



# Holy Cross Catholic Primary School

## Home School Communication *Guidelines for parents, carers and families*



HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

'Act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God.' *(Micah)*

**We acknowledge that we as parents are the primary educators of our children and have an irreplaceable role to play in supporting our children's learning at school.**

## November 2024

# Our Vision

With Christ at the centre of all that we do, we will strive to ensure that all pupils at Holy Cross feel happy and safe. With our children being the leaders of the future, we actively promote independence, confidence and teamwork. Together, everyone achieves more.

It is our ambition that Holy Cross Catholic Primary School should become a beacon for other schools within Plymouth CAST and beyond. Pupils will consistently achieve highly so that they are well-prepared for the next stage of their education.

As a result of a broad, customised and ambitious curriculum, which is coherently planned and sequenced, all pupils, particularly our disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, will be equipped with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.

The environment will be positive; supporting pupils' emotional and mental well-being. Pupils will show a dedication and commitment to learning and be highly motivated. As a result, pupils will develop detailed knowledge and skills enabling them to make rapid progress, attain well and become effective agents of change.

## Rationale

At Holy Cross Catholic Primary School we believe that you, the parents and carers, are the primary educators of your children and have an irreplaceable role to play in supporting your child's learning at school. We recognise each child as an individual, and aim to give all children every opportunity to realise their full potential, working with you to ensure your child receives the best possible education and enthusiastic teaching rooted in our mission and in our Gospel values. To achieve this, it is essential that we establish a close partnership between the school, parents and the child.

Positive communication is essential to realising our vision as we work alongside you to ensure the best possible outcomes for our pupils. We are committed to ensuring all our pupils and families feel valued and heard. Effective communication between school and home is vital in providing continuity of education, care and support. Clear, open communication between school and home has a positive impact on pupils' learning by ensuring information is shared and a sense of trust fostered between those closest to the child. The relationship we have with you, the parents and carers, is key to your child's success and well-being.

In order to enable open, clear lines of communication, we work hard to create a range of opportunities to informally share important information so that families are engaged in their child's learning and feel a sense of belonging to our special Holy Cross family. The relationship between home and school is crucial to the wellbeing of all involved. We ask that parents and carers are respectful when communicating with school staff. Abusive or aggressive language/behaviour will not be tolerated and may lead to further action being taken.

## Aims

For parents and carers

- to feel valued and involved as partners in their child's education
- to receive information about their child's needs and progress in school
- to be informed about school events, policies and practices
- to feel a sense of belonging to the Holy Cross family

## School Website

The school website provides a wide range of general information about Holy Cross Catholic Primary School including: the Holy Cross team, the curriculum, key dates, key policies, our Catholic Life, Ofsted and CSI reports and other key information about the day to day practices at our school.

[Holy Cross Catholic Primary School - Home](#)

## Class Dojo

Class Dojo is the primary method of communication between teaching staff and parents/carers. To ensure this is effective and that no unnecessary burdens are placed on either staff or parents/carers, the following guidelines will be followed:

- Each parent/carer will be provided with login information when their child joins Holy Cross.
- Each parent with parental responsibility will be given access to the app, provided there are no legal reasons why this should not be the case.
- As with all forms of communication, teachers will not respond to messages during teaching time.
- Most teachers will endeavour to respond to messages between 8am and 8.30am and between 3.30pm and 5pm on their working days. However, this is not always possible due to lesson preparation, meetings and other after-school duties. **If a response is needed more urgently, please call the school office.**
- Staff will try their best to acknowledge/respond to messages from parents within 24 hours. Part time teachers will respond only on their working days.
- There is no expectation for staff to pickup/respond to messages over the weekend.
- Teachers will share learning messages on their Class pages at least 3 times a week between the hours of 7am and 7pm from Monday to Friday. This will focus on what the children have been learning, the progress they have been making or how parents/carers might extend and support the learning at home.
- Teachers will message parents/carers privately regarding individual needs or concerns. If a child has a time-out from their learning/play, teachers will inform parents via a private message. Learning Plans may also be shared with parents in this way.
- If parents/carers wish to raise concerns with the class teacher regarding a Class post, they should do so via a private message rather than commenting on the class page.
- The whole school page will be used to share information with parents/carers about key events, support or other general information. This information will be posted between 7am and 7pm Monday to Friday usually by the PSA, office or senior leaders. Senior Leaders may post over a weekend if the information is pertinent to the following week. Emergency arrangements may be posted in the evening/at weekends in the case of school closures.
- The office may message parents/carers privately to ascertain why a child has not come to school when attempts to make contact via a telephone call have proved futile. The office will also message parents regarding Breakfast and After School Club, debts or with general support/advice.

