



## Communication Policy

2024-2025

Ratification Table:

<b>Approved by: LGC</b>	<b>Date: 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024</b>
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	May 2024
<b>Next review due by:</b>	May 2027

## **Introduction and aims**

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible

A copy of this policy will be shared on the school website, accessible to all. Responsibility for all communication lies with the Principal and the Senior Leadership Team will provide a monitoring role.

## **Our Stakeholders**

- Children
- Staff
- Parent/carers
- Governors
- Newman Trust Members
- Wider School Community
- The local St Nicholas Community

## **Key Objectives**

All communications at St Nicholas should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents, and other stakeholders well informed
- Be open, honest, ethical, and professional
- Use jargon-free English and be easily understood by all
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context and audience
- Either be neutral or offer a balanced presentation of political views

## **Communication with parents and other important stakeholders**

Effective communications enable us to share our school aims and values as well as keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the vital role that parents play in supporting the school and their child/ren. Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, it is essential that relationships are professional and parents are addressed in a formal manner in all written communication, whatever the form.

St Nicholas aims to make our written communication as accessible and inclusive as possible; we will ensure that all parents can access a form of communication, making alternative arrangements where necessary (e.g., EAL (English as an Additional Language), SEN (Special Educational Needs), IT access or literacy issues). We will seek parental feedback on the school communication via our annual parent survey.

### **Communication Procedures**

The school office can be contacted between 8.30am and 4pm on school weekdays.

<b><u>Postal Address</u></b>	<b><u>Telephone</u></b>	<b><u>Email</u></b>	<b><u>Instagram</u></b>	<b><u>Facebook</u></b>
St Nicholas of Tolentine RC Primary School Pennywell Road Bristol BS5 0TJ	01173 772260	st.nicholas.p@bristol-schools.uk	Need to add link	Need to add link

<b><u>Message, Queries or Concerns</u></b>	<b><u>Person to contact</u></b>	<b><u>Our School offer</u></b>
If your child is absent from school	Please notify the school office each day of absence by 09.30 am either by telephone on 01173 772260 (where you can leave a message) or in person. Please note that this notification does not guarantee that absences will be authorised. Please ensure this is the only way you report an absence – if a message is sent via Class Dojo to the class teacher it may not be picked up and therefore may be unauthorised.	The office staff will contact you after 10am if they do not receive notification of absence. School will monitor whole school and individual pupil attendance. If a child's attendance drops below 96%, their attendance is monitored, and parents will receive a letter from the school or from Education Welfare Services.
If you have a quick message for your child's teacher about collection, concerns, home learning...	Talk to your child's teacher on the playground after the class has been dismissed; a member of staff will always be outside every afternoon. If you cannot speak to the class teacher directly, please be assured any messages will be passed on by members of staff. Urgent messages may be left at the school office or a message via class dojo if you do not get a chance to speak to the teacher.	Staff release the children from the classrooms at the end of the school day. This is the best time to speak to a member of staff. Always speak to the classroom teacher first, then arrange to speak to a member of the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) by contacting the school office.
If you would like to talk about your child's learning progress...	Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher via the school office or a message via class dojo. If, following your discussion you would like more information, make an	Every half term teachers produce a Topic Learning Web which contains the curriculum overview for their year group, this is shared via Class Dojo and the class page on the website. We hold

	appointment to meet with the relevant member of the SLT.	two parents' evenings throughout the year – one in the autumn term and one in the spring term. Reports are written and given to parents at the end of the academic year (July). Curriculum information, newsletters and updates can be viewed on the school website and Class Dojo.  Teachers also use class Dojo to pass on positive messages regarding your child's learning.
If you are concerned about social behaviours or bullying...	Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher via the school office. If, following your discussion you would like more information, make an appointment to meet with the relevant School Leader.	Behaviour is monitored and recorded on CPOMS. You will be informed via class dojo or a phone call home if there are any behavioural issues with your children. These will be dealt with immediately.
If you would like to discuss something related to your child's teacher...	Make an appointment to meet with the Headteacher via the school office	The aim is to resolve any concerns but should concerns remain or not felt to be addressed parents will be reminded of the school's complaints policy.
If you would like to discuss your child's special educational needs...	Make an appointment to meet with the SENCO (Special Educational Needs coordinators) via the school office email.	Parents of children with SEND will be invited to meetings throughout the academic year. Parents will be informed of their child's targets each term.
If you would like to find out about after school clubs or have a query...	Check the school website, email the office, or ask at the school office	Club lists are sent home at the start of each term to allow parents to register their child/ren for their chosen clubs.
If you have a payment query ...	Enquiries can be made to the school's office staff.	Every parent should be able to access ParentPay. ParentPay allows parents to check their payment history for trips, and other events.
If you have a school dinner enquiry...	Please contact the school office directly.	
If you wanted to check if the school is open...	Please check the school website, your Parent Mail or Bristol school closures online.	The School will communicate via Class Dojo, Parent Pay and the school website if the school were to be closed unexpectedly.  Reminders of INSET days, half terms and return dates are in all Newsletters. Class dojo announcements are used to

