

Christ King Girls' Secondary School, Half Moon Lane,
South Douglas Road, Cork.

Roll No: 62692 I



COMMUNICATIONS POLICY 2022

Reviewed with Teaching Staff:	Meeting with Focus Group: 11th Mar. & 18th Mar. & 24th Mar. Draft sent to teaching staff: 2021
Reviewed with Parent Group:	Communicated with all parents: 8 th December 2021 Discussed at December Parents' Council meeting
Reviewed with Student Focus Group:	Meeting with Focus Group: December 2021
Reviewed with Board of Management:	20 th January 2022
Ratified by Board of Management:	10th February 2022

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1. Introduction

Christ King Girls' Secondary School is a Catholic all girls voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish Schools' Trust) with an enrolment varying between 750 and 800 students.

1.1 Aims of this Policy

This Communications Policy aims to:

- Promote positive, respectful communication between all members of our school community.
- Outline procedures for communication between all members of the school community.
- Outline procedures to ensure the safest possible communication and sharing of information.

- Contribute to effective communication within the school, with the Board of Management, with parents and with the local community, so as to maintain a good working, social and personal environment. Our aim is that this will promote efficiency and contribute to achieving the objectives of the school.

1.2 Mission Statement

Christ King's educational philosophy and values are encompassed in our Mission Statement:

- To respect the uniqueness of the individual.
- We are committed to providing an environment within which the development of intellectual and spiritual values are of prime importance.
- We hope this mission will be fulfilled in cooperation and partnership with students, parents and the wider community.

This policy sits within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour and aligns with and reflects our mission, ethos, educational philosophy and our values.

We value our relationships with our partners and communication is at the heart of this relationship.

We hope that good communication will serve to meet the needs of our students and create the best learning environment possible for all of our students.

We believe that Good communication is essential to maintaining a positive working and learning environment.

That 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.

2. Policy, Context, Legislation

This policy is informed by and should be read in conjunction with the following school policies

- The School's Mission Statement
- The School's Anti-Bullying Policy
- The School's Code of Behaviour
- The School's E-learning Policy
- The School's Acceptable Use Policy
- The School's Child Protection Policy/ Child Safeguarding Statement
- The School's Guidance Plan
- The School's Critical Incident Policy

This policy is written in the context of the following legislation

- GDPR
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The Education Act, 1998

The Policy also takes account of the following:

- The Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers
- The Teaching Council's Guidance for Registered Teachers about the use of Social Media and Electronic Communication
- Dignity in the Workplace Charter

Every person in this workplace has the right to be treated with respect and courtesy and to have his or her individuality valued.

While we recognise that there may be personal differences between people who work in Christ King Secondary School, these differences will not impinge upon good working relations in the school.

All staff are valued for their professional experience, knowledge and expertise and for their contribution within the school community, whether inside or outside the classroom. Teaching staff recognise each other as professional equals and acknowledge the equal importance of every subject on the curriculum.

Respect, Integrity, Trust and Care are the ethical values which underpin the standards of teaching, knowledge, skill, competence and conduct as set out in the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers and are amongst the qualities that are valued in our workplace. All individuals who work at the School or who come into contact with its staff or students have a duty to uphold this charter and to promote its provisions.

In this policy, the word “*student*” means a student enrolled in the school and the word “*parent*” means a parent or legal guardian of a student enrolled in the school.

3. Communication in our School

3.1 Types of Communication

Communication can take a variety of forms:

- Verbal e.g. face to face conversation/ meeting/ phone call/ google meet/intercom/assembly etc.
- Written e.g. student journal/ email/ notice board/school reports/ courier/vsware/letters/text messages etc.
- Visual e.g. noticeboard/ charts/ photographs/school display monitors etc.
- Electronic e.g. email/ school website/ vsware/ school twitter/school facebook/ school instagram/google classroom/shared folders in the school’s google drive etc.

