



ELT

Together We Can

Communications Policy

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ELT Communications Policy

1. Purpose

To promote partnerships between the school, parents and carers, pupils and the wider community through efficient and effective communication.

2. Definition of communication

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflects on our schools' reputation. Parents and carers, trustees and pupils also have a part to play in reflecting the school's reputation. We strive to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and effective in their purpose.

3. Principles

ELT Schools use a number of different methods to maintain effective communication with parents and carers, other schools, the wider community and outside agencies. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practicable means to contact the recipient.

Communication on issues that affect the safety and wellbeing of a pupil will be treated as a priority. The school holds emergency contact details for all pupils and families are asked to alert the school immediately if contact information needs to be revised.

Staff will always seek to establish friendly relationships with parents and carers but they will ensure relationships are professional and parents will be addressed in a formal manner. Staff are to avoid developing close relationships with parents and carers. The use of a parent, carer or staff member's first name is not appropriate; therefore, all communications will be to and from Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc.

The Communications Policy embraces the principles of our schools' Equality Statement and Online Safety Policy (copies available on the [policy page](#) of the individual schools' websites).

4. Introduction

ELT recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (pupils, parents and carers, staff, trustees, the local and wider community outside agencies, etc), and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in our schools.

The key stakeholders for a school are parents, carers, pupils, staff and trustees and this Policy addresses the main ways in which the school will ensure there is effective two-way communication between home and school.

Parents and carers have a key role to play in their child's education and as such the schools will seek relevant information from home to ensure that the school understands the needs of each child.

5. Aims of the policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that effective communication and consultation takes place between our schools, parents, carers, pupils and other stakeholders and that there are robust processes to facilitate this.

Our schools recognise that engaging and working with parents and carers is a vital key in providing their child with an excellent education. Parents and carers are offered opportunities throughout the year to convey to us what they expect from and think of the school. Our wish is to involve as many parents and carers in their child's education as possible.

Our aims include the following:

- To make our schools as welcoming and inclusive as possible.
- Signage will be clear, informative and positive.
- All written and telephone enquiries will be dealt with promptly and parents and carers can expect an acknowledgement within 2 working days.
- A variety of forms of communication with parents and carers are used for example, telephone contact, e-mail, messages via School Apps, post and text.
- Parents and carers are contacted for positive as well as negative reasons.
- Information is given to parents and carers on what pupils will be taught and tips for helping their child will be provided.
- Parents and carers will be encouraged to help or support their child's learning at school and at home. Information will be provided in a timely way to enable this support to be effective.

6. Communication with parents and carers

i. Choosing the correct member of staff to address a query

Please see individual School Appendices which details who to contact and how to progress any query that is not successfully resolved.

ii. E-mail

E-mail is the school's preferred method of communication. Emails received will be acknowledged within 2 working days and responded to within 5 working days. Emails should be short and clear and the same care and consideration should be given as when sending a letter. Any items longer than a paragraph should be attached in word format.

Parents and carers may wish to contact the school via email for a general enquiry as an alternative to telephone or letter. The school email addresses for each school can be found in the Appendices.

Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils or parents and carers using their own personal email address.

iii. Letters

Staff will always reply to a letter from parents and carers as quickly as possible. A response to acknowledge receipt of a letter will be made by telephone, letter or email **within 2 working days and responded to within 5 working days**. Group or whole school letters/emails to parents/carers must be processed through the

school administration team and approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team before posting/emailing. Copies will be kept by the school administration team and posted on the website.

Copies of correspondence with parents and carers relating to individual students will be placed on pupil files on SIMS.

Any letters of concern or complaint should be dealt with in accordance with our schools' Complaints and Suggestions Policy (copy available in the on the Policy Pages of the individual school website).

Our schools will use standard templates for letters where possible.

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide our schools with a current email address for prompt and effective communication. However, if we are unable to obtain a current email address for any parent or carer, communications will be delivered home in hard copy by their child or sent by post.

The correct salutations must be used when writing to or emailing parents/carers/partnerships. The use of a parent, carer or staff member's first name is not appropriate; therefore, all communications will be to and from Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc. and sign off is always full name Ms/Mrs/Mr/Dr Teacher Surname. Any relevant line manager / Head of House / Form tutor must be copied into letters or emails.

iv. Telephone Calls

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school where teachers may be teaching full-time and running clubs or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents and carers may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits 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.

