



The
Holy Spirit
Catholic Multi Academy

Communication Policy

This policy applies to all of the schools within The Holy Spirit Catholic MAC

To be read in conjunction with the Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct)

Policy Ratified on: **13th February 2017**

Full Board/Committee: **Mission Committee**

Signed Chair of Directors:

Next Review: **Spring 2019**



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1. Definition of communication

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflect on the Multi-Academy reputation. Parents and carers, Directors and pupils also have a part to play in reflecting the school's reputation. We strive to ensure that communications between all members of The Holy Spirit MAC community are clear, professional, timely and effective in their purpose.

2. Principles

The schools within The Holy Spirit MAC use a number of different methods to maintain effective communication with parents and carers, other schools, the wider community and outside agencies. Depending on the nature of the communication, each school will use the most practicable means to contact the recipient.

Communication on issues that affect the safety and wellbeing of a pupil will be treated as a priority. Each school holds emergency contact details for all pupils; families are asked to alert the academy immediately if contact information needs to be revised.

Staff will always seek to establish friendly relationships with parents and carers but they will ensure relationships are professional and parents will be addressed in a formal manner. Staff are to avoid developing close relationships with parents and carers. The use of a parent, carer or staff member's first name is not appropriate, therefore all communications will be to and from Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms etc.

The Communications Policy embraces the principles of the Equalities Policy and E-Safety Policy.

3. Introduction

The Holy Spirit MAC recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (pupils, parents and carers, staff, Directors, the local and wider community outside agencies, etc), and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the MAC.

The key stakeholders for any academy are parents, carers and pupils and this policy addresses the main ways in which The Holy Spirit MAC will ensure there is effective two-way communication between home and academies.

4. Parents and carers as partners in their child's education

Parents and carers have a key role to play in their child's education. The school will make every effort to encourage and make arrangements for parents and carers to contribute to creating a shared view of their child's needs.

5. Aims of the policy

- To ensure that effective communication and consultation takes place between the school, parents, carers, pupils and other stakeholders;
- To ensure robust processes for consultation between the schools, parents, carers and pupils;
- To make the schools as welcoming and inclusive as possible. Signage will be clear, informative and positive;
- All written and telephone enquiries will be dealt with promptly and parents and carers can expect an acknowledgement within 2 working days;
- A variety of forms of communication with parents and carers for example, telephone contact, E-mail, post and text;

- Parents and carers are contacted for positive as well as negative reasons;
- Information is given to parents and carers on what pupils will be taught and tips for helping their child will be provided.
- Parents and carers will be encouraged to help or support their child's learning at school and at home. Information will be provided to enable this support to be effective.

6. Communication with parents and carers

6.1 Choosing the correct member of staff to address a query

Please see Appendix A which details who to contact and how to progress any query that is not successfully resolved.

6.2 Letters

Staff will always reply to a letter from parents and carers as quickly as possible. A response to acknowledge receipt of a letter will be made by return, a more formal acknowledgment, by telephone, letter or email, **will be made within 2 working days and responded to within 10 working days.** Letters must be processed through the school administration team and approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team before posting. Copies of correspondence with parents and carers will be placed on student files. Any letters of concern or complaint should be dealt with in accordance with The Holy Spirit MAC Complaints Policy.

Each school will use standard templates for letters where possible.

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide a current E-mail address for prompt and effective communication. However, if we are unable to obtain a current email address for any parent or carer, the weekly communication will be delivered home in hard copy by their child.

6.3 E-mail

E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is the schools preferred method of communication. **E-mails received will be treated in the same way as letters: acknowledged within 2 working days and responded to within 10 working days.** E-mails should be short and clear and the same care and consideration should be given as when sending a letter. Any items longer than a paragraph should be attached in wordformat.

Parents and carers may wish to contact the school via E-mail for a general enquiry as an alternative to telephone or letter. The schools E-mail addresses are as follows:

- Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Academy: [KS1 admin3520@welearn365.com](mailto:KS1_admin3520@welearn365.com)
[KS2 admin3584@welearn365.com](mailto:KS2_admin3584@welearn365.com)
- St Anne's Catholic Primary School: admin2035@welearn365.com
- St Benedict's Catholic Primary School: admin3501@we-learn.com
- St Francis Catholic Primary School: admin3502@welearn365.com
- St Thomas More Catholic School & Sixth Form: admin@st-thomas-more.net

Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils or parents and carers using their own personal e-mail address. All correspondence should be via work e-mail.