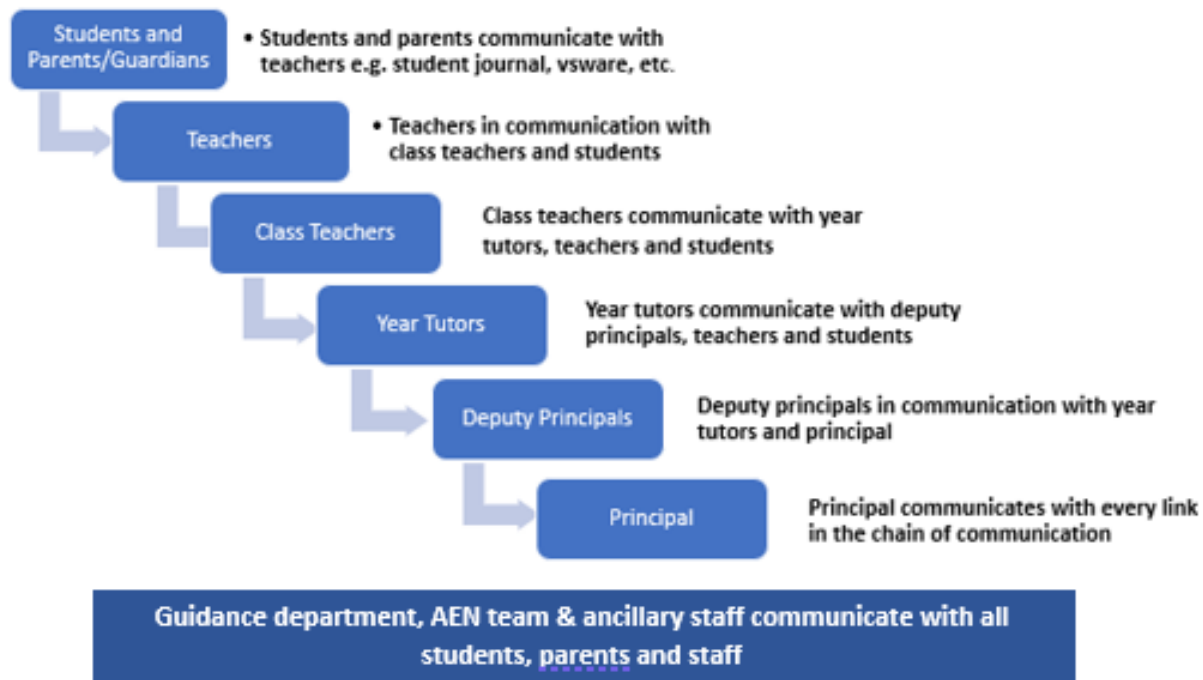


Figure 1 Two – Way Communication Chain in our School

3.2 Day to day communication in our School

- All communication will be carried out in a respectful and courteous manner.
- Email communication and google classroom communication must only take place during school hours 8.00 am to 5.30 pm (Monday to Friday).
- Emails will not be sent at the weekends.
- The function ‘Schedule Send’ should be used in emails if writing emails outside of these hours.
- Reply emails will be sent during school hours.
- To minimise the volume of emails received daily, where possible, emails will only be sent to the relevant parties.
- Only the school email addresses can be used for communication. Only @christkingschool.com addresses are allowed to be used for email and google classroom. All other accounts are strictly prohibited.

- If a teacher is using One Note platform, the teacher and students may use an outlook account, as directed by the teacher only.
- All communication between teachers and students shall be done via the school journal, school email, school google classroom and VShare.
- There shall be no communication between staff and students via personal mobile phones or any personal social media applications.

3.3 Communication of Absence

3.3.1 Student Absence/Illness

- Parents should, if possible, inform the school by telephone if a student is ill. If a student is absent for more than three days parents/guardians should phone the school with a progress report, to be given to the Year Tutor.
- On a student's return from absence, parents/guardians should complete and sign the Note Explaining Absence at the back of the journal, detailing dates absent, date of return, reason for absence and the number of days absent. The student must present the journal immediately on her return, to the Deputy Principal for signature, and to all her teachers at the start of each class. Where there has been a significant absence through illness the school may request a doctor's certificate.
- In the event of absence, it is the responsibility of the student to consult google classroom or communicate with classmates to inform them of the homework assignment.
- If possible, all appointments, such as medical or dental appointments, should be outside of school hours. If an appointment during school hours is unavoidable, a parent/guardian should enter the nature, date and time of the appointment in the student's journal, and ask the school to allow the student to leave. A parent must collect his/her daughter from the school for all appointments. The student presents the journal to the Reception for signature before leaving. Parents must collect the student and sign her out at the Office – students will not be allowed to leave the school alone. If possible, the student should return to school after the appointment, signing herself back in on arrival.

- If a student feels sick at school, she must report to the school reception, where a parent/guardian will be contacted. In all cases contact with the parent is made through the office as the school must be informed of a student's illness.

3.4 Communication within the school

3.4.1 Principal

The Principal will communicate with all relevant parties to ensure the smooth running of the school such as:

- CEIST
- DES
- SEC
- JMB
- Board of Management
- School Staff
- Students
- Student Council
- Parents/Guardians
- Parent's Council
- Wider Community etc.

The Principal is the Designated Liaison Person and all matters relating to Child Protection must be communicated to the Principal.

Guided by our duty of care to all students, the school adopts and adheres to the DES Child Protection Procedures 2017, Children First Act 2015 and the Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children and has a Child Protection Policy/ Child Safeguarding Statement, with the Principal as Designated Liaison Person (DLP) and the Deputy Principals as the Deputy DLPs. Where a child protection concern is raised, this is communicated to the DLP/DDLDP as is outlined in our school's Child Safeguarding Statement.

