

Home-School Communication Charter

Saint John Houghton Catholic Voluntary Academy

Part of the Saint Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust



**St Ralph
Sherwin**
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Approved by: Headteacher

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1. Purpose and scope

At Saint John Houghton Catholic Voluntary Academy, we believe that good communication between the home and the school of a child is vital in ensuring the happiness and success of all students. It also contributes to the wellbeing of all members of the school community, including students, parents, carers and staff.

This charter sets out how communication will be managed between the home and the school to make sure it is productive and focused on resolving issues quickly, for the benefit of all involved and to ensure that students are supported and cared for.

In addition to parents' evenings, school events, etc., there may be occasions when parents or carers wish to communicate with the school directly with questions or information related to their child. To make sure that this is effective these principles will be applied.

If an emergency situation arises, it is important that the school is contacted as soon and an explanation is given as to what has or is happening.

The constraints on school resources make it essential that parents and carers use authorised school procedures to avoid diverting time and attention that must be invested directly in students' learning and wellbeing. **We ask that any meeting requests with members of staff are pre-booked and agreed in advance. Parents are kindly requested not to turn up at the school unannounced as a meeting may not be possible without making an appointment.** In the first instance, a call to the school office would be much more effective in ensuring that an issue is dealt with as quickly as possible. Members of staff are not expected to change their calendars to accommodate a parent who demands a meeting without prior agreement. Parents are politely reminded that all teachers in school have a timetable of lessons and their days are often planned in advance.

Please note that unreasonable, abusive or offensive communication is unacceptable, and the school reserves the right to address any such problems as they feel are appropriate. This can include restricting correspondence to a specified email address, using a single person as a point of contact or using hard copy post and/or by placing restrictions on phone calls. Parents and carers have an implied licence to enter a school site, in cases where behaviour is inappropriate, threatening or argumentative, this licence can be revoked.

The school will always respond to an incident in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to such incident's rests with the Headteacher. The Headteacher will consult the Chair of Governors before banning a parent from the school site.

If a response has been given to a query, unless matters change, further responses will not be sent. Our aim is to ensure that all communications and discussions about students and their families are positive, solution-focused and move matters forward in a mutually respectful manner.

2. Our commitment as a school

As a staff body, we will:

- ensure that there is regular, proactive communication about your child's achievement and wellbeing
- acknowledge receipt of an email within 48 hours/two working days and confirm that a fuller response will be sent **within a realistic timeframe** if additional work is required. This will not usually be longer than 5 working days/one school week. If further time is required, this will be communicated by the member of staff addressing the issue
- respond to phone calls or requests for meetings (usually within 48 hours/two working days)
- if there is an urgent matter, the school office will ask an appropriate member of staff to deal with the issue as soon as possible
- display polite, professional, and respectful conduct at all times, modelling the behaviours we expect of our students and parents

3. Our expectations of parents and carers

Parents and carers will:

- ensure that any communication with the school, whether by email or telephone, is polite and respectful and seeks to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity
- make use of information channels in place, such as the school website, for keeping up to date with routine information
- give an outline of what the issue is, to make sure the query is directed to the right person as quickly as possible. We are clear as a school that 'the right people, need to do the right things, at the right time.' If queries are not directed to the right person from the outset, this can result in delays to issues being resolved. Please be aware that the Headteacher is often NOT best placed to address parental concerns and the concern/issue may be passed to an appropriate member of staff. Please allow the office staff to direct your query to the right person in school
- use the school mailbox – schooloffice@sjh.srscmat.co.uk or main reception telephone number – 0115 932 2896 as first point of contact (the school will

forward your request to the appropriate staff member). If the information to be discussed/disclosed by the parent is sensitive and parents do not wish to discuss this with the staff in the school office, parents should make this clear and ask to speak to a member of the relevant department. For example, if the concern relates to a Safeguarding matter, the parent should call and request to speak to a member of the Safeguarding Team only. The school office do, however, guarantee discretion and sensitivity when dealing with parents. We recognise that incidents such as these are rare and need to be managed sensitively

- ensure that emails are brief and clear
- refrain from sending multiple emails (to multiple staff) regarding the same query
- limit the number of people copied into an email ensuring that only the relevant staff have eyes on the email
- be respectful of the time of the staff of the school, understanding that a teacher or member of staff may be unable to respond on the same day on which a query is made
- understand that teachers or other school staff will not respond outside of school hours, i.e., evenings or weekends

4. Face-to-face meetings between the school and parents

Face-to-face meetings are often the most productive way of resolving issues and communicating effectively. If there is a face-to-face meeting involving a parent/carer and members of staff of the school, everyone will:

- be sensitive and empathetic to each other's situation and viewpoint
- show mutual respect, speaking calmly and respectfully
- NOT use foul, threatening or abusive language – Insults or personal attacks on the school will not be tolerated and the meeting will be terminated with immediate effect by the school
- approach meetings with an open mind, with the intention of ending the meeting with agreed actions and seeking a resolution
- NOT record the meeting using electronic devices without the permission of all parties. The staff of the school will summarise the meeting and a copy will be sent to the parent