



St Mary's and St Peter's C of E School

Home-School Communications Policy

We believe high standards of care and love are an integral part in the quality of teaching and learning across the whole curriculum. Our Christian vision of 'Life in all its fullness' is at the heart of our school and we believe that all within our community should be able to flourish and achieve their full potential.

Introduction

Home-School Communication is a vital element in ensuring all those within our school community are able to flourish and everyone is safe, happy and treated with respect. We believe that it is important to have clear and effective communication with all parents/carers as this has a positive impact on pupils' learning and at the same time reflects our Christian values of wisdom, hope, community and dignity.

We need to ensure that all communications are open, honest and respectful.

Aims

At SMSP we are very fortunate to have supportive parents/carers. This policy aims to set and maintain standards of communication that we expect all members of St Mary's and St Peter's school to follow.

We aim 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 within a reasonable time frame (see below).

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate;
- Regularly reviewing this policy.

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy;
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves).

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours or their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of

these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so. Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication during weekends or school holidays.

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times;
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff via info@ in the first instance;
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner;
- Checking all communications from the school.

How we Communicate with Parents

The sections below explain how we keep parents up-to-date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

Parents should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

We encourage all parents to inform the school of their current phone number and email address, to allow them access to Parentmail through our Management Information System, which is a quick, economic and efficient method for the school to communicate with parents.

We use **Parentmail** to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events;
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days);
- School surveys or consultations;
- Payments;
- Letters about trips and visits;
- Consent forms;
- Our weekly newsletter;
- Class activities or teacher requests.

We will **text** parents about:

- Short-notice changes to the school day;
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather).

We make **phone calls** about:

- Emergencies – If a child is unwell and needs to be collected, office staff will contact a parent. If a child is receiving medical attention from paramedics or an ambulance is on the way to school, office staff will contact a parent.
- Absences - If a child is absent from school and we have no indication of the reason, office staff will contact a parent on the same day, to find out the reason for the absence.

Parents receive **reports** from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing and their attendance;

- A report on KS2 SATs tests results.

We have several **planned meetings** during the course of the year.

- In September, we have year group 'meet the teacher' meetings to share the curriculum, trips, routines and additional information.
- Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content and arrangements.
- A meeting for new reception parents is held in the summer term.
- Additional meetings include workshops about phonics, maths, reading and wellbeing.
- We have Book Looks each term so that children can show their parents their work.

We hold **individual parent teacher meetings** in the autumn and spring terms. The autumn meeting is held through pre-arranged video call and the spring meeting is face-to-face. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement, progress or wellbeing, the curriculum, or any other area of concern.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress or wellbeing.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to review support plans.

Our school **website** includes a school calendar for the term and term dates for the year ahead. Our school **newsletter** includes dates of special events for the month ahead.

Where possible, we try to give parents at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special services / collective worship (assemblies), visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials).

Any such event will be included in the school calendar.

Key information about the school posted on our **website** includes:

- School times and term dates;
- Important events;
- Curriculum information;
- Important policies and procedures;
- Important contact information;
- Information about before and after-school provision;
- Information about school meals;
- Information about extra-curricular activities.

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

How Parents can Communicate with the School

Parents should use the list in appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and email address.

For general enquiries, parents can call the school office on 0208 943 0476.

Parents should always **email** the school, via info@smssp.richmond.sch.uk about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 3 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies;
- Safeguarding or welfare issues.

The school office will relay messages to the relevant staff member.

If parents would like to **schedule a meeting** with a member of staff, they should email the school office or call the school to book an appointment. We recommend they book appointments to discuss:

- Any concerns they have about their child's learning;
- Updates related to pastoral support, changes to their home / living arrangements, or their wellbeing.

Parents can speak directly to school staff before (Rec – Y4) and after school (Rec – Y6). However, parents will appreciate before school these messages need to be brief as teachers have a class waiting for them and it is important that we maximise teaching time.

Inclusion

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school.

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request support. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

The Governing Board

The role of the Governors is to steer the strategic direction and vision of the school, oversee the management of the school's finances and hold the Headteacher to account. Governors do not get involved in the day-to-day running and decision making at the school. However, if a parent feels they have the need to raise an issue with the Governors, please inform the Clerk to the Governors via the email address on the Governors' Page of the school website.

