

St Richard's CE Primary School



Communications Guidelines

2024-25

Introduction and aims

To support St Richard's CE Primary School in its aim to become a thriving and successful school we must communicate effectively with each other. We believe that clear, honest, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education and participation in school life
- Helps the school improve, through feedback on what is working well and whether areas of school life can be improved
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible.

The school's primary function is to provide a high-quality education to the pupils at St Richard's CE Primary School. Its resources, and therefore staff time is heavily focused on this moral purpose, and it is important that means of communication supports this. Staffing is a finite resource and therefore the school needs to strike a clear balance in order to ensure the progress made by pupils is maximised, and that the most effective means of communication is utilised. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are open, honest, respectful, ethical and professional.

School Office Opening Hours

The school office is open between 0830-1600 every school day.

Contact details

The school holds emergency contact details for all children on the School Information Management System (Integris). Families are expected to inform the school immediately if contact information needs to be revised/updated. Depending on the nature of the information being shared, the school will use the most practicable means to contact families.

Definition of communication

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It involves the management of relationships and the need to involve people. Communication is as much about attitude and behaviour as it is about message.

We aim to communicate with parents and the school community in the following ways:

- Electronic Information – school website and email services
- Written Information - Policies, letters, newsletters and information leaflets (as required and on request)
- Telephone Communication
- Informal/formal meetings

Electronic communication:

- Our school website contains policies, newsletters and term dates, class organisation information, curriculum information, management information, interesting links
- Reporting absences can be done via our Study Bugs App which is monitored each day during the working week during term time
- Parents can contact school via email. Our email address is info@srsa.richmond.sch.uk Parents and external service providers are welcome to contact all school staff through this central point. All emails are treated with full confidentiality and may be forwarded to staff as appropriate
- During term time, we aim to acknowledge all emails within 3 working days between 0830-1600, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 working days. If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school
- Staff are not expected to reply in the evenings or weekends

Written information:

As a school we try to be as paperless as possible and send the majority of our communication via our Scopay platform. Typically, we send:

- Information about school events and activities sent out to parents as necessary – some may require a Google Forms link to be completed and returned to school
- Trip letters will be sent out with adequate notice and will contain any relevant information (e.g. lunch / clothing requirements) as well as information linked to consents and voluntary contributions via Scopay

- A calendar of school events will be produced at the start of each term and communicated via the school Newsletter and on the school website
- A Home-School agreement completed as children enter school and which outlines key expectations, roles and responsibilities in partnership working
- In Reception and Key Stage 1, all children are allocated a home/school diary to support their learning and especially their reading development and progress. The home/school diary may contain notes or comments from their teacher
- Children may come home with a note about a minor injury treated with first aid. If staff have serious concerns regarding injury or bumps to the head, parents will be contacted immediately. Parents will always be contacted regarding a head injury
- Individual letters/information may be sent home when the school is responding to the requirements of the behaviour policy or the SEND policy. This may also be sent in response to communication from parents asking a specific question or raising a concern. The importance of this will be judged and responded to by letter, phone or meeting within an appropriate time frame
- Documentation relating to SEND (including professional reports, annual review documentation and SEN support plans) will be sent to parents/carers via the secure email system, Egress, to ensure confidentiality
- Our Newsletter is sent out each Friday via Scopay and contains important reminders, dates and messages for the week ahead. Families are strongly encouraged to read the weekly newsletter. The newsletter can also be accessed on the school website

From parents/carers to school:

Letters can be handed into, or posted to, the school office. As with emails all letters will be treated with full confidentiality and distributed to 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.

Telephone communication:

- Parents are asked to contact the school by phone or the Study Bugs App if their child is unwell. If calling, the call will be picked up by answering machine prior to 8.30am. Please leave a message
- The school will telephone parents if their child is unwell or has a serious accident in school
- **Parents and carers should ideally contact the school by calling the school office on 020 8940 7911. This is the most efficient method of communication**
- Parents are welcome to speak to the Head Teacher or member of the Senior Leadership team by making an appointment via the school office. We will endeavour to arrange meetings as soon as possible, depending on prior commitments
- The class teacher or Head Teacher may phone the parents to discuss a concern if they have been unable to see the parent at the end of the day

Informal/Formal Meetings:

- If necessary parents can visit the school to ask questions, gain support or to have the opportunity to talk about their child/home issues with either the Head Teacher, Senior Leaders, or Class Teacher. Parents are asked to phone the school office on 020 8940 7911 to make an appointment. An informal meeting will be arranged with the appropriate staff member as soon as possible
- The Head Teacher and other Senior Leaders are regularly available on the school gate at the start of the day and in the playground at the end of the day to speak with parents
- The office staff are available to accept daily information/messages from parents and pass it along to teachers where necessary
- At the end of the school day, teachers are available to discuss matters of the day with parents. They may ask parents to come inside for a discussion, or a parent may at this time approach the teacher to discuss something. The teacher will assess whether they can deal with it instantly or whether they will need to book an appointment for another time. This may be because the teacher has another commitment straight after school
- Formal Parental Meetings (Learning Conversations) are held twice a year in Autumn and Spring, usually in person although they could be online. Prior to these meetings parents have an opportunity to come into school to look at their child's work. The learning conversation meeting is a structured and systematic approach to dialogue between teacher, parent and child. The planned approach intends to enhance relationships around the shared purpose of improving educational achievement. With parents engaging with teachers/schools, all gain new knowledge which can be used to support children's progress. Therefore children are invited to join the conversation for most of the meeting
- Parents of children with SEND are invited to discuss their child's SEND support arrangements and progress if more detailed conversations are required beyond the learning conversation. These meetings can be arranged with the class teacher and SENCo and will take place as soon as is practicable
- Parents of children with an Education and Health Care Plan are invited to attend annual reviews

Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Monitoring the implementation of these guidelines
- Ensuring that communication is efficient allowing the school to focus on its primary purpose

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's internet acceptable use policy

- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)
- Staff will aim to respond to communication during core school hours between 0830 and 1600, or their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a manageable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are not expected to do so
- Teachers will not respond to requests to contact parents or to come out of class to meet a parent during times when they are responsible for a class. Staff will aim to provide an initial acknowledgement/response to emails within 3 days. Senior leaders may decide who responds to a communication dependent on its nature and who is best placed to respond or manage it

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times and is in line with the Home School Agreement which will be shared annually
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Ensuring that we have up-to-date contact details (phone and email) and at least 2 other people to contact in case of emergency
- Checking all communications from the school, sent via email or text message
- Emails should be succinct and to the point: less than 8 lines is appreciated
- Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our [Dealing with Aggressive visitors](#). Parents should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours or during school holidays
- Parents are asked not to approach teachers to discuss their child if they meet them outside of school as this does not allow for confidential discussion

Although it is a rare occurrence, when communication becomes inappropriate, aggressive, vexatious, persistent, or disproportionate and the school deems it is unacceptable, then actions will be put in place. This behaviour will not be tolerated and may result in a parent/carer being banned from the premises. These actions will involve: the headteacher, senior management and the school Chair of Governors, and if appropriate, the police. As stated on the first page 'communications should be honest, respectful, ethical and professional', staff will strive to adhere to this and hope this will be reciprocated by the wider school community.

Monitoring and Review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of these guidelines and we will review them annually.