St James Infant & Pre-School

Communication Policy

Statutory / Non-statutory

Annual review / 2 yearly review

Date policy adopted	May 2018					
Review date	May 2018	June 2020	June 2021	June 2022	June 23	Sept '25
Reviewer's name	S O'Shea	S O'Shea	GG	GG	SOS	SOS
Next review due by	June 2020	June 2021	June 2022	June 2023	June 24	Sept '27

Added:

22.7.26- Class Dojo access, Inclusion, emergencies and critical incidents

Aim

To ensure that St. James Infant 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.

Responsibilities

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 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

• A copy of the Staff Handbook is updated annually, providing staff with important information about the organisation and procedures within the school.
• Staff attend both formal and informal meetings: e.g. staff meetings, teaching assistant meetings, lunchtime assistant meetings, and curriculum meetings.
• All formal meetings should be structured and minuted, and members invited to contribute to the agenda.
• 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 handed to staff personally or emailed.
• The school calendar is accessible online and all members of staff can access it. Events are discussed in meetings, but staff also have the responsibility to check future actions.

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.
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. Parents have the opportunity to have a brief word with the teacher before and after school or make an appointment for a meeting.
Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional.

Communications with parents:

Letters: Any letter of complaint must be referred to the Headteacher immediately.
A year group curriculum letter is sent to parents each half term via Dojo. 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. All letters will be available on Dojo.
Class Dojo: Staff may choose to communicate class messages and notices using Class Dojo. Teachers can use this platform to communicate informal messages, such as reminders for trips or mufti days related to their class. Photos can also be uploaded. We limit the number of adults linked to each child's profile to the main primary carers. In most cases this is the parents. In some cases, where a child living arrangement is in place, other adults may be linked to the account. Staff are not expected to monitor or respond to messages during evenings, weekends or school holidays unless previously agreed as part of their role. Staff are not expected to monitor or respond to messages during evenings, weekends or school holidays unless previously agreed as part of their role.
E mail: The school has an email system it uses to communicate with parents. If a parent communicates with the school using email. Staff should forward relevant emails from parents to the HT and should always do so if the content is a complaint. All emails requiring an answer should be responded to within 48 hours (2 school days).
Telephone calls: Office staff will take written notes from callers and pass the details onto the member of staff. Some calls may be recorded.
Facebook: The school has two Facebook accounts: one for St. James Infant School, and another for St. James Infant School and The Abbey Academy combined. 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 and attainment 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.

Parents' Evening: 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.
IEP meetings: Parents of SEND children will meet with their class teacher and the SENCO 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.
School Prospectus: The school prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of provision in our school. This is given out annually to the parents of the new Reception and PreSchool cohorts, and to the parents of any other mid-year admissions.
Safeguarding Leaflet: Our school Safeguarding Leaflet will be given out on a yearly basis. It provides information about how we safeguard all children at St. James'.
School Website: The school website offers information about the school and provides an opportunity to promote the school to a broader audience.
Home visits: Home visits take place during the Autumn Term for those families with children in the Reception Class, and in the Autumn term, Spring term and Summer term for our new Poppies children.

Conduct
It is expected that both parents and staff use all methods of communication in a professional and courteous manner, particularly on-line methods of communication, eg. Facebook. Grievances and complaints must be dealt with in a confidential manner with the Headteacher and Governing Body as stated above.
Any personal or derogatory comments about staff or the school will be removed and the complainant will be spoken to by the school.

Inclusion and Accessibility

At St James Infant School, we are committed to ensuring that all families can access information, participate fully in school life and communicate effectively with the school, regardless of their language, disability, literacy level or individual circumstances.

Where appropriate, the school will make reasonable adjustments to ensure communications are accessible to all families. These may include:

- Providing translated letters or key documents where practicable.
- Accessing interpreter or translation services for meetings where English is not a family's first language.
- Offering face-to-face meetings or telephone conversations instead of written communication where this better meets a family's needs.
- Making reasonable adjustments for parents and carers with disabilities in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Supporting families with limited literacy by explaining written information verbally.
- Ensuring meeting venues are accessible and making adjustments to enable parents with mobility needs to attend.
- Offering flexible meeting times where reasonably possible to accommodate work commitments or exceptional family circumstances.

Where parents require additional support to engage with school, the school may involve the Family Support Worker, SENDCo or other appropriate professionals to help facilitate effective communication and strengthen home-school partnerships.

All staff are expected to communicate in a respectful, inclusive and non-judgemental manner, ensuring information is clear, jargon-free and accessible. Staff should check that important information has been understood and provide opportunities for parents to ask questions or seek clarification where needed.

Communication During Emergencies and Critical Incidents

In the event of an emergency or significant incident, the Headteacher or a designated member of the Senior Leadership Team will coordinate all communications. Information will be shared as quickly as possible once it has been verified. Whilst the school recognises that parents will naturally seek immediate information, it is essential that communication is accurate rather than speculative.

The school will communicate with parents during, or following, situations including, but not limited to:

- School closure due to severe weather, loss of utilities or other unforeseen circumstances.
- Partial school closures.
- Lockdown or invacuation procedures.
- Critical incidents affecting the school community.
- Public health incidents, including infectious disease outbreaks.
- Major site emergencies or building issues.
- Transport disruption affecting school opening or closing arrangements.
- Other incidents where parents need to take immediate action.

Where appropriate, communication will normally be issued using the following methods, in order of priority:

1. **Arbor/Class Dojo** - urgent notifications and messages sent directly to parents.
2. **Email** - where more detailed information or updates are required.

The most appropriate communication channels will be selected according to the nature and urgency of the situation.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Ensure that the school holds up-to-date contact details, including telephone numbers, email addresses and emergency contacts.
- Regularly check Class Dojo and email during periods of disruption.
- Follow instructions provided by the school and avoid attending the school site unless specifically requested to do so.
- Refrain from telephoning the school unless absolutely necessary during a major incident, as telephone lines may be required for emergency services and safeguarding purposes.
- Avoid sharing unverified information or speculation on social media, as this may cause unnecessary concern within the school community.

In the event of a lockdown or safeguarding incident, the school may be unable to communicate immediately whilst staff prioritise the safety and welfare of pupils and staff. Parents are asked to remain patient and wait for official communication from the school before taking any action.

Following any significant incident, the school will provide families with appropriate updates, information about any ongoing arrangements, and details of any support available for pupils, families and staff where necessary.

Record Keeping

Accurate, timely and secure record keeping is an essential part of effective communication and safeguarding at St James Infant School. Maintaining clear records ensures continuity of support for pupils, enables effective collaboration between staff and external agencies, and provides an accurate chronology of significant events and communications.

All records must be factual, objective, professional and completed as soon as reasonably practicable following the communication or meeting. Staff should record what was observed, discussed or agreed, avoiding personal opinion or assumptions unless clearly identified as professional judgement. Records must comply with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the school's Record Management Policy.

Safeguarding Children

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm; that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that St. James Infant 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. When any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy Designated Lead, who may share this information with Children's Services.

Written by S O'Shea
Written: May 2018 Reviewed: Sept '26