



POLICY ON WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS – HOW WE COMMUNICATE

Policy Owner Head	Associated documents	Legal Framework
Review by FGB	Review frequency Every three years	Next Review date November 2028



Working in Partnership with Parents

– How we Communicate

At St Joseph's College, we believe that open, respectful communication between home and school is central to every child's success. We value our strong partnership with parents and carers and share a common goal: to help each student achieve their personal best as they progress through the College. This guidance sets out the channels and expectations for communication so that matters can be handled efficiently, respectfully, and in a spirit of mutual understanding.

Channels of Communication

Channel	Typical Purpose	Handled By:
SchoolBase – Parent Portal Absence notification	Out of School Pupil Request/Notifications	Administrative staff in consultation with pastoral and senior leadership team.
Email General information provision: mailbox@sjcr.org.uk Other: Tutor/Teacher's own address shared by introductory email.	General queries, welfare, health, safeguarding and admissions	Tutor (Senior School) Class Teacher (Prep School) then triaged to relevant staff
Telephone College Reception Switchboard: 0118 966 1000	Time sensitive messages. Meeting requests Clarifications	Reception Staff who will direct queries as needed
In Person	Scheduled appointments to discuss your child's progress or wellbeing outside the normal routine of parent - teacher meetings.	Relevant staff arranged through reception or Tutor/Class Teacher



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SchoolBase Parent Portal

Please use the *Out of School Pupil Request/Notifications* on the [SchoolBase Parent Portal](#) to let us know if your child is unwell or has a planned absence for which you require approval/authorisation e.g. medical appointment, religious observance.

Email Communication

Email is often the easiest way to contact us about matters such as health, welfare, safety, safeguarding, changes of address, or any of the College's statutory responsibilities.

Please note that while email is a helpful tool, most of our teaching or pupil facing staff are not desk-based and may be teaching or supervising students for much of the day.

For this reason, responses may not be immediate, but you can expect an acknowledgement within 24 working hours and a full reply within 72 working hours wherever possible.

To ensure your query reaches the right person quickly, we recommend that you contact your child's tutor (Senior School) or class teacher (Prep School) in the first instance. They will be able to direct your message to the most appropriate member of staff and support you in finding a resolution.

At the start of each academic year (or shortly after your child joins the College), your tutor or class teacher will introduce themselves by email and share their College contact details.

If you wish to raise a concern or complaint, please refer to the [College's Complaints Policy](#), which outlines how to do so both informally and, if needed, more formally to the Head or Chair of Governors. The policy also provides the relevant contact addresses for those stages.

Telephone Calls

You are always welcome to telephone the College, particularly if you have a simple or time-sensitive query.

For more detailed matters, however, we encourage you to use email as your first point of contact, as most teaching staff are not desk-based and may be in lessons or on duty when you call.

When you contact Reception, our administrative team may ask a few brief questions to understand the nature of your enquiry. This helps them to direct your call to the most appropriate member of staff and ensures that you receive the quickest and most accurate response possible. We are grateful for your cooperation with this process.

For residential or off-site trips, a dedicated College mobile phone will be issued to the staff member leading the trip, and parents will be given that contact number where appropriate. To protect the privacy and wellbeing of our staff, personal mobile numbers are not shared with parents and should not be requested.

Except in cases of genuine emergency, it is not College policy for staff to make or receive calls on their personal phones, either during or outside normal working hours.



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If emergency contact has been made in exceptional circumstances, we ask that those numbers are not stored or used for future communication.

In Person Meetings

We are always pleased to meet with parents and carers to discuss a child's progress, wellbeing, or any concerns that may arise.

To ensure that we can give you our full attention and prepare the most helpful response, we ask that meetings are arranged in advance wherever possible.

Unless there is an emergency, please contact Reception, your child's tutor, or class teacher to request an appointment and provide a short outline of what you would like to discuss.

This allows us to ensure that the right staff are present and that any relevant information is available to support a constructive conversation.

When a meeting takes place outside our usual schedule of parent consultations, the following arrangements will apply to ensure clarity and fairness for everyone involved:

- The College will decide which staff members are best placed to support the discussion.
- Two members of staff will normally attend the meeting.
- Meetings will take place during staff working hours, at a mutually agreed time.
- A clear time frame will be set at the start so all parties know how long they have together.
- Brief summary notes (not full minutes) will be taken to capture key points and any agreed actions. These will be shared with parents afterwards for transparency and mutual understanding and a copy kept on your child's records for future reference if necessary.

