



St. John's Church of England VA Primary School
Finding the light in ourselves and each other
Inspired by the Gospel according to John (chapter 8, verse 12)

An aspirational school that encourages every child regardless of their background to 'soar on wings like eagles' in their learning and personal development (Isaiah 40:31)

Communication and Social Media Policy

Approved By:	FGB
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Introduction

At St John's CofE Primary School (**St John's** or **the school**) we strive to build strong relationships with parents, carers and visitors. This helps create a stimulating, happy and safe learning environment which continues from school to home and the wider community, providing all our pupils with the opportunity to achieve their personal best. We want to build a community where all members feel safe, respected and valued, reflecting the school's Christian values of love, hope, joy, forgiveness, faith and goodness are upheld. The trust, support and co-operation of parents and carers is fundamental to the continued success of our school.

The purpose of this policy is to achieve a culture of mutual understanding between the school, parents, carers and staff where everyone feels safe and treated with care and respect.

Principles of Communications

We expect that all parents, carers, staff, governors, visitors and members of the public coming into contact with the school will treat each other with dignity, respect and kindness. Everyone should be aware of school policies and know that copies are available via the school's website or from the school directly. When raising a concern, we ask parents to ensure that they act in accordance with school policies and always maintain a positive approach whilst on the school premises and in communication with school.

Whilst we welcome feedback and may consult with a range of stakeholders including parents and carers in making key decisions, ultimately the school must make decisions which we deem to be in the best interests of our pupils. Whilst it is never our intention to disappoint, it is not always possible to secure agreement or consensus, and the school is not duty bound to do so. Decisions around the operations of the school, teaching and learning or the strategic direction, unless required by statute, are at the discretion of the Headteacher and /or the governing body, as appropriate and do not require prior parent consultation.

Expectations of staff

All employees of St John's are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the highest professional standards at all times. Their behaviour should align with the school's staff code of conduct, demonstrating integrity, respect and responsibility in all interactions. By upholding these expectations, employees will contribute to a safe, supportive and professional learning environment for all pupils, families and the wider community.

Expectations of Parents and Carers

We ask parents, carers and visitors to:

- Positively support the ethos and Christian values of the school by setting a good example in their speech and behaviour (including online communication) towards each other and all pupils, staff members and other adults.
- Work constructively with staff members to resolve any issues of concern, including clarifying specific events to bring about a positive resolution.



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- Always communicate (by telephone, email, or in meetings) in a constructive, truthful and respectful manner, refraining from communicating in a manner which could be perceived as accusatory, threatening or unreasonable.
- Work alongside the school to support their child's behaviour where necessary, understanding and accepting that a behaviour policy is fundamental and necessary to a safe and purposeful learning environment.
- Make reasonable requests for meeting times and not expect to see any member of staff without a prior appointment (either in person or on the phone) and agree to meet with the member of staff who is identified or delegated by the Headteacher.
- Understand that public communication about the school on social media or through messaging groups can have a direct impact upon staff, other parents and pupils as well as potentially opening up the school to legal challenges.

Communications Protocol

All staff at St John's work extremely hard to provide the best for all children. Our priority is to ensure that the children are safeguarded and that they also have the maximum amount of contact from our staff. In addition to this, staff often have meetings after school or are involved in clubs or events. In the light of this, it is important that a protocol for communications is clear.

Appendix A includes a flow chart which sets out who parents and carers should contact, depending on the details of the concern or situation. If you are unsure about the correct point of contact, please check with the school office.

If there is a significant safeguarding concern, this must be addressed as a matter of urgency, and we will make sure an appropriate member of staff is available.

We will always endeavour to respond with speed and efficiency. However, it is important that the working practices of our school, where we are supporting many children at any moment, are respected and understood.

This policy does not impact on the right of parents and carers to make formal complaints in line with the school's complaints policy, which can be found [here](#). Once the school has received notice of a formal complaint, the issues around the complaint can no longer be discussed outside of the complaints procedure unless it is in a way to find an informal or early resolution that the school is in agreement with.

Emailing the school

Email is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information. Emails received will be responded to within 2 working days¹. If it is not possible to provide a full response within this timeframe, the parent or carer will be notified of any additional reasonable time required for the school to address their query/concern. The school email address is: admin@digswell.herts.sch.uk. Staff should not contact pupils or parents/carers using their own personal email address. Likewise, parents should

¹ Recognising that some staff work part-time and so working days will reflect their working patterns and may not be consecutive.



