

Communication Policy

St. Anne's School

2025 2026

Introductory Statement

This is a whole school policy for pupils, staff, parents and outside agencies in the school. It deals with communication within the school and between the school and our partners. To contribute to ensuring inclusivity and co-operation this policy emphasises maintaining and improving the current channels of communication among the users of the school and with the partners in education.

Rationale

Good communication is essential to maintaining a positive working and learning environment. Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect in a happy, caring and supportive environment means that people feel included, consulted and informed. This requires that we use a variety of channels of communication so as to ensure that the relevant people receive the necessary information.

Vision and Aims

Vision

All parties will be communicated with through a variety of agreed channels of communication. The target audience will be involved actively rather than passively where possible in the communication. There will be opportunity for feedback to check that information is being received and understood. All communication will be mutually respectful.

Aims

The goal of this policy is to contribute to effective communication within the school, with the Board of Management, with parents and with the outside agencies we deal with on a regular basis, so as to maintain a good working, social and personal environment. This will promote efficiency and contribute to achieving the objectives of the school.

Means of Communication

- Email
- Aladdin
- Seesaw
- Google Classroom

- Website
- Facebook
- Home/school communication diaries
- Teacher to teacher
- Teacher to SNA
- Teacher to parent
- Phone calls
- Parent/teacher meeting face to face, Zoom or phone call
- Meeting by appointment
- School newsletter
- Informal communication
- Surveys
- Noticeboards
- Students council
- Parent's Association

Personal and Confidential Communication

Personal data is protected in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988.

The privacy of personal communications is preserved in accordance with the Human Rights Act.

Some categories and items of information regarding both staff and students need to be kept confidential. All staff are bound to take care with the handling and transmission of confidential information, with regard to how and to whom the information is transmitted.

Procedures for Parents to Initiate Communication with the School

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, they can contact the teacher directly via their school email, to arrange a suitable time. In the unlikely event that a parent has a complaint, the parental complaints procedure needs to be followed.

Classes begin at 9:10 am and finish at 1:50 pm (pre-school, junior and senior infants) and 2.50 pm (all other classes) and this time should not be interrupted.

Phone calls with the class teacher should be avoided during class-times, email is the preferred mode of communication.

Regarding incidental matters arising:

If matters raised cannot be resolved immediately or if the parent or staff member needs to discuss the matter further an appointment should be made at a convenient time for both parties.

On some rare occasions a parent may need to speak to a staff member urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The Principal will aim to facilitate such meetings making every effort to ensure that the children in the class do not lose out on any of the teaching/learning time.

If parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear during class time etc, this can be done through the secretary's office so that learning is not disrupted.

Procedures for Outside Agencies to Initiate Communication with the School

Outside agencies often contact teaching staff during class time to make an appointment, email would be the preferred choice of communication and when a therapist or clinician is visiting it should be agreed beforehand if it is a class observation or a meeting so the meeting room can be booked and relevant records and paperwork can be organised.

Online and Social Media Communication

St. Anne's School has a website <http://www.stannesennis.ie/>, and a Face book page <https://www.facebook.com/StAnnesSchoolEnnis>

Parents are encouraged to visit these sites regularly to keep up to date on school matters, comment and contribute to posts and share information to help publicise the school and the achievements of our children.

The school name or anything that identifies the school should not be used on online or on social media (for example class Facebook page which might be set up by parents) by members of the public including parents without express written permission from the principal or Board of Management. St Anne's School will request removal of any online or social media sites that are not approved by the school.

Communication between staff

All communication be it written, verbal or non-verbal between staff and students, staff to staff or parent to staff we ask that all communication be mutually respectful and considerate at all times.

Staff meetings take place once a month – there is daily internal communication in school via emails, staff noticeboard outside staffroom etc.

Staff operate a WhatsApp group which is used for sharing general school updates, social news and events.

The principal and deputy principal operate an open-door policy; however, staff are encouraged to approach the office within the hours of 2pm -3pm so the principal and deputy principal can give staff the time and attention they may require, this is unless the matter arising is an emergency then make immediate contact with the office. Never hesitate to contact the office however if the matter is not an emergency emails and afternoon meetings are the preferred approach of communication. This is also to accommodate the large number of staff.

Communication is considered to be a strength among the staff and the informal communication before, during and after school is an integral part of the collegial and professional school atmosphere.

Sharing of best practice:

Staff meetings are held twice a term. The minutes are recorded and added to the school padlet for staff perusal. An Agenda is sent to all staff prior to the meeting. Communication at these meetings centres around:

- Staff Well-Being: checking in
- School Improvement Planning: curricular and organisational
- Sharing of CPD
- Policy development

Restorative Practice:

An ethos of Love and Respect is promoted and practiced through a series of training sessions, most notably “Restorative Practice (RP)”. It is hoped that staff will be trained in RP each year, whereby they are given the language and skills around conflict resolution and restoring relationships. Constructive and respectful dialogue with a solution focused approach is encouraged among all staff members.

