



St John Bosco
ARTS COLLEGE

Communications Policy

Contents

Introduction	2
Principles	2
Communication with parents and carers.....	2
To whom should my query or concern be addressed?	3
My query is about my child's learning is a subject:.....	3
My query is about my child's wellbeing, behaviour or non-compliance:	3
Letters	3
Email.....	3
Telephone Calls	4
Texts	4
My Child at School (MCAS)	4
Classcharts	4
Absence	4
Meeting with Parents and Carers	4
Social Networking	4
Reports and Progress	5
Accessibility	5
School Website	5
Communication Between Pupils and Staff	5
Verbal Communication Between St John Bosco Arts College Staff	5
Email Communication Between St John Bosco Arts College Staff	6
Email Communications Between Pupils and Staff	6
Communication With Other Schools and Outside Agencies.....	6

Introduction

St John Bosco Arts College recognises the importance of clear and effective communication with all stakeholders (pupils, parents and carers, staff and governors, the local and wider community), and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have interest in the school.

The key stakeholders for a school are parents and carers, pupils and staff and this policy addresses the main ways in which the school will ensure there is effective communication in school and between home and school.

The school recognises that engaging and working with parents and carers is vital in providing their child with an excellent education.

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communication and needs to recognise that the quality of their communication reflects on the school's reputation. Parents, carers 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 school community are clear, professional, timely and effective in their purpose.

Principles

St John Bosco Arts College uses several different methods to maintain effective communication with parents and carers, colleagues, other schools, the wider community and outside agencies. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practical means to contact the recipient.

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

Staff will always seek to establish respectful relationships with parents and carers and 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, Dr etc.

In line with the Unacceptable Visitor Behaviour Policy, we aim to set clear boundaries to enable professional and beneficial communication. There are a range of actions we consider to be unacceptable, which can be best grouped as follows:

- Aggressive or abusive behaviour, and
- Unreasonable demands and/or unreasonable levels of contact

Where this breakdown of communication has occurred, appropriate steps will be made to rectify the situation as soon as possible.

Our communication aims to include the following:

- To make the school as welcoming and inclusive as possible.
- All written and telephone enquiries will be dealt with promptly and parents and carers can expect an acknowledgement within 2 working days.
- To use a variety of forms of communication with parents and carers for example, telephone contact, e-mail, text, social media updates, in app push notifications including MCAS & ClassCharts, and on occasions via post.
- Parents and carers to be contacted for positive as well as negative reasons.
- Parents and carers will be encouraged to help or support their child's learning at school and at home. Information will be provided in a timely way to enable this support to be effective.

Communication with parents and carers

Information for parents and carers who have a query or concern.

To whom should my query or concern be addressed?

If you have a general query or concern, not specific to your child, please contact enquiries@stjohnbosco.org.uk or call the main school office on 0151 330 5142.

My query is about my child's learning is a subject:

Contact the Subject Leader through enquiries@stjohnbosco.org.uk or by telephoning the main school office on 0151 330 5142. Include in your email or telephone call, the name and form of your child to enable the correct staff to deal with the query.

My query is about my child's wellbeing, behaviour or non-compliance:

Contact the pastoral teams through enquiries@stjohnbosco.org.uk or by telephoning the main school office on 0151 330 5142. Include in your email or telephone number, the name and form of your child and some basic information about the issue to enable the correct staff to deal with the query. Depending on the nature of the query, you may receive a communication from:

- Form Tutor
- PPC (Pupil Progress Coordinator)
- Pastoral Officer / SFEO (Student & Family Engagement Officer)
- Head of Care and Safeguarding
- Assistant Headteacher for KS3 or KS4
- Deputy Headteacher for KS3 or KS4

If, following the communication routes above you are dissatisfied with the response, you may complain to the school. Please refer to the School's Complaints Policy available on the school website.

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 telephone, letter or email within two working days and responded to within five working days.

Letters to parents/carers must be processed through the Central Office Team and approved by the Headteacher before posting/emailing.

The school will use standard templates for letters where possible.

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide the school with a current email address for prompt and effective communication.

The correct salutations must be used when writing to or emailing parents/carers/partnerships. 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, Dr etc and sign off is always in the format of Ms, Mrs, Mr, Dr staff surname.

Email

Email is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is the school's preferred method of communication. Emails received will be treated in the same way as letters; acknowledged within two working days and responded to within five working days. Emails should be short and clear and the same care and consideration should be given as when sending a letter.

Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils, parents or carers using their own personal email address.

Telephone Calls

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in schools, where teachers may be teaching full-time then 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 request /query/ problem being dealt with within 5 working days. Staff will make a record of a telephone conversation with a parent/carers on ClassCharts or a record on CPOMS as appropriate.

