



# **Communication with Parents and Carers: Policy and Guidance**

*November 2019*

At the heart of our school lies our ethos of ***'a happy and holy place of learning and the centre of a thriving community.'*** This is an ethos built on love, unity, support and collaboration where all stakeholders work together to ensure that each child can reach their full potential in the presence of God's love.

At St Benet's RC Primary School we believe that it is important to work in partnership with parents/carers and that clear communication between school and parents/carers is important to help children benefit as much as possible from their time in school. We are committed to improving parents/carers' understanding of our school and in encouraging parents/carers to play an active part in their child's education. We welcome discussion with parents/carers on all aspects of their child's education, their personal and social development and care and welfare. This policy describes how staff will communicate with parents/carers about these issues and how we would like parents/carers to communicate with us. We will communicate with parents/carers in a variety of ways - these are described below. This forms the basis of our policy for Communication with Parents/Carers.

### **Visiting School**

We have an Open Door Policy here at St Benet's and parents/carers are always welcome at school. If you are visiting school to attend a meeting, one of our school admin staff members will ask you to sign into the school visitors book and to complete the appropriate safeguarding form for visitors to the school (if you have not already completed one) and will then provide you with a purple parent badge which we kindly ask you to wear as you are visible in school.

We do ask parents/carers to be understanding of the fact that staff are not always available to meet with you without notice and we encourage parents/carers to make appointments with staff to discuss any concerns that you may have regarding your child.

Parents/carers are always welcome to join us for Masses, collective worships, assemblies and other special events that are held throughout the year – you will be invited to these events through the school newsletter, diary dates' letter or a letter of invitation.

### **Contacting School by Telephone**

The school office is open from 8.00am – 4.30pm, Monday – Friday. The telephone number is **0191 4105857**. Please contact a member of the admin staff if you would like a message to be passed to your child's teacher.

If you have an urgent enquiry that can't be discussed with your child's teacher or you have a safeguarding concern, please contact a member of the admin staff and ask to speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The members of the Senior Leadership Team are:

- Catherine Harper, Head teacher
- Claire Canham, Deputy Head teacher
- Diane Calvert, SENCO

### **Email**

We are aware that some parents/carers may prefer to be contacted by email or would rather email the school to contact a member of staff, rather than via the telephone. Emails can be used for general communication instead of using the telephone, however emails must only be communicated to the school email address [stbenets@durhamlearning.net](mailto:stbenets@durhamlearning.net) and not to staff's email addresses. Please note that if your email requires a detailed response, a member of staff will ensure that your email will be replied to within a period of **3-5 working days**.

### **Text Messages**

We use a text messaging service to contact parents/carers with reminders about school events, details of class trips as well as any urgent information – for example; if it is necessary to close the school in an emergency. Please help us by making sure that we always have your correct mobile telephone number. If your details change at any time, please notify us of such change in details as soon as possible.

### **Newsletters**

The Head teacher will write a newsletter each month which will be sent home with children. This will provide general information for parents/carers in addition to items of news and events. Newsletters will be published on the school website and will be available to download.

In addition, the school publishes a termly Diary Dates' letter which is circulated to parents/carers in advance of a new term to inform parents/carers of upcoming events.

### **School Letters**

During the year we will write to you with information about activities that will involve your child – these could be educational visits, sporting activities or special events in school. At times this will be emailed, however if it requires a response it will be distributed to the children to take home.

### **Website** [www.st-benets.durham.sch.uk](http://www.st-benets.durham.sch.uk)

The school website is a useful tool in finding out information about our school. Information such as newsletters, school policies, information on admissions, holiday dates and termly events, SEND information reports and other useful information can be found on the school website.

### **Twitter**

We have a school twitter page [@Stbenetsouston](https://twitter.com/Stbenetsouston) which we use to publicise information about events in school including photographs of children's activities and details of events. It is a positive way of promoting events in school, yet we do not use it as a two-way method of communication and staff will not comment upon feeds.

### **Autumn Term Welcome Evening**

At the beginning of each school year we will hold a Welcome Evening for each class. This will provide an opportunity to meet your child's new class teacher early in the school year as well as provide you with some information and routines for the year ahead.

## **For Parents/Carers of Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities**

### **SENCO Times**

Our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) is Mrs Calvert. If any parent has a concern regarding their child's needs or feels that they would benefit from speaking to Mrs Calvert, she is available to meet with parents/carers on Tuesdays and Wednesdays between the hours of 8.45am and 9.30am. Please call the school to make an appointment with Mrs Calvert during those times.

### **Children with Identified SEND Needs**

For parents/carers of children who are listed on our SEND register, these parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss the children's targets for the term which will be recorded on an SEND support plan. In advance of the SEND meeting, the teachers will have met with the SENCO to discuss some suitable targets which the children shall focus upon in school, in order to help them to progress in terms of their social, emotional or educational priorities. Such targets will be shared and agreed by parents at the SEND Support Meeting.

### **Children with Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs)**

For children who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), parents will be invited into school each term for an **interim review**. This is where the long term plan for your child's needs shall be discussed and reviewed. Furthermore, in the Summer term we will arrange an **annual review** meeting to discuss your child's progress, health and wellbeing and agree targets for their educational, social and emotional development.

We will inform you of the arrangements for this meeting as soon as possible. If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact the school office as soon as possible and we will arrange an alternative date and time. When we inform you of the date of your child's review we will also ask you if there is anyone in particular that you would like to be invited to your child's review meeting – please let us know as soon as possible. We will invite the other professionals who work with you and your child to attend.

### **Transition Meetings/ Days**

For children who are on our SEND register, but who do not require an Education Health Care Plan we will invite you into school in the Summer term to discuss transition arrangements into the next class or if your child is in Year 6, into the next school. During the Summer term, in addition to the 'Changeover Day' where all children move into the new class for the day, there will be opportunities for transition days for those children who may benefit from some extra support transitioning into the next year group. These will take place in June/July of the academic year and parents/carers will be notified about these days in advance.

### **Home - School Communication Books/Charts**

For children with identified SEND needs, some parents/carers and/or teachers feel that a home-school communication book/chart will be useful in sharing information about the child's progress during the school day. Staff will write in these as regularly as possible. However, it may not be possible or appropriate to write each day especially if the child's teacher has to leave school early or suddenly becomes unavailable. All messages will be dated and include details of the child's progress during the school day.

In addition, we would ask that you use the home school communication book to let us know what your son or daughter has been doing at home; positive comments as well as any concerns that you or they may have.

### **Contacting Staff Outside of School**

We welcome discussion with parents/carers on all aspects of their child's education, and personal and social development. It is the school's policy that these discussions must take place on the school premises or in other professional settings. This enables us to have the right information available to discuss your child's needs.

Please note that discussions or contact with staff must not take place via any unofficial channels. Please do not contact staff outside of their professional role or by personal communication such as their private email addresses, personal telephone numbers or via social media such as Facebook or Twitter. Staff should not be contacted outside of working hours.

Policy agreed by the Governing Body of St Benet's

Signed by \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs B Davison (Chair of Governors)  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Review due **November 2021**