

School-Home Communication Policy

Good communication between school and home is essential to building a strong and effective partnership around every child. We want parents and guardians to feel informed, able to raise concerns and confident that the school will communicate openly and responsibly.

Respect must be at the centre of every interaction. The same standards of courtesy, reasonableness and professionalism that parents expect from members of staff are also expected in communication with the school.

1. Official school emails and announcements

The school periodically sends important information to parents by email. This includes introductory information at the beginning of the school year, updates at the beginning of each term and other announcements which need to reach all parents.

These emails are sent through mis.noreply@gov.mt. Parents should add this address to their safe sender list and regularly check their inbox, including junk or spam folders. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to read information sent by the school.

Where information is particularly important or time-sensitive and needs to reach parents quickly, the school may also send an SMS to the mobile number registered on the school system.

These messages are generated and distributed automatically using the contact details held on the school system. The school does not manually select individual email addresses each time a communication is sent. The system retains a record of messages sent to registered email addresses. Not seeing or reading an email does not necessarily mean that the communication was not sent.

2. School website, Facebook page and calendar of activities

The school website and official Facebook page are the main sources for information about the school calendar, upcoming activities, events, important dates and general school notices. Parents are expected to consult these regularly and to check the school calendar when planning ahead.

Not every reminder or activity can be communicated individually to every parent. Keeping the website, Facebook page and school calendar as shared points of reference helps ensure that families have access to the same up-to-date information and reduces the risk of important dates being missed.

3. Direct communication from the school

Where the school needs to contact an individual parent or guardian directly, this will normally be done by telephone or email. Telephone contact is generally used when a matter requires more immediate attention.

The school will use the telephone numbers and email addresses officially held on its records.

The school may telephone for many different reasons. These may include illness, an accident or emergency, a serious behavioural concern, a matter requiring clarification or simply something positive that we would like to share. Receiving a telephone call from school should not automatically be taken to mean that something serious has happened. Where a situation is urgent or serious, this will be communicated clearly.

4. Communication from teachers and other members of staff

Teachers may use different approved means of communicating with parents. The arrangements used by each class will be communicated clearly at the beginning of the school year.

Communication may concern classroom activities, learning, progress, behaviour, attendance, difficulties being experienced by a child or positive developments and achievements.

Parents are expected to communicate respectfully and constructively with teachers and other members of staff, even when they disagree with what is being communicated.

Members of staff communicate with parents as part of their professional responsibility. When a teacher raises a concern about a child's learning, behaviour, progress or wellbeing, this is based on what has been observed within the school context and is not raised lightly. Parents may provide additional information or ask for clarification, but concerns should be discussed rather than immediately dismissed or treated as an attack on the child. Staff do not raise concerns in order to target or 'pick on' individual children.

5. Approved communication channels

Parents should use only the communication channels indicated by the school or by the relevant member of staff.

Staff should not be contacted through personal social media accounts, private messaging services or personal telephone numbers unless that means of communication has been specifically authorised or provided for school use.

Using agreed communication channels protects the privacy of both families and staff, keeps communication professional and helps ensure that messages are received and followed up appropriately.

6. Who to contact first

Routine matters concerning a child's learning, behaviour or classroom experience should normally be raised first with the class teacher.

Administrative matters should be directed to the school office.

Where a matter is serious, remains unresolved or requires further intervention, parents should contact the Senior Leadership Team. Parents may request a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team, and the school will do its utmost to arrange this as soon as reasonably possible.

Starting with the person closest to the matter usually allows questions and concerns to be resolved more quickly and accurately. Where this does not resolve the matter, contacting the Senior Leadership Team provides a clear route for further discussion and escalation.

7. Contacting teachers

Parents who need to communicate with a teacher should normally do so in writing using the communication method established for that class. Messages should be sent in good time and should be clear and concise.

Teachers cannot be expected to check or respond to messages while teaching, supervising children or carrying out other school duties.

Teaching and supervising children must remain the teacher's first priority. Digital communication makes it possible to contact teachers easily, but it does not mean that teachers are continuously available. A message can be important without requiring an immediate response.

8. Communication outside school hours

Parents may send messages at a time that is convenient to them but should not expect staff to read or respond to messages outside normal working hours, at weekends, during public holidays or during school holidays.

Healthy communication also requires reasonable boundaries. Staff need uninterrupted time away from work, and non-urgent matters can normally wait until the next appropriate working period.

9. Urgent matters

Where a matter is genuinely urgent and requires the school's immediate attention, parents should telephone the school office rather than rely on a message sent to a teacher or through another digital channel.

Teachers may not see messages while teaching or supervising children. Contacting the school office helps ensure that an urgent matter is received and passed on appropriately.

10. Responses from teachers and LSEs

Parents should not expect lengthy written responses to every message. A teacher or LSE may acknowledge a message, provide the information required or indicate that a matter would be better discussed in another way.

Where a matter requires substantial discussion, the school may suggest a telephone conversation or meeting rather than an extended exchange of messages.

Staff will read relevant communication from parents, but responding to lengthy messages in equal detail is not always necessary or possible. Their primary responsibility during the working day remains the education, care and supervision of children. Good communication depends on clarity and usefulness, not on the length of a reply.

