

ST LUKE'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNICATION POLICY



Reviewed by CA Committee May 2023
Agreed by full governors June 2023 To
be next reviewed summer 2025

Communication Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Communication is key to having a good, positive relationships. Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, with other schools, with the community, with outside agencies and within the school. It is essential that teachers, parents, staff and pupils have a clearly understood line of communication, as we believe that children achieve more when schools and parents/carers work together with mutual respect. Parents/carers can naturally help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve.

1.2 In our school we aim to have clear and effective communications with all parents and carers and with the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values, through keeping parents and carers well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents and carers play in supporting the school.

2. Definition of communication

2.1 Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It involves the management of relationships and the need to engage people.

2.2 Communication is as much about attitude and behaviour as it is about message. We should also remember the importance of listening. Every member of staff and every parent/carer has a responsibility to support effective communications and must recognise that the quality of their communications reflects on the school's reputation.

2.3 For the purposes of this policy, 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 is carried out.

3. Aims

All communications at St. Luke's CE Primary School should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents, governors and other stakeholders well informed
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon free, plain English to be easily understood by all
- Avoid information overload

- Be actioned within a reasonable time
- Use the methods of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience
- Take account of relevant school policies and be compatible with our core values
- Value parents' expertise and knowledge

4. Responsibilities for communication within school

- 4.1 Our staff will behave in a respectful and polite manner at all times in their communication with each other and with parents/carers/pupils – see also the Staff Code of Conduct
- 4.2 All staff have a school email address and it is their responsibility to use this address to communicate school matters.
- 4.3 Whilst it supports the work/life balance of some staff to write and send email correspondence in the evening, at the weekend or during the school holidays, there is no expectation that messages will be read by others outside the working day (for these purposes deemed to be 8.00am-6.00pm, Monday – Friday, term-time and Inset days)
- 4.4 The Headteacher will send a weekly memo with important notes, covering the next two weeks. Wherever possible this will be sent out before 6pm on a Friday. All staff must read the memo and action any points within it that fall within their remit. Any event that is not included in the memo has not been put into the school diary and this must be rectified at the earliest possible time.
- 4.5 The school diary is maintained electronically. It is each member of staff's responsibility to record their own school meetings, courses, events, etc in the diary and to ensure that any cover needed has been arranged and recorded alongside the diary entry.
- 4.6 Where staff members use social media / chat groups, they must only discuss school issues in a positive light – see also the Acceptable Use Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct.
- 4.7 Class teachers must attend all parent-teacher meetings scheduled for their class. Where teachers work part-time, and meetings fall on their non-working day, overtime will be paid.
- 4.8 Class teachers must ensure that their class page of the school website is updated at least weekly. This includes the removal of out-of-date items.

4.9 Class teachers must ensure that concerns about pupils raised by a parent/carer or a member of staff are factually recorded on the CPOMS system, along with any actions/resolutions.

4.10 All staff must adhere to the communication response times stated within this document.

5. Responsibilities for communication between school and home

5.1 School staff

The school will undertake to ensure that:

- Parents/carers and children have clear lines of communication
- Staff behave in a respectful and polite manner at all times
- The curriculum (including home learning expectations) is clearly communicated to parents/carers
- Parents/carers are invited to a face-to-face welcome meeting for each class at the start of each school year
- We hold individual parent-teacher consultation meetings (remotely or face-to-face) twice a year, with an option for a third meeting in the summer term. Wherever possible, it is more effective for parents and carers to attend the consultation together so that a common approach to supporting the child can be agreed. If exceptional circumstances mean this is not possible, we will try to arrange separate consultations
- Each child receives a written report annually, towards the end of the summer term
- A list of key dates is issued at the start of each term and on each monthly newsletter
- Parents/carers are informed of forthcoming events with at least two weeks' notice wherever possible
- A reminder is sent out about school events the day before
- Written/emailed communication from parents/carers is acknowledged within two working days and given a full response within 10 working days
- There is a complaints procedure, and through this procedure, parents may make complaints, have them investigated and any learning points for the school taken on board as part of efforts to improve

5.2 Parents/Carers

Parents and carers will undertake to:

- Sign a home-school agreement on their child's admission to school, at the start of KS1 and again at the start of KS2
- Provide an email address for school correspondence
- Download the school app
- Read all communications issued by the school
- Act on the communication (for example, by attending special meetings)
- Raise issues or concerns at the earliest opportunity with the school in the appropriate manner*
- Only discuss school issues on social media in a positive light. As we explain to children, nothing written on social media is ever private. We encourage them to think of these three aspects before posting: *Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?* We ask parents to model this behaviour for children, so that they learn how to navigate the complex online world and use it kindly and effectively.
- Treat school staff with dignity and respect. They should not have to endure abusive, disrespectful or threatening behaviour whilst at work. Parents are generally courteous and respectful. In a minority of cases, where this is not the case and a member of staff considers that a parent is being abusive, disrespectful or threatening, the parent will be asked to stop. If the behaviour does not stop, the discussion will be terminated. The school may continue to communicate with the parent but will use another form, such as a letter.

**Issues should be raised with a class teacher or our Parent Support Adviser (PSA) in the first instance; these may then be escalated to the phase leader followed by the Deputy / Headteacher if necessary. The PSA is Mrs Dwan: alison.dwan@slf.sefton.school*

6. Methods of Communication between home and school

6.1 Before school

A member of staff (usually the Leadership Team) will be on the gate each morning and can take messages for teachers or the office.

Parents/carers can also speak directly to their child's teacher before school with a quick message, but anything requiring a longer conversation needs to be done at a pre- arranged meeting. Teachers will advise of the best time to see them at the Welcome meetings early in the school year.

6.2 School App

We ask all parents/carers to download the App as a quick means of communication. This is our main form of instant communication about what is going on in school. We also use this for information about trips e.g. ETA if a journey is delayed.

6.3 Newsletter

A newsletter is published via email and on the website each month, usually the first Friday of the month. This celebrates activities in school and gives advance notice of forthcoming events.

6.4 Email

We ask parents/carers to use the email address: admin@slf.sefton.school for general enquiries and the year group email address for individual children:

reception@slf.sefton.school

yr1@slf.sefton.school

yr2@slf.sefton.school

yr3@slf.sefton.school

yr4@slf.sefton.school

yr5@slf.sefton.school

yr6@slf.sefton.school

All emails will be treated with full confidentiality and the responses will be made by the member of staff addressed. Please note all emails should specify the member of staff to whom the query is addressed, if known.

We also contact parents/carers via email.

6.5 Website

School information e.g. policies, dates, uniform suppliers, topic overviews, after-school clubs, etc. are all on our school website. Parents and carers are expected to check the website to access information they may need before telephoning or emailing our busy office

6.6 Twitter

We use Twitter to celebrate school successes in addition to the newsletter, eg we may Tweet a photograph of children taking part in a sports event

6.7 Letter

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, where known. Please let the office staff know if the letter contains information about your child which you would like the class teacher to receive urgently, otherwise please use the white post box outside the office to reduce queuing time.

6.8 Telephone

This would be appropriate where enquiries are deemed more urgent by the parent, such as communicating particular information about the child to the school. We ask parents and carers to phone the school on 01704 872692. If the office is unstaffed or extraordinarily busy, the answer machine will be available. This records messages and attaches them to an office email, so that they can be accessed as soon as possible. If the call requires a response from a member of staff, we aim to do this within 2 working days.

6.9 Appointments

If necessary, parents and carers can visit the school to ask questions, to gain support or to have the opportunity to talk about their child/home issues with either the child's class teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Parents and carers are asked to phone the school office to make an appointment giving a brief outline of what they wish to discuss wherever possible. This allows the school time to organise cover to make staff available to speak to the parents and carers.

We will aim to make appointments within 5 working days.

If parents and carers are unable to keep an appointment, they should give adequate notice i.e. ring the school if it is on the same day. Parents and carers should not expect to meet teachers during the school day unless by prior

arrangement, as this means lost teaching time for a whole class of children.

6.10 Communication with the Community

Y6 pupils write a regular column for the Parish Magazine published by St Luke's Church. Posters advertising school events may be displayed in public places. Celebrations of successes will often be Tweeted or posted elsewhere in social media.

6.11 Communication with other schools/additional agencies

It is important that relevant information is shared with all agencies in the best interests of the child. Please see our Data Protection Policy for further information.

7. Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the Governors' Curriculum and Achievement Committee and is reviewed every two years or earlier when necessary.

Sharon Cowey

Headteacher