info@st-elizabeths.derbyshire.sch.uk or written communications left at the school office and will be forwarded to the Chair of Governors). As governors support the academy in a strategic role, if parents contact them on a matter to do with the day to day running of the academy or with a complaint, governors will be unable to respond and will direct them to take their concern to the academy and follow the appropriate processes.

13. Communication with the Community

Under normal circumstance (non-COVID) members of the local community are invited to special events such as Masses, liturgies, fundraising events and productions. Guest speakers from local churches, community organisations and charities come in regularly to speak to the children.

14. Communication with other Schools and Academies

The academy regularly communicates with staff and children within other educational settings, especially within the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi-Academy trust. Such communication may be by means of personal contact with specific staff or through more formal contact such as cluster groups and by means of sports fixtures and other inter-school events. Communication with the local secondary schools is predominantly for Y5 and Y6 children. We have particularly close links with St Benedict's Catholic Voluntary Academy.

16. Communication with Outside Agencies

Close contacts are maintained with support agencies including the Educational Psychologist, Learning Support Services, SSEN, the Peripatetic Music Service, Early Help Advice Team and the School Nurse.

17. Confidentiality

We store useful information about pupils in our academy and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Details have been sent to parents about the types of data we hold, why we hold that data, and who we may pass it on to. This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998. Parents have a right to view the information we hold, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

18. Freedom of Information

Please refer to St Elizabeth's Catholic Voluntary Primary Academy Freedom of Information Policy.

19. Monitoring and review

This policy will be regularly monitored, and will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required.

Next review: September 2023