



**St Edward's
School**

Unity - Achievement - Faith

Communication Policy

Reviewed and Approved by Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes Committee

On: 4th June 2026

Next full review date: Summer 2027

SLT is responsible for oversight of this policy's implementation

Mission Statement

MAY WE BE ONE

In purpose – educating for life in all its fullness

In faith – encountering God who lives among us, calling us to unity

In dignity – nurturing confidence and maturity

In community – striving together for justice, love and peace

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The raising of children to adulthood places a special responsibility upon families and schools to work together for the good of the child. Our mission statement calls us to be united in this purpose, so that together home and school can educate a child in preparation to live life in all its fullness.

As adults we need to model the behaviours that we expect from our children, and this includes the need to recognise the dignity of everyone with whom we meet. This policy describes the mutual respect that will be at the heart of all encounters between home and school. In this way, we can grow as one community, respecting the Spirit who is present in every one of us.

St Edward's school is 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 and free dialogue so that expert information can be shared freely between home and school, and vice versa.

The vast majority of teacher time is focussed on learning and student progress, and because of their teaching timetable they have limited opportunity to communicate with parents and carers. Similarly, we recognise that parents and carers have busy lives and may not be able to respond to our communications immediately. Please therefore be aware that although we always aim to respond to communications within 24 hours it can take up to three school days. If you haven't heard back from us after that period, we ask parents and carers to contact the school either by email enquiries@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk or alternatively by speaking to the Office Manager, Mrs Hutchings, on the main school number who will follow up on your enquiry, and keep you updated with progress on a response.

We expect all visitors and callers to behave in a reasonable way towards school staff. This policy also outlines the steps that will be taken where behaviour is unacceptable in various modes of communication with our school. The Governors of St. Edward's school have responsibility and oversight of the school campus, and reserve the right to restrict access to this private property as necessary.

The language of education is full of specific terms and concepts that might be unfamiliar to those who do not work in schools. 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. If we fail in this aim, we would appreciate it if you could inform us via the enquiries@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk address so that we can continue to improve the quality of our communications.

1. Contacting Us

Telephone

Please use the main reception number to leave a message for a teacher to contact 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 teacher as soon as they can, 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 and a child is at risk of harm, please tell the receptionist and they will attempt to find a senior member of staff or safeguarding lead to speak to you.
- All calls to and from the school are recorded for security and training purposes. We collect and use this information on a lawful basis, as legitimate interests, in line with GDPR regulations (2018), for further details please see the St Edward's Data Protection Policy <https://stedwards.poole.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Data-protection-incorporating-GDPAutumn-2021.pdf>

E-mail

Please use staff email addresses to contact them directly.

- Most staff email addresses follow the following format: initialsurname@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk.
- To protect their wellbeing, staff are advised not to check or respond to emails outside of working hours.
- Part-time staff may take longer than the three days outlined above, so emails should only be used for non-urgent communication.
- 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 enquiries@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

Meetings

With over 1000 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.

When contacting the school, 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. Engagement Support Workers linked to your child's year group.
 3. Directors of Learning, Year Leaders or Subject Leader (if query is relevant to a specific subject)
 4. 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 or safeguarding lead to contact you.
 - For non-urgent meetings we will aim to meet with you within 5 working days. 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.

Online behaviour

Online behaviour deemed criminal, or potentially criminal will be reported by the school to the police if it becomes aware of such behaviour during school time. Parents and Carers are responsible for their child's online behaviour outside of the school day, and away from the school's premises. As the bill-payer, parents and carers hold the power over a child's access to their device/s. The school will sanction students at its discretion if it considers online behaviour to pose a threat or cause harm to another, or have potential repercussions for the orderly running of the school where the student is identifiable as a member of the school, or if the reputation of the school is or may be adversely affected. Covert recording, either video or audio is forbidden on the school campus at all times. Uploading onto the internet or social media is not acceptable and may result in a criminal offence or being in contempt of court.

2. Contacting You

Wisepay and SIMs

Our preferred means of contacting you is via Wisepay and our management information system, SIMs.

- Parents and carers who are signed up to Wisepay are benefitting by receiving letters and notifications via email and text.
- We also use these systems to text you if we must close the school in an emergency.
- Our main communication day for emails is on a Thursday, however occasionally the weekly mailing may be delayed until Friday.

- Parents and carers can also pay for trips and resources online via the Wisepay system instead of sending in cheques and cash. To sign up, please contact our Administrator via – enquiries@stedwards.poole.sch.uk

Social Media

We use social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and X to promote student achievements, subject information and generic educational information that used to be put in the fortnightly newsletter.

This information can also be found on the news page of the school website for those parents and carers that do not use the social media platforms.

