Holy Trinity

A learning Community Providing Catholic and Church of England Education for All

Communication Policy

Rationale

Effective communication enables us to share and demonstrate our aims and values across the school community. It helps parents and carers to carry out the important role of supporting their children and the school and staff to carry out their roles within a large and complex school community. We aim to ensure that communication between all members of the school community is clear, professional and timely.

Objectives:

All communications at Holy Trinity should:
- Keep staff, pupils, parents and carers and other stakeholders well informed
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon free language which can be easily understood by all
- Be actioned within a reasonable time
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context and audience and be accessible where there are barriers to communication
- Take account of relevant school policies e.g. Confidentiality, Safeguarding, Equalities

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Governors** are responsible for monitoring the application of this policy
- The **Headteacher** is responsible for ensuring that the school establishes effective communication protocols with stakeholders and that these are complied with.
- All **staff** are responsible for
  - Responding to communications in a timely manner, in line with the protocols
  - Responding to communications within school hours (approximately 8am – 6pm) and not at weekends, in school holidays or late evening or in the case of part-time staff on days off.
  - Keeping a log of telephone conversations and meetings with parents. When writing up notes from conversations staff must be mindful that they are writing for a range of audiences, therefore clarity and professional standards are required.
  - Ensuring emails/texts or printed paperwork and letters are shared with relevant staff to ensure personal safeguarding, collective understanding and comprehensive pupil records.
  - Ensuring that they use only the school e-mail system, the school telephone system and the school texting system to communicate with parents. No communications from personal e-mail addresses, personal telephones or personal mobile devices is acceptable.
  - Using the pupil planner/book bag as a means of communicating with home.
  - Distributing letters and communicating messages to pupils as required
  - Providing updates for the school website as required.
- **Parents and carers** are responsible for
  - Ensuring that the school is informed of known absences of their child(ren) and any other circumstances which may impact on their school life.
  - Signing the pupil planner on a weekly basis (in the secondary phase).
  - Ensuring that all contact information for them held by the school is current.
  - Following school protocols if they wish to speak to a member of the school staff
  - Reading the key communications issued by the school
  - Responding to communications from school where appropriate
- **Pupils** are responsible for
  - Ensuring that any communication from school is shared with parents and carers
  - Ensuring that any communication from home is shared with the relevant members of staff
  - Recording information in their planners including homework (secondary pupils).

Approach

Communication between staff, Parents and carers and Other Stakeholders

Guidance for Staff

- Effective communication with parents and carers is vital in reinforcing the important role that they play in supporting their children and the school. Staff should always seek to establish open and positive relationships with parents and carers. However, relationships must remain professional.

- **Written communication from parents and carers:** Staff will endeavour to reply to queries as quickly as possible. They will be acknowledged within three working days and a reply sent within ten working days. Copies of letters or e mails should be sent to line managers and heads of standards / key stage coordinators so that reference can be made to them in pupil files. E-mail sent should be written professionally, in the same way as a letter. Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils, parents and carers or conduct any school business using personal email addresses.

- **Telephone Calls:** Where a member of staff makes a phone call to a stakeholder, staff should take notes about the content of the telephone call, detailing the main points of discussion and action required / taken. Copies of notes should be forwarded to line managers and heads of standards / key stage coordinators so that reference can be made in pupil files. Where a stakeholder contacts the school, they will be directed to the Head of standards or the Head of Department for a subject specific enquiry. Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils, parents and carers or conduct any school business using personal telephone numbers.

- **Meetings with parents and carers:** Meetings may be requested **by** parents through the Reception or directly **with** parents by members of staff. An appropriate room should be arranged for the meeting to take place. Notes should be taken of action agreed and any follow up and shared as appropriate including with the parents involved. Members of staff may ask for line managers to accompany them.

- If a meeting is taking place outside normal school hours, the member of staff should try, where possible, to ensure that another colleague is available. Meetings should always be professional and respectful. A meeting may be called to a close in the event of a stakeholder becoming distressed or abusive in order to allow time for further investigation. The member of staff should report such an incident to their line manager and seek further advice.

- **Social Networking Sites/Blogs etc:** Staff may not communicate personally with parents and carers or pupils via social networking sites or accept them as their "friends".

- Information posted on the **school website, or the school Twitter or Facebook accounts** should be referred to members of SLT for checking. **Text messages** sent to parents through the school system are sent by designated office staff. Staff must check texts carefully for accuracy and clarity and must avoid sending unnecessary blanket texts to parents.

Guidance for Parents and Carers

- **Meetings with members of staff:** Any parent or carer wishing to meet with a member of staff should contact the school in advance and request a meeting. An appointment should be made within one week of a request being made. Parents and carers should not come to the school to talk to a member of staff without an appointment. Parents and carers should report to Reception prior to meeting with a member of staff. School staff should always be treated with respect and a meeting may be terminated if staff have concerns about the interaction or if further information is required to progress.

- **Parent e mail:** We encourage all parents and carers to inform the school of their current e-mail address. This helps to make communication more timely and efficient.