6.4 Telephone Calls

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time and running clubs or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents and carers may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

In a non-emergency **a return call will be made within 2 working days, with any follow up action from the outline of the request/query/problem being dealt with within 10 working days.** Staff will make a file note recording details of any telephone conversations with a parent, carer using the form at Appendix B.

6.5 Texts

Parents and carers may also be contacted by text, in a non-emergency, to inform or remind them of a particular event e.g. parents evening, or late arrival. Texts will also be used in the event of emergency closure.

6.6 Absence

If a child is absent, parents and carers are asked to contact the relevant school as soon as possible on the morning of the absence and in accordance with the Absence Policy. In the event of failure to notify the school on the first day of any absence a text will be sent or telephone call will be made requesting that the parent/carers contacts the school to confirm the pupil's absence (safeguarding).

6.7 Meeting with Parents and carers

Parents and carers wishing to meet a member of staff must contact the school to make an appointment. **This request should be responded to within 2 working days.**

Parents and carers should report to reception prior to meeting with a member of staff. A member of staff will ask a colleague to accompany them. A record of the meeting will be taken by the member of staff involved using the form at Appendix C.

Staff should call a meeting to a close in the event of the parents or carers becoming angry or abusive. This should be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

It is recognised that some members of staff may support a parent/pupil who may be in a particular difficulty. Care needs to be exercised in those situations where the parent/carers or pupil comes to depend upon the employee for support outside of their professional role. This situation should be discussed with senior management and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

6.8 Social Networking

It is the preference of the MAC that staff will not communicate with parents/carers via any social networking sites. However the MAC acknowledges that staff may know parents/carers in a non-professional capacity (e.g. friends outside of school) therefore the MAC accepts that staff may on occasion communicate on social media with their friends who may also be parents/carers. If staff do participate in this type of communication, professional judgement should be exercised on all occasions, to not bring the member of staff, school, academy or MAC into any disrupt or challenge the religious character of any part of The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi Academy Company.

Employees should not seek to establish social contact with parents/carers or pupils. If anyone seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, employees should exercise professional judgement in making a response, but should also discuss the situation with the Principal. Employees should be aware that social contact in certain situations can be misconstrued as 'grooming', which is a

criminal offense. Staff members are not permitted to have social media contact with pupils until they have left school **and** reach the age of 19.

Employees should not give out personal details such as home or mobile phone numbers or their home email address.

6.9 Parent and carer use of Social Networking and Internet Sites Overview

Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are now widely used. This type of media allows people to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. However, such sites can be inappropriately used by some as a means of expressing negative or offensive views about The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company and staff. This document sets out The Holy Spirit Catholic MAC approach to parental use of such sites and sets out the procedures we will follow and action we may take when we consider that parents and carers have used such facilities inappropriately. When we refer to parents and carers in this document, we also include relatives or anyone associated with The Holy Spirit MAC.

6.9.1 Objectives

The purpose of this section of the policy is to:

- Encourage social networking sites to be used in a beneficial and positive way by pupils, parents and carers;
- Safeguard pupils, staff and anyone else associated with The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company from the negative effects of social networking sites;
- Safeguard the reputation of The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company from unwarranted abuse on social networking sites;
- Clarify what The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social networking sites by pupils, parents and carers;
- Set out the procedures that The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company will follow where it considers pupils, parents or carers have inappropriately or unlawfully used social media sites to the detriment of the Multi- Academy, its staff or its pupils, and anyone else associated with the Multi- Academy; and
- Set out the action The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company will consider taking if pupils, parents or carers make inappropriate use of social networking sites.