In a non-emergency, a return call will be made within 2 working days, with any follow up action from the request /query/problem being dealt with within 5 working days. Staff will make a record of a telephone conversation with a parent/carer on SIMS.

v. Texts

Automated texts from SIMS are sometimes sent to parents/carers but are not used for general communications from members of staff and staff should not respond by text to a text message received from a parent/carer (but should respond using an alternative means of communication such as email or telephone if appropriate).

7. Absence

If a child is absent, parents and carers are asked to contact the school as soon as possible on the morning of the absence, for full details please refer to the Attendance Policy (copy available on the policy page of our schools' websites).

8. Meeting with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers wishing to meet a member of staff must contact the school to make an appointment.

This request should be responded to within 2 working days.

Parents and carers should report to reception prior to meeting with a member of staff. A member of staff may ask a senior colleague to accompany them.

Staff should call a meeting to a close in the event of the parents or carers becoming angry or abusive. This should be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

9. Reports and Progress

Parents and carers receive progress reports and a full annual report to provide information about their child's progress in each academic year. These reports are sent to parent/carers digitally.

In addition, parents and carers have the opportunity to meet their child's teachers during the year, at parents evening. Parents and carers should contact the school if issues arise about their child's progress or wellbeing. **The first point of contact should be the child's Form Tutor/class teacher.**

We welcome the presence of any other adult a parent or carer wishes to invite to a school meeting for support or to act as an interpreter.

10. Accessibility

We will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to enable a parent or carer with a disability to participate fully in a meeting or to receive and understand a communication.

The font used in all printed communications is Calibri 11. Documents printed using a larger font can usually be provided and requests should be made via the Office.

If a translation of a document is required, in the first instance parents/carers should access Google Translate.

11. School Website

The school website provides a range of information about the school, including:

- Curriculum information
- Pupil Premium information
- Homework and relevant App
- Uniform list
- Timetables
- School events
- Holiday dates
- School prospectus

It is used to promote the school to a wider audience and is updated regularly.

12. Educational Apps

Our Schools use a number of apps to support Teaching and Learning in the school environment. Each of these Apps have been cleared for GDPR compliance prior to use and they encourage parent and carer involvement in learning.

Parents also have access to data about their child's attendance and progress via online apps.

13. Severe weather and emergency closure

In the event of emergency closure communication will be made to parents and carers via email/SMS Parents and carers should also tune in to local radio and check the school website and social media channels (e.g. Twitter).

14. Prospective parents/carers

The school prospectus is published on the website.

Prospective parents and carers are invited to an Open Events in the Autumn Term of the year preceding their child's year of entry to the school and to attend published tours to enable them to see the school operating.

Prospective parents and carers are also invited, along with their child, to an induction evening in July where the main channels of communication are outlined, and important information will be shared.

15. Supporting parents and carers of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The school recognises the importance of positive relationships with parents and carers of all pupils with additional needs. The SEND Code of Practice emphasises the importance of positive, supportive attitudes to parents and carers and user-friendly information and procedures. All staff will make every effort to ensure effective communication with parents and carers.

All staff within the school are expected to help parents and carers understand how to contribute effectively to their child's education and will make every effort to ensure that parents understand their rights and responsibilities. All relevant information will be provided in a way for all to understand and respond to.

When pupils who have special educational needs are making less than the expected progress or if they are experiencing behavioural difficulties, we would expect to meet with parents and carers more regularly. Parents and carers are encouraged to communicate immediately where they have a concern about their child's needs being met and should also refer to the SEND section of the website.

16. Investigating incidents

When investigating an incident involving pupils, school members of staff interview all pupils involved and ask them to complete a written account. The school will only share any information that would identify any pupils in accordance with data protection regulations and legislation and our policies (a copy of our data protection policy is available on the policy page of the website).

17. Monitoring, evaluation and review

A member of the senior leadership team and the ELT will review this Policy at least every three years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The Policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

The next review is due: January 2025

18. Communication between pupils and staff

Two-way communication between pupils and staff is an important aspect of school life. The school welcomes and encourages pupils to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school. When communicating with a member of staff should encourage pupils to:

- Stand in front of the member of staff they are speaking with and make eye contact; taking into consideration any special education needs
- Address the member of staff using their formal name e.g. Mrs Smith or Sir/Miss, never referring to a member of staff by their first name;
- Be respectful, do not talk over, raise voice or walk away before the conversation has ended.

