CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC COLLEGIATE

A Multi Academy Company

Communication Policy

Date: March 2016

Adopted: April 2016

Review: March 2017

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to promote partnership between Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company (CtKCC MAC), Academies, parents and carers, students and the wider community through efficient and effective communication.

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1.   Definition of communication

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflect on the Multi-Academy reputation. Parents and carers, Directors and students also have a part to play in reflecting the school's reputation. We strive to ensure that communications between all members of CtKCC community are clear, professional, timely and effective in their purpose.

2.   Principles

CtKCC Academies use a number of different methods to maintain effective communication with parents and carers, other schools, the wider community and outside agencies. Depending on the nature of the communication, each academy will use the most practicable means to contact the recipient.

 Communication on issues that affect the safety and wellbeing of a student will be treated as a priority. Each Academy holds emergency contact details for all students; families are asked to alert the academy immediately if contact information needs to be revised.

 Staff will always seek to establish friendly relationships with parents and carers but they will ensure relationships are professional and parents will be addressed in a formal manner. Staff are to avoid developing close relationships with parents and carers. The use of a parent, carer or staff member's first name is not appropriate, therefore all communications will be to and from Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms etc.

The Communications Policy embraces the principles of the Equalities Policy and E-Safety Policy.

3.   Introduction

CtKCC MAC recognises the importance of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (students, parents and carers, staff, Directors, the local and wider community outside agencies, etc), and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the MAC.

The key stakeholders for any academy are parents, carers and students and this policy addresses the main ways in which CtKCC MAC will ensure there is effective two-way communication between home and academies.

4.   Parents and carers as partners in their child's education

Parents and carers have a key role to play in their child's education. The academies will make every effort to encourage and make arrangements for parents and carers to contribute to creating a shared view of their child's needs.

5.   Aims of the policy

- To ensure that effective communication and consultation takes place between the academies, parents, carers, students and other stakeholders;

- To ensure robust processes for consultation between the academies, parents, carers and students;

- To make the academies as welcoming and inclusive as possible. Signage will be clear, informative and positive;

- All written and telephone enquiries will be dealt with promptly and parents and carers

can expect an acknowledgement within 2 working days;

- A variety of forms of communication with parents and carers for example, telephone contact, E-mail, post and text;

- Parents and carers are contacted for positive as well as negative reasons;

- Information is given to parents and carers on what students will be taught and tips for helping their child will be provided. This information is also available via Moodle and Show my Homework[1];

- Parents and carers will be encouraged to help or support their child's learning at school and at home. Information will be provided to enable this support to be effective.

6. Communication with parents and carers

6.1 Choosing the correct member of staff to address a query

Please see Annex A which details who to contact and how to progress any query that is not successfully resolved.

6.2 Letters

Staff will always reply to a letter from parents and carers as quickly as possible. A response to acknowledge receipt of a letter will be made by return, a more formal acknowledgment, by telephone, letter or email, **will be made within 2 working days and responded to within 10 working days**. Letters must be processed through the school administration team and approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team before posting. Copies of correspondence with parents and carers will be placed on student files. Any letters of concern or complaint should be dealt with in accordance with the CtKCC MAC Complaints Policy.

Each academy will use standard templates for letters where possible.

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide a current E-mail address for prompt and effective communication. However, if we are unable to obtain a current email address for any parent or carer, the weekly communication will be delivered home in hard copy by their child.

6.3 E-mail

E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is the academies preferred method of communication. **E-mails received will be treated in the same way as letters: acknowledged within 2 working days and responded to within 10 working days.** E-mails should be short and clear and the same care and consideration should be given as when sending a letter. Any items longer than a paragraph should be attached in word format.

Parents and carers may wish to contact the academy via E-mail for a general enquiry as an alternative to telephone or letter. The academies E-mail addresses are as follows:

- St John Fisher Catholic College: office@sjfcc.net

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School: office@stmarysnul.co.uk

- St Teresa's Catholic Primary School: stteresas@sgfl.org.uk

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[1] Currently this is only available at St John Fisher Catholic College

- St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Primary School: stthomasa@sgfl.org.uk

Under no circumstances should staff contact students or parents and carers using their own personal E-mail address. All correspondence should be via work e-mail.

6.4   Telephone Calls

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in an academy, where teachers may be teaching full-time and running clubs or working with students at lunchtime or after school. Parents and carers may be frustrated 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.

