



St Oswald's C of E Academy

Imagine with all your mind, **Believe** with all your heart, **Achieve** with all your might

Communication Policy

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1. Introduction

Schools/academies have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, with other schools, with the community, with outside agencies, and within the academy. Good communication between St Oswald's CofE Academy and the home is essential, and children achieve more when academies and parents/carers work together. Parents/carers can naturally help more if they know what the academy is trying to achieve.

In our academy, we aim to have clear and effective communication with all parents and with the wider community. Effective communication enables us to share our aims and values through keeping parents well informed about academy life. This reinforces the important role that parents/carers play in supporting the academy. We seek parental feedback on the academy communication via our annual parent survey.

2. Aims

Our academy aims are to ensure all communications are:

- Clear
- Comprehensive
- Two-way
- Timely
- Respective responsibilities.

The academy will undertake to ensure that:

- Parents and children have clear lines of communication
- The curriculum is clearly communicated to parents
- Ensure that communication with parents/carers are effective, timely, appropriate and respectful
- Response to communication from parents/carers is in line with this policy
- Parents are informed of forthcoming events within appropriate timelines
- All relevant communications will be treated as confidential within the academy context

Parents will undertake to:

- Ensure that communications with staff are effective, timely, appropriate and respectful
- Read all communications issued by the academy
- Raise issues or concerns at the earliest opportunity with the academy in the appropriate manner*
- **Understand that their child's class teacher should be, in most cases, their first point of contact** unless the communication is a concern regarding the child's teacher or a safeguarding concern, in which case it would be the headteacher/ deputy headteacher and the designated safeguarding lead or deputy designated safeguarding leads respectively
- Be aware of the core academy hours of 8:00am - 4:00pm and not expecting staff to respond to their communication outside of these times
- Not to discuss academy issues on social media

**Issues or concerns should be raised with a class teacher in the first instance; these may then be escalated to a member of the senior leadership team, deputy headteacher and finally the headteacher if necessary. Any formal complaints are to be communicated using the stages identified in the Trust's Complaints Procedure and Policy.*

Staff will aim to respond to communication during core academy hours 8:00am - 4:00pm, or their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are not expected to do so. Staff are expected to respond to emails within three working days (term time).

3. Methods of Communication

In person

Where possible, most communication should take place in personal verbal interactions between parents/carers and staff, as children are collected from academy at the end of the day. It is the academy belief that this is the best form of communication and reduces the risk of miscommunication or misinterpretation of the information. This communication should be **brief and non-confidential** as it will take place in a public space. As with any verbal interactions between parents and staff, it is fully expected to be **non-confrontational**. If the communication requires more time or confidentiality, a meeting should be arranged for a convenient time for all parties. Staff will only discuss issues involving parents/carers own children and not those involving other children.

The academy's Attendance and Welfare Officer is present on the playground from 8.30am - 8.45am every morning. This can be a time for brief non-confidential conversations to take place. Should longer conversations be required, then an appointment to meet with the Attendance and Welfare Officer or the child's class teacher needs to be booked in the usual way.

If parents/carers have issues or concerns regarding other members of staff, then these are to be raised using the contacts outlined in section 2 above and not with the Attendance and Welfare Officer at this time.

Email

We ask parents to use the email address school.office@stoswalds.covmat.org .

For the purposes of administration, we require all emails to go to a central email address. All emails will be treated with full confidentiality, and the responses will be made by the member of staff addressed. Please note, all emails should specify the member of staff to whom the query is addressed.

We will respond to emails from parents and carers within 3 working days (during term time).

Class teachers / academy staff may send emails to parents/carers via school.office@stoswalds.covmat.org but not from their work nor personal email addresses.

The Attendance and Welfare Officer may make contact via the academy attendance email address, regarding attendance related communication.

Teachers 2 Parents (T2P)

The academy administration staff will contact parents/carers through the Teachers 2 Parents (T2P) texts as a primary means of communication in case of emergencies or time sensitive matters.

If a child is absent from the academy, and we have no indication of the reason, the Attendance and Welfare Officer or administrative staff will contact a parent on the same day via T2P or a phone call, to find out the reason for the absence. Further details regarding procedures for pupil absence contacting, can be found in the academy's Attendance Policy.

My Child at School (MCAS)

This is an app which allows parents/carers to securely access and update the information we hold about their child, including attendance and personal details. Parents can update information as needed to help us maintain accurate records. Parents are encouraged to enable notifications for the MCAS app to ensure they receive all important school communications.