6.9.2 Appropriate use of social networking sites by parents and carers

Social networking sites have potential to enhance the learning and achievement of pupils and enable parents and carers to access information about the academies and provide feedback efficiently and easily. In addition, The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company recognises that many parents and carers and other family members will have personal social networking accounts, which they might use to discuss/share views about school issues with friends and acquaintances. As a guide, individuals should consider the following prior to posting any information on social networking sites about The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company, its staff, its pupils, or anyone else associated with the school:

- Is the social networking site the appropriate channel to raise concerns, give feedback or express these views;
- Would a private and confidential discussion with the academy be more appropriate?

e.g. if there are allegations or concerns being raised. Social media sites should not be used to name individuals. The academy should be contacted directly to discuss any concerns you may have;

- Are such comments likely to cause emotional or reputational harm which would not be justified, particularly if the academy has not been given the opportunity to investigate any concern;
- The reputational impact that the posting of such material may have on the school or The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company; any detrimental harm that the academy may suffer as a result of the posting; and the harm that such a posting may have on pupils' learning.

6.9.3 Inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents and carers

Although social networking sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations or concerns about the school (and those associated with it), it is rarely appropriate to do so. Other channels, such as a private and confidential discussion with the academy, or using The Holy Spirit Catholic MAC's formal complaints procedure are much better suited to this.

The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social networking sites. (This list is non-exhaustive and intended to provide examples only):

- Making allegations about staff or pupils (Cyber-bullying);
- Making complaints about the school or a member of staff;
- Making defamatory statements about the school or staff;
- Posting negative/offensive comments about The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company policy or practice.

Parents should also ensure that their children are not using social networking/internet sites in an inappropriate manner. It is expected that parents and carers explain to their children what is acceptable to post online. Parents and carers are also expected to monitor their children's online activity, including in relation to their use of social media.

6.9.4 Procedure The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company will follow if inappropriate use continues

The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents and carers in a professional and appropriate manner and understands that parents and carers may not always realise when they have used social networking sites inappropriately. Therefore, as a first step, the school will usually discuss the matter with the parent or carer to try and resolve the matter and to ask that the relevant information be removed from the social networking site in question. If the parent or carer refuses to do this and continues to use social networking sites in a manner The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company considers inappropriate, we will consider taking the following action:

- Take legal advice and/or legal action where the information posted is defamatory in any way or if the circumstances warrant this;
- Set out The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company concerns to the parent or carer

in writing, giving them a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed;

- Contact the police where The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company feels it is appropriate, for example if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed or in cases where it is considered to be grossly obscene or threatening violence;
- If the appropriate comments have been made on the school website or online forum, the school may take action to block or restrict that individual's access to the forum;

6.10 Reports and Progress

Parents and carers receive an annual report to provide information about their child's progress in each subject. The reports for St Thomas More School are accessible on-line through Insight.

In addition, parents and carers have the opportunity to meet their child's subject teachers at least once per academic year, at parents evening.

Parents and carers should contact the school if issues arise about their child's progress or wellbeing.

The first point of contact should be the schools reception.

We welcome the presence of any other adult a parent or carer wishes to invite to a school meeting for support or to act as an interpreter. We will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to enable a parent or carer with a disability to participate fully in a meeting or to receive and understand a communication.

6.11 The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company Website

The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company website and individual academy websites provides a range of information about the Multi-Academy.

It is used to promote The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company to a wider audience and is updated regularly.

6.12 Virtual Learning Environment - (VLE) – St Thomas More School

The VLE is a powerful tool for motivating pupils as it gives them more choice and flexibility about when and where they complete their learning. It also encourages parent and carer involvement in learning, especially with extended learning tasks.

The school VLE is a good source of general information and includes:

- Curriculum resources
- Copies of letters to parents and carers
- Information about lessons / additional study
- Guidance on expectations and academic performance
- Parents evening appointment sheets

Parents will also have access to data about their child's attendance and progress via the VLE.

6.13 Home School Communication

Each pupil has a log book (St Thomas More School) or homework/reading diaries for noting down homework and the date for completion. It is also an important tool for communication between parents, carers and teachers. It contains, for example:

- Uniform list
- Timetables

- Holiday dates
- Notes for / from parents and carers

Parents and carers should use planners to check homework and other messages and to communicate day to day issues.

A calendar of planned school events is available on the school websites and is updated as necessary throughout the year.

All schools publish a weekly newsletter; a link to an electronic copy of this is E- mailed to all parents and carers as well as being published on the academy website. Hard copies of the newsletter are available from the school upon request.

6.14 Communication between pupils and staff

Two way communications between pupils and staff is an important aspect of school life. The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company welcomes and encourages pupils to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school. When communicating with a member of staff pupils should:

- Stand in front of the member of staff they are speaking with and make eye contact;
- Address the member of staff using their formal name e.g. Mrs Smith, Miss, Sir etc, never referring to a member of staff by their first name;
- Be respectful, do not talk over, raise voice or walk away before the conversation has ended.