In a non-emergency **a return call will be made within 2 working days, with any follow up action from the outline of the request/query/problem being dealt with within 10 working days.** Staff will make a file note recording details of any telephone conversations with a parent, carer using the form at Annex B.

6.5   Texts

Parents and carers may also be contacted by text, in a non-emergency, to inform or remind them of a particular event e.g. parents evening, or late arrival. Texts will also be used in the event of emergency closure.

6.6   Absence

If a child is absent, parents and carers are asked to contact the relevant academy as soon as possible on the morning of the absence and in accordance with the Absence Policy. In the event of failure to notify the school on the first day of any absence a text will be sent or telephone call will be made requesting that the parent/carer contacts the school to confirm the student's absence (safeguarding).

6.7   Meeting with Parents and carers

Parents and carers wishing to meet a member of staff must contact the school to make an appointment. **This request should be responded to within 2 working days.**

Parents and carers should report to reception prior to meeting with a member of staff. A member of staff will ask a colleague to accompany them. A record of the meeting will be taken by the member of staff involved using the form at Annex C.

Staff should call a meeting to a close in the event of the parents or carers becoming angry or abusive. This should be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

6.8   Social Networking

Other than social networking sites that have been established specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning/events fixtures etc staff will not communicate with parents and carers or students via any social networking sites nor will they accept them as 'friends'.

A number of Departments and subject areas within Christ the King Catholic Collegiate do host networking sites that provide school/subject specific information and resources. Your child's

teacher will provide information and recommendations for accessing relevant sites appropriate to your child.

6.9 Parent and carer use of Social Networking and Internet Sites Overview

Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are now widely used. This type of media allows people to communicate in ways that were not previously possible. However, such sites can be inappropriately used by some as a means of expressing negative or offensive views about Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company and staff. This document sets out the Christ the King Catholic Collegiate approach to parental use of such sites and sets out the procedures we will follow and action we may take when we consider that parents and carers have used such facilities inappropriately. When we refer to parents and carers in this document, we also include relatives or anyone associated with CtKCC MAC.

6.9.1 Objectives

The purpose of this section of the policy is to:

- Encourage social networking sites to be used in a beneficial and positive way by students, parents and carers;

- Safeguard students, staff and anyone else associated with Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company from the negative effects of social networking sites;

- Safeguard the reputation of Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company from unwarranted abuse on social networking sites;

- Clarify what Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company considers to be appropriate and inappropriate use of social networking sites by students, parents and carers;

- Set out the procedures that Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company will follow where it considers students, parents or carers have inappropriately or unlawfully used social media sites to the detriment of the Multi-Academy, its staff or its students, and anyone else associated with the Multi-Academy; and

- Set out the action Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company will consider taking if students, parents or carers make inappropriate use of social networking sites.

6.9.2 Appropriate use of social networking sites by parents and carers

Social networking sites have potential to enhance the learning and achievement of students and enable parents and carers to access information about the academies and provide feedback efficiently and easily. In addition, Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company recognises that many parents and carers and other family members will have personal social networking accounts, which they might use to discuss/share views about academy issues with friends and acquaintances. As a guide, individuals should consider the following prior to posting any information on social networking sites about Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-

Academy Company, its staff, its students, or anyone else associated with the school:

- Is the social networking site the appropriate channel to raise concerns, give feedback or express these views;

- Would a private and confidential discussion with the academy be more appropriate? e.g. if there are allegations or concerns being raised. Social media sites should not be used to name individuals. The academy should be contacted directly to discuss any concerns you may have;

- Are such comments likely to cause emotional or reputational harm which would not be justified, particularly if the academy has not been given the opportunity to investigate any concern;

- The reputational impact that the posting of such material may have on the academy or Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company; any detrimental harm that the academy may suffer as a result of the posting; and the harm that such a posting may have on students' learning.

6.9.3 Inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents and carers

Although social networking sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations or concerns about the academy (and those associated with it), it is rarely appropriate to do so. Other channels, such as a private and confidential discussion with the academy, or using the Christ the King Catholic Collegiate formal complaints procedure are much better suited to this.

Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social networking sites. (This list is non-exhaustive and intended to provide examples only):

- Making allegations about staff or students (Cyber-bullying);

- Making complaints about the academy or a member of staff;

- Making defamatory statements about the academy or staff;

- Posting negative/offensive comments about Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company policy or practice.

Parents should also ensure that their children are not using social networking/internet sites in an inappropriate manner. It is expected that parents and carers explain to their children what is acceptable to post online. Parents and carers are also expected to monitor their children's online activity, including in relation to their use of social media.

