



St Edward's School

Unity - Achievement - Faith

Communication Policy

Reviewed and Approved by Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes Committee

On: 23rd June 2022

Reviewed and Ratified by the Full Governing Body

On: 14th July 2022

Next full review date: Summer 2024

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.

St Edward's school is committed to effective collaboration with parents because it is through such partnership that we best support students in their personal formation and academic progress. The Education Endowment Foundation has found that on average effective parental engagement can add up to an additional four months of progress over the course of the year. We therefore welcome open and free dialogue so that expert information can be shared freely between home and school, and vice versa.

The vast majority of teacher time is focussed on learning and student progress and they have limited opportunity to communicate with parents and carers. Similarly, we recognise that parents and carers have busy lives and may not be able to respond to our communications immediately. Please therefore be aware that although we always aim to respond to communications within 24 hours it can take up to three school days. If you haven't heard back from us after that period, we ask parents and carers to contact the school either by email enquiries@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk or alternatively by speaking to the Office Manager, Ms Burgess, on the main school number who will chase up your enquiry, and keep you updated with progress on a response.

The world of education is full of specific terms and concepts that might be unfamiliar to those who do not work within it. We will always try to keep the language of our communications accessible to all, and avoid the unnecessary use of technical terms or jargon. Where these are necessary we will always try to explain them simply. If we fail in this aim we would appreciate it if you could inform us via the enquiries@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk address so that we can continue to improve the quality of our communications.

Contacting Us

Telephone

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

- Please note that there are no phones in classrooms and lessons will never be interrupted for teachers to take calls.

- Reception staff will relay messages to the teacher as soon as they can, usually by email. The member of staff will respond as promptly as they can, as outlined above.
- 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.
- 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 <https://stedwards.poole.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Data-protection-incorporating-GDPRAutumn-2021.pdf>

E-mail

Please use staff email addresses to contact them directly.

- The majority of staff email addresses follow the following format: initialsurname@stedwards.poole.sch.uk.
- In order to protect their wellbeing, staff are advised not to check or respond to emails outside of working hours.
- Part-time staff may take longer than the three days outlined above, so email should only be used for non-urgent communication.
- 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 make contact via the means outlined above.

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.

- 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 (if a query has not been resolved through the channels above)
- 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. In order to enable us to manage multiple demands and priorities, the school will determine the level of urgency and the most appropriate or relevant person to meet with you at its discretion.

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@stedwards.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.

Parent and Carer Feedback

From time to time we use online surveys in order to gather feedback from parents and carers about a wide range of issues. We would appreciate it if you could support us by completing these where possible as the information you give us is used for the wider benefit of students, parents and carers. If you have specific feedback or suggestions please feel free to make contact via the enquiries@stedwards.poole.sch.uk address.

Scope of support

The school is limited in its capacity to manage situations that occur whilst a child is under the care of their 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.

Respectful Communication

We know that concerns around your child can cause anxiety for parents and carers and we will always seek to support you where we can. 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 and we find that this promotes trust and supports best outcomes for students.

Staff are instructed to end communications 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.”

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.