Name of School: St Mary’s CE Primary School

Date of Policy / Procedure: September 2024

Member of Staff Responsible: Headteacher

Review Date: September 2027

Consultation: This policy has been drawn up by the staff and governors at St Mary’s School.

Ethos Statement

Our school is committed to bringing out the best in each other so that every member of the school community can know ‘life in all its fullness’ (John 10:10). Through learning of the teachings of Jesus, we believe that our children can explore and develop their understanding of Core Christian values as markers and guides for their own lives. We aim for the school’s Core Christian values to inform and influence our pupils’ moral compass and allow them to enjoy ‘life in all its fullness’. These values are known as the 'Sunshine 6'. They are: Forgiveness, Perseverance, Honesty, Compassion, Courage and Respect.

**Introduction**

This policy applies to all pupils; it is set and approved by the school’s governing body. At St. Mary’s Church of England School we strive to build strong relationships with parents, carers and visitors. This helps create a stimulating, happy and safe learning environment which extends from school to home and into the wider community. This is aimed at enabling everyone to ‘Live fullness of life’ and ‘bring out the best in each other’. The trust, support and co-operation of parents / carers is fundamental to the success of our school.

This Positive Communication Policy outlines the manner in which everyone is expected to communicate whether on school premises, on the telephone or virtually. The policy also explains behaviours which do not support positive communication.

All employees of St. Mary’s Church of England School:

1. Are required to demonstrate the highest possible professional standards at all times.
2. Deal with all pupils fairly and consistently.
3. Communicate with all parents / carers and visitors with professional courtesy.
4. Be aware of and conform to all safeguarding routines in the school.
5. Uphold the professional integrity of the school and teaching profession at all times.

Our staff body are committed to educating and supporting our pupils and we believe it is important for everyone involved with school life to communicate in a respectful and productive manner, whether in person, on the phone, or online. To this end, staff, pupils, parents, carers and members of the public are expected to always behave respectfully to each other, promoting the most constructive working and learning environment.

St. Mary’s Church of England Primary School therefore asks parents, carers and visitors to:

1. Positively support the ethos of the school by setting a good example in their speech and behaviour (including online) towards all pupils, staff members and other adults.
2. Work constructively with staff members to resolve any issues of concern, including clarifying specific events in order to bring about a positive resolution.
3. Always communicate by telephone, email, or in meetings in a constructive and respectful manner.
4. Refrain from communicating in a manner which could be perceived as threatening or unreasonable.
5. 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.
6. Make reasonable requests for meeting times. We will always try to accommodate a meeting or phone call as soon as possible, but staff do have many commitments, including teaching throughout the day and we would ask that parents / carers understand and respect this.
7. Agree to meet with the member of staff who is identified or delegated by the Headteacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team, when a request for communication is made. The member of staff will be commensurate with the stage and scale of the concern and we will not accept demands to communicate with a particular individual.
8. Work with the school to resolve issues of concern, acknowledging that it becomes difficult to reach a satisfactory conclusion if observations or criticisms of the school or individual staff members are shared in a public forum (e.g. social media platforms).

Whilst we welcome feedback and regularly consult with a range of stakeholders in making key decisions, ultimately the school has to make decisions in good faith, which we deem to be in the best interests of our pupils.

**Expected Behaviour**

We expect that all parents / carers, visitors and members of the public will treat each other, staff members, pupils and external agencies with dignity and respect. Parents / carers 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 would ask parents / carers ensure that they act in accordance with school policies and maintain a positive approach at all times whilst on the school premises and in their communications with school.

**Emailing the school**

Email is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is the school’s preferred method of communication. During term time, the school will endeavour to respond to emails received, which will be acknowledged within 3 school days and responded to within 10 school days. Parents / carers should contact the school via email for a general enquiry as an alternative to telephone or letter. The school email address is: enquiry@stmryb29.bham.sch.uk

If the school does not receive a reply to an email within 3 school days, we will assume no further action is required and that the matter has been resolved to the Parent/Carer's satisfaction and the school take no further action. The school requests that all emails are sent directly to the office email address rather than staff personal email addresses to ensure continuity and efficiency of response.

