



Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock

Communication - Guidance for Parents/Carers (Summary)

Good communication between school and home is essential as students are likely to achieve more when school staff and parents/carers work well together. In Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock we aim to have clear and effective communication with all parents and the wider community. Effective communication enables us to share our aims and values by keeping parents well informed about school life.

Staff will always seek to maintain cordial, professional relationships with parents. To this end, parents should be addressed in a formal manner (e.g., Mr Smith). We try to make our written communications as accessible, personal and inclusive as possible.

First Point of Contact

The Tutor is the first point of contact if a parent/carer has a query or concern. Tutors may be contacted by telephone (028 90 40 11 84) or by email at info@knock.co.uk with the Tutor's name in the subject line.

Parent/Carer Contact Details

Parents/Carers provide contact details/preferences when their child first registers with the College. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that telephone numbers and email addresses are kept up-to-date.

College Website (www.knock.co.uk)

The College website is used to inform parents, students and the wider community about key aspects of school life. Students and staff are encouraged to contribute articles to the 'News' section of the site and ICT staff ensure that the site is updated regularly.

College App

Parents are invited to register for the College App when their child begins Year 8. Important communications are shared with parents using the College App.

Social Media

Twitter is used by the College and departments to recognise and celebrate student achievement. Search for @OLSPCK on Twitter.

Communiqué

The College magazine, Communiqué, is published twice per annum, at the end of the first and third terms, and distributed to parents. Communiqué gives parents a more in-depth view of College life with contributions from both students and staff. Copies of the magazine are displayed in the foyer for the attention of visitors and distributed to contributory primary schools.

eBulletin

An eBulletin is emailed to parents twice per annum. The e-Bulletin informs parents about College events and celebrates recent school achievements.

Telephone Calls

Telephone communication can be an effective way of parents contacting staff within the College. It must be acknowledged, however, that teachers are restricted by timetable demands and are often dealing with other pressing pastoral/subject matters.

- When a parent contacts the College office staff may ask some questions to signpost the caller to the most appropriate member of staff.
- They will then check the teacher's timetable and if the member of staff has other commitments the parent will be invited to leave a voicemail.
- Office staff will ensure that important or urgent calls are brought to the attention of the relevant member of staff as quickly as possible.
- Tutors will respond, where possible, by the next working day (excluding weekends/holidays).
- Subject teachers will respond, where possible, within two working days (excluding weekends/holidays).
- If the issue raised requires some investigation, a holding telephone call will be made and then followed up as soon as possible.

Email

Some parents may prefer to communicate with staff by email by using info@knock.co.uk. To ensure the message reaches the correct member of staff:

- Please record your child's name, tutor group and the name of the member of staff in the subject line.
- Provide a brief outline of the issue.
- It is recommended that parents send emails or schedule emails to be sent during normal working hours (8.00am-5.00pm).
- Tutors will respond, where possible, by the next working day (excluding weekends/holidays).
- Subject teachers will respond, where possible, within two working days (excluding weekends/ holidays).
- If the issue raised requires some investigation, a holding email will be sent and then followed up as soon as possible.

Letters

- Staff will endeavour to respond to parents' letters within 5 working days (excluding weekends/holidays).
- Formal complaints should follow the guidance in the Complaints Procedure.

Meeting with Parents

Parents who wish to meet a member of staff should contact the College in advance to make an appointment, clearly stating the reason for the request and which member(s) of staff they would like to be present. Due to timetable constraints, parents are advised not to expect an 'ad hoc' meeting with a member of staff without an appointment. If a parent feels the matter is urgent, the College will endeavour to deal with the issue as soon as possible.

Visitors to the College

- All visitors to the College are required to report to Reception.
- Visitors passing beyond the Reception area will have their details recorded at Reception. This includes their name, organisation (if relevant), arrival time, departure time and the name of the supervising member of staff.

Call Parents: Email or Text Messages

Call Parents will be used to contact parents in circumstances where it is important to convey information quickly to a large number of individuals (e.g., a decision to close the school because of bad weather/reminder about PTM/PTA events).

