Achieving together in faith

Holy Cross Catholic MAC

Communication Protocol

Responsible for Policy	Chris Connoll
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1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Holy Cross Catholic MAC is committed to the promotion of effective communication between pupils, members of staff, parents/carers, stakeholders, governors, Directors, Members and all members of Holy Cross Catholic MAC community and beyond. Efficient and effective communication is essential at all levels of the organisation.

Our objectives are to:
- Have a clear and professional communication protocol in place which will help the MAC to keep parents/carers well-informed about their child's educational progress and any other matters related to their child's overall well-being.
- Make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of discrimination.
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional using jargon-free, plain English which can be easily understood by everyone.
- Ensure that there is a robust process in place for consultation between the schools, parents, staff members and pupils on key areas.
- Ensure that the systems in place are fully aligned to the MAC's Mission and Aims.
- Recognise that monitoring and evaluation of communication issues through regular meetings and discussion with pupils, staff, parents, Directors and governors is an on-going consideration. In the context of a growing organisation it is particularly important to review systems and facilitate the best possible communication at all stages of the MAC's development.

2. KEY MAC COMMUNICATION MESSAGES

Holy Cross Catholic MAC is committed to:

- providing outstanding CATHOLIC EDUCATION and outcomes for all pupils

- *"Achieving together in faith"* as a family of schools working in COLLABORATION for the best interests of our pupils and staff

- supporting the mental health and WELLBEING of pupils, staff and communities -

- securing the best possible educational environment for of our pupils and staff through effective use of RESOURCES

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1. School responsibilities

- To publish key policies, documents and procedures on the School website, in line with government requirements, and in other areas that maximise their accessibility and usefulness to the entire school community.
- To ensure that the school website has links to all Holy Cross Catholic MAC policies and privacy notices.
- To publish on the School website key information about the composition and remit of the Local Governing Body, including a list of members, their record of attendance at meetings during the previous 12 months, and a register of their business interests.
- To inform parents/carers of all school events within appropriate timelines.
- To keep parents/carers informed of the progress of their child at regular intervals throughout the school year.
- To consult with and work in partnership with parents/carers on the well-being and education of their children.
- To seek the views of the parents and children on their education and learning environment and ensure that their ideas and feedback are always treated with respect and built into planning and development. (E.g. regular circulation of Parent and Pupil questionnaires).
- To seek creative ways of making key messages relevant to the communities served by each School.
- To remind staff of the services provided through Care First and its relevance to the them.

3.2. Staff members' responsibilities

- To ensure that the principles and procedures of this protocol are followed.
- To communicate proactively with parents/cares about pupil progress and to support parents/carers to help their children's learning.

3.3. Parent/carer's responsibilities

- To read key communications circulated by the School (e.g. homework tasks, website information, newsletters)
- To respond/act on communications from the school (e.g. sign consent forms, attend meetings.
- To keep the School office up to date with any changes to contact details (address, phone numbers, email addresses).
- To inform the school of any medical conditions along with medical documentation.
- To inform the school of any child protection matters, le.g.al issues or relevant duties with appropriate documentation.
- To raise any issues or concerns with the class teacher in the first instance.

4. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE SCHOOLS

4.1. Communication with members of staff

- A timetable should be made available to staff, which outlines weekly activities across the School. In addition, daily updates are provided through morning briefings, noticeboards, online alerts etc.
- The Staff Handbook (or equivalent) contains details of all procedures and policies.
- Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff without their consent.
- Circulate the termly MAC Newsletter produced by the MAC Central Team to all staff (and governors) to keep all members of the MAC community fully informed of current events and developments.

4.2. Email Communication for members of staff

- All members of staff have their own MAC email account and must ensure they use the official MAC signature strip on all internal and external emails.
- Staff must consider the best way to communicate according to each situation, recognising that in school, email should not be used as a substitute for face- to-face communication.
- Staff must be mindful of the tone and propriety of their email communications and ensure that their written correspondence is always appropriate and professional.
- As the MAC encourages staff to have an appropriate work/life balance, staff are not expected to write and/or respond to emails outside of working hours. It is expected, though, that emails are responded to within **two school working days**.
- To ensure effective management of emails, staff should be mindful of who is "cc'ed" into an email. It is helpful to use the cc function if the information will be directly useful to your colleague.
- Use Bcc (blind carbon copy) if you are sending an email to a large number of people and you want to keep everyone's email private. Email recipients will still see who sent the email, and the people who received the email via "To" or "Cc."
- It would be inappropriate to discuss issues of a sensitive nature by email. Although not exhaustive, sensitive issues may include addressing staff performance or pupil performance and behaviour. Issues of this nature should be conducted in a face-to-face manner, with minutes taken as necessary.
- Communicating with parents and staff members must be carried out via the school email address and not via a personal email address.
- Engaging in personal correspondence with pupils is not allowed.
- Pupil communications must be done via the school email system or software packages.
- Sending of chain emails is not allowed.
- Embedding of adverts is not allowed.

4.3. Social Networking Sites/Blogs etc for members of staff
(see also Holy Cross Catholic MAC's Staff Code of Conduct)

- Staff will not communicate with pupils or parents via social networking sites/personal accounts such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.
- Staff will not accept personal 'friend' requests from pupils or parents.
- School/class blogs may be set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning and will be carefully managed and monitored. Only official designated users may use social media on behalf of the School.
- When using social media outside school for personal use, all employees must remember that they are personally responsible. Employees must take care to ensure that they always act responsibly and follow the law and the MAC's policies and standards of conduct outside school as well as in school.

