



Education & Children's Services

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Parental Communications Policy

St Stephen's RC Primary School

Parental Communications Policy

1. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

- 1.1 This policy seeks to define how the school maintains good communications with parents and other stakeholders. It should provide an overview of what parents can expect of the school and, in turn, what the school will expect of parents.
- 1.2 This policy complies with relevant Perth and Kinross Council policy documents, including the [Customer Service Standards](#) (July 2010).
- 1.3 This policy reflects the school's community values and its focus on the importance of communication with our community and cultivating trust and respect. It is an important principle that the views of all are listened to so that together we can build the best possible experience for our young people. This is **our** school.

2. PARENTAL COMMUNICATION WITH THE SCHOOL

2.1 Enquiries

- 2.1.1 Parents are welcome to raise matters with the school by visiting reception, by telephone (**01250 871950**) or by email (**st-stephens@pkc.gov.uk**). In many cases, including where a message must be passed to a pupil, such enquiries can be dealt with directly by the school office staff. Where another member of staff is required to respond, the following will apply:

- **Non-urgent enquiries** - In such cases, a message can be left with the office staff who will forward it to the relevant member(s) of staff. In line with the **Council's [Customer Service Standards](#)**, general correspondence (letters, emails and enquiries) will be responded to within **15 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 who will usually be a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team. In most cases, the member of staff will be available to deal with such enquiries at the time of contact. If not, they will advise you when you will be contacted; usually the same day or within 24 hours.
- **Logging of enquiries** - All enquiries (in person, by telephone, in writing or via email) that require a member of staff to respond to a parent are logged centrally, with details of the time and nature of the enquiry and the member of staff to whom the enquiry has been passed. This allows the school to quality assure response times.
- **Enquiries by email** - All enquiries by email should be directed to the school's generic account: **st-stephens@pkc.gov.uk**.

This will allow enquiries to be logged for the purpose of quality assurance and for them to be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff, with line managers copied in as appropriate.

- 2.2 **Letters to the school** - Parents will often use letters to communicate relevant information, such as reason for absence. In general, any letters requiring a response should, in the first instance, be addressed to one of the following: the Headteacher or the Principal Teacher.
- 2.3 **Social Media** – parents should not use social media personal/private messaging to contact members of staff.
- 2.4 **Parental complaints** - Should a parent wish to make a formal complaint about any aspect of the school, this should be addressed to the Headteacher. The school follows the [Perth and Kinross Complaints Procedure](#). Such complaints can be made by email, letter, telephone or in person.
- 2.5 **Subject Access Requests (SAR)** – the Data Protection Act 2018 protects individuals from possible misuse of their information, while giving them legal rights to gain access to the information held about them by an organisation or individual within it. If a parent wishes to access information about themselves or their child(ren) this should be submitted in writing to the Council's Data Protection Team at: DataProtection@pkc.gov.uk
- 2.6 **Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests** – Members of the public have a legal right under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 to access information held by the Council. If you wish to request information from the Council, please contact the Council's Freedom of Information Team at: FOI@pkc.gov.uk

3. THE ROLE OF PARENTS IN GOOD HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

- 3.1 Communication between the school and home is at its most effective where parents are clear of what is expected of them. The following are keyways in which parents can support the work of the school in terms of communication:
- 3.2 **Pupil absence**
- 3.2.1 The school's over-riding obligation is to ensure the safety of the young people entrusted to it, and it is 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 as early as possible by telephone where circumstances are likely to result in their child being absent from school.
- 3.2.2 Where no such notification has been received, parents will be contacted via telephone asking for such information. Parents are requested to respond to such calls as a matter of urgency, as the school will continue to pursue absences until such time as it has established a reason for an absence.
- 3.3 **Information Returns**
- 3.3.1 Throughout the session parents will be asked to make returns to the school by a stated deadline. These could be for several reasons, such as information data updates, confirmation of attendance of a pupil on a school trip or activity, feedback on reports etc. Whatever the reason, it considerably eases the administrative burden to the school when parents adhere to the deadlines provided.

3.4 Updating the school on personal matters

- 3.4.1 All our pupils can be affected by things going on at home or in their personal lives and these in turn can have an impact on their learning. It is very helpful for the school to be made aware of anything that a young person may be experiencing away from school that could be having an impact on how they are feeling in school. This could be something such as a family bereavement or friendship difficulties. Parent can contact the school office and request a call back from a certain member of staff to pass on this information, they may wish to inform the school via email, or they may wish to talk to a member of staff at drop off or pick up time.