6.9.4 Procedure Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company will follow if inappropriate use continues

Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents and carers in a professional and appropriate manner and understands that parents and carers may not always realise when they have used social networking sites inappropriately. Therefore, as a first step, the academy will usually discuss the matter with the parent or carer to try and resolve the matter and to ask that the relevant information be removed from the social networking site in question. If the parent or carer refuses to do this and continues to use social networking sites in a manner Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company considers inappropriate, we will consider taking the following action:

- Take legal advice and/or legal action where the information posted is defamatory in any way or if the circumstances warrant this;

- Set out the Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company concerns to the parent or carer in writing, giving them a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed;

- Contact the police where Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company feels it is appropriate, for example if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed or in cases where it is considered to be grossly obscene or threatening violence;

- If the appropriate comments have been made on the school website or online forum, the school may take action to block or restrict that individual's access to the forum;

6.10 Reports and Progress

Parents and carers receive an annual report to provide information about their child's progress in each subject. The reports for St John Fisher Catholic College are accessible on-line through Moodle.

In addition, parents and carers have the opportunity to meet their child's subject teachers once a year, at parents evening.

Parents and carers should contact the school if issues arise about their child's progress or wellbeing.

The first point of contact should be the schools reception.

We welcome the presence of any other adult a parent or carer wishes to invite to a school meeting for support or to act as an interpreter. We will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to enable a parent or carer with a disability to participate fully in a meeting or to receive and understand a communication.

6.11 Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company Website

Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company website and individual academy websites provides a range of information about the Multi-Academy.

It is used to promote Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company to a wider

audience and is updated regularly.

6.12   Virtual Learning Environment - MOODLE (VLE)[2]

The VLE is a powerful tool for motivating students as it gives them more choice and flexibility about when and where they complete their learning. It also encourages parent and carer involvement in learning, especially with extended learning tasks.

The school VLE is a good source of general information and includes:

- Curriculum resources
- Copies of letters to parents and carers
- Information about lessons / additional study

Parents will also have access to data about their child's attendance and progress via the VLE.

6.13   Home School Communication

Each student has a planner (St John Fisher Catholic College) or homework/reading diaries for noting down homework and the date for completion.   It is also an important tool for communication between parents, carers and teachers. It contains, for example:

- Uniform list
- Timetables
- Holiday dates
- Notes for / from parents and carers

Parents and carers should use planners to check homework and other messages and to communicate day to day issues.

A calendar of planned school events is available on the academy websites and is updated as necessary throughout the year.

A newsletter is published on a weekly and termly basis; a link to an electronic copy of this is E-mailed to all parents and carers as well as being published on the academy website. Hard copies of the newsletter are available from the academy upon request.

6.14   Communication between students and staff

Two way communications between students and staff is an important aspect of school life. Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company welcomes and encourages students to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school. When communicating with a member of staff students should:

- Stand in front of the member of staff they are speaking with and make eye contact;
- Address the member of staff using their formal name e.g. Mrs Smith, Miss, Sir etc, never referring to a member of staff by their first name;
- Be respectful, do not talk over, raise voice or walk away before the conversation has ended.

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[2] Only available at St John Fisher Catholic College

6.15   School trips, visits and activities

Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company will endeavour to publish all proposed trips, visits and activities on the respective academy calendar at the start of each academic year. Parents and carers will be notified by letter or email of trips, visits and activities that their child/children may wish to participate in as early as possible, and within at least six weeks of the proposed trip, visit or activity. Occasionally opportunities arise during the academic year to offer students additional trips, visits or activities that were not known or available when the calendar was published. The academy will always ensure parents and carers are notified of any additional opportunities for their child as soon as possible to ensure parents and carers have adequate time to plan for such events.

6.16   Severe weather and emergency closure

In the event of emergency closure communication will be made to parents and carers via text, parents and carers should also tune in to local radio and check the academy website and social media channels (e.g. Facebook and Twitter). School emergency closures may also be published on the [Stoke-on-Trent Local Authority website](#).

6.17   Other

In addition to the above forms of communication:

- The academy school prospectus is published on the website. Prospective parents and carers may receive a printed copy of the prospectus upon request;
- Prospective parents and carers are invited to an Open Evening in the September of the year preceding their child's year of entry to the academy;
- Prospective parents and carers are invited to attend open mornings to enable them to see the academy operating;
- Prospective parents and carers are invited, along with their child, to an induction evening in July where the main channels of communication are outlined, and important information will be shared;

7.   Supporting parents and carers of students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company recognises the importance of positive relationships with parents and carers of all students with additional needs. The revised SEND Code of Practice emphasises the importance of positive, supportive attitudes to parents and carers and user-friendly information and procedures. All professionals will make every effort to ensure effective communication with parents and carers.

