



**CRIGGLESTONE ST. JAMES CE PRIMARY  
ACADEMY**

**Communications Policy:  
between Parents and School**



**January 2024**



# *Ready For The Future*

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## Statement of intent

Crigglestone St James CE Primary Academy is committed to maintaining effective communication and relationships between parents, pupils and the school. Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It is through effective and interactive communication that information is transmitted, understanding is developed and shared trust is built, confidentiality respected and action coordinated. Good communication promotes partnership.

This policy sets out the aims of the school with regard to internal and external communication, and the responsibilities of the school, its staff members and parents.

The school aims to promote effective and timely communication between pupils, members of staff, parents, stakeholders and all members of the school community through the following means:

- Having a clear and professional communication strategy in place to keep parents well-informed about their child's educational progress and any other matters related to their child's overall wellbeing
- Using the methods of communication that are the most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience and responding to and actioning communication within a reasonable timeframe
- Improving the quality of education by ensuring there is a robust process in place for consultation between the school, parents, staff members and pupils on key areas
- Monitoring and evaluating communication issues through regular meetings with staff, parents and members of the school community
- Being open, honest and professional with communication, whilst maintaining our core values.



## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Education Act 2002
- The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Parent Code of Conduct

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

The Data Protection Officer is responsible for:

- Informing parents about the types of data that the school holds on pupils, who controls the data, why that data is held and who it may be shared with. This information will be concise, transparent and easily accessible; written in a clear and plain language; and free of charge.
- Ensuring that parents understand their right to access information about their child that is held by the school.
- Ensuring that parents also understand their rights to rectification, to erasure, to restrict processing, to data portability and to object to processing.
- Ensuring that consent obtained from parents, and pupils where appropriate, regarding the processing of personal data is freely given, specific, informed, and an unambiguous indication of the individual's wishes.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Placing key policies, documents and procedures in areas that maximise their accessibility and usefulness to the entire school community, e.g. on the school website.

The headteacher and SLT are responsible for:

- Communicating important information, e.g. the curriculum, clearly to parents.
- Informing parents of all school events within appropriate timelines.
- Regularly keeping parents informed of their child's progress.
- Ensuring that individuals are informed of their rights to withdraw consent and are provided with easy ways to do so.
- Taking steps to ensure parents who do not have access to the internet can still access the information that is included on the school website.



- Ensuring the principles and procedures of this policy are followed.
- Maintaining open channels of two-way communication and to listen to feedback and comments from parents.

Staff members are responsible for:

- Communicating important information, e.g. the curriculum, clearly to parents.
- Regularly keeping parents informed of their child's progress.
- Informing parents of school events that include their child's class.
- Ensuring the principles and procedures of this policy are followed.
- Communicating proactively with parents about pupil progress and helping parents to support their child's learning.

Parents are responsible for:

- Reading the key communications circulated by the school and responding or acting on these communications where required, e.g. by attending meetings.
- Logging on to the school website for detailed information about the school calendar, term dates, SATs/assessment details, school achievements and other useful downloads.
- Informing the school of important information related to their child, such as:
  - Medical conditions or allergies, supported by medical documentation relating to these conditions.
  - Any SEND or other needs their child has.
  - Child protection matters, legal issues or relevant duties with appropriate documentation.
  - Change of address/contact details.
- Raising any issues or concerns they may have with the school office team, who will then pass them on to the relevant members of staff.
- Using the school's communication policy appropriately, referring to the communication pathway (see Section 3: Communication between teachers and parents)

### **3. External communication**

#### **Communication from the school to parents**

Parents will be contacted through the following methods:

- Emails or text messages via ParentMail
- Letters home
- Text messages
- Phone calls
- School newsletters
- Face to face meetings

Staff will not communicate or interact with parents or pupils via social networking sites, except in the case of blogs or social media pages set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning.



Parents will be given the opportunity to sign up to newsletters and other marketing communication via email.

The school subscribes to an electronic communication system, ParentMail, which is used to achieve effective and consistent communication with parents. The school will ensure that:

- Only the headteacher, and staff authorised by the headteacher, can access and use the messaging system.
- Parents are asked to provide their consent and details for the use of the system at the beginning of each academic year.
- If any changes are made to the service, or manner in which data is processed on the system, parents are informed and consent is renewed.
- Any parents who cannot be contacted via the messaging system are contacted via another method set out in this policy.

The headteacher, or a member of SLT, will hold meetings for new parents prior to their child's entry to the school.

