



SACRED HEART COLLEGE

Home School Communication Policy

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Introduction

Sacred Heart College recognises that strong and effective communication between home and school is essential in supporting the learning, wellbeing and safety of every pupil. The College is committed to working in partnership with parents and guardians to ensure that pupils are supported to achieve their full potential.

As a large and busy school community, it is necessary to have clear procedures in place to ensure that communication is managed appropriately. These procedures ensure that enquiries are directed to the correct member of staff, that matters are addressed within reasonable timescales, and that staff can carry out their professional responsibilities effectively.

Parent Contact Availability

It is essential that the College can make timely contact with a parent or guardian during the school day where required. This is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all pupils. Parents/guardians must ensure that up-to-date contact details are provided and that they are contactable during normal school hours.

In circumstances where the College is unable to contact a parent/guardian, or where there is a consistent difficulty in establishing contact, the College may require assurances that appropriate contact arrangements are in place. Where this cannot be confirmed, the College reserves the right to request that a pupil remains at home until such time as reliable contact can be established.

Parental Communication with the College**Enquiries**

Parents/guardians are welcome to raise matters with the College by contacting reception, by telephone, or by email. All initial contact will be managed through the College office to ensure that enquiries are directed appropriately and responded to in a timely and effective manner.

All communication must follow this process to ensure fairness, consistency and appropriate oversight.

All teaching and support staff are primarily engaged in teaching, learning, supervision, and the wider responsibilities associated with the effective running of the school. As such, staff are not available to take direct calls or respond to unscheduled contact from parents during the school day.

Role of the School Office

The College office acts as the first point of contact for all parental enquiries. Office staff will:

- Gather relevant information, including pupil name, form class, and details of the enquiry
- Determine the nature and urgency of the matter
- Direct the enquiry to the most appropriate member of staff
- Decide on the most appropriate form of response

Parents/guardians are expected to provide sufficient detail to allow enquiries to be assessed and directed appropriately.

Enquiries from parents/guardians of pupils who do not attend the College will be managed initially by office staff; however, priority will be given to matters relating to Sacred Heart College pupils. While such enquiries will be acknowledged, the College cannot guarantee a specific timeframe for response.

It should be noted that contacting the College does not automatically result in a call being put through to a teacher or a call back from a member of staff. In many cases, queries may be resolved through:

- A response via SIMS ParentApp/ SIMS Intouch /SMS text
- Information relayed through the office
- A follow-up communication from the appropriate member of staff where necessary

Office staff act on behalf of the College in managing communication and their role should be always respected.

Visiting the College in person

Parents/guardians are welcome to visit the College reception to raise a matter. As staff are engaged in teaching and supervision throughout the day, meetings are arranged in advance through the College office.

Parents should not attend the College expecting immediate access to teaching staff. Classroom Assistants are not available to meet with parents, either on a scheduled or unscheduled basis, as their role is to support pupils throughout the school day and they cannot be released from these duties.

All visitors must report to reception, where office staff will:

- Record the details of the enquiry
- Gather relevant information, including pupil name and form class
- Determine the nature and urgency of the matter
- Pass the information to the appropriate member of staff

Parents/guardians are expected to provide sufficient detail to allow the matter to be assessed appropriately.

Attending the College without a prior appointment does not guarantee that a member of staff will be available to meet. In most cases, staff will be engaged in teaching or other professional duties.

Where appropriate, the enquiry will be:

- Responded to by the relevant member of staff
- Addressed through SIMS ParentApp
- Followed up by telephone where necessary
- Arranged for a meeting at a later time if required

All interactions with staff must be conducted in a respectful and appropriate manner. The College reserves the right to manage or terminate any interaction that does not meet these expectations.

Non-Urgent Enquiries

Non-urgent enquiries will be acknowledged within **five working days**. In many cases, acknowledgements will be provided sooner.

Urgent Matters

Where a matter is deemed urgent, it will be prioritised and passed to the appropriate member of staff and dealt with as soon as possible.

The College will determine whether a matter constitutes an urgent issue.

