



# **St Brigid's School Communication policy**

Report Author	LVC
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## **1. Introduction**

St Brigid's school recognises the importance of clear and effective communication with all stakeholders and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the school. The key stakeholders for a school are parents, carers and students and this policy addresses the main ways in which the school ensures effective two-way communication between home and the school. In this policy the term 'parents' refers to both parents and carers.

## **2. Parents as partners in their child's education**

It is widely acknowledged in Government guidance, legislation and research that parents have a key role to play in their child's education. Schools and Local Authorities are all required to encourage and make arrangements for parents to contribute to the shared view of their child's needs. The parent of every child of compulsory school age must make sure that they receive efficient full-time education suitable;

- To their age, ability and aptitude
- To any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

## **3. Rationale of the policy**

St Brigid's school recognises that engaging and working with parents is a vital component in providing their child with an excellent education. The school will ask parents annually what they expect from and what they think of the school. We intend to involve as many parents in their child's education as possible as part of the community aspect of the school's work. We want to ensure that effective communication and consultation takes place between the school, parents, students and other stakeholders. We want to ensure robust processes for consultation between the school, parents and students on key service areas within a realistic timeline for staff.

## **4. Aims**

We want to make the school as welcoming and inclusive as possible. Signage will be clear, informative, bilingual and positive.

All written and telephone enquiries from parents will to be dealt with within published timeframes.

A variety of forms of communication with parents, for example, telephone contact, email, post, text and home visits will be used.

Parents will be contacted for positive as well as negative reasons.

Information will be given to parents on what students are being taught and tips for helping their child circulated.

Parents will be encouraged to help or support their children's learning at school and at home. Information or training will be provided where possible to enable this support to be effective. The school will encourage the use of parents as volunteer helpers within the boundaries relating to safeguarding children.

## **5. Definition of Communications**

Communications can take a variety of forms: verbal (through meetings or by telephone), written (through letters, SIMS App, or email) or through the School website. We aim to utilise all means of communication effectively.

Communication between the school and parents will operate in the following ways:-

- All prospective parents will receive a St Brigid's school prospectus upon request or via the school website or by coming to the school reception.
- Prospective parents are invited to an Open Evening in the Autumn preceding the year of entry to the school.
- Prospective pupils are invited to an induction days (or days) in July where the main channels of communication are outlined, essential information given and information about the school is presented.
- Parents are invited to a pastoral 'Settling-in parents' evening' in the early part of the Autumn Term of Year 7 to meet the student's form tutor and subject teachers to review how they have settled into the school. Both academic and pastoral information will be shared.

Parents are invited to attend at least one full parent's evening each year to review the academic, personal and social progress of their child. Parents will receive a report of academic, personal and social progress each term.

## **6. Barriers to communications**

Effective telephone and email communication can sometimes be a problem in a school as staff may be teaching full time and running clubs or working with students at lunchtime or after school. Parents may be frustrated if they feel that a message gets 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 or respond to an email. For this reason, teaching staff will endeavour to reply to parent's routine phone calls, letters or emails within five working days therefore **please do**

**not expect immediate responses.** Emails which are sent to school email addresses after 5pm will not be dealt with until the following school day from 9am. For queries that require an immediate response due to an emergency, the admin staff should be contacted who will respond within school hours (8am to 4pm). Messages left on the school answering machine after 4pm will be dealt with the following school day.

Any letter of complaint will be referred to the Headteacher or Deputy (or Assistant) Headteacher for advice prior to response. Our Complaints Policy explains this in more detail.

The school will be particularly proactive in encouraging use of a wide range of communication methods, with admin email contacts being publicised regularly in newsletters and all parents being encouraged to give an email address for prompt and effective communication. On request, key school documents can be translated in community languages and a translator made available, if required, to ensure more effective communication.

## **7. The School Website**

The school website is a good source of general information and will include;

- The school prospectus
- Curriculum resources
- Holiday dates
- Copies of letters to parents
- Information about lessons / additional study
- Special events
- Newsletters and updates
- Essential school Emergency details

## **8. Social Networking Sites**

Staff are not permitted to communicate with parents or students via social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept them as their “friends.” This is part of our safeguarding procedure to protect students and staff. The school-approved social media sites such as Twitter and Instagram are monitored to ensure that there is no risk of reputational damage to the school from outside sources. The school does not have a Facebook page and any social media will not be used to respond to queries.

## **9. School Pupil App (SIMS)**

St Brigid’s School gives all pupils from Year 3 to 13 a SIMS Pupil App, this should be used by your child to access timetables, homework and other notices. Foundation Phase children have access to Seesaw which can be used to communicate between home and school. The Pupil App can be used to convey messages to class or form tutors, but it is the responsibility of your child to do so.

We also provide a SIMS Parent App for free, for parents to access at all times. The SIMS Parent App will contain latest in their child’s attendance, attainment, achievement, behaviour, conduct and any notices from the school. The SIMS App must be checked regularly so that parents can stay abreast of all school communication.

## **10. E-mail**

Parents may wish to contact the School via e-mail as an alternative to telephone or letter. The school e-mail address is admin@st-brigids.denbighshire.sch.uk and this is the school's preferred method of communication.

### **11. Celebrating success**

Parents will be invited to special assemblies, events and presentations throughout the course of the school year to celebrate the students' achievements.

### **12. Parental Involvement**

Parents will receive an annual questionnaire on many aspects of the service provided by the school. Replies are confidential and will be collated and analysed the Headteacher and discussed by Governors, the Senior Leadership Team, staff and the student council. Our intention is to establish regular meetings with parents who may wish to support the school with ideas for progression. We want to help parents to be more involved in their child's learning, developing better expectations of attendance and punctuality and helping families to improve this.

### **13. Supporting Parents of pupils with ALN**

The ALN Code of Practice (Wales) states that '*Partnership with parents plays a key role in promoting a culture of cooperation between parents, schools, LEAs and others. This is important in enabling children and young people with ALN to achieve their potential*'. There should be no presumption about what parents can or cannot do to support their children's learning. All staff should bear in mind the pressures a parent may be under because of the child's needs. Professionals should make efforts to ensure effective communication with parents.

Staff within the school are expected to help parents understand how to contribute effectively to their child's education and should make every effort to ensure that parents understand their rights and responsibilities. All relevant information will be provided in a way that parents can understand. As stated in the ALN code of Practice (Wales), *parents also have a responsibility to communicate effectively with professionals to support their children's education. In working with schools they should:*

- *communicate regularly with their child's school and alert them to any concerns they have about their child's learning or provision*
- *fulfil their obligations under home-school agreements which set out expectations of both sides.*

The ALNCo will endeavour to reply to parents of ALN pupils' routine phone calls, letters, or emails **within five working days**. As noted above for queries that require an immediate response due to an emergency, the admin staff should be contacted who will respond within school hours (8am to 4pm). Messages left on the school answering machine after 4pm will be dealt with the following school day.

### **14. Home-school communications**

A calendar of St Brigid's school events is on the school website and in the weekly newsletter and issued to parents and students. The school encourages parents to share any issues about their child with their form tutor at the earliest opportunity. This can be done through the pupil/parent app or via the admin office. The school will arrange various meetings for parents throughout the year. Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content, and arrangements. If a student is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, the school's First Contact officer will contact a parent (by telephone, if possible) to find out the reason for the absence.

### **15. Communication with Other Schools and Outside Agencies**

We recognise that young people have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on better ways to meet these needs, so that they 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 other specialists. It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare, Social Services and Child Protection Units. We recognise that young people 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. (See the School Safeguarding and Child Protection policy).