Communication between School/Board of Management

There is a teacher representative on the Board of Management who attends meetings monthly.

Communication with outside agencies

These include:

NEPS / NCSE / SENO / HSE / Tusla / OIDE/ CDNT / NCCA

NEPS:

The Principal liaises with National Educational Psychological Services with regard to making referrals, where necessary. One-to-one meetings with Parents/Guardians for these meetings are organised by the Principal and necessary paperwork regarding this is undertaken by the Principal with the class teacher of the child in question and gone through in detail with the parents of the child. All communication with external agencies is done through the school.

Tusla:

The DLP, the Principal, liaises with the services of Tusla with regard to child welfare. This includes the National Education and Welfare Officer regarding child attendance at school and social services regarding child protection. When referring to these services, parents/guardians and/or staff personnel are immediately informed by the Principal.

St. Anne's also aims to make links with the community through:

Links with other local schools (Principal meetings, pupil events, creative clusters, STEAM projects)

Community businesses etc. through LCA student Placement

Agencies that provide further education for our students – Streetwise, Brothers of Charity, Dulick Enterprise Centre etc.

Communication through the school

Emails can be sent by teachers directly to parents through the Aladdin system. However, if the class teacher does wish to contact a parent via email it will be from @stanneennis.com address. Parents will not have access to teachers via Whatsapp, teachers can communicate through platforms such as Google Classroom, Seesaw and Aladdin. Parents can also access communication via Facebook and the school website. Parents will be kept regularly informed via home/school communication journals, phone calls, parent/teacher meetings, communication through bus escorts.

Communication within classes amongst staff:

The quality of the relationship between teachers and pupils is very important in supporting and promoting learning in the school. This relationship is best when based on mutual respect. Communication between SNA and class teacher is of paramount importance as it has a direct impact on the child/children they are caring for. To ensure smooth running of the classes, the class teacher and SNA ensure that effective plans, timetables and classroom practices and roles are set out before the academic year commences. They also engage in monthly review meetings and make plans accordingly.

Communication amongst pupils

St. Anne's School has a Students Council that represents student voice. The purpose of this council is to give a democratic voice to our pupils. The Student Council is an important communication mechanism between the pupils and all school partners.

Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT)

All newly qualified teachers take part in an induction course at the start of the academic year. They are also supplied with updated policies and procedures. Newly appointed teachers are mentored by the principal and deputy principal, most notably in relation to on-going planning and probation through Droichead.

Assistance with planning templates, whole school planning and teaching methodologies take the format of these meetings, weekly. Mentor meetings also take place between teacher and principal/deputy principal where support is implemented if required in the above.

On-going evaluation and support is provided by the principal/deputy principal in the form of observation of classes, co-teaching with newly qualified teachers and constructive feedback given at the end of this.

Communication by email- response time

Response times to emails from the school secretary can vary depending on the demands in the office at any given time. It is considered reasonable that 3-5 school days are allowed for a response (with the exception of holiday periods during which email is only checked intermittently).

Response times to emails to the Principal can also vary greatly depending on the demands at any given time. Priority must be given to the pupils, staff and overall running of the school. A response time of 5-7 school days is considered to be reasonable.

Teachers are in class during the day and will not have time to access emails. They may be engaged in planning, meetings or personal matters after school hours and so again 3-5 school days is considered to be a reasonable response time.

There may be occasions where a parent is trying to contact the school by phone and/or email and are not receiving a response. Office hours are limited and the secretary is not always at the desk. We ask for patience during these times.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

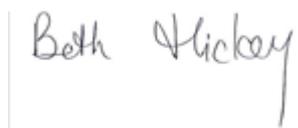
The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act became operative on 1 November 1989. It is an important piece of legislation for BoMs and for those who work in schools, as schools and colleges were brought under the scope of safety legislation for the first time.

It is recognised that school staff may be at risk from violence in the form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults or other forms of intimidation. This behaviour may come from pupils, parents, guardians, other staff members or intruders.

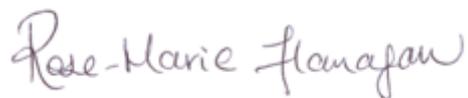
In this respect, all staff should be aware of **DES Circular 40/97** which deals with the procedures to follow if they feel they have been subjected to any of the above behaviours. A copy of this circular can be found attached to the school's Health and Safety policy.

Ratification Communication

Following ratification by the Board of Management meeting on the 20th November 2025, a copy of this plan will be available to parents and guardians on the school website.



Beth Hickey
Chairperson B.O.M



Rose-Marie Flanagan
Principal

Date: 20/11/2025