## Telephone Communication

**Please ensure we have up to date telephone numbers for you especially if you change your number.**

- The office telephone is manned between 8.30am and 3.45pm Monday to Friday.
- Teachers are not available to speak to parents/carers between 8.30 am and 3.15pm and will do their best to return calls outside of teaching hours.
- All calls are recorded; this includes logging the date and time of the call, who the call was with and the nature of the conversation.
- The office will call parents/carers if a child has had a head injury or is feeling unwell. This is to ensure that you are informed as soon as possible. If your child has vomited or has diarrhoea, we will request that you pick up the child. If your child has had a head bump we will advise appropriately.
- The office will always call parents/carers of children who are not at school for whom we have not received notification. Parents and carers are respectfully reminded to ring the school in the morning and leave a message explaining your child's absence. Should the office be unable to make contact, we will follow

safeguarding procedures which may lead to a home visit. We may also contact the police if we feel there is a significant concern.

- The office may also call regarding punctuality/attendance concerns in order to invite you to speak with Mrs Gill at a date and time convenient to you.
- A texting service is used to inform parents and carers or school closures when necessary. Text messages are also used in the event that a parent has not been contactable via a telephone call.
- Parents/Carers should phone or email the office to book Breakfast Club and After School Club. A telephone call to the office should be made in the event of a booking being cancelled. This is so that no time is lost in notifying school staff so that the child can be directed to the right place at the end of the day.
- Parents/Carers should inform the school by telephone/email if a pupil is to be collected by another adult. This person should be provided with a password which they will share when collecting the pupil. The password must be shared with school staff beforehand. A child will not be released without this prior notification. **Parents/Carers should note that teachers do not check Dojo during the day as they are teaching and last minute messages may not reach them in time.**

### Emails/Letters

- Letters including newsletters are emailed to parents/carers via E-Schools.
- Letters including newsletters are also shared on the WholeSchool Dojo page.
- Mrs Gill, Miss Buscombe and the office are contactable via email/Class Dojo messaging. All communication with teachers should be done via **private messaging** on Class Dojo.
- Parents and carers will be invited to respond to questionnaires/surveys in order to gather parental views. These will be rolled out across the school year.
- A weekly reminder debt letter will be sent via ParentPay if your account is in arrears.
- Important letters which require a response or a section to be completed by the parent/carer may be printed and sent home via your child's book bag.
- Important notifications may be posted to ensure the school has a record of sending this to the parent/carer.

### Social Media Sites

- Holy Cross Catholic Primary School has Facebook, Instagram and X (Twitter) accounts. We will share news and information about the school and wider support services via these platforms. This may include special events or news that the school is keen to share and celebrate with a wider audience. Our social media pages are designed to highlight the positive aspects of our school. Any inappropriate or negative comments will be removed and may result in further action being taken by the school. Should a parent or carer have a grievance or complaint, we request that they seek redress through the appropriate channels such as the complaints policy (available on the school website)
- Parents and carers are reminded that on no account should they post pictures of pupils other than their own children on social networking sites where these photographs have been taken at a school event. This is for safeguarding reasons.

### Requests for Information

- Parents and carers should refer to our Data Protection and GDPR policy regarding copies of children's records, freedom of information and Subject Access Requests. These documents will provide the necessary information regarding protocols and procedures, including timelines.
- All policies are available on the school website.

### Complaints

- We will do our best to address any concerns brought to us by parents and carers in a timely manner. Parents and carers are advised to speak with their child's class teacher in the first instance either verbally at the end of the school day or via a private message on Class Dojo.

- Should a parent or carer be dissatisfied with the response they have received or seek further redress, please contact Miss Buscombe. If unresolved, the concern may be escalated to Mrs Gill. We aim to resolve any issues efficiently and sensitively following our complaints procedure. This is available on the school website.

