

General Welfare Requirement: Organisation

Providers must plan and organise their systems to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs.

Partnership

4.8 Home/Pre-School Agreement outlining communication with staff

Policy Statement for St Joseph's Pre-school

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It is through effective and interactive communication that information is transmitted, understanding is developed and shared, trust is built, confidentiality respected and action coordinated. Communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated.

Good communication promotes partnership.

To ensure that St Joseph's Pre-school is thriving and successful we must communicate effectively with each other, with our children, with their parents and with other members of the wider community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the pre-school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

Objectives

All communications at St Joseph's Pre-school should:

- keep staff, parents and carers well informed;
- be open, honest, ethical and professional;
- use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all;
- be actioned within a reasonable time;
- use the methods of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience; and
- take account of relevant pre-school policies and procedures.

Responsibilities

This section details the responsibilities of the different groups within the pre-school.

Chair and Lead Practitioner:

- To ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels, where practicable face to face.
- To ensure that staff have the relevant information available to communicate with colleagues effectively.
- To maintain open channels of two-way communication and to listen to feedback and comment from all staff.
- To keep committee informed of developments and concerns.

All staff:

- To communicate regularly with each other, preferably face to face, to ensure information is available and understood within the context of the setting and working environment.
- To ensure they are informed and have access to information in order to be as effective as possible in their role and to support their work within the pre-school.
- To use open channels of two-way communication to keep the leadership team and colleagues informed.

Communication Policy

- Using a variety of communication methods to promote and explain the work of the pre-school.
- To ensure the posting of minutes of meetings in appropriate places.

Internal methods of communication

- All staff receive an induction pack providing them with important information about St Joseph's Pre-school and its policies and procedures.
- An integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff both formal and informal: staff meetings, committee meetings and EY forums.
- All formal meetings should be structured and minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda.
- Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information. However, it should not replace face to face meetings where discussion is required.
- Staff meetings take place every week and the minutes are kept in the pre-school. Events are discussed in advance at meetings but staff also have the responsibility to check future actions.
- Committee meetings take place once every half-term.
- St Joseph's Pre-school's Annual General Meeting is held in the Autumn term (Term 1).
- Weekly notices are emailed out to staff and placed on the noticeboard.
- Reminders to parents/carers are email out and put on the Pre-school's Facebook page. Hardcopies are occasionally handed out too.
- Letters to individual parents/carers are emailed to them.
- Urgent messages for parents/carers will be sent by email/phone call as early as possible and followed up by practitioners to ensure receipt.

External methods of communication

Pre-schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, other settings, the community and with outside agencies. Our aim is to have clear and effective communications with all parents and the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents well informed about pre-school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting pre-school.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end parents should always be addressed in an appropriate manner.

Practitioners will not accept friendship requests from parents on social media¹.

We will try to make written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions to our society by all cultural groups represented in our pre-school.

Communications with Parents/Carers – early years

- Letters: Staff will respond to parents' letters within 48 hours (2 pre-school working days). Any letter of complaint must be referred to the Lead Practitioner and Chair immediately. Letters to parents must be approved by the Lead Practitioner before they are sent. Copies of all correspondence to individual parents will be kept on file. A copy of general letters will be placed in the red file at the front desk.

¹ See 1.12.3 Social Media

- Email/Text: The pre-school has an e-mail system which it uses to communicate with parents. Any communication by practitioner staff that needs to be sent to parents using this system must be approved by the Lead Practitioner. If a parent communicates with the pre-school using email with a complaint or a matter that requires an action, a copy should be stored in a digital file or printed and filed². All emails requiring an answer should be responded to within 48 hours (2 pre-school working days). E-mail communications concerning a child are kept for the academic year in a digital folder unless they are required for evidence trailing, in which case a copy should be printed.
- Social Media Sites/Blogs: Staff will only communicate with parents on the St Joseph's Pre-school Facebook page: parent and practitioner private group via social media. Staff will not accept children, ex-children or parents/carers as "friends"³.
- Written Reports: Twice a year, we provide a full written report to each child's parents on their progress. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development.
- Newsletters: Newsletters are e-mailed out half-termly.
- Pre-School Website: The pre-school website is accessible via St Joseph's Catholic Primary School's website⁴, and provides an opportunity to share information about the pre-school and to promote the pre-school to a wider audience.
- Face to face: Parents can speak to practitioners on a daily basis, there is also a parents evening at the start of the year and key worker meetings at the end of the year.