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contact staff via the office email for the attention of the particular member of staff, and not through personal email addresses.

Telephone calls

In a non-emergency, a return call will be aimed to be made within 2 working days. Staff may make a log of telephone conversations, often using the tool 'CPOMs' and telephone calls may be recorded. The school telephone number will be used. Staff will not share their personal number with parents.

Meetings

If there is an issue that requires more than a few minutes of information sharing, a meeting with the relevant member of staff should be arranged. There is only a very limited time at drop off and collection and this is not an appropriate place for a discussion of more than a few minutes.

The school will only meet with the child's parent/legal guardian. Meetings will not be held with a third party representing the parent/carer, unless the parent/carer does not speak English and the representative is an interpreter.

Excessive Parental Contact

We are committed to working positively to deal effectively with any issues or concerns. However, we ask parents/carers to understand that once the school has given a reasonable amount of time to satisfactorily address an issue or concern, we will not engage in further communication or lengthy and repetitive meetings regarding those issues to which we have already responded. Any emergency situations will be dealt with separately. As set out in the flowchart in this policy, if parents are still unhappy there is a process for escalation.

Aggressive or Threatening Behaviour

Our school is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all pupils, staff, and families. To uphold this standard, we will not tolerate any abusive, aggressive, or threatening behaviour from parents, carers or visitors. Such conduct - whether verbal, written, or physical - undermines the wellbeing of our school community and will be addressed promptly and firmly.

In particular:

- If parents or carers are rude, abusive or speak in an inappropriate tone over the telephone, our staff may end the call.
- If any email is rude, threatening or inappropriate in tone we reserve the right not to reply, or we may choose to take any other action outlined within this policy.
- If parents or carers are rude, abusive or speak in an inappropriate tone during a face-to-face meeting or a virtual meeting, our staff may terminate the meeting immediately.
- In extreme circumstances, the school may restrict access to school premises or contact the police in accordance with our behaviour policy if behaviour becomes threatening, abusive, or persistently inappropriate.

Social media use by parent/carers



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The school recognises that social media is widely used and can be a valuable tool for communication. When using social media (particularly in school specific places like social profiles and class messaging groups), parents and carers are requested to:

- Communicate respectfully about the school at all times
- Use the school's formal complaints procedure to raise concerns and avoid airing grievances publicly/online
- Protect the privacy and safety of pupils, including refraining from posting images or personal information about children other than their own
- Consider the impact of posts on the wellbeing of staff and pupils and the school's reputation.

The expected conduct of pupils in respect of social media is covered by the school's [Online Safety Policy](#).

Parent/Carer WhatsApp Groups

Parent/Carer WhatsApp groups, which operate independently of the school, can be a particularly useful way to connect parents in a particular class or year group. Class WhatsApp groups have been voluntarily set up by the parents in each class and endeavour to include all parents with children in the class. There is no requirement to join these groups and participation is voluntary.

Ideally, these group chats are used as an efficient means of receiving relevant updates and reminders about school events that have been published in the newsletter and on the school website, the sharing of information that is of general interest to all parents in the class or a forum to offer any supportive parenting advice. The messages in the class or year WhatsApp groups come from parents/carers/PTA in their personal capacity. The school does not post directly on any WhatsApp parent/carers groups, nor do we have 'parent advocates' who post messages on our behalf.

Most of the time, group chats will be a beneficial resource and an enjoyable place to be in. However, these same spaces can at times be a potential source of misinformation and can fuel bad feeling or create unnecessary concerns.

For the benefit of all, we ask that everyone using these groups within our school community read and keep the following in mind:

- It is not appropriate to air views/grievances regarding a member of staff, child or parent in the class or school. If you have a concern, contact the school directly via the appropriate channels.
- Messages posted on the WhatsApp year groups should be supportive and respectful of all other group users.
- Respect the privacy of others, including refraining from naming children or sharing sensitive incidents (including emails from the school).
- Bullying is not to be tolerated and should be reported

Inappropriate use of social media

The school considers the following WhatsApp or social media activity inappropriate:



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- Abusive, personal comments or open criticism about staff, pupils or other parents or any member of the school community
- Displays of anger including swearing or using offensive language
- Posting aggressive, defamatory or libellous comments or bringing the school into disrepute
- Using social media to publicly challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children
- Threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating staff, or using bad language

To avoid uncomfortable or unpleasant situations for other group users, parents/carers are therefore asked to consider the nature of their WhatsApp post carefully as any opinions expressed are the opinions of individual members and may not be representative of the whole group.