All staff within Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company are expected to help parents and carers understand how to contribute effectively to their child's education and will make every effort to ensure that parents understand their rights and responsibilities. All relevant information will be provided in a way for all to understand and respond to.

When students have special educational needs and they are making less than the expected progress or if they are experiencing behavioural difficulties, we would expect to meet with parents and carers more regularly.

8. Communication with other Schools and outside agencies

Prior to students joining Year 7, they are visited in their primary schools to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to St John Fisher Catholic College. We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on better ways to meet these needs, so that children may participate more fully. Support comes from medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), from educational psychologists, from health professionals and specialists.

It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare, Social Services and Child Protection Units. We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our academies should provide a safe and secure environment (see the Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company Safeguarding).

We hold information on all students in our academies and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Details will be sent to parents about the types of data we hold, why we hold that data, and who we may pass it on to. This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Parents and carers have a right to view the information we hold and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

Further information can be found in the schools Confidentiality policy and Data Protection policy.

9. Investigating incidents

When investigating an incident involving students, academy members of staff interview all students involved and ask them to complete a written account. The school is not permitted (under Data Protection) to share any information that would identify any students. However, we fully co-operate with any police investigation and provide information to the police upon request. A record of the interview is to be maintained using the form at Annex D. Incidents requiring intervention will be recorded using the form at Annex E.

10. Monitoring, evaluation and review

Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company will review this Policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The Policy will be promoted and implemented throughout Christ the King Catholic Collegiate Multi-Academy Company.

ANNEX A – To whom should my query or concern be addressed?

If you have a general query or concern, not specific to your child, please contact the relevant academy reception on:

St John Fisher Catholic College: 01782 615636 or by email at office@sjfcc.net
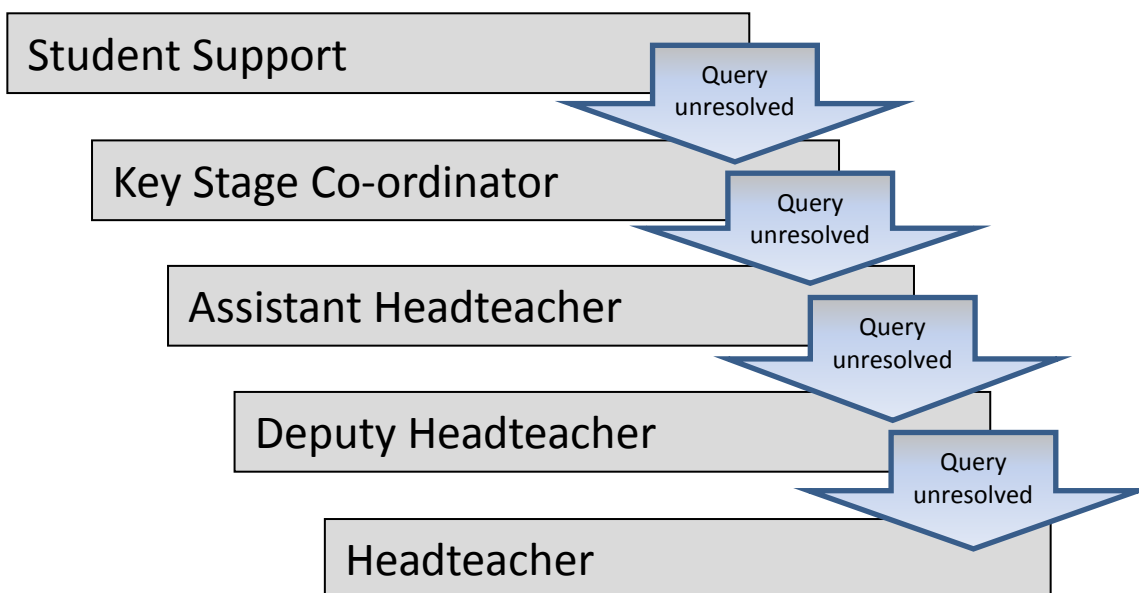St Mary's Catholic Primary School: 01782 or by email at office@stmarysnul.co.uk
St Teresa's Catholic Primary School: 01782 235005 or by e-mail at stteresa@sgfl.org.uk
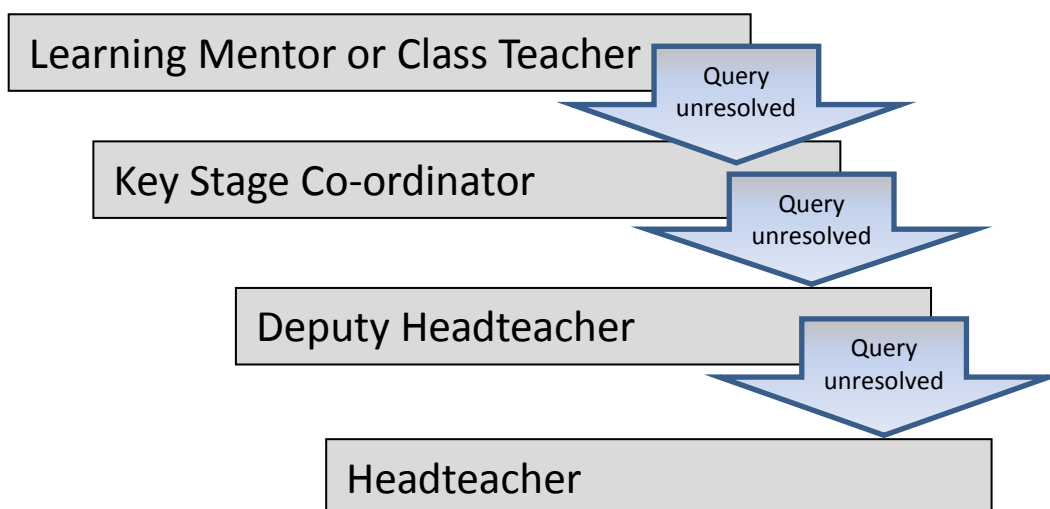St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Primary School: 01782 or by email at stthomasa@sgfl.org.uk