We are grateful for your cooperation in helping us to manage meetings thoughtfully and respectfully. This approach ensures that discussions remain focused, productive, and centred on achieving the best outcome for your child.



Our Shared approach to Communication

At St Joseph's College, we believe that open, respectful communication between home and school is at the heart of every child's success.

We know that parenting and schooling can be complex and, at times, emotional. When questions or concerns arise, our aim is to listen carefully, respond thoughtfully, and work together to find the best way forward for your child.

Just as we ask our staff to model professionalism, empathy, and patience, we ask parents and carers to approach communication in a spirit of mutual respect. We all share the same goal: to support our students to thrive academically, socially, and personally.

Guiding Principles

All communication between parents, carers, and College staff whether in person, by phone, or in writing, should aim to be:

- **Polite and courteous** in both tone and content
- **Respectful** of professional boundaries and responsibilities
- **Assumptive of goodwill**, recognising that all staff act in the best interests of students
- **Mindful** of the time pressures under which both teachers and parents work
- **Balanced**, acknowledging that different perspectives may exist and that children's accounts of situations may not always reflect the full picture

You can expect an acknowledgement of your message within 24 working hours and a fuller response within 72 working hours. If a matter requires more time to investigate, the member of staff will let you know when to expect a further update.

When Communication Becomes Concerning

The vast majority of our communication with families is positive and constructive. However, on rare occasions, interactions may become inappropriate or distressing.

As an employer, the College has a legal and moral duty to protect its staff from abuse, intimidation, or behaviour that causes concern.

We therefore ask that all communication remains courteous and focused on resolution. This includes written, verbal, and online interactions.

Examples of concerning behaviour

Such behaviour may include (but is not limited to):

- Shouting, swearing, or using insulting or aggressive language
- Making unfounded allegations or personal attacks
- Sending repeated messages in a manner that feels harassing or intimidating



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- Posting or sharing comments online that are defamatory or damaging to the reputation of individuals or the College

If a staff member feels that communication has become inappropriate, they will refer the matter to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

That colleague will take over correspondence and, where necessary, initiate the College's formal procedure for addressing such behaviour.

In the event that abusive or threatening communication continues, the College may need to restrict contact, request that all communication goes through a single point of contact or take further steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and students. We always hope, however, to restore a positive and respectful dialogue.

The Senior Leadership Team Procedure

If communication is deemed abusive, threatening, or persistently inappropriate, the matter will be referred to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) for review and follow-up.

Our staged process is designed to allow for reflection and resolution at the earliest possible point and mirrors how we work with students to resolve conflict:

1. Step One – Restorative Conversation

A member of the Senior or College Leadership Team will contact the parent to discuss the issue, clarify concerns, and seek to restore a positive way forward.

The focus at this stage is on understanding and resolution.

2. Step Two – Formal Meeting

If difficulties continue, a meeting will be arranged with the **Bursar or Head** to review what has occurred, agree expectations for future communication, and confirm any next steps in writing.

3. Step Three – Governance Review

In the event of serious or ongoing concerns, the matter may be referred to the Chair of Governors. This step ensures that all actions taken are fair, transparent, and proportionate.

In the most serious circumstances, for example, incidents involving physical aggression or defamatory statements, the College may seek advice from external agencies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our community.

Possible Outcomes

We hope that most issues can be resolved through honest conversation and mutual understanding. However, if unacceptable behaviour continues or escalates, the College may need to apply one or more of the following measures:

- A written warning reminding all parties of expectations for respectful communication



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- Temporary or ongoing restriction of contact to a single member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Withdrawal of invitations to certain College events (e.g., performances, assemblies, or meetings) where attendance may not be appropriate
- In rare and serious cases, withdrawal of permission to enter College premises
- Where behaviour has a significant impact on the College community, formal action under the College's Terms and Conditions, in line with the Exclusion Policy

These measures are taken only as a last resort, after careful consideration and, wherever possible, consultation with those involved.

Our preferred outcome is always to rebuild trust, communication, and partnership in support of the student's ongoing education.

In Summary

Our shared aim is to nurture a respectful, compassionate, and collaborative environment for our students to grow and thrive.

We thank all parents and carers for helping us uphold the high standards of communication that reflect our College values of kindness, respect, and integrity.