If a pupil is absent from school and the school has no indication of the reason for the absence, the school will contact the pupil's parent via telephone on the first day of absence in order to find out the reason for the absence. If no contact can be made with any named parent, home visits may be made. The school has the right to contact the education welfare officer to ensure the pupil's wellbeing and safety.

### **Communication from parents to the school**

The school phone is manned from Monday to Thursday between 8:30am and 5:00pm, and on Fridays between 8:30 and 4:30pm on 01924 251018.

For general and urgent enquiries, parents will be required to ring the school office, which is open from Monday to Thursday between 8:30am and 5:00pm, and on Fridays between 8:30 and 4:30pm on 01924 251018.

For non-urgent enquiries, parents may choose to contact the school via telephone or email using the school's email address: [admin@stjamesacademy.co.uk](mailto:admin@stjamesacademy.co.uk). All emails to the school will specify the member of staff that the query is addressed to. All emails to the school will be treated as confidential, unless there is a specific reason not to do so.

To inform the school that the child is absent, parents should call the school office and leave a message stating the child's name, class and reason for absence, for example an illness. The school office may call the parents back if further information/clarification is needed.

Any communications received during school holidays will be responded to upon the school re-opening.

### **Communication between teachers and parents**

Teachers regularly update parents of pupils' progress, the curriculum content being covered, and how they can support pupils' development and progress through activities to be completed at home. This is done through Parents Evenings. There is one a term, with the first (in Autumn



term) being optional. Teachers also lead other sessions throughout the year to keep parents updated with the curriculum. Information is also included on the school's website.

Teachers will be available to discuss pupils' progress and any concerns with parents at the end of each school day. For children in Reception, parents can pass on any quick information at the start of the day, when dropping children off. Parents can also request a meeting with the class teacher, if they wish to have a more in-depth conversation about their child. A meeting will be arranged at a time that is convenient to both the parent and the teacher.

For children in Reception, Tapestry is used as a means of communication. Teachers can upload observations (WOW moments) as well as send reminders about learning or homework. Likewise, parents can upload observations about their child's learning at home. Parents should contact the school office to inform school of any illnesses / medical appointments.

There is a clear path for communication in place which should be followed by parents:

- Level 1: School office / Class teacher (via phone or email to [admin@stjamesacademy.co.uk](mailto:admin@stjamesacademy.co.uk))
- Level 2: Assistant Headteacher: [assistanthead@stjamesacademy.co.uk](mailto:assistanthead@stjamesacademy.co.uk)
- Level 3: Deputy Headteacher: [deputyhead@stjamesacademy.co.uk](mailto:deputyhead@stjamesacademy.co.uk)
- Level 4: Headteacher: [headteacher@stjamesacademy.co.uk](mailto:headteacher@stjamesacademy.co.uk)
- Level 5: Governing Body – via the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors is Mrs Watkins. Her email address is: [cwatkins@stjamesacademy.co.uk](mailto:cwatkins@stjamesacademy.co.uk)

If parents do not follow the above process, the relevant leader will filter the communication to the appropriate member of staff.

If a parent has contacted school via telephone, the relevant member of staff will aim to reply to the parent, via telephone, within one working day. For contact via email, see email communication.

Any communications received during school holidays will be responded to upon the school re-opening and the timescales stated will apply from the first working day after a school holiday.

#### **4. Emergency communication**

All parents will ensure that the school has their latest contact details, including their address, telephone number and email address, so that they can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

If a pupil is seriously ill or injured, the school will attempt to contact the pupil's emergency contacts via telephone. In the event of a larger serious incident requiring invacuation, lockdown, or evacuation, the school will follow its Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Policy and parents will be informed via ParentMail.

Where an incident affects the whole school community, such as power failure or snow, the school will send all parents a message via ParentMail with information on how the school will be operating, e.g. reduced hours or closure. If the school is closed for more than one day due to adverse weather or similar problem, an update will be posted on the school website at least once a day and parents will receive an update via ParentMail.



## 5. Email communication

Email and internet access will be used in line with the school's Data Protection Policy and Online Safety Policy. Emails should not be used as a substitute for face to face communication.

Parents should contact teachers via the school email address: [admin@stjamesacademy.co.uk](mailto:admin@stjamesacademy.co.uk).

The school will aim to acknowledge emails within one working day and will look to respond to email enquiries within five working days. Staff and parents will be made aware that part-time staff may take longer to reply due to the nature of their work schedule.

