



Policy:	Parent-School Communication Policy
Review date:	September 2024

Parent Contact Details

College staff must be able to make immediate contact with a parent or guardian during the school day. It is parents'/ guardians' responsibility to ensure changes to telephone numbers, email or home address be communicated to college as soon as possible. Parents are responsible for arrangements for collection of their child from school during the school day if needed.

If it is not possible for a parent/guardian to be contacted immediately by the college staff, then the parent must meet with the principal or vice principal to establish an alternative method of communication as a matter of urgency.

Parental Communication with the College

Enquiries

Parents/guardians are welcome to raise matters with the school by visiting reception, by telephone or by letter/email. In many cases, including where a message must be passed to a pupil, such enquiries will be dealt with directly by our school administration staff.

When another member of staff is required to respond, the following will apply:

Non-urgent enquiries – In such cases, please feel free to contact us by telephone, letter or email. Upon receipt of your message our administration staff will forward it to the relevant member(s) of our staff. As a school, to facilitate effective communication, we aim to acknowledge and respond to non-urgent enquiries **within five working days**. In many cases, however – particularly where there is a time factor – responses will be quicker.

Matters requiring an immediate response – Where a matter is of such urgency that it requires an immediate response, it will be passed to the most appropriate member of staff. Where possible, the member of staff will respond to such enquiries at the time of contact however, where this is not possible, you will be contacted as a matter of urgency within 24 hours (most likely, later the same day).

When speaking to our office administration staff it is important that your child's name and Year group are referenced as well as a brief description of the issue that needs attention.

This will allow enquiries to be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff, with line managers copied in as appropriate.

When communicating by telephone, staff can only discuss a pupil with the registered parent/guardian.

PLEASE NOTE

School staff are not permitted to discuss pupils or any issue relating to school outside the above process.

ABUSIVE AND/OR DEROGATORY LANGUAGE DIRECTED TOWARDS ANY MEMBER OF STAFF WILL RESULT IN THE IMMEDIATE TERMINATION OF THE INTERACTION WITH SCHOOL STAFF.

Enquiries by email – All parent enquiries by email should be directed to the school’s email account: info@shc.omagh.ni.sch.uk

Letters to the School – Parents/guardians are welcome to send letters to communicate relevant information (such as: reasons for absence, appointment times, etc.) to appropriate members of staff within the school. However, we would encourage parents to use the specific pages in the student planner to inform staff of absences and requests to leave early for medical appointments. Should you wish to communicate information of a more confidential or personal nature, letters should be addressed to the relevant staff member and marked as ‘confidential’.

While we endeavour to provide a response to any written communication, enquiries of a vexatious nature will not be responded to.

School Holidays – Any communication received by the school during times of school closure or school holiday will be acknowledged and responded to upon the school reopening. Where communication has been received during a holiday period the timescales for acknowledging and responding to that communication will begin upon the reopening of the school.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN GOOD HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

Pupil Absence

The college’s over-riding obligation is to ensure the safety of the children and young people entrusted to it, and it is therefore of the highest importance that reasons for any pupil absences are established as a priority each morning.

It is therefore essential that parents notify the school at their earliest possible opportunity where circumstances are likely to result in their child being absent from school.

It is also very important that parents provide the school with absence notes, when appropriate, following any absence. Parents are advised to use the appropriate section at the back of the pupil planner to inform school staff of a planned medical absence.

In conjunction with the college’s attendance policy and procedures parents are asked to make medical and dental appointments in the evening, after 3:30pm. When this is not possible a note accompanying the appointment card/letter should be presented to your child’s Head of Year. Parents collecting their children during the day without such a note will need to speak with the principal or a member of the school leadership team (SLT)

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND PARENTS/CARERS

SIMS ParentApp

All formal communication between the school and parents will be through the SIMS ParentApp. This includes academic progress reports, end of year reports, formal letters between individual staff members and parent.

The App can be downloaded to a smart phone or communication can be accessed through a web browser.

It is parents' responsibility to download the app and or provide the school with an email address. The college website includes a section containing help sheets on downloading and operating the SIMS ParentApp.

It is essential that notifications are enabled and that the app is checked on a daily basis.

More than 1 parent can have full access to SIMS ParentApp but this will not be authorised until the college have spoken with the parent registered on SIMS.

School Text System

Short SMS messages will be sent to individual parents or groups of parents regarding issues that require your immediate attention.

School Website and social media

The School Website – the college website is a very useful resource for parents. As well as providing news updates, the website is the place where parents are most likely to find information they need about the college. The school website also provides clear details for parents/carers on how they can contact the college.

Facebook –The college will use its Facebook page for providing updates and celebration of pupils' achievements both within the school and in relation to extra-curricular activities and wider achievement. Please note, messages to this page are not monitored, it should not be used to communicate to the college