Complaints

It is in everyone's interest that concerns and complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. In the first instance, parents should speak to their child's teacher. If parents are dissatisfied, the next step is to make an appointment with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If the matter cannot be resolved, parents should follow the Complaints Procedure which is available on the school website.

Compliments

The school likes to hear what parents are happy with, so please tell us, we are always very pleased to hear or read compliments.

Friends

The Friends committee and class reps are all parents who keep other parents informed about arrangements for Friends events and reminders about specific year group events. If parents have any queries about anything other than Friends matters, these need to be addressed directly to the school.

Use of Social Media

Social media is an important tool for parent groups to liaise, plan and share information efficiently. Unfortunately, sometimes message threads get out of hand, and people can become at best misinformed, and at worst deeply upset by discussions on social media. To avoid distress to pupils, parents, staff and clergy, we ask that parents take a moment to consider what they post before they post. See Appendix 2.

Social media is not a forum for raising personal issues or complaints about the school, school staff and, in some cases, other parents or pupils. The Department for Education and the Governors of St Mary's and St Peter's School consider the use of social media being used in this way as unacceptable.

Any concerns parents may have about the school or their child must be made through the appropriate channels by speaking to the classteacher, the Senior Leadership Team or by following the school's complaints procedure. In this way, they will be dealt with fairly, appropriately and effectively for all concerned.

Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Senior Leadership Team.

Safeguarding

St Mary's and St Peter's school fully recognises its moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils and staff. Our Home-School Communications Policy is one of a range of documents which set out the safeguarding responsibilities of the school. We wish to create a safe, welcoming and vigilant environment for children, parents and staff where they feel valued and are respected.

Policy Date: Spring 2024

Review Date: Spring 2025

Appendix 1

Postal address	Telephone	Email
St. Mary's and St. Peter's CofE Primary School Somerset Road Teddington TW11 8RX	0208 943 0476	info@smsp.richmond.sch.uk
		Website
		www.smsponline.co.uk

Who	When & How	Why
School Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.00am - 4.00pm in person 0208 943 0476 info@smsp.richmond.sch.uk 	General enquiries, absences, trips, clubs, events, medicines, uniform, school meals, payments, family emergencies.
Teaching Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request an appointment via info@smsp.richmond.sch.uk Brief note to the teacher Brief chat after school 	Questions around teaching and learning or pastoral concerns.
SENDCo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> scolenso@smsp.richmond.sch.uk 	Questions around your child's special educational needs.
Senior Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> info@smsp.richmond.sch.uk 	If there has been an unsatisfactory outcome to your enquiry.
DSL - Designated Safeguarding Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> info@smsp.richmond.sch.uk 	Safeguarding concern.

Message, query, concern	Person to contact
If your child is absent from school or has an appointment.	Please notify the school office each day of absence by 8.55 am either by telephoning on 0208 943 0476 (press 1 for child absence) or by using the Parentmail app or in person. Please note that this notification does not guarantee that absences will be authorised.
If you have a quick message for your child's teacher about collection, concerns, home learning.	Talk to your child's teacher at the end of the day. Urgent messages may be left at the school office. Reception-Y4 have sign-up sheets on the classroom doors for collection notice.
If you are concerned about your child's progress.	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 a member of the Senior Leadership Team via the school office.
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 a member of the Senior Leadership Team via the school office.
If you would like to discuss something related to your child's teacher.	Make an appointment to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team via the school office.
If you would like to discuss your child's special educational needs.	Make an appointment to meet with the SENDCo via the school office.

If you would like to find out about extra-curricular clubs or have a query.	Check the school website or call the school office.
If you have a query about Breakfast Club or After School.	Contact KOOSA Kids 01276 21884
If you have a pay query.	Contact the school office.
If you have a school dinner enquiry.	Contact the school office.
If you wanted to check if the school is open.	Check the school website or your Parentmail.
If you have a safeguarding concern.	Make an appointment to meet with the DSL via the school office.
If you would like to make a formal complaint.	Follow the school's Complaints Procedure.

Appendix 2

When using social media, please use these reminders before you share:

- Am I posting in anger?
- Who might be able to read this?
- Could someone misinterpret what I am saying?
- Am I showing a bad side of myself?
- Should I wait and post this tomorrow?
- Am I revealing too much about myself / my child?
- Could someone be upset by my comment?
- Is there a better way to respond to this situation?