Written Reports and SIMS Assessment Record Grades

The College provides a written annual report to parents on their child's progress in each subject studied. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for further development. In addition, Year 8-10 students receive a Progress Report which summarises their attainment and effort in each subject studied in Term 1.

Parent-Teacher Meetings, Options Days and Post-Exam Results Meetings

Parents are invited to meet their child's teachers at least once during the school year. Parents of Year 8, 9, 11, 12, 13 and 14 students meet their teachers at parent-teacher meetings scheduled during Term 1 and Term 2. Information Evenings are held annually for the parents of Year 8 and Year 11 students. Parents of Year 10 and 12 students meet subject teachers and Careers staff at Options Days in Term 2. Option Booklets for Year 10 and 12 students are produced annually in advance of the respective Options Day. Parents and students are also encouraged to consult with teachers, Careers staff and Examination Officers after public examination results have been published.

Home-School Liaison

A calendar of school events is produced at the start of the academic year and included in the Student Planner. The Student Planner allows parents to see what work has been set for students. Junior School parents are asked to sign their child's Student Planner at the end of each school week. Staff, particularly those with pastoral responsibilities, will contact parents by telephone should issues arise. Parents are encouraged to contact the College at the earliest opportunity if they have any concerns regarding their child's progress or well-being. The College Parent-Teacher Association is also useful in helping to develop good working relationships between parents and staff.

Consultation with Students, Staff and Parents

Consultation is about listening to and responding to the views and needs of students, staff, parents and the wider community on a variety of school-related issues. The Principal and SLT take into account the opinions expressed in consultations when making decisions, which will always be based on the best interests of the College. Consultation and communication may be both formal and informal, with confidentiality maintained at all times. Formal surveys will be used to obtain the views of students, staff and parents on key issues such as the School Development Plan, the curriculum and pastoral care concerns. The results of such surveys should be presented to all stakeholders and used in the decision-making process.

Communications Officer, Public Relations and Yearbook Coordinator

The Communications Officer, Ms Maguire, is tasked with promoting, enhancing and protecting the College's reputation, whilst celebrating student success through various media. In conjunction with the Principal, the Officer deals with enquiries from the media, individuals and outside agencies, often via telephone or email. The Officer is also involved in publicising school events. All media enquiries made to staff should be promptly referred on to the Principal or the Communications Officer.

College Prospectus and College Policies

The College prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of provision at our school. College policies are available for download on www.knock.co.uk or as hard copies on request.

Accessibility

We will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to enable a parent with a disability or other need to participate fully in a meeting or to receive and understand any written communication. Levels of adjustment to determine what is reasonable will be determined by the Principal. The default font used by the school is Calibri 11 but it may be appropriate for a larger font size to be used in certain circumstances.

For Newcomer Students, we welcome the presence of any other adult the parent wishes to invite to a school meeting to act as an interpreter. A sign language interpreter can also be requested. The College may also liaise with the Intercultural Education Service to source interpreters for Parent-Teacher Meetings.

Covert Recording

Parents are not permitted to undertake or carry out any covert recording (audio or visual) of employees or persons with whom the College has dealings with, in the workplace or through the course of their duties, without their knowledge or consent. Covert recording undermines trust and confidence and can breach data protection laws and confidentiality. It may result in action taken by the College and referral to the appropriate agencies.

Unreasonable Behaviour Policy

College staff have the right to be treated with courtesy and respect. It is accepted that individuals may act out of character in times of difficulty or distress; on occasion, however, the behaviour or actions of a parent/carer may not align with the values of the College. In such cases, to protect the well-being of our staff, the Principal or Vice Principals will contact the individual involved to highlight that unacceptable behaviour towards staff will not be tolerated and to seek assurances that future behaviour will be amended accordingly. Where she deems it appropriate, the Principal will restrict the means of communication with a parent/carer should his/her behaviour continue to give cause for concern.