Website

The academy website has lots of information including all the statutory information required by the DfE: [Home | St Oswald's CofE Academy](#) . Parents/carers are encouraged to look at the website on a regular basis. Class pages can be accessed via the academy website and provide valuable information for specific classes, including curriculum information. These pages are kept up-to-date and include termly updated curriculum information.

Class Dojo

The Class Dojo platform is used as an additional form of communication with parents/carers. Staff may choose to use this to share good news with specific parents/carers about a child's achievement in the academy, or they may use to send out whole class notices. Class Dojo cannot be used for parents/carers to make contact with staff. This needs to be done using the other forms of communication and in the usual way as outlined in this policy e.g. via office email.

The exception to this is for parents/carers of Nursery children who are still developing independence and may need additional support in passing messages between home and academy.

Letters

Letters can be handed in, or posted to, the academy office. As with emails, all letters will be treated with full confidentiality and the responses will be made by the member of staff

addressed. Please note all letters should specify the member of staff to whom the query is addressed. Please let the office staff know if the letter contains information about your child which you would like the class teacher to receive urgently. We will aim to respond to letters within 3 working days (during term time).

Telephone

This would be appropriate where enquiries are deemed more urgent by the parent, such as communicating particular information about the child to the academy. We ask parents to phone the academy on 01788 543882. If the call requires a response from a member of staff, we aim to do this within 3 working days (term time).

4. Meeting with Parents/carers

We encourage parents to arrange to meet with their child's class teacher if issues arise regarding their child's progress, wellbeing or any other issues in which are concerning their child. In some instances, regarding attendance or welfare issues, then an appointment with the academy's Attendance and Welfare Officer may be more appropriate and can be requested.

If a parent/carer feels as though there are persistent or serious issues, these may then be escalated to the deputy headteacher and finally the headteacher if necessary.

Any parent wishing to meet with a member of staff should email or telephone the request into the academy office and ask for a meeting or telephone conversation with that member of staff. The subject for that meeting should be shared in advance to help staff to be fully prepared to ensure the meeting is productive. We will acknowledge the request within 3 working days and aim to schedule the subsequent meeting as soon as possible. Staff are willing to meet outside core academy hours of 8:00am - 4:00pm to fit in with parents and staff, where possible.

If parents are unable to keep an appointment, they should give adequate notice i.e. ring the academy if it is on the same day. Parents should not automatically expect to meet teachers during the academy day unless by prior arrangement. Any urgent concerns should be passed on via the office.

Parents/carers should not come to the academy to talk to a member of staff without an appointment. Staff members may be unavailable to meet should this happen. It is perfectly acceptable to call a meeting to a close to allow time for further investigation. When a pupil is accompanying a parent/carer for a meeting, it is acceptable to ask a pupil to remain out of the meeting for part of it, particularly when a parent is critiquing any aspect of the academy. It is damaging to the relationship with the pupil for them to witness this, but if parents/carers need to air feelings in a constructive, non-confrontational fashion, then this is a useful mechanism for this. A staff member may ask for another member of staff to accompany them if their input will add value to the meeting. The staff member should not feel threatened at any time and will call a meeting to a close in the event of a parent/carer becoming confrontational or abusive.

All meetings and discussions are confidential between the staff involved. Parents/carers and other parties should not divulge information to others without the agreement of parents/carers and the academy, unless there are safeguarding concerns which the academy must share with the relevant authorities.

5. Planned Meetings

Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content, and arrangements.

A meeting for new Reception parents is held in July each year.

If there are attendance concerns, parents / carers may be asked to attend a planned attendance meeting with one of the attendance team.

There may be other planned incidental meetings for specific year groups throughout the year, and parents / carers will be given good notice of these.

6. Home - Academy Communication

Written Reports: there is an annual report which gives in-depth information on children's progress in all areas of the curriculum. In addition, parents meet their child's teacher twice during the year for parent consultations.

Half-termly updates are sent to parents / carers indicating their child's current attendance.

Academy event dates are shared regularly on academy newsletters, the academy's Facebook page and sometimes via email, MCAS or T2P. In addition, some specific communications regarding trips and events are sent out to the relevant groups of parents.

When starting at St Oswald's C of E Academy, parents will be asked to sign and return a Home/Academy agreement.

