



Notre Dame School And St Boniface's College Communication Policy

Named Persons: E.Ley

Last reviewed on: November 2023

Next review due by: June 2026

Psalm 19:14 (ESV) "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer."

Policy values:

We encounter one another, as members of the school community, as unique individuals, deserving of dignity and respect. Whether student, staff or parent; our membership of this school community commits us to build unity of purpose, in striving together for justice, love and peace. Our communication, then, must reflect our own dignity, and a recognition of the dignity of another person. This policy describes how all stakeholders in our community will model a more peaceful world for our children.

Notre Dame School and St Boniface's College are committed to effective collaboration with parents because it is through such partnership that we best support students in their personal formation and academic progress. The Education Endowment Foundation has found that on average effective parental engagement can add up to an additional four months of progress over the course of the year.

We therefore welcome open, free and respectful dialogue so that expert information can be shared freely between home and school. We want to help parents in the challenging task of raising their children as responsible, caring, and well-educated young adults.

Home-school communication

The vast majority of teacher time is focussed on learning and student progress and they have limited opportunity to communicate with parents and carers in the working day. Their schedule, and wider professional responsibilities means that "on-demand" communication is not possible. Similarly, we recognise that parents and carers have busy lives and may not be able to respond to our communications immediately.

Therefore although we always aim to respond to email communications within 24 hours, it may take up to three school days.

If you have not heard back from us within that period something will have gone wrong, and, we ask parents and carers to contact the school by email; either info@ndonline.org or mailbox@stbonifaces.com so that we can ensure that parents and carers get a response to their communication. We will aim to respond to phone calls within 24 hours.

The world of education is full of specific terms and concepts that might be unfamiliar to those who do not work within it. We will always try to keep the language of our communications accessible to all and avoid the unnecessary use of technical terms or jargon. Where these are necessary, we will always try to explain them simply. If we fail in this aim we would appreciate it if you could inform us via the info@ndonline.org or mailbox@stbonifaces.com address so that we can continue to improve the quality of our communications.

Contacting the school**Telephone**

Please use the main reception number to leave a message for a member of staff to contact you;

- Phone calls will always be directed to the member of staff who in the school's view is best positioned to help you.
- Please note that there are no phones in classrooms and lessons will never be interrupted for teachers to take calls.
- Reception staff will relay messages to the member of staff as soon as they are able to do so, usually by email. The member of staff will respond as promptly as they can, as outlined above.
- If the nature of the call is extremely urgent, please tell the receptionist and they will attempt to find a senior member of staff to speak to you.

E-mail

Appendix A provides you with guidance on who to contact for specific concerns. Please use staff email addresses to contact them directly. The majority of staff email addresses follow the following format: initialsurname@ndonline.org and initialsurname@stbonifaces.com:

- In order to protect their wellbeing, staff are advised not to check or respond to emails outside of working hours. The schools' working hours are 8.30 to 5pm.
- Part-time staff may take longer than the three days outlined above due to their working arrangements, so email should only be used for non-urgent communication.
- Please refrain from using the blind copying (bcc) of third parties into an email to a member of staff. It is important that the email addresses the intended audience.
- We know that sometimes emails do not arrive at their intended destination and so, if you have not received a reply to your email within 3 working days, we ask for parents and carers to make contact via the means outlined above.

We are keen to communicate well, and to help our families to the best of our ability.

All Communications

In order to maintain the wellbeing of those who are communicating within our school community we request that:

- All communications need to be focused on your child only.
- Matters of a personal nature should never be in an email but communicated in face-to-face meetings or by phone..
- Please be mindful of what you say/write about staff in front of children and other parents. This can undermine the relationship with the school. In order to support your child's progress it is important that we maintain positive relationships between home and School.
- The school has limited ability to address issues that arise outside of school, where children are under the control and supervision of their parents and carers. This includes issues that arise from use of social media outside of school.

