



'Living, Learning and Growing in the Love of God'

Communication Policy

Introduction

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It is through effective and interactive communication that information is transmitted, understanding is developed and shared, trust is built, confidentiality respected and action coordinated. Communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated. Good communication promotes partnership.

Aim

To ensure that Newland St. John's CE Academy is a thriving and successful school, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents, carers 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.

Objectives

All communications at Newland St. John's should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents, carers, 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.
- Take account of relevant school policies.
- Be compatible with our core values and School Development and Improvement Plan.

Responsibilities

This section details the responsibilities of the different groups within the school.

Senior leadership team (SLT)

- 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 school.
- To use open channels of two-way communication to keep the leadership team and colleagues informed.
- To check email regularly in order to keep up to date with school information.

Governors

- To ensure the use of trusted online spaces when communicating between governors or with the school.
- To use a variety of communication methods to promote & explain the work of the governors.
- To listen to people to hear what is being said about the school.
- To check email regularly in order to keep up to date with school.

Internal methods of communication

- All staff receive an induction pack providing them with important information about organisation and procedures within the school.
- An integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff both formal and informal: e.g. teachers' meetings, teaching assistant meetings, Office meetings, Key Stage meetings, whole staff meetings.
- All formal meetings should be structured and minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda.
- E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating information however it should not replace face to face meetings where discussion is required.
- Events are discussed in advance at meetings but staff also have the responsibility to check future actions.
- Weekly agenda and minutes are e-mailed out to staff.
- Reminders or letters to individual parents and carers are sent to classes to be given out by the class teachers and must be given to children the same day. Every class must have a system for distributing letters and other materials to go home with the children.
- The schools uses 'Teachers 2 Parents to communicate with parents and carers by text.

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, carers and the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents and carers well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents and carers play in supporting school.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents and carers, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end parents and carers should always be addressed in an appropriate manner. Staff should not accept friendship requests from parents, carers or pupils on social media.

We will try to make written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. The use of photographs of pupils will be limited to those whose parents and carers have provided written permission to do so. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions to our society by all cultural groups represented in our school.

Communications with Parents and Carers

Letters: Staff will respond to letters from parents and within 48 hours (2 school days). Any letter of complaint must be referred to the Head Teacher immediately. Letters to parents and carers must be approved by the Head Teacher before they are sent. Copies of all correspondence to individual parents and carers will be placed in pupil files.

E-mail/Text: The school has an e-mail/text system (Teachers 2 Parents) which it uses to communicate with parents and carers. Any communication that needs to be sent to parents and carers using this system must be approved by the Head Teacher. If a parent or carer communicates with the school using email with a complaint or a matter that requires an action, a copy should be stored in a digital file or printed & filed. Staff should forward relevant emails from parents and carers to the Head Teacher and should always do so if the content is a complaint. All e-mails from parents and carers requiring an answer should be responded to within 48 hours (2 school days). E-mail communications concerning a child are kept for the academic year in a digital folder unless they are required for evidence trailing, in which case a copy should be printed.

Telephone calls: Office staff will not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency.

Social Media Sites/Blogs: Staff are required not to communicate with parents and carers via social networking sites or accept them as “friends”. Staff will not accept pupils or ex-pupils as “friends”.

The school Instagram, Facebook and Twitter accounts will be used to advertise events at school, interesting activities which have taken place in school and to share successes of our pupils with parents/carers and the wider community. The site is restricted to members of staff who maintain a consistent approach to posts and only link with work related accounts for networking purposes.

Written Reports: We provide regular written reports to each child’s parents and carers on their progress. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. Pupils are also given an opportunity to comment on their progress.

Newsletters: Newsletters are produced weekly and placed on the school website. A text is sent out to parents and carers informing them of this, and that hard copies are available from the office on request.

In addition, parents and carers meet their child’s teacher/s during the year for a private consultation at a Parents Evening. We encourage parents and carers to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child’s progress or well-being. When children have particular education needs, or if they are making less than expected progress, parents and carers will be invited to meet with their child’s teacher more regularly. We will also make 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 communication. Parents and carers of children with an EHCP will have the opportunity to review the EHCP regularly.

School Website:

The school website provides an opportunity to share information about the school and is an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience.

Home-School Communication:

- Home School Agreements are signed on entry and at the beginning of each year.
- Home visits & pre-school visits take place during the summer term for those joining reception in the following September.
- The school newsletter is posted on the school website. Paper copies are available on request.
- Parents and carers will be texted if there is an unexpected cancellation of a club. A text will be sent to parents and carers if their child receives a minor bump to the head whilst at school. The pupil will also take a letter home. If a serious injury occurs at school, or if a pupil is too ill to stay at school, staff will telephone the parent or carer to request the pupil to be collected and, if necessary, taken for medical treatment. If a parent or carer cannot be contacted and a pupil requires medical attention, a member of staff will take the pupil to hospital/walk in centre or accompany them to hospital should an ambulance be called.
- Once a year a questionnaire is sent out to parents and carers and the results are analysed & used to improve the school.

We recognise that children's protection is a shared responsibility, and that Newland St. John's should provide a safe and secure environment. If any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed to the Designated Senior Person for Children Protection, or the Deputy DSP, who may share this information with Social Services.

How will this policy be monitored and evaluated?

This policy will be monitored through on-going school self-evaluation. The Head Teacher will use a variety of methods to evaluate this policy with staff, parents and carers and governors.

Other policies that might be of interest to you.

- Child Protection
- Complaints procedure
- Staff code of conduct
- Data Protection

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