4.4. Communication with Pupils/Accessing 'the pupil voice'
- Pupils' views are sought via lessons, discussion, pupil questionnaires.
- Each School has a developed School Council or Pupil Parliament or equivalent.

5. COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN DIRECTORS AND GOVERNORS

5.1. To ensure efficient and effective communication between Directors and between governors, there are key expectations of members of the Board of Directors and members of Local Governing Bodies as follows:

- To regularly attend MAC Board meetings/Local Governing Body meetings.
- To prepare well for meetings by reading all communications and papers in advance and making any requests for printing of papers (not including policies) to the Clerk no later than two days in advance of a meeting.
- To ensure that any planned absences for any length of time are communicated to fellow colleagues/MAC staff.
- To respond in a timely manner to email correspondence from fellow Directors or fellow governors (within two working days).
- To access relevant MAC information on the designated IT systems.
- To immediately advise the Catholic Senior Executive Leader (CSEL) and Chair of Board of Directors of any issue which might affect the interests of Holy Cross Catholic MAC.

5.2. Email communication for Directors and governors
The same expectations apply to Directors and governors for use of email as those for staff (as detailed under 3.2)

5.3. Social Networking Sites/Blogs etc for Directors and governors

The same expectations apply to Directors and governors for use of Social media as those for staff (as detailed under 3.3).

5.4. Communication between the MAC Central Team, Headteachers, Governors and Clerks

- A detailed set of expectations for the process and timescale for setting of agendas, writing of minutes and approval of draft minutes has been produced and is set out in the Coventry City Council Governance Services Service Level Agreement.

- On confirmation of the appointment of new governors, Clerks or Chairs will ensure that the whole Local Governing Body, MAC Central Team and Birmingham Diocesan Education Service is informed.

6. Communication between the Board of Directors and Local Governing Bodies

6.1. As sub-committees of the Board of Directors, Local Governing Bodies (LGBs), are delegated responsibility for individual MAC Schools according to the MAC's Scheme of Delegation. Effective communication between the Board of Directors and Local Governing Bodies is vital so that:

- The Board of Directors has an accurate, up-to-date picture of provision across the MAC and is able to take this into account in its local decision-making.
- The views of member Schools, through their LGBs, are appropriately represented at Board of Directors level.
- LGBs are able to implement policies and decisions agreed by the Board of Directors.

6.2. To facilitate communication the following systems are in place:

LGB half termly agendas are formulated to include MAC items as well as LGB items;
- LGB Chairs meet termly with the MAC Chair and CSEL;
- All LGBs have a direct link with the Board of Directors via the MAC Chair, CSEL, Link Director or LGB Clerk;
- All LGB minutes are available to Directors via Governor Hub.

On occasions, it is necessary for the Chair of Directors or LGB Chairs to take a Chair's Action outside the meeting cycle. In these circumstances, it is important to ensure that Chair's Actions are reported and ratified at the next available meeting.

Clerks are therefore to be copied into any email correspondence around such issues, to enable the addition of ratification of any chair's action to the next agenda.

7. Communication between MAC schools

Close collaboration between MAC Schools is an expectation. Headteachers work closely with one another and with the MAC Central Team to ensure that expertise and good practice is effectively shared across the MAC. MAC Schools are encouraged to celebrate the successes of other MAC members, publicising "good news" stories from across the MAC.

8. External Communication

8.1. The MAC and MAC Schools communicate with parents/carers in a variety of ways including:
- Letters home
- Text messages
- School Websites
- Holy Cross Catholic MAC Website
- Regular School newsletters
- Parent/Carer meetings
- Informal communications between teachers and parents/carers

8.2. Communication of Holy Cross Catholic MAC's moral purpose is achieved by:
- Ensuring the MAC Vision and Aims and particularly The Way of the Cross, is constantly referenced
- Maintaining a frequently updated MAC website
- Producing a termly Holy Cross Catholic MAC Newsletter which is circulated to stakeholders
- Use of local and national press articles where appropriate.
- Speaking at local, regional and national conferences and seminars.
- Networking and facilitating visits to MAC Schools

8.3. Communication with the Media and Wider Public
- When press coverage takes place, all parties who may be interested such as parents, staff, Directors, governors and the community will be informed via email, social media, newsletters or the School /MAC websites.
- All publications and press releases which include pictures of pupils will be checked before release/ publication to ensure that they do not include any children whose parents have informed the MAC / School that they do not wish their child to be photographed.
- All publications and prospectuses will be mindful of the equal opportunities protocol, reflecting and celebrating the diversity of our MAC community.
- Headteachers are authorised to provide press releases to the local press on 'Good news' items relating to their School. The CSEL and LGB Chair would expect to be informed of any press contact on good news events.

- Any other contact with the Press, local or national, relating to a School or the MAC more generally, should always be made via the CSEL and Chair of Directors. No one else (Headteachers, members of staff) are authorised to speak to the press without first having agreed this with the CSEL and Chair of Directors.

8.4. Communication of Recruitment Opportunities
- A proactive approach to recruitment of high-quality staff.
- Attendance at key recruitment fairs.
- Internal vacancies are advertised solely on the MAC website and the onus for checking this is on individual members of staff.
- All recruitment is done through MyNewTerm and automatically posted to school/MAC websites

9. Branding
Guidance on use of branding is currently being developed and will operate in conjunction with this Communication Protocol.