When communicating with pupils, staff should use pupils' first names and full names of staff (Mr Surname and Ms/Mrs Surname) in front of pupils. Try to avoid generic terms of: Sir and Miss to convey politeness.

Staff are never permitted to use personal email accounts when communicating with pupils.

19. Communication between staff

I. Verbal

Staff are to use first names when communicating with each other and full names (Mr/Dr/Ms/Mrs Surname) in front of pupils.

Walkie talkies are to be used by all staff on call out and in the Premises team. Be aware that other members of the school, including pupils, may overhear any conversation. Volume should be kept low.

Agendas for staff meetings are to be circulated at least 2 days in advance. The minutes of the meeting to be circulated to all relevant parties where possible within 2 days of the meeting.

II. E-Communications

We have introduced the use of Microsoft Teams and Office 365 we have agreed new internal ways of working and best practice tips so that we get the most out of the new technology and to ensure staff are all working on the same page.

Appendix 4 summarises the staff communication guidelines and expectations when using the different types of communication e.g. email, Teams chat and Teams posts.

20. Professional duty to communications

Staff should check their emails and Microsoft Teams at a minimum of twice a day. The beginning and ends of days are the minimum expectations. Colleagues should acknowledge an internal email that requires a response within 48 hours.

21. Dealing with the media

Regular newsletters home our main avenue for communicating to our parents/carers; for wider coverage staff must first seek permission from the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher's PA will then be able to liaise with local contacts such as The Local Informer for smaller pieces. The ELT Marketing and GDPR manager will be must be the main liaison for bigger pieces or any pieces going to the Surrey Comet, Surrey Advertiser TES or to a national media outlet.

The Head Teacher must approve every piece before it is sent externally and, in each case, there must also be an equivalent article written for the school Newsletter.

All media enquiries must be directed The PA to the Head Teacher.

22. Communication with other Schools and outside agencies

We hold information on all pupils in our school and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. All personal data is held and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (for full details see our Data Protection Policy, on the [policy page](#) of our schools' websites)

23. Communicating actions with senior and middle leaders

The trust endorses the use of Microsoft Planner as the best way to record and communicate actions to those with responsibilities in the trust. If this is not used then agendas, minutes and actions must be saved in a consistent place following each meeting. See Appendix 4 on the best practice guide for using Microsoft Planner to communicate actions in an online cloud based solution.

24. Monitoring, evaluation and review

A member of the senior leadership team and the ELT will review this Policy at least every three years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The Policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

The next review is due: January 2025

Appendix 1 ; Esher High School

(Part A – External)

1. Communications with Parents and Carers

The main school email address is office@esherhigh.surrey.sch.uk

Whole school information is included in a fortnightly newsletter, published on Friday during school term time. A link to an electronic copy of this is emailed to all parents and carers. Hard copies of the newsletter are sent to non-email parents and carers.

The school uses an app called Edulink one which provides a one stop solution for the majority of information for parents and students. This includes timetables, achievement record, behaviour record, academic reports. It is also main way to contact teachers and receive school correspondence via the ‘communication/messages’ function of the app.

I. Social Networks

The School has a Twitter account which is used to provide updates to parents and pupils who wish to subscribe to this. It is not compulsory to do so and therefore any key messages will be relayed through formal school communication channels.

Staff also communicate ideas and post best practise examples and with pupils via ‘closed’ Instagram and Facebook accounts.

II. Communication between pupils and staff

Pupils may also email staff on their school accounts in relation to their learning. All pupils are taught email protocol:

- Complete the subject line
- Use ‘Dear Ms/Mrs/Mr’ and Surname as salutation
- Use Standard English
- Avoid abbreviations
- Sign off with Thank you or Kind Regards.

Correspondence is to remain professional at all times.

III. Communicating with the School

If you have a general query or concern, not specific to your child, please contact Student Services on 01372 468068 or email your child’s Tutor.

If your query or concern is about your individual child please follow the communications route applicable to your specific question below.

- a) **Query is about your child’s learning:** You can contact the Subject Teacher and/or Tutor.

- b) **Query is about my child's wellbeing, behaviour or non-compliance:** You can contact your child's Tutor, Head of Year, Student Wellbeing Coordinator or Assistant Headteacher (Student Wellbeing).