School trips, visits and activities

The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company will endeavour to publish all proposed trips, visits and activities on the respective school calendar at the start of each academic year. Parents and carers will be notified by letter or email of trips, visits and activities that their child/children may wish to participate in as early as possible, and within at least six weeks of the proposed trip, visit or activity. Occasionally opportunities arise during the academic year to offer pupils additional trips, visits or activities that were not known or available when the calendar was published. The school will always ensure parents and carers are notified of any additional opportunities for their child as soon as possible to ensure parents and carers have adequate time to plan for such events.

6.15 Severe weather and emergency closure

In the event of emergency closure communication will be made to parents and carers via text. Parents and carers should also tune in to local radio and check the school website and social media channels (e.g. Facebook and Twitter). School emergency closures may also be published on the Warwickshire County Council website.

6.16 Other

In addition to the above forms of communication:

- The school prospectus is published on the website. Prospective parents and carers may receive a printed copy of the prospectus upon request;
- Prospective parents and carers are invited to an open evening in the September of the year preceding their child's year of entry to the school;
- Prospective parents and carers are invited to attend open mornings to enable them to see the school operating;
- Prospective parents and carers are invited, along with their child, to an induction evening in June/July where the main channels of communication are outlined, and important information will be shared;

7. Supporting parents and carers of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company recognises the importance of positive relationships with parents and carers of all pupils with additional needs. The revised SEND Code of Practice emphasises the importance of positive, supportive attitudes to parents and carers and user-friendly information and procedures. All professionals will make every effort to ensure effective communication with parents and carers.

All staff within The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company are expected to help parents and carers understand how to contribute effectively to their child's education and will make every effort to ensure that parents understand their rights and responsibilities. All relevant information will be provided in a way for all to understand and respond to.

When pupils have special educational needs and they are making less than the expected progress or if they are experiencing behavioural difficulties, we would expect to meet with parents and carers more regularly.

8. Communication with other Schools and outside agencies

Prior to pupils joining Year 7, they are visited in their primary schools to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to St Thomas More Catholic School and Sixth Form. We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on better ways to meet these needs, so that children may participate more fully. Support comes from medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), from educational psychologists, from health professionals and specialists.

It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare, Social Services and Child Protection Units. We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our schools should provide a safe and secure environment (see The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company Safeguarding).

We hold information on all pupils in our academies and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Details will be sent to parents about the types of data we hold, why we hold that data, and who we may pass it on to. This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Parents and carers have a right to view the information we hold and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

Further information can be found in the schools Confidentiality policy and Data Protection policy.

9. Investigating incidents

When investigating an incident involving pupils, school members of staff interview all pupils involved and ask them to complete a written account. The school is not permitted (under Data Protection) to share any information that would identify any pupils. However, we fully co-operate with any police investigation and provide information to the police upon request. A record of the interview is to be maintained using the form at Appendix D. Incidents requiring intervention will be recorded using the form at Appendix E

10. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company will review this Policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The Policy will be promoted and implemented throughout The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company.

APPENDIX A – To whom should my query or concern be addressed?

If you have a general query or concern, not specific to your child, please contact the relevant school reception on:

Our Lady & St Joseph Catholic Academy:

Foundation Stage & KS1 - 02476 326080 or email admin3520@welearn365.com

KS2 - 02476 383807 or by email admin3584@welearn365.com

St Anne's Catholic Primary School:

02476 392877 or by email admin2035@welearn365.com

St Benedict's Catholic Primary School:

01827 712320 or by e-mail at admin3501@we-learn.com

St Francis Catholic Primary School:

02476 315279 or by email admin3502@welearn365.com

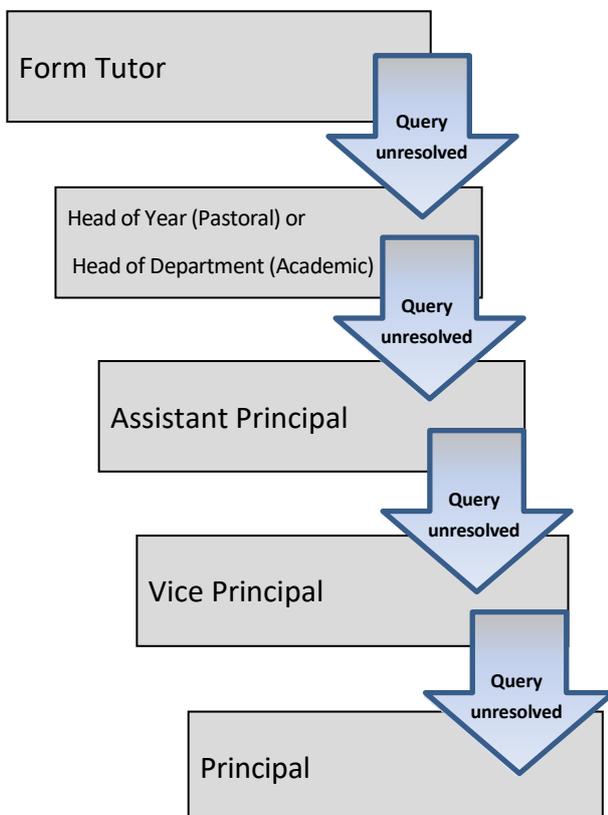
St Thomas More Catholic School & Sixth Form:

02476 642400 or by email admin@st-thomas-more.net

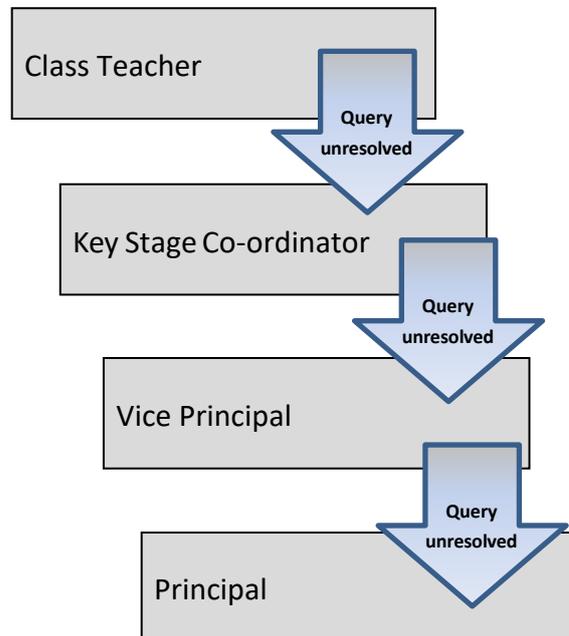
If your query or concern is about your individual child please follow the communications route below:

My query is about my child's learning / behaviour or non-compliance / well-being

St Thomas More Catholic School



Primary Schools



If, following the communications route above you are still dissatisfied with the response you may complain to the Multi-Academy, please refer to the The Holy Spirit Catholic MAC Complaints Policy available on The Holy Spirit MAC website.

<i>[Insert Academy Name]</i>		
Parental Meeting		
Pupil Name(s)		
Pupil Form Group		
Pupil Teaching Group(s)		
People present:		
Reason for Meeting:		
Details of Discussion:		
Continued overleaf (tick if appropriate) <input type="checkbox"/>		
Action to be taken (include person responsible & timescale)		Agreed?

<i>[Insert Academy Name]</i>		Pupil Interview					
Pupil Name							
Pupil Year & Form Group							
Time/Period	Before	1	2	Break	3	4	Lunch
	5	6	After				
(circle above)							
Location							
Other pupils involved							
Other staff involved							
Role in situation							
Details of Interview Discussion (include pupil suggestion for resolution):							
<i>Continued overleaf (tick if appropriate)</i> <input type="checkbox"/>							
Action to be taken (include person responsible & timescale)							
Parents Notified <i>(tick if appropriate)</i> <input type="checkbox"/>							

<i>[Insert Academy Name]</i>		
Learner Intervention		
Pupil Name		
Pupil Year & Form Group		
Pupil Teaching Group(s)		
People present:		
Reason for Intervention:		
Details of Intervention Discussion:		
Continued overleaf (tick if appropriate) <input type="checkbox"/>		
Action to be taken (include person responsible & timescale)		Agreed?

Member of Staff _____ Date _____

COPIES GIVEN TO _____