



St Edward's School

Unity - Achievement - Faith

Communication Policy

Reviewed and Approved by Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes Committee

On: 11 June 2020

Reviewed and Ratified by the Full Governing Body

On: July 2020

This update (no.1) ratified on 10 September 2020

Next full review date: Summer 2021

SLT are responsible for oversight of this policy's implementation

Mission Statement

MAY WE BE ONE

In purpose – educating for life in all its fullness

In faith – encountering God who lives among us, calling us to unity

In dignity – nurturing confidence and maturity

In community – striving together for justice, love and peace

We encounter one another, as members of the school community, as unique individuals, deserving of dignity and respect. Whether student, staff or parent; our membership of this school community commits us to build unity of purpose, in striving together for justice, love and peace. Our communication, then, must reflect our own dignity, and a recognition of the dignity of another person. This policy describes how all of us will model a more peaceful world, for our children.

It is very important to St Edward's School that we work closely in partnership with parents and carers, and communication between home and school is key. We recognise however that it can often be difficult communicating with teachers because they have a very full timetable; and we recognise that parents and carers also have very busy lives. The school is limited in its capacity to manage situations that occur whilst a child is under the care of his or her parents, such as issues online, or events that take place outside of school hours/campus. We will always try and support such interventions as are necessary in these situations, but we recognise that the parent is the primary educator of the child in their care.

Contacting Us

Communication by email or student planner is our preferred method.

- Notes in student planners are by far the best way to get a message to a teacher promptly and should be used for the majority of everyday communication;
- the student is responsible for showing the note to the correct teacher. If you need to discuss something in more detail with a teacher, this is the best way to ask them to contact you when they are able. If needs be, please write a separate note for the student to give to the relevant teacher.

Teachers want to respond to parental queries at the earliest opportunity and will do their best to do so, however, most of a teacher's time is taken up with lessons, meetings, planning and preparation, or covering a lesson for an absent colleague. For clarification:

- Teachers are usually in meetings, on duty, or preparing for tutor time and lessons from 8.15am.
- Once a week they give their 20 minute morning break to be on duty and a 30 minute lunchtime, if not spent on duty or running activities, will be used for planning etc.
- After school, teachers will generally be on duty, in meetings or running after-school clubs. Therefore, they may not be able to respond on the day that the query is made.
- The school, in caring for its staff, has advised teachers that there is no expectation to respond to queries in their personal/family time, such as at weekends.
- Directors of Learning and subject leaders generally have their 'non contact' time booked for meetings with students, parents, carers or colleagues.

Telephone

Please use the main reception number to leave a message for a teacher to contact you;

- Reception staff will relay this to the teacher as soon as they can, usually by email.
- Please note that there are no phones in classrooms and lessons will never be interrupted for teachers to take calls.
- All calls to and from the school are recorded for security and training purposes. We collect and use this information on a lawful basis, as legitimate interests, in line with GDPR regulations (2018), for further details please see the St Edward's Data Protection Policy <http://news.network.st-edwards.poole.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Data-protection-incorporating-GDPR-Dec-2018.pdf>
- Directors of Learning and subject leaders generally have their 'non-contact' time booked for meetings with students, parents, carers and colleagues.
- If the nature of the call is extremely urgent, please tell the receptionist and they will attempt to find a senior member of staff to speak to you.
- We will endeavour to respond on the same day, but within three working days where this is not possible.

E-mail

Please use staff email addresses to contact them directly.

- Please note that teachers are not always in a position to check emails during the day and the school does not expect work emails to be checked during a teacher's personal/family time from home. We therefore aim to respond as soon as possible, and within three working days.
- Part-time staff may take longer, so email should only be used for non-urgent communication that cannot be done via the student's planner.
- The majority of staff email addresses follow the following format: initialsurname@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk.
- We know that sometimes emails do not arrive at their intended destination, and so if you have not received a reply to your email within 3 working days we ask for parents and carers to contact the school either by email enquiries@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk or alternatively by speaking to the Office Manager, Mrs Stapleton, on the main school number who will chase up your enquiry, and keep you in touch with progress on a response.

Meetings

With over 1000 students in the school, the day to day care, welfare and safety of your child is managed by the person who is placed closest to them.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, until it is safe to meet in person, the norm for meetings with parents and carers will be via Microsoft Teams, Zoom or Schoolcloud (Parent Evening system). Alternative arrangements can be made for a parent or carer without the technological means to meet in this way.

- In the first instance, please approach the following members of staff who are responsible for your child in the following order:
 1. Form tutor or classroom teacher (if query is relevant to a specific subject)
 2. Directors of Learning or subject leader (if query is relevant to a specific subject)

3. Assistant headteacher
4. Deputy headteacher
5. Headteacher

- Meetings should always be pre-arranged with members of staff so that they can adjust their schedules as needed.
- If you urgently need to see someone, for instance if there is a serious family emergency or a child protection issue, please phone ahead and the reception staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff to contact you.
- For non-urgent meetings we will aim to meet with you within 5 working days. The school will determine the level of urgency at its discretion, to enable it to manage multiple demands.

Contacting You

Wisepay and Sims

Our preferred means of contacting you is via Wisepay and our management information system, Sims.

- Parents and carers who are signed up to Wisepay are benefitting by receiving letters and notifications via email and text.
- We also use these systems to text you if we have to close the school in an emergency.
- Our main communication day for emails is on a Thursday, however occasionally the weekly mailing may be delayed until the Friday.
- Parents and carers can also pay for trips and resources online via the Wisepay system instead of sending in cheques and cash. To sign up, please contact our Administrator via enquiries@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Social Media

We use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to promote student achievements, subject information and generic educational information that used to be put in the fortnightly newsletter.

This information can also be found on the news page of the school website for those parents and carers that do not use the social media platforms.

The school accounts are for the purposes of publicity and information sharing, and the account and its monitoring is not set up so that the school can respond to social media comments or replies. Communication should be via the school's identified preferred means of communication.

No Response

In the event that you have contacted the school and not had a response within 3 working days, something may have gone wrong, and so we ask for parents and carers to contact the school either by email enquiries@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk or alternatively speaking to the Office Manager, Mrs Stapleton, on the main school number who will chase up your enquiry, and keep you in touch with progress on a response.

Communication with parents and carers is important to us, and we will continue to monitor practice under this policy, in seeking ways to improve our communication processes further.

Respectful Communication

Our staff work hard and do their best to help children and their families. We ask that whether contact is via phone, email or in person, that your communication with the school is calm and reasonable. Communication is best when it takes place in a context of mutual respect. Staff are instructed to end calls that are threatening, abusive, or contemptuous, in their opinion. Further information can be found in our policy "Building mutually respectful communication with parents, carers and callers."

This policy has undergone an Equalities Impact Assessment in line with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.