If your query or concern is about your individual child please follow the communications route below.

My query is about my child's learning / behaviour or non-compliance / well-being

St John Fisher Catholic College:

Student Support
Query unresolved
Key Stage Co-ordinator
Query unresolved
Assistant Headteacher
Query unresolved
Deputy Headteacher
Query unresolved
Headteacher

Primary Schools:

Learning Mentor or Class Teacher
Query unresolved
Key Stage Co-ordinator
Query unresolved
Deputy Headteacher
Query unresolved
Headteacher

If, following the communications route above you are still dissatisfied with the response you may complain to the Multi-Academy, please refer to the CtKCC Complaints Policy available on the CtKCC website.

[Insert Academy Name]	A part of
Parental Contact	CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC COLLEGIATE
	A Multi Academy Company

Parent Name	
Learner Name	
Relationship to Learner	
Learner Year & Form Group	

Reason for Phone Call:

Details of Discussion:

Continued overleaf (tick if appropriate) ◯

Outcome of Conversation:

Further Intervention Required: Yes   No   (Circle as appropriate)

Member of Staff taking notes_____   **Date**_____
COPIES GIVEN TO_____

[Insert Academy Name] **Parental Meeting**	A part of **CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC COLLEGIATE** A Multi Academy Company

Learner Name(s)	
Learner Form Group	
Learner Teaching Group(s)	

People present:

Reason for Meeting:

Details of Discussion:

Continued overleaf (tick if appropriate) ◯

Action to be taken (include person responsible & timescale)	Agreed?

[Insert Academy Name] **Learner Interview**	A part of **CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC** **COLLEGIATE** A Multi Academy Company

Learner Name	
Learner Year & Form Group	
Time/Period	Before 1 2 Break 3 4 Lunch 5 After
(circle above)	
Location	
Other learners involved	
Other staff involved	
Role in situation	

Details of Interview Discussion (include learner suggestion for resolution):

Continued overleaf (tick if appropriate) ◯

Action to be taken (include person responsible & timescale)

Parents Notified *(tick if appropriate)* ◯

[Insert Academy Name]	A part of
Learner Intervention	CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC COLLEGIATE
	A Multi Academy Company

Learner Name	
Learner Year & Form Group	
Learner Teaching Group(s)	

People present:

Reason for Intervention:

Details of Intervention Discussion:

Continued overleaf (tick if appropriate) ◯

Action to be taken (include person responsible & timescale)	Agreed?

Member of Staff_____ Date_____

COPIES GIVEN TO_____