



CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM CENTRE

HOME/SCHOOL POLICY

In everything but detail, the pastoral policy for parental liaison and involvement reiterates that of the school. Central to both policies is the tenet that, at its most effective, the education of young people is a collaborative enterprise involving teachers, parents and the pupils themselves.

Parents know a great deal about their children; they have particular insights about their strengths, skills, interests, preferences, aspirations, anxieties and difficulties. Accordingly, the importance of meaningful, regular and positive communications between teachers and the parents of their pupils can hardly be over-stated – this principle forms the foundation of the school's policy on liaison with parents.

NB: the term 'parents' is employed throughout this policy to refer to parents, guardians and others in loco parentis.

For their part in this liaison during a normal academic year, teachers communicate with parents directly or indirectly by means of:

- The Personal Journal is given to pupils at the beginning of each year and accessed by parents. This includes details of school policies and procedures, important dates and a copy of the Partnership Agreement. A shortened version of the pastoral policies is included in the school prospectus and is presented to the parents of all (prospective) pupils;
- A range of 'standard' letters either:
 - to parents typically regarding parents' evenings, open days, prize-giving ceremonies, career forums, curricular changes, educational visits, visiting speakers and school or local exhibitions and workshops, or
 - to parents of individual pupils concerning, for instance, achievement and progress, attendance, punctuality or some commendatory or disciplinary matter;
- 'Personal' letters that address some matter(s) or incidents idiosyncratic to the pupil concerned, the style and manner of which often reflect the close relationship that has developed between the school and the parent;
- by using the comments section and the home/school communication section of the Personal Journal;
- Articles in the school's half-termly Newsletter to parents et al in which the work and activities of the school are regularly and substantially represented;
- Twice-yearly formal reports that summarise pupils' achievements and progress over a specific period. One is a half-year report distributed prior to the parents' evening and the other is an end-of-year summative report.

In addition to these written communications the tutors have or create opportunities to talk with parents and to show and explain to them examples of the pupils' work and activities:



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- during the school's parents' evenings (including the Annual Governors' Meeting for Parents), open evenings and information evenings;
- during discussions with an individual pupil's parents, initiated at the request of either the parents or the teacher;
- during certain educational visits, school exhibitions, productions or events.

To help fulfil their important role in their child's education, and to be as informed as possible in any communications or discussions with teachers, parents are requested and encouraged to:

- ensure their child has (at least) the basic equipment necessary for their proper participation in all lessons;
- show an interest in, and to ask questions about, the work and activities in which their child is currently engaged at school and/or at home;
- periodically to look at, to ask questions about and to comment meaningfully on, the child's folder of work;
- ensure that the child industriously completes any set homework including, for example, such tasks as collecting information from a library, studying advertisements in a magazine or watching a particular television programme, as well as the more obvious tasks concerned with producing written work;
- check their child's Personal Journal and make comments for staff if necessary;
- make every effort to attend the school's parents' evenings, open days and any other pertinent events, and when so doing to make time to discuss their child's work and progress and to look at some of the work displayed;
- to communicate to the Head of Year or to the tutor any concerns or difficulties, interests or aspirations that are either specific to or that are seriously affecting their child's education.

With regard to this latter point, but also in general, in all of their communications with parents, teachers should strive to be as sensitive as possible to the needs, apprehensions and background circumstances of the parent(s) and the pupil. This means, among other important considerations, that in their communications with parents, teachers should:

- pay attention to the form of address so as not to exclude or embarrass one-parent families or children being fostered or in care;
- seek to employ a form and tone that is clear, straightforward, appropriately friendly and not patronising;
- be sensitive to the known home and family circumstances of a parent and their child(ren), and should exercise caution when those circumstances are not known, eg the parent's first language;
- encourage apprehensive parents to visit the school and to contribute as much as possible



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- to their child's education;
- gain approval from the year Head or Headteacher for all 'original' letters before they are sent.

All parents, pupils and the Headteacher (on behalf of the school) are asked to sign a 'Partnership Agreement' that sets a cooperative tone for the people concerned. A copy of the agreement is included in the Staff Handbook and in the Parents' Booklet.

Parents are informed sufficiently in order that they can fully understand the measures the school is taking. This is particularly important during the making of a 'contract' or a review meeting. Parents' and pupils' views are invited and highly valued as a contribution to the process. Parents are always asked to give their consent to consultation with relevant health professionals and other agencies.

Parents are encouraged to discuss any problems or concerns with school and a suitable room will be made available for such meetings. Problems or concerns raised by parents should initially be raised with the pupil's tutor. Most problems can be resolved in this way but if this does not happen parents may raise concerns with the Year Head or Headteacher. After following this line of referral parents can, if still dissatisfied, complain to the governors and later, if they are still dissatisfied, may take their complaint to the LEA. Parents are encouraged to offer their views on the pastoral provision at the annual meeting for parents which is arranged by the Governing Body.

Confidentiality between parents and the school will be paramount and sensitive information will only be shared within the school on a 'need to know' basis. The school has the legal obligation to act in accordance with national and local authority guidelines in cases of suspected child abuse which must be referred to the Area Officer of Social Services. In the rare cases where such action is necessary the school will offer all possible care and support to the student and his/her family.