

# **Communications Policy**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 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. Good communication between the school and the home is essential, and children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents 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 with 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 the school and their children's education.
- 1.3 We have various strategies for communicating with parents. Some of our communications are in accordance with a statutory requirement; while others simply reflect what we believe is important for our school.
- 1.4 We try to make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We use an easy-to-read font, and add pictures wherever appropriate. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the cultural groups represented in our school. We make emailed electronic versions of documents available through 'In Touch'. Parents have access to the VLE to support communications and email to individual teachers and the Headteacher.

## **2 Home-school agreement**

- 2.1 Our home-school agreement has been in place since September 1999. It is a requirement of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. It explains the school's aims and values, the school's responsibilities towards the children, the responsibilities of parents, and what the school expects of the children. We ask parents to sign this agreement when their child starts at our school, and to renew it each year.
- 2.2 The agreement covers the standard of education in our school, the ethos of the school, and our expectations regarding attendance, behaviour, and homework. Our governors review the agreement annually.

## **3 Annual written report to parents: children's achievements**

- 3.1 Every year we provide a written report to each child's parents on the child's progress in the various National Curriculum subjects. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. In our school we ask the children to comment on their own progress, and we ask parents to make a similar comment. Teachers are asked to report their 'Teacher Assessed Levels

of Attainment' in Reading Writing & Maths and we also give children in Year 2 and Year 6 the details of their performance in the national tests, and details of national comparisons.

- 3.2 As well as receiving the annual written report, parents are provided with the opportunity to meet their child's teacher each term for a private parent-teacher consultation. 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. Parents are able to see their child's work during these meetings. Parents are also given current assessment level and targets for the end of the year. We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being at any time throughout the academic year.
- 3.3 When children have Special Educational Needs, or if they are making less than the expected progress, we find it helpful to meet with parents more regularly. A child, whose progress is causing concern, or a child who has identified Special Educational Needs (SEN) will be reviewed and supported in line with the current Local Authority (LA) 'Code of Practice' and within school policy, protocol and procedures. Parents/carers will be kept informed of all monitoring outcomes and educational provision made.  
**(Ref. SEN Policy)**
- 3.4 We welcome the presence of any other adult the parent wishes to invite to a school meeting such as an interpreter, support or liaison eg Parent Support Services. We will also make any 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 a communication.

#### **4 School Prospectus**

- 4.1 The school prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of provision at our school.

#### **5 Public access documents**

- 5.1 The school makes a range of documentation available to parents. We keep a main set in the school office and we make a copy of this available on request. It contains minutes of governors' meetings, and all school policies, including those that the governing body are required to draw up in relation to the following matters: **Charging and Remissions, Sex Education, Health and Safety, Curriculum Policies, Performance Management, Admissions, and Action Planning following an inspection.** It also contains a range of national and Local Authority documentation. Many policies are now available on the website for parent access.

#### **6 Home-school communication**

- 6.1 We send a newsletter to parents (hardcopy or electronic) every two weeks throughout the term. It contains general details of school events and activities.

Parents expect the newsletter, and appreciate the regularity of the contact. We send other letters of a general nature when necessary, such as:

- Progress Meetings
- Letters re. out-of-school visits – payments, confirmation and approval
- Invitations to SEN Meetings, School Performances, Sporting Events...
- Letters regarding curriculum enrichment activities – music, sport, Modern Foreign Languages etc
- Information about assemblies

- 6.2 At the beginning of each term all teachers write to the parents of the children in their classes with details of the work to be covered during the forthcoming term; our 'Projection of Work' letters. We invite parents to support their child's work through discussion and shared interest. We also invite parents to take part in any educational visit that is linked to the work, recognising their valuable contribution to our curriculum enrichment activities. Parents are informed of the teachers email addresses for any communication.
- 6.3 Children in Years 1 – 6 have Homework Books, which are sent out and returned on agreed days each week (ref. timetable on Projection letters); The work returned is marked and feedback to pupils and parents is on a regular weekly basis. **(ref. Homework Policy and Marking Policy)**
- 6.4 The school encourages parents and carers to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. Teachers see parents immediately, if at all possible. Where this is not possible, the parent makes an appointment. We provide the opportunity for many parents to have a word with the teacher when they bring their children to school, or when they collect them after school; we find that this 'immediacy' and 'availability' enhances the home-school communication.
- 6.5 We arrange 'Curriculum Meetings' for Parents. These are mainly evening meetings to explain areas of our curriculum as requested by parents/carers through either verbal feedback or through parent questionnaires.
- 6.6 We hold a meeting for new Foundation Stage parents each May, and either schedule a meeting for Year 2 and Year 6 parents each March, or communicate by letter, regarding the national statutory tests. We also hold a meeting in June for Y2 parents regarding their child's move into KS2.
- 6.7 If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, we contact a parent (by telephone, if possible) to find out the reason for the absence. **(ref. Attendance Policy)**
- 6.8 Letters are sent to parents in response to a child obtaining 3 'entries' on the 'Class Behaviour Tracking Sheet' on any particular day in the school week; this would result in a child losing 'Golden Time'. The letters are sent from the class teacher and signed by the KS Coordinator. If a child receives more than 3 entries on the 'Tracker' then communication would be made between the child and the Headteacher (HT) or the HT and parents/carers. **(ref. Behaviour Policy)**

6.9 Consultation and Communication Questionnaires will be issued each year. These may take the form of an online electronic response, (NFER Parent Survey) or a hard copy form (based on OFSTED questions).