### Parent-Teacher Meetings

- Parent - Teacher meetings are an important part of our communication strategy so that we can discuss your child's progress and share important information which will help us to meet your child's needs. We ask that all parents and carers attend these meetings which take place three times a year.
- Should your child require additional support due to a Special Educational Need/Disability, your child's teacher will meet with you each term to discuss their learning plan. You may also contact Miss Buscombe, our SENDCo for any additional information regarding your child's needs. The teacher may share the learning plan with the parent/carer on DOJO.
- It is the headteacher's responsibility to ensure children attend school every day. Parents and carers should submit absence requests two weeks in advance. The headteacher can only approve absences in exceptional circumstances and **term time holidays are not permitted**. Should your child's attendance or punctuality become a concern, the office will write inviting you to a meeting to discuss how we can work together to address the issue. Please refer to the attendance Policy on the school website for further information.

### Dealing with incidents of Bullying/inappropriate use of social networking platforms

- Should you have concerns about your child being bullied at school, please let us know immediately. Bullying is not tolerated at Holy Cross and all allegations are carefully investigated. An Allegation of Bullying form is completed to record all allegations and parents/carers are invited into school to discuss the next steps for both the victim and the perpetrator. You will be invited to sign the bullying form as a record. Please refer to the Anti-Bullying Policy on our website.
- In the case of inappropriate use of social networking by parents, the school will contact the individual to request the removal of the comment, referring them to the complaints policy.
- Please note that laws of defamation and privacy apply to the web and it is unlawful for statements to be written that:
  - Expose (an individual) to hatred, ridicule or contempt
  - Cause (an individual) to be shunned/avoided
  - Lower (an individual's) standing in the estimation of right-thinking members of society
  - Disparage (an individual in their) business, trade, office or profession
 (*National Association of Headteachers*)

Please see the [Home School Agreement](#) for the responsibilities of School, Parents/Carers and Pupils of Holy Cross Catholic Primary School.

How will parents and carers receive information from school?

<b>What?</b>	<b>Information included</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>When</b>
Newsletter	General school news and celebrations Key Dates	By email and DOJO	Every Friday evening
Term Dates	School holiday dates	By email and on website Included in newsletter	Reviewed annually
School Calendar	Important dates	On website: <a href="http://holycrossprimaryschoolplymouth.com">holy cross primary school plymouth</a>	Termly
Website	All statutory information including policies Prospectus General information about the school	On website: <a href="http://holycrossprimaryschoolplymouth.com">holy cross primary school plymouth</a>	Online 24/7
Letter	School trips New information	By Dojo or paper copy on request	As necessary
Class Dojo	Remote learning grids and class curriculum letters Posts celebrating class learning	By email invitation then <a href="http://www.classdojo.com">www.classdojo.com</a> or via free app (Teachers' quiet hours from 5pm-8.00am and at weekend)	Most Teachers will respond to messages between 8am and 8.30am and between 3.30pm and 5pm on their working days.
Facebook/Twitter	Updates on school activities	Twitter: <a href="https://twitter.com/HolyCrossPlymouth">@HolyCrossPlymouth</a> Facebook Page: Holy Cross Primary	Online 24/7
Parents' Evening	Meetings to share pupils' achievements and set targets.	Usually face to face by appointment in November and March. Book via ESchools website. (Login given by school office)	November and March annually  Follow up to annual reports in July (optional)
School Reports	Pupils' progress and attainment	End of year report in July. Hard copy sent home.	End of Year
Information Sessions	How to help your child	A flyer/letter is sent out	Across the year

	at home: curriculum and/or pastoral information	with details. Parents asked to confirm attendance. Sessions held in school.	range of times: evening/start or end of school day
Telephone Calls	Any urgent matter relating to your child	By school office staff or class teacher	As necessary
School Meals	Lunch menu	Link will be sent by office when joining the school Current menu shared on dojo each week	Online 24/7
Parentpay	Payments	Letter will be sent by office when joining the school Debt letters	Online 24/7  Weekly if in arrears

What is the best way to contact the school if I need information?

