



Communication Policy

The school vision:

Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth

St Andrew's C of E (VA) Primary School and Nursery takes as its inspiration and cornerstone, the life and teaching of Jesus Christ with the vision and values strongly rooted in the Christian narrative of **1 John 3:18**, thereby enabling all to have a sense of responsibility and love towards others, by respecting all cultures and faiths. The school aims to demonstrate openness, acceptance and empathy.

Our emphasis is to respect and listen to the voice of the unique child and then to build on this and work together to create an environment of excellence for all. Within that environment, we aim to help children flourish and grow as individuals, developing their personal skills and characters, their understanding of the world and their place within it. As they establish their personal identities, we move to inspiring academic aspiration – a love of learning and the desire to succeed and to follow Christ's path by valuing everyone and having a responsibility to contribute as future global citizens.

St Andrew's school has high expectations of every member of the school community committing to our school vision and values through daily actions and interactions.

We communicate at all levels by working hard to ensure that every member of our school community has a voice. We aim to create a community, which does not judge or offer judgment but rather promotes values, acceptance and understanding.

We achieve our vision through six elements that enable all learners within our community to grow, flourish and contribute - thereby living life in its fullness.

At St Andrew's the following values are central to how we work and learn together: Thankfulness, Justice, Koinonia, Courage, Forgiveness, Honesty, Compassion, Respect, Ubuntu, Peacefulness, Friendship and Perseverance



Fostering Curiosity and Creativity
Providing inspirational, innovative and reflective learning that dares to be different.



Christian Values in Action
Christian values and spirituality are at the heart of our school and embraced by all members.



Growing Minds
Being attentive, building relationships and developing resilient learners.

1 John 3:18
 Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.



One voice
Working collaboratively with open minds; speaking honestly by questioning and reflecting to uphold our shared vision.



Inspirational Sustainable Environments
Developing a respectful, sustainable, creative and stimulating environment that embraces the natural world.



Our place in the world
Making a difference by sharing our skills and passions and working in partnership.

Aim

To support the vision and values of the school, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents and with other members of the wider school community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

Definition

Good communication involves the management of relationships and the need to involve people as well as the exchange of information. It involves attitude and behaviour as well as message. It also involves active listening.

For the purposes of this policy, communication includes not only the content of the message but also how that message is communicated; not only the responsibility for communication but also how effectively that responsibility is carried out.

Objectives

All communications at St Andrew's C of E (VA) School should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents, governors and other stakeholders well informed
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all
- Be actioned within a reasonable time frame (within 10 working days)
- Be of a frequency and volume appropriate to the issue at hand and to ensure that all children receive appropriate attention.
- Use a method most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience
- Take account of relevant school policies such as Equal Opportunities and Acceptable Use of Information Technology
- Be compatible with our Vision and Values outlined above.

External Methods of Communication

The school has many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, other schools, the community, local churches and with outside agencies. Good communication between school and home is essential to help children to make more progress. Parents can help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve. At St Andrew's C of E (VA) School we aim to have clear and effective communications with all parents and with the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents and carers well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting the school. Staff will seek to establish open, professional relationships with parents which involve appropriate boundaries and forms of

addressing each other. In our written communications we seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the cultural groups represented in our school.

Communication by the School to Parents/Carers

Email

The school has an email system it uses to communicate with parents. This includes regular newsletters and updates. Please ensure the school has an accurate record of your email address.

Telephone calls

The school will contact parents/carers via telephone call for urgent matters.

Social Networking Sites / Blogs etc

Staff will not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept them as their “friends”. (See also the E Safety Policy). Each class has their own blog where information is posted to communicate to parents on a weekly basis the learning that has occurred that week. The school’s Facebook account is managed by the Computer Lead to share information about school life. Both these systems have settings to reduce negative content being added.

Written reports and meetings with parents

Once a year the school provides a full written report to each child’s parents/carers on their progress in each subject. The report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development.

Parents and pupils have opportunities to comment on their child’s progress and attainment.

In addition, parents/carers meet their child’s teacher during the year for a private consultation at Parents’ Evening. This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child’s success and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for improvement. We encourage parents to contact the school at other times if any issues arise regarding their child’s progress or well-being.

When children have special educational needs or if they are making less than expected progress, we may request to **meet** with parents more regularly. To fully support staff and parents we may invite additional school staff to the meeting. We will also make any reasonable adjustments if this will enable a parent with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our school, or to receive and understand a communication.

School Prospectus

The school prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents and other stakeholders a full picture of provision at St Andrew’s C of E (VA) School and Nursery.

School Website

The school website provides information about the school and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience. It includes an electronic version of the school prospectus. The school website is updated on a regular basis.