When calling parents/carers from the school phonenumber, staff must leave a voicemail whenever possible if the call is not answered. If leaving a voicemail is not an option, they should inform the central office to ensure any returned calls are directed appropriately, minimising parental concern.

Telephone calls should be a professional and respectful two-way conversation. Parents are reminded of the need to be polite when speaking to school staff. Staff should professionally end any telephone conversation if they are being subjected to verbal abuse such as swearing or being shouted at. The incident will then be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team and acted on accordingly.

Texts

All requests to send text messages to parents/carers must go through the Central Office Team. They should be short and clear and the same care and consideration should be given as when sending a letter.

My Child at School (MCAS)

All parents are strongly encouraged to download the MCAS app for quick and easy communication from school. All push notifications sent through MCAS must go through the Central Office Team. They should be short and clear and the same care and consideration should be given as when sending a letter.

Classcharts

Staff with access to the Classcharts announcements module can send notifications directly to parents / carers, and pupils. It is essential to follow the school style guide and apply the same care as when drafting a formal letter. To ensure effective support for any responses, it is best practice to inform the central office of notices sent.

Absence

If a child is absent, parents and carers are asked to contact school as soon as possible on the morning of the absence, for full details please refer to the Attendance Policy on the school website.

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 Main Reception prior to meeting with a member of staff. A member of staff may ask a senior colleague to accompany them.

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

Social Networking

Communications Policy

The school avidly uses social media networks to ensure communication is as widespread as possible. These accounts are used to provide updates to parents, pupils and members of the wider community who wish to subscribe to this. As this is an optional means of communication, any key messages will be relayed through formal school communication channels as well as on social networks.

Reports and Progress

Parents and carers receive a progress report at the end of each term.

In addition, parents and carers have the opportunity to meet their child's subject teachers at parents' evenings. Parents and carers should contact the school if issues arise about their child's progress or wellbeing.

Accessibility

We will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to enable all parent/carers to participate fully in a meeting or to receive and understand a communication.

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.

The font used in all printed communications is size 11. Documents printed using a larger font can usually be provided and requests should be made via enquiries@stjohnbosco.org.uk.

School Website

The school website provides a range of information about the school, including:

- Statutory policies
- Term dates
- Pupil Premium information
- Homework support
- Uniform list
- School news and events
- Letters sent out to parents

It is used to promote the school to a wider audience and is updated regularly.

Communication Between Pupils and Staff

Effective communication between pupils and staff is an important aspect of school life. The Salesian principles of RUAH (Respect, Understanding, Affection and Humour) should underpin all communication between staff and pupils. The school 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 aim to:

- 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, 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.

When communicating with pupils, staff should use pupils' first names. When referring to staff in front of pupils, use full names of staff (Mr Surname and Ms/Mrs Surname).

All correspondence with pupils is to remain professional at all times.

Staff are never permitted to use personal email accounts when communicating with pupils.

Verbal Communication Between St John Bosco Arts College Staff

Communications Policy

Staff are free to use first names when communicating with each other however they should address each other professionally by title and surname (Mr/Dr/Ms/Mrs Surname) in front of pupils.

Email Communication Between St John Bosco Arts College Staff

- All staff emails should only be sent if all staff need to read it.
- Staff should not send non-urgent emails before 7.30am or after 6pm, or at weekends. Emails should instead be saved as drafts and sent during working hours or scheduled to automatically send during working hours.
- Consider whether an email is appropriate when face to face communication may be more effective.
- Only copy into emails those who need the awareness of the contents.
- Keep emails concise, use standard UK English and bullet points if necessary.
- Staff should check emails regularly each day, at least each morning and each afternoon.
- Staff must be conscious when using autofill functions with regards to email addresses and ensure the email is being sent only to those intended to receive it.

Email Communications Between Pupils and Staff

(During normal term-time. See separate guidance during isolation periods)

- Pupils should only email staff if their query cannot wait until the next lesson.
- Emails that need a response will be responded to within two working days.
- Staff will use their discretion as to whether an email query requires an email response, or a face-to-face conversation next lesson.
- Staff are not expected to respond to pupil emails after 6pm or at weekends.
- Pupils should use a standard email template when emailing staff.
- Pupils should only email staff from their school email address. Emails from personal emails will not be responded to.

Communication With Other Schools and Outside Agencies

At St John Bosco Arts College, we recognise that children have diverse needs, and where required, we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals including medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), educational psychologists, health professionals and specialists and various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare and the local authority Children's Services. We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school must provide a safe and secure environment.

For more details on how we go about this see the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (copy available on the school website).

We hold information on all pupils in our school and from time to time we are required to share some of this information with others for educational and safeguarding purposes. All personal data is held and processed in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation, in line with our school GDPR policy (Copy available on the school website).