If, following the communications route above you are still dissatisfied with the response you may complain to the school. Please refer to the school's Complaints and Suggestions Policy available on the school website.

2. School trips, visits and activities

The school will endeavour to publish all proposed trips, visits and activities on the school calendar at the start of each academic year. Parents and carers will be notified by letter of trips, visits and activities that their child/children may wish to participate in as early as possible, and within at least six weeks of the proposed trip, visit or activity. Occasionally opportunities arise during the academic year to offer pupils additional trips, visits or activities that were not known or available when the school calendar was published. The school will always ensure parents and carers are notified of any additional opportunities for their child as soon as possible to ensure parents and carers have adequate time to plan for such events (see also the separate Trips Policy, copy available on the policy page of the school website).

3. Communication with other Schools and outside agencies

Prior to pupils joining Year 7, pupils are visited in their primary schools to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to EHS. We recognise that children have diverse needs, and where required we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals including medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), educational psychologists, health professionals and specialists and various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare and the local authority Children's Services Single Point of Access. We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school must provide a safe and secure environment (see the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy copy available in the Policy Folder on the School Network or on the policy page of the school website).

When pupils leave the school, we will also share certain information with the local authority so that they can provide Post-16 education and training, Youth Support services and Careers advice. Details of this and associated Privacy Notices can be found on the policy pages of our website.

(PART B – Internal Use Only)

1. Communication between EHS staff

A weekly bulletin will be sent to all staff on Friday afternoon to plan for the following week.

Appendix 2; St Andrew's Primary School

PART A – External Use Only

1. Communications with Parents and carers

The main school email address is office@standrews-primary.surrey.sch.uk

Whole school information is included in a weekly newsletter, published on Friday during school term time. A link to an electronic copy of this is emailed to all parents and carers. Hard copies of the newsletter are sent to non-email parents and carers.

Letters and other school communication will be sent via an app named Scopay. School trips and clubs can be paid for via Scopay as well and it is also used to book parent evening appointments and choose school lunches.

I. Social Networks

The school has Twitter, Instagram and Facebook accounts and Class Reps use WhatsApp to provide updates to parents who wish to subscribe to these. It is not compulsory to do so and therefore any key messages will be relayed through formal school communication channels.

II. To whom should my query or concern be addressed?

If you have a general query or concern, not specific to your child, please contact the office 01932 863452 or email your child's teacher.

If your query or concern is about your individual child's learning, behaviour or social or emotional issues please contact the class teacher

If you are not satisfied with the response, you may escalate your query to the Year Group leader, deputy head or head teacher.

2. School trips, visits, and activities

Each year group usually undertakes a number of trips/visits/ activities each year. Parents and carers will be notified by letter/email of trips, visits, and activities that pupils will be participating in as early as possible to ensure parents and carers have adequate time to plan for such events.

3. Friends of St Andrew's

Friends of St Andrew's (our PTA) is led by current parents and their focus is to organise social events for parents and pupils and raise funds. Fund raising is an important aspect of their work but is not their sole focus. They use Classlist to communicate with parents and to organise tickets for events. Parents may contact Friends of St Andrew's by emailing friends@standrews-primary.surrey.sch.uk

4. Communication with other Schools and outside agencies

Prior to pupils joining in Reception, they are visited in their nursery schools and at home during home visits to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to St Andrew's. Children joining other year groups may visit the school prior to starting and the teachers may communicate with their previous school.

We recognise that children have diverse needs, and where required we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals including medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational

therapy, and physiotherapy), educational psychologists, health professionals and specialists and various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare and the local authority Children's Services Single Point of Access. We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school must provide a safe and secure environment (see the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy copy available in the Policy Folder on the School Network or on the policy page of the school website).

When pupils leave the school, we will also share certain information with the local authority and their new secondary school. Details of this and associated Privacy Notices can be found on the policy pages of our website.

(Part B – Internal Use Only)

1. Communication between STA staff

The Head Teacher and other SLT will communicate with staff as appropriate.

Appendix 3; St Martin's C of E Schools

PART A – External Use Only

5. Communications with Parents and carers

The main school email address is office@stmartinsepsom.school

Whole school information is included in a weekly newsletter, published on Friday during school term time. A link to an electronic copy of this is emailed to all parents and carers. Hard copies of the newsletter are sent to non-email parents and carers.

