

Communication Protocol for Ss. Constantine & Helen School

Communication plays a key role in creating and fostering strong, positive relationships between the school and the home. Communication is a two-way street; our school shares information with our families and community, and our families share information with our schools.

The purpose of this document is to guide, manage, and improve school-home communication by offering a standard format, structure, and sequence for regular, ongoing communication.

Communication Channels

Communication can take place in a variety of formats. The message and the purpose of the communication can help determine which format is most appropriate. Generally, the more issues-driven and/or detailed the information is, the more direct the communication channel chosen should be.

Communication channels include:

- Face-to-face communication – one-on-one meetings, Parent-Student/Teacher Meetings twice a year, Grandparents Day, and Parents Day.
- Telephone conversations.
- Hard copy, written communication – letters sent home from the school, weekly reports on the children
- Electronic communication – email and social media (face book).

When the communication requires a dialogue, such as bringing forward a question or concern or when a discussion is required on a topic, the preferred channels of communication are ones that allow for an immediate and ongoing interaction between the people involved. The best formats for this kind of communication are face-to-face conversations or telephone conversations.

Ss. Constantine & Helen School and families are encouraged to use these direct channels of communication when a topic is complex or requires a dialogue. These more direct forms of communication also help us establish a personal connection, which helps build relationships that we don't get in other forms of communication.

When it comes to communication from Ss. Constantine & Helen School to our families, very rarely do we use only one communication channel. Often, we use multiple communication formats together with one another to help ensure the message reaches everyone it needs to.

All staff at Ss. Constantine & Helen School are encouraged to collectively select one common communication tool to use as their primary channel when communicating with parents (e.g., face book (email, person-to-person, telephone). This will help ensure consistency throughout the school, so parents have a consistent place to go for information. Some staff may then choose to also use other communication tools to supplement the main communication channel, if they wish.

The Role of Social Media Social media is quickly becoming a common communication tool used throughout education and the world. The speed at which we can share information using social

media and how easily accessible that information becomes, makes it a valuable tool in our communications toolbox. However, social media has its limitations, and therefore it is just that – one tool in the toolbox.

Social media platforms may work well for:

- Sharing snippets of good news stories and celebrations
- Sending reminders of key dates
- Communicating important information during a crisis (however, keep in mind the information can change quickly in these situations and our priority is always responding to the situation to ensure students and staff safety)
- Providing links to more detailed information or sharing resources
- Asking basic questions of clarification (however, more complex questions may be better asked using email or a telephone conversation when more detail is required in the answer)

Expectations Addressing Concerns Directly If parents/guardians have a concern about something at the school or in the classroom, they are encouraged to bring the concern forward in a timely manner directly to the teacher or director. These discussions should take place in the following order:

1. Discuss the concern with the classroom teacher to determine if the issue can be resolved at the classroom level.
2. If this issue cannot be resolved at the classroom level, bring it forward for discussion with the director. Concerns can be addressed at the school level when school staff and administration as well as parents/guardians engage in open and collaborative discussion.

The above discussions may be initiated by telephone or email but may evolve into a face-to face meeting, which allows for the best and most collaborative discussion to take place.

Response Time Frames

Every effort should be made to respond in a timely manner, whether the response is required from the home to the school, or school to the home. While there is no guarantee on the specific time frame for a response, generally families can expect a message that will state “thank you for your message. Someone will respond shortly to your message.”