Communication Between the School and Parents/Carers

SIMS ParentApp

The SIMS ParentApp is the primary and official channel of communication between the College and parents/guardians. Users should ensure Notifications have been enabled.

All key communication from the College will be issued through the SIMS ParentApp. This includes:

- Progress reports and end-of-year reports
- Information relating to a pupil's learning and progress
- Communication regarding additional educational needs and support
- General school updates and correspondence

In addition to formal communication, the SIMS ParentApp is used to support day-to-day communication between the College and home. This may include:

- Attendance information
- Homework tasks and expectations
- Positive engagement and contributions in class

The SIMS ParentApp will also be used to communicate key information regarding:

- Parent–Teacher Meetings
- Formal assessment periods (including feedback provided at key points during the academic year)
- Annual written reports

The app can be accessed via a smartphone, tablet, or desktop device.

Parents/guardians are expected to:

- Download and activate the SIMS ParentApp
- Enable notifications
- Check the app regularly

Guidance on accessing the app is available on the College website. Support can also be provided through an appointment with the College.

Failure to access or monitor the SIMS ParentApp does not prevent communication from being deemed received.

Role of Teaching Staff in Communication**Subject Teacher and Head of Department**

Class and subject teachers play an important role in supporting communication between the College and home through the consistent use of SIMS.

Teachers will:

- Set and record homework using SIMS. (available on parentApp & pupilApp)
- Record pupil attendance accurately (available on parentApp)
- Recognise and record positive engagement and contributions in class (available on parentApp)
- Record behavioural incidents, where appropriate, through the College's behaviour management system to support consistent monitoring by pastoral staff

The emphasis of communication through SIMS is to support a balanced and accurate picture of each pupil's experience, including positive engagement as well as areas for development.

Subject teachers will also provide formal feedback on pupil progress through:

- Written commentary and assessment feedback at key points during the academic year
- Participation in scheduled Parent-Teacher Meetings, which take place at least once per year

Where appropriate, a class or subject teacher may communicate directly with a parent/guardian to support a pupil's progress or to address an ongoing concern.

Form Teacher

The Form Teacher plays a central role typically in communication between the College and home, particularly in relation to matters concerning a pupil that are not addressed through routine communication via SIMS ParentApp.

Where appropriate, enquiries that cannot be resolved through the College office, or which require pastoral understanding of the pupil, may be directed to the Form Teacher in the first instance.

This may include communication via telephone and/or a meeting were deemed appropriate.

Head of Year and Head of Key Stage

The Head of Year and Head of Key Stage work collaboratively with the Form Teacher to support pupils and respond to matters as they arise.

Where appropriate, they may become involved in communication with parents/guardians, particularly where:

- A matter requires further pastoral oversight
- An issue is ongoing or more complex in nature
- Additional support or intervention is required

This may include communication through telephone calls, meetings or written correspondence.

Vice Principal

The Vice Principal will be involved in communication with parents/guardians where matters relate to:

- Safeguarding and child protection
- Serious or sensitive pupil welfare concerns
- Significant pastoral or behavioural matters requiring senior oversight

Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented consistently, fairly and in line with the values of the College.

The Principal will become involved in communication with parents/guardians where a matter has reached a level of significance that requires senior leadership oversight. This may include:

- Matters that remain unresolved following earlier stages of communication
- Serious or complex concerns requiring a final decision
- Issues that may require formal consideration in line with the College's complaints procedures
- Matters which may necessitate consultation with, or referral to, the Board of Governors

In such circumstances, communication will be managed at an appropriate level to ensure that the matter is addressed fully, fairly and in accordance with College procedures.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Communication

Communication relating to Special Educational Needs (SEN) is managed through a structured approach to ensure clarity, consistency and appropriate support for pupils and their families.

A designated Senior Clerical Officer with responsibility for SEN will act as the initial point of contact for most SEN-related enquiries. This ensures that queries are directed appropriately, and that relevant information is gathered in advance.

The SENCo will oversee all SEN provision within the College and will respond to specific or complex queries relating to a pupil's identified needs, support arrangements and provision.

All formal documentation relating to SEN, including support plans and review information, will be communicated through the SIMS ParentApp.