We encourage parents to contact the pre-school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being. When children have particular education needs, or if they are making less than expected progress, parents will be invited to meet with their child's key worker more regularly. We will also make reasonable adjustments to our arrangements if this will enable a parent with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our pre-school, or to receive and understand communication. Parents of children on the graduated pathway will have the opportunity to review the pathway three times a year.

Communications with Parents/Carers – non-early years

- The Treasury Administrator communicates with parents/carers via email – and tries to keep such correspondence to a minimum.
- She is primarily responsible for the half-termly invoices and for the submission of parent/child information with regards to the Nursery Education Funding⁵, and reports to the Committee Treasurer. In addition she ensure that the Pre-school's policies and procedures are kept up to date.
- Before the start of a new Pre-school year, ie. end August, the Treasury Administrator will email all parents/carers whose child will be attending the Pre-school from September. The email contains an up-to-date policy and procedure contents list, together with the latest versions of a small number of documents, eg. 4.10 Payment of Fees, to ensure that parents/carers are fully informed.

Home-Pre-School Communication:

- The half-termly pre-school newsletter is emailed out to parents/carers.
- Parents evening is held at the beginning of each pre-school year (Autumn term).
- Key worker meetings are held in the summer term.
- Half-termly invoices are sent out during the second week of each half-term.

² Policy 5.4 Data Protection

³ Policy 1.12.3 Social Networking

⁴ www.st-josephs-nympsfield.com/Preschool

⁵ See Policy 4.10 Payment of Fees for more information

- Other invoices, eg. Early Morning Session ad hoc booking, extra sessions or late collection fees, will be sent out within 48 hours (2 working days) of the occurrence.
- Nursery Education Funding forms are sent to parents/carers within 3 days of their release by Gloucestershire County Council Early Years.

We recognise that children's protection is a shared responsibility, and that St Joseph's Pre-school should provide a safe and secure environment. If any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, who may share this information with Social Services⁶.

Codes of Conduct

St Joseph's Pre-school has separate documents with regards to expected code of conduct. Namely:

- 2.2.1 Code of Conduct – for staff and volunteers; and
- 4.8.1 Parent/Carer, visitor & professionals Code of Conduct

Associated Policies and Procedures

- 1.2 Safeguarding Children and Child Protection
- 1.12.3 Social Media
- 4.10 Payment of Fees
- 5.4 Data Protection

Version Number	Author	Purpose of Change	Date
1.0	Committee	New policy written and page numbered	Nov 2017
2.0	K Coupe	Reviewed, updated and version controlled	16 Jan 2020 Committee Meeting
3.0	K Coupe and N Powers	Procedure reviewed and updated. • update on how reminders and/or letters are sent out to parents/carers. • Brief details of what regular communication parents/carers will receive from the Treasury Administrator; • Inclusion of "Associated Policies and Procedures" section as per Safeguarding Audit 175/157	27 Nov 2022 Committee Member (L Finn)
4.0	K Coupe and N Finn-Powers	Reviewed and updated. Minor changes made to reflect current practice	7 June 2024 Committee Member (L Finn-Powers)
5.0	K Coupe	Reviewed and updated: • more information under "Communication with parent/carers – non early years"; • new "Code of Conduct" section	29 Jan 2026 Committee Member (L Finn-Powers)

⁶ Policy 1.2 Safeguarding children and child protection (including managing allegations of abuse against a member of staff).