- **Reporting Pupil Progress:** Parents and carers receive progress reports 4 times a year. If they wish to discuss any aspects of the report, they should contact reception and they will be directed to the most appropriate person to deal with their enquiry. Parents and carers are

invited to meet their child's subject teachers once a year in the secondary phase and class teacher 3 times a year in the primary phase. We encourage parents and carers to contact the school if issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being. For everyday issues parents and carers should contact reception so that they can be directed to the most appropriate person to deal with their enquiry. Parents can view their child's latest report and information about attendance and behaviour / achievement points on the school gateway.

- **School Website:** The school website provides information about the school, promotes the school to a wider audience and advertises upcoming school events. Parents are encouraged to visit it regularly.

- **Public Access Documents:** Curriculum information, policies and copies of recent letters are available on the school website.

- **Home-school agreement:** This explains the school's aims and values, the school's responsibilities towards the pupils, the responsibilities of parents, and what the school expects of the pupils. We ask parents to sign this agreement when their child starts at our school, and to renew it each year.

- **Student Planners:** All students in the secondary phase are issued with a planner. This enables parents and carers to record information that they wish to share teachers and for teachers to communicate with parents and carers. Students record homework in their planners and, in order to help students to meet deadlines and to produce high quality homework, parents and carers should check planners for homework and sign the planner weekly. Form tutors and pupils should also sign the planner weekly.

- The **school newsletter** is published regularly (up to twice termly) and is sent to all parents and carers; it is also available on the school website.

- **Text messages** are sent to parents and carers to let them know when letters and other communications have been sent home so that they are not missed.

- **Parent Forum:** A coffee morning takes place on the first Friday of every half term to discuss current issues of importance to parents and carers.

- **Attendance:** If a pupil is absent from school and we have no indication of the reason we will try to make contact through a phone call. If this is not possible you will receive a text. Please refer to our attendance policy.

- In line with 'The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice' we aim to ensure that parents are kept fully up to date about their child's SEN provision. We give parents and carers the opportunity to meet at least 3 times each year. Please refer to the schools SEND Policy.

Communication between staff at Holy Trinity

- **Meetings:** There is a programme of meetings set out in the school calendar. All staff must attend these meetings. Staff should not plan other meetings and appointments at these times. For all formal meetings, notes should be taken and action points noted. These should be copied to relevant staff and to line managers / SLT.

- **E-mail:** Staff have a school email account to use for all school business. Staff may not engage in private/personal correspondence with a pupil. (This includes texting and media messaging) The sending of chain letters and the embedding of adverts is not permitted. E-mail can be an efficient way of communicating with colleagues and passing on information. However, it should not be used as a substitute for face to face contact. Unnecessary blanket e mails should be avoided as they lead to less effective communication.

- **Written Communication:** These are placed in staff pigeon holes in the staff room, which staff should check on a daily basis. Phone messages taken by office staff will also be placed in pigeon holes or sent via e mail, except in cases of emergency.

- **Staff Briefings:** Staff briefings take place at 8.30am. This is also the time when collective staff worship takes place. All staff must attend briefings unless on duty.

- **Policies:** Policies are reviewed in accordance with the 'Policy Review Schedule' (or earlier if required). They are all available for staff to read on the MLE and it is the responsibility of individual staff to read and adhere to all policies relevant to their work.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** All feedback from lesson observations will be made within 5 working days to the named observee, and general outcomes will be reported to staff and governors as a pre-determined/agreed date. (re. Monitoring and Evaluation Policy)

Communication with pupils

- All relevant information about events during the week is be communicated to pupils in the morning. In the secondary phase, this is during registration and during assemblies.
- Communication with pupils also takes place through the school website, pupil e mail, TV screens around school and noticeboards.
- Pupils have the opportunity to contribute to school policy and practices through the school council

Safeguarding

We are supported by and regularly communicate with various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on ways to meet pupils' needs of pupils. These agencies include Educational Welfare Services, Educational Psychologists and Social Care.

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. Any concerns about a child will be passed on to the safeguarding team in school, who may share this information with the Social Care. See Child Protection Policy.

Outcomes

- Stakeholders have access to the protocols for communication at Holy Trinity
- Information about forthcoming events is communicated within appropriate timelines
- Stakeholders receive timely responses to enquiries in line with this policy
- All communication is professional and in line with safeguarding guidelines
- All communication is treated as confidential within the school context
- Stakeholders are confident to contact school as appropriate and necessary
- Communication protocols strengthen links across the community and further the Mission, aims and ethos of the school

Links to other Policies and Documents

Complaints Procedure Statement   Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
Attendance Policy   Accessibility Plan
Behaviour Policy   e-Safety Policy
SEND Policy   Code of Conduct
Child Protection Policy   Home School Agreement
Data Protection Policy

Policy Review

This policy will replace the previous policy and will be reviewed in by the Governing Body every 3 years. The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body on 30th November 2017 and is due for review before December 2020.

30/11/2017

Signature …………………………………………..   Date ……………………
Head Teacher

Signature ……………………………………………….

30/11/2017

Date ……………………

Chair of Committee