7. Governors

The governors are listed on the academy website in the section 'Governance'. Governors should be contacted via the academy (email: school.office@stoswalds.covmat.org communications left at the academy office, which will be forwarded to the Chair of Governors). As governors support the academy in a strategic role, if parents contact them regarding a matter to do with the management of the academy, governors will be unable to respond and will direct them to take their concern to the academy. Any complaints which are addressed to the Chair of Governors will be dealt with in line with the Trust's Complaints Policy. This may include referring you back to the class teacher or headteacher in the first instance.

8. Safeguarding including Child Protection (See also Safeguarding Policy)

If you have concerns about any child at the academy including concerns of neglect and abuse, please contact one of the academy's designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) for child protection through the academy office.

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our academy should provide a safe and secure environment. Because of this, when any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Leader (DSL), who may share this information with the Social Services.

We regularly communicate with various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on ways to meet pupils' needs, to ensure that all pupils can participate fully in academy life. Support comes from such services as Educational Welfare, Educational Psychologists, Social Care etc.

9. Confidentiality

We hold information on pupils in our academy and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Details of which can be found on the Trust website: <https://www.covmat.org/> within the policy: Privacy Notice for Parents and Pupils.

We will be compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018. Parents have a right to view the information we hold, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

10. Exceptions

There may be occasions where the academy needs to invoke alternative or more bespoke communication protocols to operate effectively or to respond to more unique situations. This will be done with reference to our other guiding policies and in line with the academy's governance framework and responsibilities.

11. Quick checklist:

Message, queries, concerns	Person to contact	Our academy offer
If your child is absent from academy...	If a child is unavoidably absent from the academy, parents are expected to contact academy by telephone call on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the	The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in academy after close of register at 9.30am and where no reason for absence is known (see Attendance Policy for further details)

	expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.	
If you have a quick message for your child's teacher about (for example) collection, lost uniform item, home learning...	You can talk to your child's teacher on the playground after the class has been dismissed; a member of the classroom staff will always be outside every afternoon.	Staff release the children from the playground at the end of the academy day. This is the best time to speak to a member of staff.
If you would like to talk about your child's learning progress...	Please email the academy office to make an appointment with the class teacher.	We hold two parents' evenings throughout the year – one in the autumn term and one in the spring term Reports are written and given to parents at the end of the academic year (July). Curriculum information, newsletters and updates can be viewed on the academy website.
If you are concerned about social behaviours or bullying...	Please email the academy office to make an appointment with the class teacher.	Behaviour is monitored and recorded. You will be informed verbally if there are any behavioural issues with your child/ren which will be dealt with immediately. If there are more ongoing behavioural incidents, you parents/carers will be asked to come into academy for a meeting.
If you would like to discuss something related to your child's teacher...	Please contact the academy office to speak with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher.	
If you would like to discuss your child's special educational needs...	Please contact through the academy office to make an appointment with our SENDCO (Special Educational Disability Needs coordinator).	Parents of children with SEND will be updated about their child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) throughout the academic year.
If you have a general query e.g. payment query, Before & After Academy Club, academy dinner question	Enquiries can be made to the academy's office staff.	
If you wanted to check if the academy is open...	Please check the academy website, email or T2P communication from academy or the academy's Facebook page	Any unexpected academy closures will be communicated to parents via T2P or email.
If you have a query about your child's homework...	Please either speak to the class teacher at end of day pick up or email your child's class teacher via the academy office.	Homework expectations for your child's class will be set out at the start of each term and are communicated out to parents/carers.
If you have a safeguarding concern...	Please contact the academy and ask to speak with the designated safeguarding lead or deputy designated safeguarding leads	The academy's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy has comprehensive details of the academy's safeguarding arrangements and can be accessed via the academy website.
If you have a concern or complaint...	Concerns should be raised with a class teacher in the first instance; these may then be escalated to a	The academy has a clear structure in place regarding who concerns or complaints should be raised with. This is underpinned by a

	<p>member of the senior leadership team.</p> <p>Any formal complaints are to be communicated using the stages identified in the Trust's Complaints Procedure and Policy.</p> <p>Any complaints which are addressed to the Chair of Governors will be dealt with in line with the Trust's Complaints Policy. This may include referring you back to the class teacher or headteacher in the first instance.</p>	<p>Trust Policy which identifies the stages for formal complaints.</p>
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