Letters and other school communication will be sent via an app named Scopay. School trips and clubs can be paid for via Scopay as well and it is also used to book parent evening appointments and choose school lunches.

III. Social Networks

The school has a Twitter account and Class Reps use WhatsApp to provide updates to parents who wish to subscribe to these. It is not compulsory to do so and therefore any key messages will be relayed through formal school communication channels.

IV. To whom should my query or concern be addressed?

If you have a general query or concern, not specific to your child, please contact the office 01372 846930 or email your child's teacher.

If your query or concern is about your individual child's learning, behaviour or social or emotional issues please contact the class teacher.

If you are not satisfied with the response, you may escalate your query to the Year Group Leader, Assistant Head Teachers or Co Head Teachers.

6. School trips, visits, and activities

Each year group usually undertakes a number of trips/visits/ activities each year. Parents and carers will be notified by letter/email of trips, visits, and activities that pupils will be participating in as early as possible to ensure parents and carers have adequate time to plan for such events.

7. PTFA (Parent, Teacher and Friends Association)

PTFA is led by current parents and their focus is to organise social events for parents and pupils and raise funds. Fund raising is an important aspect of their work but is not their sole focus. When they need to send out updates this is done through our school office. This may include adding reminders to the weekly Newsletter, sending out specific comms via email or asking the office staff / PA to print and distribute letters in bookbags. Parents may contact the PTFA by emailing ptfaepsom@gmail.com

8. Communication with other Schools and outside agencies

Prior to pupils joining in Reception, they are visited in their nursery schools and at home during home visits to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to St Martin's. Children joining other year groups may visit the school prior to starting and the teachers may communicate with their previous school.

We recognise that children have diverse needs, and where required we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals including medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy), educational psychologists, health professionals and specialists and various

welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare and the local authority Children's Services Single Point of Access. We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school must provide a safe and secure environment (see the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy copy available in the Policy Folder on the School Network or on the policy page of the school website).

When pupils leave the school, we will also share certain information with the local authority and their new secondary school. Details of this and associated Privacy Notices can be found on the policy pages of our website.

(Part B – Internal Use Only)

2. Communication between STM staff

The Co Head Teachers and other SLT will communicate with staff as appropriate.

Appendix 4 – How to communicate, and which channel to use

Format	Email	Teams Channel Posts	Teams Chat	WhatsApp/Text
Communication style	Formal - professional	Professional	Conversational - Internal communication	Direct contact in urgent time
Description	<p>Still remains a key communication point major decision to be communicated. Any specific formal documentation to be sent.</p> <p>When sharing a file for comment/collaboration, share a link to the file. Do not send an attachment for colleagues to send back. This can be done using the share function in the document and adding the required staff emails.</p>	<p>Used to be able to share news, professional links appropriate to that channel. E.g. Subject channels, perfect for sharing ideas, links, resources, subject based admin updates etc.</p> <p>It is to post to all in that channel, not to directly share something with a team member.</p> <p>Announcement banners to only be used for urgent announcements. If in doubt, avoid using the announcement.</p> <p>The search function at the top of Teams is significantly better than outlook.</p>	<p>Is it to someone in the school community? Send it in Teams via chat. Reduce the email count, reduce the time to communicate. Removes the constant need for long winded etiquette and speeds up responses.</p> <p>Manage your notification alerts and use your status to stop notifications and to alert others to your availability.</p> <p>You can name a group chat (E.g. SLT/Maths/HOYs)</p> <p>The Teams mobile app is very useful as well – best of all you can log off. No more work WhatsApps when you are on your time.</p>	<p>Can be used for immediate contact when urgent response needed. Groups set up for SLT and HODs for this are for emergencies.</p> <p>1:1 use is up to individuals, but if for school business it must not be used – tell the person to send to you in Teams or via email if a document or formal correspondence.</p>
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appraisal documents • Observation documents • Parent communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme of Work updated and share the link • Document for comment • Proposal needing input • Share a link to document in that channel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing a document to work on, send a link in chat. • Need to ask a question • Checking details • Inviting to collaborate on a document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT outages • Emergencies • Off-site emergency • Personal emergency (1:1 contact)
Things to avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sending in email then repeating in another method. • Having a back and forward conversation on email – tell the other person to move it to teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting a new post and not replying to the post. This is not a 1:1 chat area, it is an area to reply to a post 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attaching a document (it will save to one drive not the location – share link instead) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messaging a group about work related content