Meetings

With a large number of students in the school, the day to day care, welfare and safety of your child is managed by the person who is placed closest to them:

- In the first instance, please approach the following members of staff who are responsible for your child in the following order:
 1. Form tutor or classroom teacher (if query is relevant to a specific subject)
 2. Head of House, Year leader or Subject leader (if query is relevant to a specific subject)
 3. Assistant headteacher (if a query has not been resolved through the channels above)
- Meetings should always be pre-arranged with members of staff so that they can adjust their schedules as needed.
- If you urgently need to see someone, for instance if there is a serious family emergency or a child protection issue, please phone ahead and the reception staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff to contact you.
- For non-urgent meetings we will aim to meet with you within 5 working days. In order to enable us to manage multiple demands and priorities, the school will determine the level of urgency and the most appropriate or relevant person to meet with you at its discretion.

Contacting You

Our preferred means of contacting you with formal communication is via Parent Mail. For student alerts and announcements that relate to the day to day life of your child the school may also use Classcharts.

- Parents and carers who are signed up to ParentMail are benefiting by receiving letters and notifications via email.
- Parents and carers can also pay for trips and resources online via the Parent Pay system; we are unable to accept cheques and cash. To sign up, please contact our administrator via finance@ndonline.org or finance@stbonifaces.com

Note: School representatives will collect email addresses from the parents/carers of students upon starting at Notre Dame School and St Boniface's College. This will facilitate improved communication through the use of 'In Touch' and 'ParentMail' to email whole cohort/school messages. Please inform the School of any change to your email address.

Social Media

We are reviewing our use of social media as part of our aim to ensure effective and timely communication. We use social media to promote student achievements, subject information and generic educational information. Our communications take into account that not all parents use social media.

The schools' social media accounts are for the purposes of publicity and information sharing; the accounts and their monitoring are not set up so that the school can respond to social media comments or replies.

Communication should be via each school's identified preferred means of communication.

Parent and Carer Feedback

From time to time we use online surveys in order to gather feedback from parents and carers about a wide range of issues. We would appreciate it if you could support us by completing these where possible as the information you give us is used for the wider benefit of students, parents and carers.

We will aim to communicate the outcomes of consultations with parents, and the actions that we are taking in response. In this way, our families help our schools to improve. If you have specific feedback or suggestions, please feel free to make contact via the info@ndonline.org or mailbox@stbonifaces.com.

Scope of support

The school is limited in its capacity to manage situations that occur whilst a child is under the care of their parents, such as issues online or events that take place outside of school hours/campus. We will always try to support such interventions as are necessary in these situations but we recognise that the parent is the primary educator of the child in their care.

Respectful Communication

We know that concerns around your child can cause anxiety for parents and carers and we will always seek to support you where we can. We ask that whether contact is via phone, email or in person, that your communication with the school is calm and reasonable.

Communication is best when it takes place in a context of mutual respect and we find that this promotes trust and supports best outcomes for students.

Our reception staff, who are often the first port of call, have the right to work in a safe and caring environment, and the Governing Body will not allow any member of staff to experience abuse, harassment or threat.

Staff are instructed to end communications that are threatening, abusive, or contemptuous in their opinion. Further information can be found in our policy "Building mutually respectful communication with parents, carers and callers."

Communication with parents and carers is important to us and we will continue to monitor practice under this policy in seeking ways to improve our communication processes further.

Appendix A

Area of Concern	First Point of Contact	Email@ND	Email@SBC
Safeguarding	Safeguarding team	safeguarding@ndonline.org	safeguarding@stbonifaces.com
Attendance	Attendance Officer	attendance@ndonline.org	attendance@stbonifaces.com
Additional Educational Needs (high level)	SENCO	SEND@ndonline.org	SEND@stbonifaces.com
Additional Educational Needs (low level)	Tutor	initialsurname@ndonline.org	initialsurname@stbonifaces.com
Academic	Subject Teacher	initialsurname@ndonline.org	initialsurname@stbonifaces.com
Pastoral	Tutor	initialsurname@ndonline.org	initialsurname@stbonifaces.com
Administrative	School Reception	info@ndonline.org	mailbox@stbonifaces.com
Finance	Finance Department	finance@ndonline.org	finance@stbonifaces.com
Formal Complaints	All formal complaints will be managed using the Plymouth CAST Complaints Policy. This can be found on the School Website.	A copy of the complaints procedure can be requested at: info@ndonline.org	A copy of the complaints procedure can be requested at: mailbox@stbonifaces.com