		remind parents when children return to school following a break.
If you have a query about your child's homework	Please message the class teacher via the Class Dojo chat	Homework expectations for your child's class will be set out at the start of the year with you. Any help with homework will be shared via Class Dojo

If having followed the steps above, and your question or concern is not resolved, please make an appointment with the school office to meet with the Principal or Vice Principal.

If you would like to contact the Local Governing Committee, they may be contacted directly, in writing, via the school office. All correspondence must be sealed and addressed to the Chair of the LGC, Mrs Colleen Collet.

### **Communication Via the following forms:**

#### **Formal Letters (sent via the school office)**

Staff will endeavour to reply to parents' letters as quickly as possible. Letters will be acknowledged in 2 working days from receipt and a reply sent within 10 working days. Letters must be approved by the Principal or a member of SLT before posting. Copies of correspondence with parents will be placed on the pupil's file and on CPOMs.

#### **Email**

Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information. However, it does not replace face-to-face meetings where some discussion is required. All e-mail should be treated as letters and should be checked carefully for technical errors and tone. Staff should acknowledge e-mails within 2 working days and if necessary, a reply will be sent via the office. **Under no circumstances will teaching staff contact pupils, parents or conduct any school business using personal email addresses.**

#### **Class Dojo**

Class dojo is used to celebrate events and learning in school. This is in the form of class pages and a whole school page. Parents are able to comment on the learning shared and must do so in an appropriate manner.

Weekly Newsletters and updates are shared with the whole community via Class Dojo. Class Dojo has the facility for parents to translate any messages to their home language.

Class teachers use this method of communication with parents and parents are able to communicate with teachers. Teachers will not respond to any messages via Class Dojo over the weekend or between the hours of 8.30am – 5pm Monday to Friday.

#### **Telephone Calls**

Staff should take notes about the content of telephone calls, as they would with meetings with parents. Notes from telephone calls, including main points of discussion and action required/taken should be logged and filed in their pupils file and on CPOMs.

If a child is absent from school and we have no indication of the reason, administrative staff will contact a parent on the same day, to find out the reason for the absence.

### **Parent Mail**

We encourage all parents to inform the school of their current e-mail address, to allow them access to Parent Mail through our MIS (Management Information System), which is a quick, economic, and efficient method for the school to communicate with parents. A record of those who do not have access to Parent Mail is maintained and they will receive a paper copy of any correspondence.

The newsletter, information about whole school events and all letters relevant to the whole school 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.

### **Meeting with Parents**

We encourage parents to contact the school if issues arise regarding their child's progress or wellbeing. For everyday issues parents should contact their child's class teacher as stated above. For persistent or serious issues, parents should contact the Principal or a member of SLT. Any parent wishing to meet with a member of staff should contact the school office in advance and request a meeting with that member of staff. This will then be arranged at a time convenient to both parties. The subject for that meeting should be shared in advance to help staff to be fully prepared to ensure the meeting is productive.

Parents should not come to the school to talk to a member of staff without an appointment. Staff members may be unavailable to meet should this happen.

Parents (like all visitors) should report to reception prior to meeting with a member of staff. If the meeting is due to take place outside office hours, separate arrangements can be made. If a meeting with a parent is taking place outside normal school hours, the member of staff may be accompanied by another colleague. It is perfectly acceptable to call a meeting to a close to allow time for further investigation.

When a pupil is accompanying a parent for a meeting, it is perfectly acceptable to ask a pupil to remain out of the meeting for part of it, particularly when a parent is critiquing a teacher or any aspect of the school. It is damaging to the relationship with the pupil for them to witness this, but parents may need to air particular feelings, and this is a useful mechanism for this. The teacher should not feel threatened at any time and is encouraged to stop a meeting, especially if they are meeting with the parent on their own.

