

St. Mary's

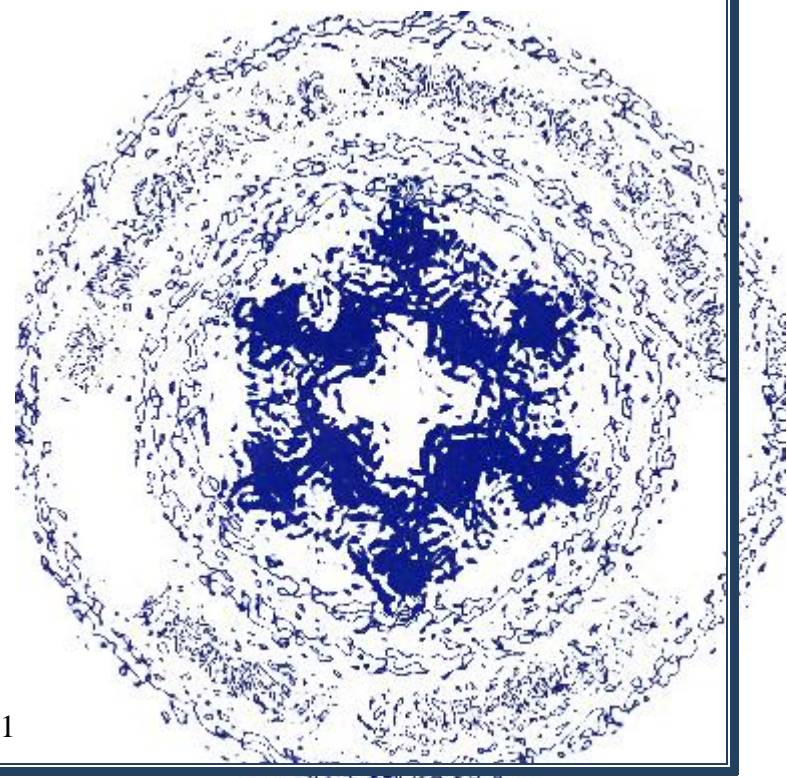
Church of England Primary School

Communication Policy 2016-2019

Signed



Oct 2016



Aim

To ensure that St Mary's CE School is a thriving and successful school, 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 the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

Definition of communication

- Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It is through effective and interactive communication 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 school'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.

Principles

All communications at St Mary's CE School 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 school activity to enable them to be as effective as possible in their role.
- Take account of relevant school policies.
- Be compatible with our core values and vision of the school.
- Written communications with parents and other external contacts must comply with agreed practice.
- Consultation issues, plans and changes which may affect the work of the school is inclusive of all appropriate stakeholder groups.

Responsibilities

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

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, preferably 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 school.
- To use open channels of two-way communication to keep the leadership team and colleagues informed.

Internal methods of communication

- All staff receive a Staff Handbook, updated annually, providing them with important information about organisation and procedures within the school.
- An integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff both formal and informal: e.g staff meetings, teaching assistant meetings, meal time assistant meetings, phase meetings, inter school meetings and partnership meetings.
- All formal meetings should be structured and minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda.
- 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.
- For all other meetings notes should be taken, action points progressed and feedback given to staff.
- Information and notification of initiatives are communicated through the use of email, where appropriate. Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information however it should not replace face to face meetings where discussion is required.
- Written communications should be placed in pigeon holes, in the staffroom, which staff must check daily, handed to staff personally or emailed.
- Staff meetings take place every week. The main points are emailed to all staff and also placed on the staff notice board. The school diary is accessible on line and all members of staff can access it. Events are

discussed in advanced at meetings but staff also have the responsibility to check future actions.

Diary for the coming week discussed.

- Within each individual class, class teachers organise their own methods of communicating information to the children. This may be a news board or other type of notice board. Every class must have a system for distributing letters and other materials to go home with the children.
- Reminders or letters to individual parents are sent to classes to be given out by the class teachers and must be given to children the same day. A copy of any letter should be handed to the school office.
- Some communication may take place at the end of collective worship. All staff must be informed of messages given to the children.

External methods of communication

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, other schools, the community and with outside agencies. Our aim is to have clear and effective communications with all parents and the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting school.

Whist staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end parents should always be addressed in an appropriate manner.

We will try to make written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions to our society by all cultural groups represented in our school.

Communications with Parents/carers

- **Letters:** Staff will respond to parents' letters within 48 hours (2 school days). Any letter of complaint must be referred to the HT immediately. Letters to parents must be approved by the HT before they are sent. Copies of all correspondence to individual parents will be placed in pupil files.
- **E mail:** The school has a email system it uses to communicate with parents. Any communication that needs to be sent to parents using this system must be approved by the HT. If a parent communicates with the school using email, a copy should be printed. Staff should forward relevant emails from parents to the HT and should always do so if the content is a complaint. A hard copy of any email sent to a parent or received by staff from a parent should be filed and a copy stored in the school office. The same applies to all internal mail, email transmissions concerning pupil matters. All emails requiring an answer should be responded to with in 48 hours (2 school days).

- Telephone calls: Staff should check their phone messages each day. A file note will record details of the conversation. Office staff should not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call.
- Social Networking Sites/Blogs: Staff will not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites or accept them as “friends”.
- **Written Reports:** Once a year, we provide a full written report to each child’s parents on their progress in each area of learning. This report identifies areas of strengths and areas for future development. Pupils are also given an opportunity to comment on their progress. **Interim termly target setting reports will also be provided.**

In addition, parents meet their child’s teacher **twice** during the year for a private consultation at Parents’ Evening with an option to meet for a third time following the end of year report. Parents of SEND children will meet with their class teacher three times a year, in addition to parents evenings. This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child’s successes, and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for improvement. We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child’s progress or well-being.

When children have particular education needs, or if they are making less than expected progress, parents will be invited to meet with their child’s teacher more regularly.

We will also make reasonable adjustments to our arrangements if this will enable a parent with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our school, or to receive and understand communication.

- **School Prospectus:** The school prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of provision in our school. This is updated every year and placed on the web-site.
- **School Website:** The school website provides information about the school and is an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience.

Home-School Communication

- Home School Agreement discussed annually with parents.
- Home visits during the first two weeks of the Autumn Term for those families with children in the Reception Class.
- A school newsletter is sent to parents/carers each week through Scholarpack with paper copies available on request or sent to parents who are not on the Scholarpack list. It contains general details of school events and activities. We send other letters of a general nature when necessary and store copies on the school’s website.

- Children in all classes have a reading diary/record. This enables parents to record a wide range of information about their child's reading.
- Children receive homework during the week. In KS2 (juniors) written communication about homework should be noted in school planners. The school encourages parents to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. Teachers will arrange to see parents as soon as possible. Some parents, especially of the younger children, have the opportunity to have a brief word with the teacher before and after school.
- We arrange various meetings for parents throughout the year. Parents are invited various curriculum meetings as appropriate. Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content and arrangements. Several meetings for new parents are organised at an appropriate time for them to receive information prior to their child starting at the school.

Curriculum Support

To ensure parents are informed of the expectations for a particular year group, parents are provided with the expectations for the year. These are available on the school website in addition. We also provide parents with support materials on how to support their child eg, SATs information, Phonics assessment information, Maths – Reach for the Skies Programme.

Safeguarding

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm; that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that St Mary's CE School should provide a safe and secure environment. We are the people most in contact with our children, and we are therefore in a unique position to identify and help any child needing protection. So when any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed to the Designated Lead for Children Protection, or the Deputy Designated Lead, who may share this information with Social Services.