Where required, meetings will be arranged in line with statutory requirements. Pupils at Stage 3 of the SEN Code of Practice will have an annual review of their provision, with parents/guardians invited to participate.

Communication will be managed at the most appropriate level to ensure that queries are addressed efficiently and in line with statutory guidance.

Meetings Between Staff and Parents/Guardians**Arranging a Meeting**

All requests for meetings must be made through the College office. Meetings will only be arranged where it is deemed necessary and appropriate following initial communication. The College will only meet with individuals who hold parental responsibility for the pupil; where another adult (e.g. a relative or family friend) wishes to attend, this must be agreed in advance, and they must accompany the parent/guardian.

In many cases, matters can be resolved without the need for a meeting.

A request for a meeting does not automatically result in a meeting being granted.

The College will determine:

- Whether a meeting is required
- The most appropriate member of staff to attend
- The format and timing of the meeting

Structure and Conduct of Meetings

Parents/guardians will be provided with an outline of the purpose of the meeting in advance. This will normally be communicated verbally and does not constitute a formal written agenda.

Meetings must be conducted in a respectful and constructive manner.

The College reserves the right to have an additional member of staff present.

Where external professionals are invited to attend, this will be communicated to parents/guardians in advance.

Attendance at Meetings

Parents may request to bring an additional attendee to a meeting. Any such request must be made in advance through the College office, with the individual's **name and role clearly outlined**.

The College will determine whether such attendance is appropriate.

The College reserves the right to:

- Limit the number of attendees
- Decline attendance where appropriate

If an additional attendee has not been agreed in advance, the College reserves the right to:

- Ask the individual to wait outside
- Proceed with the meeting
- Reschedule the meeting

Any agreed additional attendee will attend in a **supportive capacity**. This does not include acting as a representative, advocate or spokesperson on behalf of the parent/guardian, except in the case of recognised advocacy services or external professionals, which must be clearly identified and agreed in advance of the meeting.

Pupil Attendance at meetings

It is at the discretion of the College to determine whether a pupil attends all or part of a meeting.

Outcomes of Meetings

A summary of key points may be recorded for internal use only, where appropriate. Formal minutes will only be taken for statutory meetings.

Recording of Meetings

Meetings or telephone calls must not be recorded without the prior consent of all participants. If this occurs, the meeting will be terminated.

Contact Arrangements and Parental Responsibility (PR)

For each pupil, the College will communicate with the parent/guardian recorded as the first named contact. It is the Parent registering the child, responsibility to communicate all who have Parental Responsibility(PR)

Where parents reside at different addresses, it is the responsibility of the first named contact to share information with the other parent.

The College will fulfil its statutory obligation to provide a written report at least once per academic year to an additional parent where required.

Aside from this, all routine communication will be issued to the first named contact only. Parentapp is available to more than 1 parent.

In relation to Parent-Teacher Meetings, teachers will report on each pupil once during the scheduled meeting time. Where parents/guardians reside separately, it is expected that they make appropriate arrangements to attend together or share information following the meeting.

The College is not responsible for managing communication between parents.

Repeated and Persistent Contact

The College is committed to responding to all parental enquiries in a timely and appropriate manner. Once a message or enquiry has been received and relayed to the relevant member of staff, parents/guardians can be assured that it will be considered and responded to in line with the College's stated response times.

Parents/guardians are asked to avoid repeated contact regarding the same matter, as this does not expedite a response and may impact the College's ability to manage communication effectively.

Where multiple contacts are made in relation to the same issue, the College will continue to process the original enquiry. Additional calls or messages may not receive a separate response.

Frequency and Nature of Contact

The College expects that communication from parents/guardians is reasonable, proportionate and appropriate to the nature of the concern being raised.

Where a pattern of frequent contact is established, particularly in relation to minor or routine matters, the College may:

- Limit responses to key updates only
- Respond through a single agreed college communication channel
- Decline to respond to repeated or unnecessary contact where the matter has already been addressed or is in the process of being considered

In such cases, parents/guardians may assume that their communication has been received and passed to the appropriate member of staff.