- The school accounts are for the purpose of sharing school news with our community, and for raising awareness. The accounts and their monitoring is not set up so that the school can respond to social media comments or replies. The school will sanction students at its discretion if it considers online behaviour to pose a threat or cause harm to another, or have potential repercussions for the orderly running of the school where the student is identifiable as a member of the school, or if the reputation of the school is or may be adversely affected. Covert recording, either video or audio is forbidden on the school campus at all times. Uploading onto the internet or social media is not acceptable and may result in a criminal offence or being in contempt of court.

We ask that any concerns are raised with the school directly using our central email address enquiries@stedwards.poole.sch.uk.

3. Parent and Carer Feedback

From time to time, we use online surveys 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. If you have specific feedback or suggestions, please feel free to make contact via the enquiries@stedwards.poole.sch.uk address.

4. 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 and carers, such as issues online, or events that take place outside of school hours/campus. We will always try and support such interventions as are necessary in these situations, but we recognise that the parent or carer is the primary educator and safe-guarder of the child in their care.

5. 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 our students.

Staff are instructed to end communications that are, in their opinion, threatening, abusive, or contemptuous. 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.

6. Behaviour

Types of behaviour that are considered serious and unacceptable and will not be tolerated:
This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour:

- Shouting at school staff, either in person or over the telephone
- Physically intimidating a member of staff, eg standing very close to her/him
- The use of aggressive hand gestures
- Threatening, belittling, disparaging, or insulting school staff
- Online abuse, defamatory comments or the spreading of false and/or malicious information
- Shaking or holding a fist towards another person
- Swearing at a member of school staff
- Pushing
- Hitting, eg slapping, punching and kicking
- Spitting
- Racist, sexist or other derogatory comments
- Breaking the school’s security procedures

Unacceptable behaviour will result in the Local Education Authority, the Diocesan Board of Education, the Chair of Governors and the Police being informed. Legal action may follow including individual actions pursued by the member of staff’s professional association. The school site is comprehensively covered by CCTV and footage may be used in evidence.

Behaviour on the telephone

If telephone conversations become contemptuous, abusive or threatening, members of staff are instructed to terminate the call and report the incident. In line with many institutions, all calls to and from the school are recorded for security and training purposes. The school may restrict future telephone contact with the caller, to the extent that it feels necessary. A recording of the call may be used in any dispute with the school.

Behaviour online and/or via email

All school staff have the right to be treated with respect, both in person, or via remote communication. The immediacy of electronic communication can result in ill-considered messages and emails to the school. Contemptuous and/or disparaging remarks in emails, and via social media, can adversely affect staff. In exercising its duty of care towards employees, the school may pursue offenders and/or restrict communication and/or access in regard to the offender(s) to the extent that it feels is

necessary. The school will act in cases where an individual, or individuals are making defamatory, or offensive comments about members of staff or Governors online, including in email correspondence.

The school will sanction students at its discretion if it considers online behaviour to pose a threat or cause harm to another, or have potential repercussions for the orderly running of the school where the student is identifiable as a member of the school, or if the reputation of the school is or may be adversely affected. Covert recording, either video or audio is forbidden on the school campus at all times. Uploading onto the internet or social media is not acceptable and may result in a criminal offence or being in contempt of court.

7. Procedure

If a visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school staff the Headteacher or appropriate senior staff will seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation. If necessary, the school's complaints procedure should be followed. If a person refuses to use the informal and formal complaints procedure, the school will consider the concern closed. Where all procedures have been exhausted, and aggression or intimidation continue, or where there is an extreme act of violence, a visitor may be banned by the Headteacher from the school premises for a period of time, subject to review. The school also reserves the right to restrict access to its staff, and/or to only communicate on terms that the school feels are appropriate under the circumstances, for the duration of time determined by the school.

In the event of aggression towards, or intimidation of staff, an investigation will be conducted and an incident report form will be completed and evidence taken from witnesses.

If a ban is deemed appropriate the following steps will be taken:

1. The person or persons will be informed, in writing, that s/he is banned from the premises, subject to review, and what will happen if the ban is breached, eg that an injunction application may follow.
2. Where an assault or threatening behaviour has led to a ban, a statement confirming that the matter has been reported to the Local Education Authority and the Police will be included.
3. The Chair of Governors will be informed of the ban.
4. Where appropriate, arrangements for students being delivered to, and collected from the school gate will be clarified.

Where such behaviour does occur on site, the person involved will be instructed to leave the premises or be taken to a room away from other persons. The school reserves the right to inform its designated community police officers.

8. Conclusion

St Edward's School will always take action where behaviour or communication are unacceptable and constitutes a breach of our home-school code of conduct, health and safety legislation, or negatively impacts upon any of our staff.