



ARCHBISHOP
MCGRATH CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL



COMMUNICATION

POLICY

OUR VISION

‘Christ at the Centre’

Our core purpose is to ensure that all pupils reach or exceed their potential by using their God-given talents to develop as healthy, ambitious, capable, life-long learners ready to live as valued members of our local community, Wales and the world.

We aim for all our pupils to leave our school as:
Empowered, Virtuous and Employable individuals,



Formulated by:	A Howells
Approved by:	Full Governing Body Nov 2023
Review Cycle	2 Years
Next Review	November 2025

Amendment Date	Section and details:

Key Principles of effective communication.

All communications from and within Archbishop McGrath School should adhere to the following principles:

- keep staff, pupils, parents, governors and the wider community well informed about the work of the School.
- be open, honest, ethical and professional at all times
- use jargon free, plain English that is easily understood by all.
- be actioned within a reasonable time. See guidance below regarding time frames
- use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.
- be compatible with our core aims and values.
- follow a 'corporate' School style – the correct headed paper and compliment slips should be used. The font for all letters to should be Calibri 12
- characterised by a high standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- promote the school as a centre of excellence

Email:

E-mail is a vital business tool, but often lapses inappropriately into an informal means of communication and should therefore be used with great care and discipline.

The School's e-mail facility is intended to promote effective communication within the business on matters relating to the School's business activities and access to the School's e-mail facility is provided for work purposes only.

Staff should always consider if e-mail is the appropriate medium for a particular communication. **The School encourages all members of staff to make direct contact with individuals rather than communicate by e-mail wherever possible to maintain and enhance good working relationships.**

Messages sent on the e-mail system should be written as professionally as a letter and should be concise and directed only to relevant individual(s) on a need to know basis. The content and language used in the message must be consistent with the School's best practice.

E-mails should never be sent in the heat of the moment or without first checking the content and language and considering how the message is likely to be received. Staff are encouraged wherever practicable to write a draft e-mail first, review it carefully before finalising and sending. As a rule of thumb if a member of staff would not be happy for the e-mail to be read out in public or subjected to scrutiny then it should not be sent.

All members of staff should remember that e-mails can be the subject of legal action and copies of emails can be requested as part of investigations. E-mail messages may of course be disclosed in legal proceedings and freedom of information requests in the same way as paper documents. Deletion from a user's inbox or archives does not mean that an e-mail is obliterated and all e-mail messages should be treated as potentially retrievable, either from the main server or using specialist software. This should be borne in mind when considering whether e-mail is an appropriate forum of communication in the circumstances of the case and if so the content and language used.

Staff should take care with the content of e-mail messages, as incorrect or improper statements can give rise to personal liability of staff and to liability of the School in the same way as the contents of letters.

Staff should assume that e-mail messages may be read by others and not include in them anything which would offend or embarrass any reader, or themselves, if it found its way into the public domain. The School standard disclaimer should always be used on every e-mail.

Staff should ensure that they are logged into their school emails during lessons in order to allow them to be checked regularly. Staff should respond to e-mails marked 'high priority' as soon as is reasonably practicable.

Members of staff are strictly forbidden from sending abusive, obscene, discriminatory, racist, harassing, derogatory or defamatory messages. If such messages are received, they should not be forwarded and should be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team immediately. If a recipient asks you to stop sending them personal messages then always stop immediately. Where appropriate, the sender of the e-mail should be referred to this policy and asked to stop sending such material.

As general guidance, staff must not:

- Send any e-mail, including resending and forwarding, containing sexually explicit or otherwise offensive material either internally or externally.
- Use their school email address and job title when sending personal emails.
- Send any e-mail communication which may be regarded as harassing or insulting. Complaints about the performance or service of other departments or individuals must be made on a face-to-face basis in accordance with normal and courteous practice.
- Send or forward private e-mails at work which they would not want a third party to read.
- Send or forward chain mail, junk mail, cartoons, jokes or gossip either within or outside the School.
- Contribute to system congestion by sending trivial messages or unnecessarily copying or forwarding e-mails to those who do not have a real need to receive them.
- Agree to terms, enter into contractual commitments or make representations by e-mail unless the appropriate authority has been obtained. A name typed at the end of an e-mail is a signature in the same way as a name written in ink at the end of a letter.
- Download or e-mail text, music and other content on the internet subject to copyright protection, unless it is clear that the owner of such works allows this.
- Send messages containing any reference to other individuals or any other business that may be construed as libelous.
- Send messages from another worker's computer or under an assumed name unless specifically authorised.
- Send confidential messages via e-mail or the internet, or by other means of external communication which are known not to be secure.
- E-mail may normally only be used to communicate internally with colleagues and students (where appropriate and necessary) and externally to parents, suppliers and third parties on

academic/service related issues.