11. Changes to daily arrangements

Arrangements concerning transport, after-school services, collection of children and similar matters must be organised in advance. Parents should avoid making repeated or last-minute changes to arrangements from one day to the next.

Changes of this kind should be communicated through the established written channels and within the timeframes communicated by the school. Routine changes cannot normally be accepted by telephone.

The school must be able to establish clearly who has requested a change and must have enough time to communicate that change safely to the relevant members of staff. A telephone call does not always allow us to verify who is making the request. Last-minute changes also increase the possibility of misunderstandings at dismissal time. Genuine emergencies will, of course, be treated as such.

12. Formal meetings with parents

The school organises formal opportunities for parents to meet teachers during the school year. These include meetings at the beginning of the scholastic year and Parents' Day, together with any other meetings organised by the school when necessary.

Where a teacher or the school considers that an additional meeting is required to discuss a child's progress, behaviour, wellbeing or another important matter, the parent will be contacted and an appointment arranged.

Parents who believe that a matter requires a meeting should communicate with the teacher or school through the established channels so that an appropriate appointment can be arranged.

Formal meetings may take place face-to-face or online, depending on the arrangements made by the school.

Formal meetings are intended to provide space for open, constructive discussion. They work best when they are planned, when the relevant people can be present and when sufficient time can be given to the matter. Admission, dismissal and other times when staff are supervising children are not appropriate for substantial discussions.

13. Respectful communication

Communication with members of staff must remain respectful, whether it takes place face-to-face, by telephone, by email, through a digital platform or in writing. Abusive, threatening, insulting, aggressive or repeatedly unreasonable communication will not be accepted. Where communication becomes inappropriate, the school may end a telephone call or meeting, discontinue an exchange of messages, request that future communication takes place through a specified member of staff or channel, or take other appropriate action.

Parents do not have to agree with every decision made by the school, and the school does not expect disagreements never to occur. Disagreement can still be expressed respectfully. Productive communication becomes difficult when discussion turns into personal accusations, intimidation or hostility.

14. Social media

The school's social media pages are used to share information, celebrate school life and communicate general updates. They are not an appropriate forum for raising individual concerns, asking questions about individual matters, making complaints, questioning school decisions or criticising members of staff.

Questions, complaints or criticism raised through comments or posts on social media will not be entertained and should instead be directed to the school through the appropriate communication channels.

Individual matters require context, confidentiality and the opportunity for proper discussion. Social media does not provide an appropriate or constructive setting for resolving concerns involving children, staff or school decisions.

15. Information already provided and repeated queries

Parents are expected to read information already provided by the school before requesting further clarification. Where a question has already been addressed in an

email, circular, website notice, class communication or previous correspondence, parents may be directed back to that information.

Effective communication is a shared responsibility. School staff will make information available as clearly as possible, while parents are expected to make reasonable use of the information already provided.

16. Family circumstances and official contact information

The school communicates using the contact details and information officially held on its records. Parents and guardians are responsible for informing the school promptly of any changes which may affect communication, including changes in contact details, parental responsibility, custody arrangements or any other relevant legal arrangements.

Where parents are separated or living in different households, the school will act on the official information available to it and in accordance with any legal documentation provided.

The school cannot act on information which has not been formally communicated to it. Keeping records accurate and up to date helps ensure that information reaches the appropriate people and that the school acts correctly in situations where family circumstances may affect communication.

17. Privacy, confidentiality, recording and sharing of images

The school will discuss a parent's own child but will not disclose confidential information about another student, family or member of staff. Parents should likewise avoid using communications or meetings concerning their own child to seek information about other children.

School correspondence, class communications, photographs, videos and other material shared through closed school or class channels are intended for the people within those channels. They must not be copied, forwarded, reposted on social media or otherwise made public where doing so would compromise the privacy of children, families or members of staff.

Where parents are permitted to take photographs or videos during school activities or events, these may be taken for personal use. Photographs or videos in which other children are identifiable should not be uploaded to social media or otherwise shared publicly without appropriate permission. Parents should also avoid naming or tagging other children in material they share publicly.

Meetings must not be recorded. This includes audio recording, video recording, screen recording or the use of any other technology to capture or reproduce a meeting. Any unauthorised recording will be treated as a serious breach of this policy and the school may take further action, including legal action where appropriate.

Data protection and respect for privacy are shared responsibilities. The school has obligations under GDPR and other data protection requirements in relation to the information and images it processes, but parents and guardians also have a responsibility to respect the privacy of other children, families and members of staff. The fact that a photograph, video or communication has been shared by the school within a closed channel does not give recipients permission to publish or redistribute it elsewhere. The same principle applies when photographs or videos are taken during school activities: what may be appropriate for personal use is not necessarily appropriate for public sharing.

18. Accessibility and support

Parents who experience difficulty accessing, reading or understanding an important school communication are encouraged to contact the school so that reasonable support can be provided.

While parents remain responsible for keeping themselves informed, the school recognises that language, accessibility or other practical difficulties may sometimes make this more challenging. Where possible, we will support families so that important information is understood and accessible.

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