



St George's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Communication Policy

Policy No

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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. Through, 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 George'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 Core Values and Academy 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, 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 academy.
- To use open channels of two-way communication to keep the leadership team and colleagues informed.
- To be proactive in keeping informed and update 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, teaching assistant meetings, lunchtime supervisor meetings, phase meetings.
- 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, 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 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 a written academy diary for the term ahead and one is displayed on the board in the staffroom.
- The school diary is accessible on line and all members of staff can access it.
- Events are discussed in advance at meetings but staff also have the responsibility to check future actions.
- The diary for the coming week is discussed within weekly briefing meetings.
- 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.
- 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

6.1. Email

We ask parents to email admin@stgeorges.derby.sch.uk. For the purposes of administration we require all emails to go to a central email address. However, 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. We will respond to parents' emails within 2 working days (during term time; to cover sickness and investigations).

6.2. 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. 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 01332 766815. 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 welcome to visit, 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 01332 766815. 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 8.00 am) or after school (3.15 – 4.30 pm) to fit in with parents.

7. Academy prospectus and website

Our prospectus and website contain a range of specified information to give parents and carers, and the wider public, a full picture of provision at our academy. We update this for each new academic year.

8. Home-school communication

- A calendar of events will be produced at the start of the 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.
- There is a Home / Academy agreement which will be sent home at the beginning of the year for parents to sign and return.
- 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, and for Year 2 and 6 parents and carers each October, 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 Summer 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. Termly Learning Conferences

Parents and carers meet with their child's teacher twice during the year for Termly Learning Conferences. These take place in the Autumn and Spring term and include the teacher, pupil 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 www.pupilrewardpoints.co.uk. A log-in is required. If you do not have one, please contact the office.

Where possible it is more effective for parents/carers to attend the consultation together so that a common approach to supporting the child in their learning can be agreed. If exceptional circumstance mean this is not possible we will endeavour to arrange separate consultations.

11. Parentmail

- We encourage all parents to register to the parentmail service, to allow them to access a quick and efficient method of communication with the Academy. Those who do not have access to parentmail will receive a paper copy of any correspondence.
- Parentmail is used to send out a variety of information, either to a targeted group, or to all parents on parentmail. Text messages, the newsletter, information about whole school events and all letters relevant to all pupils are sent out to all parents on parent mail and in addition, some specific communications regarding trips and events are sent out to the relevant groups of parents.

12. Governors

A notice board detailing the names of governors is on the school website. Governors should be contacted via the academy (email: admin@stgeorges.derby.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 management of the academy, governors will be unable to respond and will direct them to take their concern to the academy.

13. Communication with the Community

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. 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. St George's Catholic Voluntary Primary Academy is a part of the St Ralph Sherwin Multi-Academy Trust and also works closely with a cluster of Catholic primary schools in Derby City. 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, the Library Service, the Peripatetic Music Service, the EWO 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 George'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 2022