### **Possible contentious meetings**

A member of staff may ask for another member of staff to accompany them and should always do so when the meeting may be contentious or vexatious in any way or if their input will add value to the meeting. When possible, a member of SLT will attend this meeting. The key

discussion points, actions and decisions will be recorded, records will be kept on the child's file on CPOMS.

Staff will call a meeting to a close in the event of the parent becoming angry or abusive. The member of staff will report such an incident to a member of the leadership team and seek further advice. The Principal will either accompany the member of staff to a further meeting with the parent or hold it without the original member of staff present.

### **Social Networking Sites/Blogs etc (Also see the Online Safety Policy)**

Staff will not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites nor accept them as their "friends." The exception is networks or blogs set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning.

### **Written reports**

Once a year, a full written report is sent to parents on their child's progress in each subject. The report identifies areas of strength and areas for further development. Pupils are also given the opportunity to comment on their own progress and parents are invited to make a comment.

In addition, parents meet their child's teacher twice a year, at parents' evening. When pupils have special educational needs, or if they are making less than expected progress or experiencing behavioural or disciplinary difficulties, we will meet with the parents three times a year.

### **School Website**

The school website provides information about the school and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience and provide guidance on admissions for prospective parents and pupils. It also has a regularly updated area for information for current parents. In addition, it has up-to-date policies available for parents to view. Copies of all newsletters to parents and information guides are also accessible through the website.

### **Public Access Documents**

Curriculum information, policies and copies of recent letters will be available on the school website. Key dates for the year (where possible) are sent out in September.

### **Home-school Communication**

A calendar of school events is available on the website and is updated on the key dates that are sent out in September, the upcoming terms dates are always shared in the newsletter. The school's newsletter is published weekly and is sent to all parents, it is also available on the school website. Members of the school will be invited and are encouraged to contribute appropriate items to the newsletter which should be e-mailed to the Principal.

Class Dojo is used by all class teachers to share information about pupils' with parents, sharing concerns or positive experiences in class.

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

Before joining new pupils are encouraged to visit in the school prior to starting. We offer taster days/sessions. We will contact the previous school to help gather key information to aid this

process. We will receive the individual pupil file and CPOMs records from the previous school once that child is on roll.

### **Visits from External Agencies (See also Equality Information and Objectives Policy)**

As part of our curriculum and extra-curricular provision, we will regularly invite guest speakers, experts, and representatives from a range of organisations and institutions to the school to speak to and engage with our pupils. Prior to these visits, we will agree the terms and content of their input into the provision and ensure that it is in accordance with our policies. From time to time, for PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) provision for instance, these individuals may represent partial groups or promote partial political views. Where this is the case, this will be clearly explained to pupils, along with the reasons for the partiality. We will also ensure pupils have access to alternative views, to give them access to a balance of views. No group or individual will be allowed to present views which are contrary to our Equality Information and Objectives Policy.

### **Safeguarding including Child Protection (See also Safeguarding Policy)**

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. Because of this when any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Leader, who may share this information with the Social Services.

We are supported by and regularly communicate with various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on ways to meet pupils' needs, to ensure that all pupils can participate fully in school life. Support comes from such services as Educational Welfare, Educational Psychologists, Social Care etc.

### **Complaints**

All formal letters of complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the school's separate Complaints Policy. Emails will NOT be treated as a formal letter of complaint. All formal letters to families must be approved by the Principal before they are sent. Formal correspondence with families will be kept in the child's personal folder and held for a period of time in accordance with our Disposal of Records Schedule. The school does not accept or act upon anonymous communication unless in relation to matters of serious Child Protection.

### **Confidentiality**

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. Parents have a right to view the information we hold, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed. (Please see our (GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation)) data protection policy)

### **Requests for Information**

Please refer to our Data Protection and GDPR Policy for copies of children's records, freedom of information and Subject Access Requests. This will detail procedures and protocols, including timings.

## **Final Note**

Although it is a rare occurrence, when communication becomes inappropriate, aggressive, vexatious, persistent, or disproportionate and the school deems it is unacceptable, then actions will be put in place, an example may be a Parent will not be able to make individual communication to a member of staff via class dojo. This behaviour will not be tolerated and may result in a parent/carer being banned from the premises. These actions will involve: The Principal, senior management and the school Chair of Governors, and if appropriate, the police.