School Response to Inappropriate Online Behaviour

We acknowledge that parent-run messaging groups are independent of the school and the school is not responsible for their content. However, where issues raised in such groups impact pupils, staff or the wider school community, we may intervene as appropriate. The school may:

- Contact the parent/carer to request the removal of the content.
- Issue a formal written notice outlining the concern and request further action.
- In extreme circumstances, restrict access to school premises in accordance with our behaviour policy and national guidance if behaviour becomes threatening, abusive, or persistently inappropriate.
- Report content to the social media platform if it violates platform policies.
- Seek guidance from legal or local authority advisors where serious or repeated breaches occur.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher every 2 years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Full Governing Body.



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Appendix A: Communication Flowchart

As a school, we value the communication that we have with our parents and the support that it provides in developing our pupils. The flowchart below has been designed to support effective communication between school and our families. It is a tiered approach that aims to support both parents and staff and the opportunity to resolve issues efficiently and effectively. We endeavour to deal with any queries or concerns as quickly and as effectively as possible. However, there are occasions where staff roles determine that immediate correspondence is not possible, but please be assured that they will get back to you within the stated timeframe.

Tier 1	
Tier 1 should always be used as the first point of contact between families and school. The table below clarifies whether the communication requires the attention of your child's class teacher or if the school office is more appropriate.	
Class Teacher	Office Staff
<p>The following queries are to be raised with your class teacher in the first instance, either by email to the school office for the attention of the teacher or by speaking to the class teacher directly in the playground at drop off or pick-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Class events information (please check newsletter first)• Home learning queries• Behaviour issues/concerns• Learning concerns• Home/pastoral/friendship concerns	<p>The following queries can be dealt with directly through the office – either by email to admin@digswell.herts.sch.uk or by phone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School events information/changes to usual school day (please check newsletter first)• Reporting an absence• Giving or requesting a form (e.g., leave of absence/medication form/breakfast club)• Admission queries• General school enquiries (e.g., attendance at school clubs or cancellation)• Payment enquiries• Medication• Pupil appointments (e.g., doctors, dentist etc)

If the matter is urgent, please contact the school office and they will get a message to the teacher at the earliest convenience.

We appreciate that these lists are not exhaustive. If you are unsure of who to contact please speak to the school office in the first instance. They will take some details and arrange for the most suitable person to get back to you.





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Tier 2

If further support is required, the following members of staff are available to support in their specific area as detailed below. Either a teacher, parent or a combination of the two can request a conversation/meeting with the member of staff most closely related to the area of concern. These requests can be made through the school office or via the teacher with whom the original concern was raised.

Leadership Team

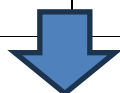
Mrs Athill: EYFS Lead, Mrs Levy: KS1 Lead, Miss Brady: KS2 Lead

- Escalating teaching and learning concerns (which have been raised with class teacher in the first instance)
- Unresolved home/school issues
- Unresolved behaviour issues/ concerns

SENCo/Deputy SENCo

Mrs de la Croix/Mrs Scott

- Initial concerns re SEND practice
- Unresolved SEND concerns
- Information about SEND external agency referrals
- Referrals for family support from external agencies



Tier 3

Having followed this flowchart through Tier 1 and Tier 2, if a matter needs further attention, it can be brought to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. This can be organised through the office or in collaboration with the member of staff currently dealing with the enquiry

Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher

Mr Worton-Geer/Mrs de la Croix

In addition to the concerns escalated through Tier 1 and Tier 2, the following queries can be raised directly with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher:

- Issues relating to safeguarding concerns*

*Mr Worton-Geer is the Designated Safeguarding Lead within the school. Mrs de la Croix and Miss Brady are the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads.

Whilst we hope that we are able to resolve any matter through the escalation of Tiers 1 to 3, if the unfortunate situation arises where you are still not satisfied that your concern has been successfully resolved then please see our complaints procedure which can be found on the school website.



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Communication and Social Media Policy Document Control

2 nd December 2025	Created	Arnold Worton-Geer