3.5 Updating the school in the event of change of contact details

- 3.5.1 It is very important that the school has current contact details for parents and other relatives. Parents are requested always to notify the school of such changes, both to their own contact details and those of relatives. This can be a particular problem for the school when it comes to mobile phone numbers. Parents should inform the school of these changes through email, phone call or written note.

3.6 Use of Social Media

- 3.6.1 Consideration should be given regarding the nature of comments made about members of staff on social media platforms. Where a parent has a concern or complaint this should be raised with the school directly so this can be addressed through the complaint's procedure (see 2.4 above).

4. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND PARENTS/CARERS

4.1 The School Handbook

- 4.1.1 A school handbook is made available to all parents through the school website and is updated by December of each year. This handbook meets the requirements of the Education (School and Placing Information) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, and its purposes include:
- providing a welcome for new parents to the school;
 - helping parents to choose a school; and
 - helping parents to prepare their child for school.
- 4.1.2 The handbook should serve as a practical guide to parents about school, authority and national policies and how these will impact on their child's experience at the school. It should also give them a good 'feel' for the sort of school that we are.

The school handbook is also available on the school's website or in hard copy upon request.

4.2 Standards and Qualities Report

- 4.2.1 The school is required under the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc (Scotland) Act (2000) to publish an annual report including key performance measures such as those relating to attainment and attendance. This report is published on the school's website/app.

4.3 General Communications to all parents

- 4.3.1 The school uses a variety of methods to communicate with all parents on matters which are of interest to them. Please see attached flowchart for a handy guide on our communication.
- **Groupcall** – this facility allows the school to send short text messages to parents and is usually used only for matters that require to be drawn to parents' attention urgently such as unexplained absences, school bus or club cancellations or severe weather closures.
 - **Email** – the school holds parental email addresses for almost all pupils and is using this as the main means of sharing things such as school newsletters, trip information, etc.
 - **Newsletter** – the newsletter is published termly and provides parents with an accessible, digital and attractive overview of the school's activities. The newsletter will provide key dates at the end to help you plan for school event that are coming up.
 - **The School App** – the school app is a very useful resource for parents. As well as providing news updates, the app is the place where parents are most likely to find information they need about the school. This includes the school's calendar of events, the school handbook, school newsletters and other key documents.
 - **Twitter account** – this is particularly useful for providing updates on school wide activities and achievements. [@ststephensrcpri](https://twitter.com/ststephensrcpri)
 - **Just2Easy** - is open to all families and we encourage all to engage. Photos, targets and learning will be shared on this platform.

4.4 Communication regarding the curriculum/learning and teaching

- **Primary** - There are two parents' nights per year for primary pupils and a detailed written report towards the end of the session. Primary staff are usually available for brief, informal discussion at the end of the school day, but formal appointments can also be arranged if required. Parents are also provided with a curriculum overview at the beginning of each term.

5. SEEKING PARENTS' VIEWS

5.1 The Parent Council

5.1 The Parent Council, which meets termly and is attended by the headteacher/ principal teacher, is a key vehicle for parents to share their views with the school leadership. These meetings are also used by the school leadership to provide parents with updates on a wide range of issues, ranging from small changes to procedures to very significant government policy changes. The school is committed to harnessing the potential of the Parent Council as a key forum for interaction with parents and will always seek to support initiatives raised through this body.

5.2 Parental Involvement in school self-evaluation and annual planning

5.2.1 The school is also keen to involve parents, as well as other stakeholders, in its annual processes of self-evaluation and planning. Parents' views are sought through a variety of ways including online surveys, verbal responses and feedback gathering activities.

5.3 Consultation on proposed change

5.3.1. The school is committed to consulting parents wherever possible, particularly in cases where significant changes in policy or procedures are under consideration. As well as pupils themselves, parents are key stakeholders within the school community and their views are valued and will be taken into consideration in the making of decisions.

5.4 On-going evaluation of events

5.4.1 The school is also committed to seeking regular feedback from parents on activities such as parents' nights and we will issue evaluation forms to seek parents' views on how such events might be improved.

5.5. Annual parental survey

5.5.1 In addition to these methods of seeking parental views, the school also conducts a formal parental survey, covering a wide range of the school's functions, towards the end of each academic session. These questions largely remain the same each year which allows the school to note trends – either positive or negative – in terms of parental responses. A summary of this survey is shared annually with the Parent Council and, where appropriate, their views on next steps sought.

6. SCHOOL CONTACT DETAILS:

- Email Address: st-stephens@pkc.gov.uk
- Phone No: 01250 871950
- Twitter @ststephensrcpri

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