The name of the DLP is displayed in the foyer of the Reception and at various other points around the school. The DLP/DDLDP will be contacted in the event of a concern of a CP nature. All registered teachers are mandated persons for the purposes of the Children First Act 2015 and the Department of Education Procedures for Post Primary Schools 2017. Mandated Persons are required to report any reasonable concerns above a threshold to Tusla. In the school context any reasonable concerns above a threshold should be reported to the DLP/DDLDP in the first instance.

3.4.2 Deputy Principals

In the absence of the Principal, the Deputy Principal is the Deputy Designated Liaison person and all matters of a child protection nature must be reported to the DDLDP.

The Deputy Principal communicates with all members of the school community, such as:

- Principal
- CEIST
- DES
- SEC
- JMB
- BOM
- School Staff
- Students
- Student Council
- Parents/Guardians
- Parent's Council
- Wider Community etc.

3.4.3 Year Tutors

Year Tutors communicate with their year group in a variety of ways such as:

- Individual communication
- Small-group communication
- Student leadership team
- Year group assembly

Year Tutors also communicate with:

- Principal/Deputy Principal
- Class teachers
- Guidance department
- Teaching staff and AEN department etc.
- Parents and Guardians
- Wider community

3.4.4 Staff

Staff communicates with members of the school community such as:

- Teaching staff
- Student teachers
- A.E.N department
- Ancillary staff
- Guidance department
- Students

- Parents
- The wider school community
- The DLP in the event of a Child protection concern
- SEC

3.4.5 Students

Students communicate with a variety of members of the school community such as:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Year Tutor
- Class Teacher
- Teaching staff
- AEN department
- Guidance department
- Student council
- Fellow students
- Ancillary staff

3.4.6 Communication between the School and Parents/guardians

1. Parents are encouraged to participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of teachers and all staff members in the school
2. Subject Teachers, Class Teachers , Year Tutors, Deputy Principals, and the Principal shall contact parent(s)/guardian(s) by phone, letter, email or note in the homework journal whenever such contact is warranted.
3. Parents may also be contacted by the school via text with regard to attendance, punctuality, permission to release students and general information.
4. Any change in the school calendar shall be notified by letter/email/text.
5. Parents and staff will communicate using school channels of communication only such as school journal, vs ware, School phone number, School email.
6. Parents/guardians are required to furnish a note to explain any absence of their daughter from school.

7. Parents/guardians shall receive formal progress reports at Christmas and Summer (approx January and June). Parents of Sixth Year and Third Year students will receive an additional progress report following the pre-exams.
8. All parents/guardians are encouraged to attend the annual Parent/Teacher meetings and other events such as Parents' Council meetings, Open nights, Information nights etc.
9. All parents/guardians must 'check in' at reception upon arrival to the school if attending a pre-arranged meeting.
10. Times and duration of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected and adhered to where possible to avoid disruption to other students/classes. Sometimes an agreed agenda will be of assistance.
11. Should a parent wish to communicate with a teacher, a note may be written in the student journal.
12. Should a parent/guardian require any support, help or advice regarding his/her daughter s/ he should contact their subject teacher, class teacher or year tutor through the school office.
13. Parents/Guardians are requested to respect school personnel's Right to Disconnect and only email during the working day or use Schedule Send option.

3.4.7 School Visitors/ Visiting Speakers

- All visitors must report to reception upon arrival to the school.
- Visitors will be required to fill in a 'sign in/out' book upon entry to and exit from the school.
- All visitors to the school will wear a visitor's badge for the duration of the school visit.
- Visiting speakers will be accompanied by a staff member at all times.
- Visiting speakers invited by the school to address classes will communicate the content of their address/communication/talk to students with the liaising teacher/staff member in advance of the talk.

4. Confidentiality

Confidentiality pertaining to all school matters is of paramount importance to all those who work or visit our school, and especially those who are in contact with staff and students. For staff, this is explicitly stated in their contracts of employment as well as the school's Child Protection

Policy. This is also imperative in the case of visitors (e.g. guest speakers, parent volunteers, coaches etc.) who have direct contact with pupils.

Confidentiality when dealing with the students in school

Some students may be experiencing difficulty or have varying learning styles. This is a sensitive area, requiring all involved to have due regard for the privacy and confidentiality of the student. Discussion about any student's behaviour, needs or progress must only occur amongst the parties directly involved with the student i.e. the student's parents/guardians, teachers, principal and/or relevant external agencies.

Information received about particular students and observations made in classrooms need to be handled sensitively and carefully and often are only to be shared with particular members of staff or individual parents. It is very important therefore, that all teachers recognise the rules of confidentiality which govern their role as a member of the school staff.