<b>What do I need to contact you about?</b>	<b>Who should I contact?</b>	<b>What is the best way to contact them?</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pastoral – friendship, mild illness, lost property</li> <li>• Academic progress</li> <li>• Reading books/homework</li> <li>• Classroom or playground incident</li> <li>• Academic concerns</li> </ul>	Class teacher	By Dojo or email between 8am and 8.30am and between 3.30pm and 5pm Verbally at the end of the school day or call to make an appointment
Remote learning	Class teacher	Class Dojo platform
Illness/Absence	School office	Option 1 on school telephone system 01752 225420 or by email <a href="mailto:admin@holycross.plymouth.sch.uk">admin@holycross.plymouth.sch.uk</a>
Change of person collecting child	School office. Please try to do this as soon as possible	Option 1 on school telephone system 01752 225420
Confidential matter of a serious nature	Headteacher: Mrs Gill	By phone or appointment <a href="mailto:fgill@holycross.plymouth.sch.uk">fgill@holycross.plymouth.sch.uk</a>
Formal complaint	Headteacher: Mrs Gill <i>Complaints Policy available on <a href="#">school website</a></i>	By phone or appointment <a href="mailto:fgill@holycross.plymouth.sch.uk">fgill@holycross.plymouth.sch.uk</a>
Trips/Clubs/copies of letters	School office	Option 1 on school telephone system 01752 225420
Safeguarding concerns	Headteacher: Mrs Gill	By phone or appointment <a href="mailto:fgill@holycross.plymouth.sch.uk">fgill@holycross.plymouth.sch.uk</a>

Safeguarding concern relating to staff	Headteacher: Mrs Gill	By phone or appointment <a href="mailto:fgill@holycross.plymouth.sch.uk">fgill@holycross.plymouth.sch.uk</a>
SEND or medical need	Deputy Head Teacher/SENDCO: Susan Buscombe	By phone or appointment <a href="mailto:sbuscombe@holycross.plymouth.sch.uk">sbuscombe@holycross.plymouth.sch.uk</a>
Requests for absence	Forms available through school office	Two weeks notice



### **Parent Involvement in the Early Years Policy**

At Holy Cross we aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum to inspire children through an imaginative and immersive approach, ensuring that the children are happy and enthusiastic to learn. We foster and nurture the children's interests and curiosities by giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We believe parents play a vital role in education. When parents are engaged and involved, everyone benefits – students, parents, families, teachers, schools and communities – and our school is enriched as a positive place to teach, learn and grow. Our school Mission Statement plays an important part in our hope and expectations for the children in the Foundation Stage.

*"I want to be the very best I can be so I can do what God wants me to do. I want to be the very best I can be so God can do his work through me".*

#### **Aims**

1. To enhance and widen our children's education through the involvement of parents and the community when possible.
2. Foster and promote a two way partnership based on mutual respect between parents, children and all those working within our school.
3. Ensure that Holy Cross Catholic Primary School is a culturally appropriate environment that values parents and carers and is sensitive to family needs.
4. Recognise that parents and carers are the most important influence in a child's life and that school is most effective when there is partnership between parents, children and school.
5. Holy Cross Catholic Primary School seeks to provide helpful communication with parents about their child's learning journey.

#### **Introduction**

Both home and school want the best for the children in our care. Parents want the children in our care to have the best opportunities so that they can become successful and happy members of the school and wider community. At Holy Cross we want to provide pupils with the environment and support they need to achieve all their potential. Effective partnership between home and school is key to these aspirations. Parents and carers are the most important influence in a child's life, and the school needs to listen to and communicate with parents effectively to build the trust and understanding needed for pupils to achieve their best. The school needs to be a resource for the community it serves.

#### **Involvement in the life of the school and the children's learning**

- Establish and sustain a positive learning culture and welcoming climate where parental input is welcomed, respected and valued.
- We are committed to on-going dialogue to improve our knowledge of the needs of children and to support families. Our Parent Support Officer, Elena is around in the morning and after school to see parents on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Parents can make an appointment to see her or the Headteacher, Mrs Gill and EYFS Lead Mrs Shaw.