Home – school communication

- A calendar of school events will be produced at the start of each term and issued to parents via the school website and the newsletter.
- A school newsletter is sent to parents on a regular basis. It contains general details of school events and activities. We send other letters of a general nature when necessary.
- The school encourages parents/carers to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity so that we can respond appropriately.
- Many parents/carers have the opportunity to have a brief word with the class teacher after school when they collect their child(ren).
- We arrange various meetings for parents throughout the year such as preparation for residential trips, for new parents and information evenings about curriculum matters.

Communication with other schools and outside agencies

Prior to pupils joining Reception, they are invited to visit the school to enable us to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to St Andrew's C of E (VA) School. Parents are invited to attend an individual "Meet the teacher" meeting in school is also carried out as part of the induction arrangements.

We recognise that children have diverse needs and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed of 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. The school engages with the local authority services and other external agencies as required.

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility and that our school should provide a safe and secure environment. When any member of staff has safeguarding concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Child Protection who may share this information with the Social Services.

We hold information on pupils in our school, and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Parents have a right to view the information we hold about their child(ren) and we can provide contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

Communication by parents/carers to the school

A positive and collaborative relationship between the school and parents/carers is of the utmost importance to the school. We therefore welcome communication from parents/carers.

School staff have many responsibilities and obligations on their time. For this reason, we ask for your understanding and patience when corresponding with the school. The high workload of the school's staff means that:

- We cannot guarantee that staff will be available for meetings at your preferred time; and
- There will often be a delay in replying to email correspondence, because the school receives a high volume of emails and replies to parents/carers often require internal review before being sent (we commit to replying to emails within 10 working days but in some instances this will be a holding response requesting further time to reply in full).

If the matter being raised by the parent/carer is sensitive, complex, or requires detailed background in order to explain, it is the school's preference that this is discussed in a pre-arranged meeting and not written in an email or a letter.

The school asks that communication takes place with the class teacher in the first instance. Written communication should be addressed to the class teacher and handed in at reception or emailed to admin@standrews.herts.sch.uk.

If the class teacher's response does not resolve the matter to the parents/carers' satisfaction, parents/carers can then request to speak to the Phase Leader or a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If this still does not resolve the matter, parents/carers can then request to speak to the Headteacher. In the case of a complaint, parents/carers are asked to follow the process set out in the Complaints Policy.

All correspondence with parents/carers that is considered material will be written up or printed and included on the pupil's file.

All forms of communication should:

- reflect the values of the school (Thankfulness, Justice, Koinonia, Courage, Forgiveness, Honesty, Compassion, Respect, Ubuntu, Peacefulness, Friendship and Perseverance)
- treat each other with courtesy and respect
- avoid any use, or threatened use, of violence to people or property
- respect the needs and well-being of pupils and staff within the school
- avoid any aggression or verbal abuse
- recognise that resolving a specific issue can sometimes take some time
- in the case of a complaint, follow the school's complaints procedure.

Problematic communication

In very rare circumstances the style or format of communication by a parent/carer causes a problem for staff at the school.

A parent/carer's communication can be problematic without any deliberate or negative intent by the parent/carer. For this reason, if a member of staff describes a parent/carer's communication as problematic it is not an accusation of wrongdoing. Rather, the member of staff is informing the parent/carer of the effect of the style or format of communication that was received.

Where the problematic communication relates to a matter that is still ongoing, a member of school staff will clearly state how they wish the communication to be different going forwards. This may include, for example, requiring a meeting in-person instead of continuing correspondence via email.

Examples of communication that could be problematic:

- communication that is not conducted in adherence with the bullet-points above.
- communication that repeatedly seeks an outcome that has previously been explained by the school to be impractical or impossible.
- requests for many meetings or a high volume of written correspondence that places unsustainable demands on staff time (this does not include situations where the school agrees that regular communication is required to ensure the welfare, wellbeing, or academic progress of the pupil. Cases such as this will involve the Inclusion Coordinator (INCO).
- communication where the language or tone induces stress, anxiety or otherwise has a negative impact on the wellbeing of staff, regardless of whether that negative impact was intended.
- communication that explicitly or implicitly demands a response that is quicker than the timeframes set out in this policy.

In cases of persistent problematic communication, the School will consider whether to impose some or all of the following communication restrictions and confirm this in writing accordingly:

- Require that contact only takes place in a particular form (e.g. letters only).
- Require contact to take place with a designated member of Staff (e.g. the Headteacher).
- Restrict telephone calls to specified days and times.
- Ask the parent/carer to enter into an agreement about their future contact with the School.
- Inform the parent/carer that if they do not follow this advice, any further communication/correspondence that does not present significant new matters or new information will only be kept on file and will not be acknowledged or responded to.

The Policy and Procedure for Managing Persistent and Vexatious Behaviour and Complaints may be referred to in the event of persistent and problematic communication.

The governing body reviews this policy every two years. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

Review date: May 2025