**Telephone calls**

Telephone conversations can be a very effective method of communication. When requests for a telephone call are made, we ask that parents and carers remember that teachers may be teaching, leading clubs or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. In a non-emergency, we will aim to make a return call within 3 school days. Any follow up action from the communication will be dealt with within 10 school days. Staff will make a log of a telephone conversation with a parent / carer on the school’s management system.

**Face to Face or Virtual Meeting**

Arranging a face to face or virtual meeting (outside of pre-arranged Parent Consultation meetings) can sometimes be a challenge in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time, leading clubs or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Such requests should be emailed to the school office or if the matter is urgent or regarding a safeguarding matter then a telephone call should be made to the school office. Staff will make a log of a meeting with a parent / carer on the school’s management system.

**Excessive Parental Contact / Demanding Behaviour**

We are committed to working positively with parents / carers to effectively deal with any issues or concerns. However, we would ask parents / carers to understand that we do not have the capacity to engage in excessive communications or lengthy and repetitive meetings. Once the school has given a reasonable amount of time to address an individual issue or concern, we will not engage in further communication regarding those issues to which we have already responded. Any emergency or safeguarding situations will be dealt with separately.

Please remember that any time dealing with complaints, excessive communications or questioning of school procedures is time away from our primary aim of supporting our pupils.

Parents / Carers should note the following:

* If parents / carers are rude, abusive or speak in an inappropriate tone over the telephone, our staff will politely end the call.
* If any email is rude or inappropriate in tone, we reserve the right not to reply, or we may choose to take the action outlined within this policy.
* If parents / carers are rude, abusive or speak in an inappropriate tone during a face-to-face meeting or a virtual meeting, our staff will terminate the meeting immediately and ask the parent / carer to leave the premises if the meeting is on the school site.
* In a case of inappropriate communication, the school will forward a copy of this policy to reiterate our expectations and rights with regard to appropriate communication.
* In circumstances where school has listened to the request of a parent, carer or pupil, considered the request and shared the outcome but the matter continues to repeat or labour, the school reserves the right to cease communication or to limit the reply with a repeat of key messages already shared.
* When the school judges email correspondence to be excessive, the school reserves the right to cease communication or only offer a reply with a repeat of key messages already shared. In such circumstances, a face-to-face or virtual meeting will be offered to attempt to deal with any issues or concerns.
* Following reasonable attempts by the school to arrange a meeting at a mutually convenient time, or if a meeting is refused or not attended, communication on this issue will cease.
* This policy does not impact on the right of parents and carers to make formal complaints via the school’s complaints policy which can be found at: https://www.stmarys-sellyoak.co.uk/key-information/policies/
* Once the school has received a formal complaint, the matter at hand must be dealt with using the school’s procedure and not beyond.

**Communication Timings:**

Emails into school: Acknowledged with 3 school days and response within 10 school days.

Telephone calls: A return telephone call within 3 days and follow up actions within 10 school days.

Face to Face and Virtual meetings: In a non-emergency situation, a meeting time will be agreed within 10 school days.

Please note that safeguarding concerns will be responded to immediately and the school’s safeguarding policy will be followed.

**Steps that can be taken:**

When part of the policy is breached the decision lies with the Headteacher to decide upon the sanctions to be enforced. The following sanctions can be applied:

-A reminder of our expectations with a copy of this policy shared with a parent/carer or family;

-A warning that further breaches of the policy may result in a step being taken;

-A request not to make contact with specific members of staff;

-Limiting contact between a parent/carer and school to email and/or telephone only for a fixed period;

-Banning a parent/carer from the school site for a fixed period.

Policy created July 2024.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_