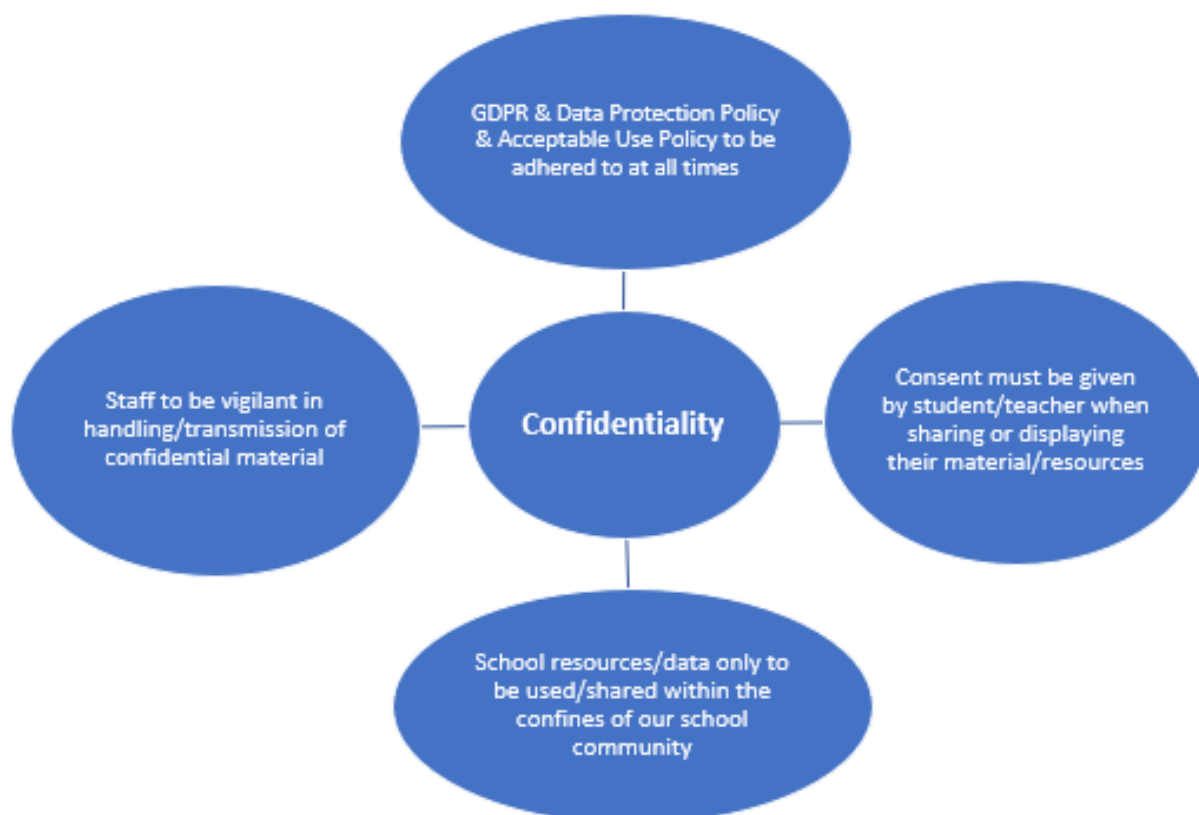


Figure 2 – Main Principles to ensure Confidentiality in our School

Personal data is protected in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Our Data Protection Policy provides guidance for the maintenance of personal data in order to be compliant with the GDPR. 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. Internal communications using electronic media must be conducted under the acceptable use policy of the school.

All staff are obligated to safeguard and protect any data relating to students and the school. In particular, we take care to ensure that iPads, laptops, USB keys, desktops and mobile phones are adequately password protected. In the event of a perceived data breach through the theft or loss of a device it is incumbent on the staff member to report same to the Principal/Deputy Principal. Staff are requested to read and adhere to the Teaching Council's Social Media and Electronic Communication Guidance document.

5 . Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the School's Communication's Policy

We are committed to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy. Specifically, important to the review are:

- a) student feedback;
- b) staff review and feedback;
- c) parental feedback;
- d) new guidelines and/or legislation.

This policy is ratified by the Board of Management and is the agreed policy of Christ King Girls' Secondary School. All teaching staff will be familiar with this policy and aware of any changes implied in school communication procedures.

The policy will be reviewed and evaluated every three years under the direction of the Board of Management. On-going review and evaluation will take cognisance of changing information, guidelines, feedback from parents, students and teachers. The policy will be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation and within the framework of school self-evaluation and policy planning.

Ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting of : 10th February 2022

Signature: ___Margaret McCormack ___ Date: 10th February 2022

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signature: Richel Long Date: _10th February 2022

Principal