Communication Code

St. Laurence Catholic Primary School

Approved by:

Date: Spring 2026

Next review due by: Spring 2027

The aim of this code is to foster good communications between parents/carers and the school.

Introduction

The school always welcomes contact with parents/carers because this fosters mutual understanding and support which has a positive effect on children's development, attitudes to learning and their achievement.

The school wants to ensure that parents/carers always have an appropriate and helpful response to their communications. However, unlike some businesses and other occupations, the professional duties of staff can make it difficult for them to routinely speak or meet with parents/carers during the school day.

Due to teaching commitments, staff will typically be unavailable between 8.55 am and 3.30 pm each day. There are also other times outside the core teaching hours when they attend meetings and have other commitments, such as extracurricular clubs. The important business of working with and responding to parents/carers must be managed within this context.

Principles for responding to parents/carers

In order to achieve the most effective balance for children, parents/carers and teachers, we always aim to follow the following principles:

- welcoming contact from parents/carers
- responding as quickly and fully as possible to parents/carers
- involving parents/carers in our work with children
- sharing information as often and as fully as possible with parents/carers.

For day to day or routine matters correspondence will be sent via email. When correspondence is made to an individual parent/carer on a significant matter, the letter will be sent by post or handed directly to the parent/carer to ensure confidentiality and security. On some occasions it may be appropriate for the school to contact parents/carers by telephone. The school will refer breaches of the communications code to the Chair of Governors.

Guidelines on responding to parents/carers

It may be helpful for parents/carers to know how they can expect their telephone calls, letters, emails and requests for meetings with the school to be dealt with. The following guidelines show how we aim to respond to parents/carers.

Telephone Calls

• Messages: All telephone calls are received through the main office. A message will be taken and sent to the relevant person as soon as possible. Staff will normally take details of the caller's name and telephone number and purpose of calling. The person concerned will try to respond as soon as possible and by the end of the next school day, if possible. The school's telephone number is 01223 712227

• **Urgent calls**: An urgent call is defined by a child or family being at risk of harm, imminently (e.g. family member being admitted to hospital after an emergency or a parent needing to flee due to domestic abuse). The call will be put through to the most appropriate or available senior member of staff, if possible, or a message will be taken and they will respond on the same day.

• **Busy times**: The office is particularly busy between 8.30 am and 9.30 a.m. in the morning and 3.00 p.m. to 4 p.m., in the afternoon. At these times, and at other times, calls may be recorded on an answering machine. This is checked regularly and if a message is left, it will be passed on.

• **Telephone calls made at arranged times**: If teachers have arranged with parents/carers for them to receive calls at particular times of the school day, those teachers will try to ensure that they are available. Should other commitments or events make this impossible, a staff member will take a message and the person concerned will try to call back the same day.

Letters and emails

- The school will always try to acknowledge receipt of letters and emails received from parents/carers within two working days, during term time.
- The school email is office@stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk The postal address is Arbury Road, Cambridge, CB4 2JX.

- Staff will try to respond to the most pressing concerns of parents/carers as quickly as possible. It is our intention to try to respond to any letter or email as soon as we can but within ten working days, within term time. If there is likely to be a delay, we will let you know the reasons why.

Complaints

Complaints should be logged with school, following the school's Complaints Procedure -

https://www.stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk/_site/data/files/policies/C846807E7EBA8EE3B1BF6B0BE77753C8.pdf

We will investigate a complaint and aim to respond with ten working days. If we cannot provide a full response within ten, working, school days then we will write to the complainant explaining this, giving a date on which we will endeavour to provide a full response.

Meetings

Where situations are more complex, a face-to-face meeting is preferable to a letter or phone call and this will be arranged at the earliest convenience for parents/carers and staff.

Meetings with class teachers

The class teacher is the first point of contact for any concerns about a child. Teachers are not available to discuss more complex matters at the beginning and end of the school day but do value brief messages and communications (which may also be relayed via a teaching assistant). Although teachers are not generally available for organised meetings between 8.55 am and 3.30 pm, mutually agreed appointments can be made outside these times, either through the office or directly with the class teacher.

Depending on the nature of the situation, a meeting may include a more senior member of staff. A record may be kept and notes shared with all parties, where appropriate. Parents/carers will only be invited to discuss their own children. Staff will not talk about other children in front of other parents/carers. All meetings and discussions are confidential between the staff involved and the parents/carers and parties should not divulge information to others without the agreement of parents/carers and the school.

E- Mails

The school has a system of sending all standard forms of communication home to parents/carers via e-mail using Arbor. Parents are required to download the Arbor app. Parents/carers must ensure that the school office is informed of any changes to e-mail addresses. Paper copies are available by request. All email contact with teachers is via the school office office@stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk

Website

The school seeks to put as much information as possible on its website. Most general information that parents/carers would seek can be readily found at www.stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk

Parents/carers are encouraged to look at the website, in particular the calendar, on a regular basis.

Protocol for Communications

The school undertakes to treat all communications with parents/carers with courtesy. It expects to receive the same courtesy, in return, in respect of all communications with school either in person, by telephone or email.

Both parties will work towards identifying and resolving any problems quickly and efficiently. Where difficulties cannot be resolved, Key Stage Leaders and/or the Head of School may be involved. A member of the Local Governing Body or other agencies may be invited in situations which are particularly complex, in an effort to move forward. The school reserves the right to take appropriate action if aggressive behaviour from any party occurs on school premises.

This policy should be viewed with the Parent Partnership Agreement.

Reviewed by St Laurence Local Governing Body in Spring 2026.

Next review due: Spring 2027