- Staff should avoid sending emails to colleagues after 5pm and before 8am Monday to Friday unless deemed urgent e.g. linked to a safeguarding concern. Out-of-hours safeguarding concerns should always be dealt with by telephone in the first instance. Where possible, staff should use the 'schedule' send function when working on emails outside these hours and on weekends.

The school recognises that it is not always possible to control incoming mail. Any material which would be considered as inappropriate or unprofessional, sexually explicit or offensive should be deleted at once. Any member of staff who finds that they are receiving such communications from known sources is responsible for contacting that source in order to request that such communication is not repeated.

Staff who receive an e-mail which has been wrongly delivered should return it to the sender of the message. If the e-mail contains confidential information or inappropriate material (as described above) it should not be disclosed or forwarded to another member of staff or used in any way. The Business Manager should be informed as soon as reasonably practicable.

Telephone Communication

We understand that effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers are teaching full time, running clubs or otherwise working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents may be exasperated 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.

For this reason the School has been particularly proactive in ensuring that we have Wellbeing Officers for each Key Stage, employed to deal with front line queries, concerns etc.

The WSOs do not have a teaching commitment and therefore are the first point of contact for parents. Each WSO has a unique and direct telephone number and an e-mail for this purpose.

School reception and admin office: The school reception will be staffed at all times from 8.30. All visitors must be greeted warmly, sign in and be provided with a printed ID badge. Staff working in the admin office are expected to answer colleagues' phones if they are away from their desks. This avoids external and internal callers being unable to get through.

Details of Events and Other General News

Details about events, news, key messages at the School are published in the School's termly newsletters to parents/carers, the school website, Google classroom, SIMs Intouch, and other communication platforms. Sometimes additional messages will be sent to compliment the schools newsletters when appropriate. Departments and wellbeing leads are encouraged to post updates using the school twitter page @archbishmcgrath

Methods of General Communication

Communication between the school and parents/carers operates in the following ways:

i) Prospective Parents and Y7 Pupils

- Prospective parents are invited to an Open Evening in October, preceding the year of entry to the School. All prospective parents receive information about the School and are informed of the online prospectus (paper copies available upon request) with details of a range of information regarding the School.
- Prospective parents will receive confirmation in writing of a formal offer of a place at Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School in March.

ii) All Parents - Parents' Evenings (Virtual/Face-Face)

- Parents are invited to attend a Parents' Evening each year to review the academic progress of the student with the individual class/subject teacher. This will provide parents/carers and teachers a valuable opportunity to discuss relevant assessment data, examples of work where appropriate and to keep a focused discussion regarding strengths, areas for development and 2/3 action points for pupil and parent/carer.

Where a parent/carer feels that an issue which will take longer or there is a potential dispute, parents need to make an appointment with either the Leader of Wellbeing or relevant link member of SLT.

It is expected that communication between staff and parents/carers is respectful, polite and with the aim of resolving issues raised. Should staff feel that the situation is becoming difficult, parents will be referred to a more senior member of staff.

Please refer to the school Code of Conduct for parents, carers and visitors for further information.

Meetings with Parents/Carers – Additional

At other times during the School year, it may be appropriate for parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss progress and other issues from time to time affecting a pupil's achievement, wellbeing etc. This is an integral part of the roles of Wellbeing Support Officer's (WSO), Leaders of Wellbeing (Heads of Year), Heads of Department (HOD) and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). **Please note that it is not possible to meet with individual class/subject teachers/ form tutors over and above the designated Parents' Evenings as outlined above.**

Meetings will take place with the most appropriate staff members and the school will decide which member of staff is the most appropriate, depending on the individual circumstances. Meetings will usually take place between the hours of 9:00 and no later than 16:00. This is to ensure the appropriate management of workload. **Please note that meetings must be arranged in advanced notice and we recommend that parent/carers do not attend school requesting to speak to a member of staff without an arranged appointment.**

The school does not have the capacity for admin staff to minute parental meetings and this should be explained at the outset of such meetings. Staff should keep their own brief written notes. Requests

for meetings will be accommodated as soon as practically possible. This will normally take place within 10 school working days, with the relevant staff member.