The following processes will be implemented to assist with the management of email communication:

### Level 1: Using the admin team email for general enquiries and to contact teachers

- Parents should contact school via the admin team: [admin@stjamesacademy.co.uk](mailto:admin@stjamesacademy.co.uk) in the first instance. This email address should be used as a main point of contact for general home-school communication, e.g. informing the school that their child is ill.
- Office staff will track communication sent to this email address and ensure emails are dealt with promptly and consistently.
- Office staff will first seek to handle the enquiry themselves, e.g. if the email is in relation to dates of upcoming trips, uniform queries, sickness.
- If the message requires more specific support, it will be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff.

### Levels 2 – 5: Contacting members of the SLT and the Governing Body

There is a clear path for communication in place that parents should follow. For all general queries, parents should contact the office team via email (as above). This is seen as Level 1 of the communication process.

If parents have questions about the curriculum, or would like to share/raise concerns, they can do so by using the following process:

- Level 1: Class teacher (via phone or email to [admin@stjamesacademy.co.uk](mailto:admin@stjamesacademy.co.uk))
- Level 2: Assistant Headteacher: [assistanthead@stjamesacademy.co.uk](mailto:assistanthead@stjamesacademy.co.uk)
- Level 3: Deputy Headteacher: [deputyhead@stjamesacademy.co.uk](mailto:deputyhead@stjamesacademy.co.uk)
- Level 4: Headteacher: [headteacher@stjamesacademy.co.uk](mailto:headteacher@stjamesacademy.co.uk)
- Level 5: Governing Body – via the Chair of Governors. The Chair of Governors is Mrs Nicola Priestley: [npriestley@stjamesacademy.co.uk](mailto:npriestley@stjamesacademy.co.uk)

If parents do not follow the above process, the relevant leader will filter the communication to the appropriate member of staff.

If parents have specific questions/concerns regarding SEND, they should contact the office in the first instance, who will pass this on to the SENCO – Mrs Butterworth. Parents can also email her directly, if they have an urgent concern: [senco@stjamesacademy.co.uk](mailto:senco@stjamesacademy.co.uk)





If parents have a safeguarding concern, they should contact the school office and ask to speak to a Designated Safeguarding Lead. Alternatively, they can also email school using the safeguarding email address: [safeguarding@stjamesacademy.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@stjamesacademy.co.uk)

### **Implementing set times for responding to emails**

- The school has established a set window of time that parents can contact school: Monday – Thursday 8:30am – 5:00pm and Fridays 8:30am – 4:30pm. Staff may respond to parents within these times. They may also contact parents via phone/email outside of these times, between 8:00am and 6:00pm.
- If emails have been sent to members of the SLT or the SENCO, they will aim to send an acknowledgement email within 24 working hours of receiving the email and will aim to respond to the email within 5 working days. Please be aware that some members of SLT work part-time. They will respond within 24 hours or 5 working days that reflect their part-time working hours.
- Parents should be aware that staff are not able to check emails consistently throughout the day.
- We encourage the school community to only send emails during this window. Receipt of emails sent outside of this window will normally be the next working day.
- The school will not expect staff work emails to be checked outside of staff working hours.
- Any communications received during school holidays will be responded to upon the school re-opening and the timescales stated will apply from the first working day after a school holiday.

## **6. Meetings with staff and parents**

### **Meetings between staff and parents**

When parents wish to organise meetings with members of staff, they will first contact the school office before communicating with the appropriate member of staff directly. Parents will be required to organise meetings with members of staff with adequate preparation time, i.e. at least two working days before the meeting. Lessons will not be interrupted to accommodate parents needing to speak to a teacher.

If parents urgently need to meet with a member of staff, they will phone the school office as soon as possible – the office staff will aim to find a senior member of staff to see parents before the end of the day. For non-urgent meetings between parents and staff, the school will aim to meet parents within five working days. The school will determine the level of urgency in requests for meetings.

### **Recording meetings**

If parents and/or other individuals wish to record a meeting, whether the meeting is virtual or in person, they will discuss their intentions with the school no less than 24 hours before the meeting commences. The school will decide if recording requests are appropriate, in consideration of the meeting's subject matter and the school's Confidentiality Policy.

The school will accept all recording requests in exceptional circumstances, e.g. if parents are hard of hearing or have a memory-related disability.



For meetings to be recorded, consent will need to be obtained from all participants. The final decision to permit any individual and/or parental recording of meetings will reside with the school.

If parents and/or other individuals fail to obtain the school's permission to record before the meeting begins, and insist on recording without permission, the school will be permitted to suspend the meeting.

Any complaints surrounding the school's rejection of a request to record a meeting, or the school's suspension of a meeting due to permission not being granted, will be managed in line with the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.

## **7. Monitoring and review**

The efficiency of this policy will be continually monitored throughout the year by the headteacher and governing board. This policy will be reviewed annually by the governing board. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2024.