- We encourage and support parents to play an active part in the governance and management of the school. We have parent governors who represent the views of the parents. Parents are also invited to attend the PTFA meetings, where decisions about the school are made and discussed.
- We have a good transition for children starting our school. This begins with a New Parent Meeting, home visits and 3 transition afternoons in the summer term. We also send home 'All About Me' Booklets for parents to fill out all about their child with them. Each child gets a home visit by the class teachers.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage parents and families are encouraged to share their child's development and record keeping through sending in weekend news, holiday news and WOW moments. WOW moments are recorded through Tapestry, which are celebrated as a whole class every Friday afternoon.
- We welcome parents into school to help with trips, learning support evenings, reading, or sharing their skills in the classroom. All parents who help have a DBS provided by the school free of charge.
- Through weekly and termly newsletters we keep parents informed of topics, events and overviews of learning. This can be by pupil, post, email or through accessing the school website which is updated weekly with letters.
- Curriculum letters are sent to each family at the start of each term, detailing the aspects of learning each child will undertake, and how families might support that learning, for example becoming in and helping us explore different cultures. 'Home Learning', linked to our topic, is also shared with parents.
- Celebrating diversity through exploring different cultures and inviting parents to send in pictures and come in to talk about their home countries. We aim to offer workshops where parents and carers can share their love of learning.
- We inform parents on a regular basis about their child's progress. We have termly parents' evenings and have half termly drop in sessions where parents and carers are invited into school throughout the year to take part/observe lessons and look at their child's work.
- We aim to include and communicate with parents, who do not live with their children. We send duplicate letters in book bags or by post if requested on a regular basis in a separate reading folder.
- The governors' minutes and policies are available for parents and parents can phone school or communicate through their child's reading record book or on Class Dojo. All staff emails are also available on the school website.
- Class Dojo is a communication app for the classroom. It connects teachers, parents, and students to share photos, videos, and messages through the school day. At Holy Cross we use ClassDojo to work together as a team; eg communication with parents is very useful in the mornings to share information about children's sleep patterns or anything we would find useful to know. Throughout the day with the children we add photos of what we are doing and this gives the children an opportunity to share the photos with their parents and explain exactly what they are doing. This particularly helps with EAL children and their parents.
- We seek the parents' views and strive to make things better for the children. We recognise the power of planning with parents; we take into account the values of the parents and try to teach the children about a range of beliefs and values
- We ensure all parents have access to their child's written records when requested.
- Annual reports on each child's academic and personal development is made available in the summer term.
- All helpers are asked to sign in and sign out of the school when visiting, for security reasons. All parent helpers are given a booklet, which includes a policy for them to sign about confidentiality and no use of mobile phones when in the classroom, only to be used in the staff room.

- Every Friday during the celebration assembly 1 child is chosen as our Wonder of the Week and we invite the child's parents, with enough notice to come and join in the celebration. We aim to ensure parents are told at the latest by Wednesday at collection time.
- At the end of every half term children go through their learning journey and reflect on what they have enjoyed and what they would like to learn about the following half term. Parents are also asked for their comments on the half term. We send these home and support the parents who may need it by writing down what they would like. Parents can respond on Class Dojo which we can translate if they wish. Class Teachers are also available to support parents after school when we hand out the forms.
- We try to get as much parent voice as we can through a variety of opportunities; if we cannot get parent voice by drop-ins or sending WOW moments home, we speak to parents before and after school, message them on Class Dojo, ring them and have conversations and also ask them to come in when they pick up their child trying to accommodate them as much as we can.
- We aim to remember the whole family - dads, mums, grandparents, siblings. If there is a language barrier, siblings support the translation and can also complete WOW moments for their younger sibling.

#### **Ways in which effective partnerships can support pupils**

- Provide good induction for all parents – New Parent Meeting, Home Visits, Transition afternoon, coffee mornings. All information available on Class Dojo can be changed into any language to support EAL parents, ensuring all relevant school information is effective and easy to read by parents.
- Provide high quality information to parents/carers – newsletters, website, advance notice of all school events, celebrations assembly, parents notice board, communication between home and school through Class Dojo.
- Parents training – Curriculum, Read Write Inc., how to support learning at home.

#### **Consultation**

Our home-school agreement, signed by pupils, parents and the school, details the responsibilities and expectations of all parties. The school will make every effort to consult

parents and carers, both formally and informally, about their views on school life, children's learning and new initiatives. Parents or carers of a child with a disability are asked to keep the school fully informed about any relevant issues, so that the school can make all reasonable efforts to meet the requirements of that child. The school values regular feedback, and will make every effort to act on parents' and carers' views, wherever possible. Teachers (including the Headteacher) can be approached informally before and after school, and will always take careful account of any information forwarded to them. Periodically the school will seek parental views more formally, through an annual survey, or a questionnaire on a particular theme. By working in close partnership with parents we nurture the development of trust, respect, confidence, independence, self-esteem and the desire to learn. We provide quality learning experiences with the expectation that all will have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Knowing our parents is key and we love working within this partnership with them as we work together helping their children grow throughout the year with us and as they continue into Year 1 and beyond. We keep in contact throughout the children's time at school and still invite parents to share learning with us and talk about their child's journey up the school.