Specific, Primary, Front-line communication for Individual Pupils

As outlined above, each key stage group has a designated Wellbeing Support Officer and a Leader of Wellbeing (Heads of Year) for each year group. Therefore, parents/carers can contact the School by telephoning or e-mailing the designated WSO as follows:

Year Group of Learner	Wellbeing Support Officers (WSO), Leaders of Wellbeing (LOW) and Head of Sixth Form	Contact direct number and e-mail
• Year 7	Miss E Morgan (WSO) & Mrs J Bailey (LOW)	01656 815500 and year7@archbishopmg.co.uk
• Year 8	Miss E Morgan (WSO) & Miss K Sutton (LOW)	01656 815500 and year8@archbishopmg.co.uk
• Year 9	Miss E Morgan (WSO) & Mr W Gallafant (LOW)	01656 815500 and year9@archbishopmg.co.uk
• Year 10	Miss C Burgess (WSO) & Miss E Davies (LOW)	01656 815500 and year10@archbishopmg.co.uk
• Year 11	Miss C Burgess (WSO) & Miss A Frisby (LOW)	01656 815500 and year11@archbishopmg.co.uk
• Sixth Form	Miss C Burgess (WSO) & Ms J Pearson (Head of Sixth Form)	01656 815500 and year12@archbishopmg.co.uk year13@archbishopmg.co.uk

The WSO will liaise internally with the relevant staff and will convey messages to and from staff, obtain information from staff and where appropriate refer issues to other staff where it is felt necessary for intervention from Heads of Department, Leaders of Wellbeing (Heads of Year), or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Telephone Calls

Wellbeing Support Officers can receive high volumes of calls from parents/carers and other individuals during the school day. **They will attempt to respond to external calls and convey messages, collect information usually within 24 hours. Parents/carers will not be put through to individual teachers.** A simple log (date and time) and also a brief outline of the content of the conversation and any actions resulting from it will be kept by the WSO. Where staff contact home and are unable to reach a parent/carer, and subsequently leave a voice mail message, staff will be clear who is calling and where from as well as indicating briefly the nature of the call. This prevents undue stress for parents/carers and also supports the School team when parents/carers return missed calls.

Social Networking Sites

Staff will not communicate with parents/carers or pupils via social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept them as their “friends”. Under no circumstances will staff communicate with parents/carers or pupils using their private email accounts.

Written Communication with parents

E-mails

We will aim to respond to e-mail communication as soon as practically possible. **This will normally be within 5 working days.** Holding e-mails **will normally be sent within 24 hours.** Emails received on weekends/ out of school term time (i.e. holiday times) will not elicit a response until after the start of the school week/term.

Please note that the working time for Wellbeing Officers is 8am – 4pm. Therefore any e-mail communication received outside of these times will not be actioned until the next working day.

Written Letters Received in the Post

We will aim to respond to **written communication within 10 working days.** Where this is not possible for example where an issue needs further exploration/ investigation, we will acknowledge receipt of correspondence and will outline when written communication will be responded to.

Addressing Parents – Verbally or Written

Parents must be referred to by their formal title i.e. Mr, Mrs, Ms, Dr etc. and not by Christian name. Staff should use their full name or appropriate salutation i.e. Mrs Smith, Leader of Science. Staff should not respond by use of their Christian name only.

Disputes between Home and School

It is recognised that from time to time, that parents may dispute a particular approach or viewpoint as to the behaviour or attitude of their child. Where staff are faced with potentially difficult or challenging communications with parents, they will always seek advice from the relevant line manager, rather than enter into a dialogue which may become stressful for staff and parents or make a difficult situation worse. Line managers will always look to support their colleagues in these circumstances, where necessary taking over the communication from members of their team. At all times it is vital to retain professionalism. Where parents may become abusive or aggressive in their response, in whatever form of communication is being used, staff will politely inform them that the communication will have to cease and that they may wish to speak to the relevant line manager. Should any member of staff receive persistent complaints and/or impolite communication via any medium, this will be referred to the relevant Senior Leader. The Senior Leader(s) will discuss with the Deputy Headteacher/Headteacher. Relevant action will be taken by the Deputy Headteacher/Headteacher in accordance with relevant policies.