## **7 Communication with other schools and outside agencies**

7.1 Toward the end of their final term in Year 6, we pass on information about the children to their intended secondary schools. We try to give a view of the whole child, and we include their expected national test results, their strengths and weaknesses, their interests and responsibilities (e.g library monitor, sports team captain, school council representative, playground friend, etc). There is also an electronic transfer of further information about the child, organised by the government. We may also send on several items of work. We also arrange visits for named children to attend ‘welcome sessions’ in addition to those arranged for Y6 as a whole.

7.2 We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on better ways to meet these needs, so that children may participate more fully. Support comes from medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), from child development centres, from local and LA doctors and specialists, and from school nurses. It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as Education Welfare, Social Services and Behaviour Intervention units.

7.3 We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our 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 abused children. So when any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the headteacher, who may share this information with the Social Services.(ref. **Child Protection Policy**)

7.4 We hold information on pupils in our school, 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.

## **8 Communication within our school**

8.1 So that all staff know what is going on daily, the school VLE has a noticeboard for messages. All staff have access to read and write messages.

8.2 A ‘Week To View’ is available for all staff. On the reverse of the sheet are extracts from the ‘Monitoring and Evaluation Schedule’ and the ‘Assessment Reporting & Recording Schedule’ relevant to that week

- 8.3 Staff and parents are issued with 'Dates for the Diary' and 'Term Dates' at the beginning of the academic year, and at the beginning of each term. Amendments are sent when necessary.
- 8.4 Staff receive timetables at the beginning of each term, or when significant alterations have been made, for:
- Staff Meeting agendas
  - Phase Meeting agendas
  - Collective Worship rota (i/c themes/content)
  - Playground Duty rota
  - Hall use
  - Outside Games – use of playground/field
  - ICT Suite use
- 8.5 Written communications are delivered through the VLE, pigeonholes or by e-mail.
- 8.6 Supply teachers are provided with a 'Supply Teachers Handbook'. This contains information about the school organisation, management and expectations. Supply Teachers are expected to complete a 'daily report form' for the class teacher (ref. Supply Teacher Handbook)
- 8.7 Work Placement Students and Initial Teacher Training / Graduate Teacher Training Students are issued with a '**Work Placement Handbook**' which they collect as part of their 'Work Placement' Interview' scheduled at least a week before placement with the Work Placement Coordinator or their mentor.
- 8.8 Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff, unless permission has been sought and granted
- 8.9 Handouts/Information/Guidance relating to SEN is to be kept in an agreed SEN File
- 8.10 Policies are reviewed in accordance with the '**Policy Review Schedule**' (or earlier if required).
- 8.11 Course feedback is provided by those attending INSET at the next scheduled Staff Meeting (this is a 'standing agenda item').
- 8.12 Lesson Objectives/Lesson Outcomes: The use of Learning Objectives – We Are Learning To (WALT) and Success Criteria supports communication of teaching intentions and expected learning outcomes with the pupils – **ref. Teaching and Learning Policy**
- 8.13 Minutes are kept for many school meetings, and unless agreed as being 'confidential', are open to all:
- Staff Meetings
  - Senior Management Team Meetings
  - Governor Meetings and sub-committees

- 8.14 Outcomes of Monitoring and Evaluation: All feedback from lesson observations will be made within 24 hours to the named observee, and general outcomes will be reported to staff and governors as a pre-determined/agreed date. (**ref. Monitoring and Evaluation Policy**)

## **9 Electronic communication**

- 9.1 We use the VLE and e-mail ([office@st-bartholomews.leics.sch.uk](mailto:office@st-bartholomews.leics.sch.uk)). There are many benefits, but also a number of possible dangers. Rules for the use of the Internet are contained in our 'Internet Policy'. (Safeguards in our school include constant adult supervision, sites being filtered by our service provider, controlled links, and the use of child-friendly search engines.)
- 9.2 Our school website. ([www.saintbarts.co.uk](http://www.saintbarts.co.uk)) provides information about the school, and an opportunity to celebrate the 'life of our school' with the worldwide learning community.
- 9.3 Parents are required to sign permission slips for their child to use the Internet in school. A record of those who do not have permission, is held by each class teacher, and by the school office. (**ref. Internet Policy**)

## **10 Use of photographs and names**

### **Ref. Code of Practice No.22: 'Images of Children and Young People'**

- 10.1 Photographs are used in and around the school for many purposes, including displays of pupils work and achievements, and records of important school events.
- 10.2 We may use photographs of children or their work when communicating with parents and the wider community, in newsletters, in the school prospectus, on the school website, or in the governors' report to parents. The local or national press may on occasion publish photographs of children participating in events at school.
- 10.3 Parental permission must be obtained before using photographs of children of their work as detailed in 10.2 above. Parents will want to know the policy to be used. Lists of those children for whom permission has NOT been given will be held by each class teacher, and by the school office.
- 10.4 Photographs will be checked to ensure that they are suitable (photos of children in swimwear would be unsuitable, as would individual and close-up shots).
- 10.5 Photographs used will not be captioned with children's names. Even on the school website only children's first names will be used.

## **11 Monitoring and Review**

- 11.1 This policy will be regularly monitored, and will be reviewed in three years, or earlier if required.