

Partners in Communication - Silver

Module 1 - Communication with Parents

'St Monica's is a Catholic community working in partnership with families, schools and parishes...' School Mission Statement.

St Monica's as identified in the opening line of the school Mission Statement sees communication with parents and families as integral to the life of the school. The school works with parents and offers support in a pastoral capacity to parents as well as an academic one helping parents to work with pupils and the school in reaching a shared goal of success and happiness for our pupils.

Ofsted recognised that the school has 'excellent transition arrangements' Ofsted 2009

A parental comment typical of many others received during the questionnaire was;

"I feel the transition from primary school to High school was outstanding and feel the visits when in year 6 prior to year 7 were of great value to this transition. I feel my daughter has gained a lot of support (thank you) from secretarial staff via reception office which has helped a lot. Communication via reception to home has been excellent and very supportive for me as a parent worrying too. Many thanks".

Transition is a strength at St Monica's. Staff across the school work to ensure that transition is a process as 'painless as possible'. The Head of Year and Headteacher visit pupils in their own environment in year 6 and there is ongoing dialogue between primary school and St Monica's well before transition and long afterwards.

Parents are involved from as early as year 5 with some of our statemented pupils. Pupils with special needs and their parents visit the school independently of organised transition events; some of them a number of times so that pupils will be familiar with their new environment well before September.

Information regarding all aspects of school life is communicated to parents though an information evening in November, an open morning in June with a chance to see the school on an average day and speak to staff personally who will be involved with their children.

Further information is distributed to parents in the form of information booklets which is also available on the school website alongside our prospectus and further information about the whole school.

Parents are encouraged to share information with the school on every level. Parents complete a 'Form 1' prior to attending St Monica's so that we may communicate with parents and support their children from the earliest point. This communication however is ongoing; St Monica's is a community and information shared helps staff and pupils to best meet the needs of our families - this is reiterated to parents by pastoral on a regular basis.

The school website has gone from strength to strength over the past few years following an appointment of a second ICT technician Mr Pycroft. The website provides a wealth of information for parents from information about what is going on in school via the school newsletter each week to what is going on in departments. Parents can view examples of pupils work. From the school website Parents can also access information about parenting ideas and supporting their children not just in their academic life but also their pastoral one as pupils in a high school will have many challenges during their time here.

Parents are invited to an options evening in school prior to pupils in year 9 making these very important decisions - information regarding options can also be found on the school's website; <http://www.stmonicas.co.uk/>

The school newsletter is also now emailed to a number of parents - this was a change only this year in order to reduce our 'carbon footprint'.

Other evenings which have been available for parents to attend include; key stage four evening, Drugs information evening, Internet safety evening as well as in total 5 parents evenings. (One for each year group).

The school communicates on a daily basis with parents through the school journal, interviews with parents and telephone calls.

The school journal has grown over the years as we have found more and more pages to include to support parents in helping their children at home. The journal has a current level and target page so that parents have an overview of the progress that their sons/daughters are making across the curriculum. The journal also explains revision skills and key concepts in subjects along with direction to other websites which will help parents to support their children or maybe even learn together.

The school has shared with some parents previously a DVD produced originally by the DFES which aims to give parents tips on how to support their children at school/ with their learning.

Parents may be informed of particular issues or achievements by individual departments by letter or by telephone. Communication with parents has improved also as a result of the relatively new staff email system which was established in 2007. Since staff have had access to individual school email accounts parents have been able to email staff directly, it has then been easy to share this information with other members of relevant staff.

Pupils with Special Education Needs have an IEP, these are discussed with pupils and parents. Pupils with a Statutory assessment each year have a full review with children, parents and staff in attendance.

The School conducts a full and very comprehensive survey with both pupils and parents every three years. The last full parental survey was in April 2008 which was analysed by Kirkland Rowell marketing company who were then able to produce a full report of 75 pages in total. In the questionnaire when asked about teaching and learning the school achieved the following results amongst others;

Explaining to parents how to help their child 79% Grade 1 Outstanding
Encouraging and listening to parent views 78.2% Grade 1 Outstanding.

The school has a very effective and pro-active PTFA. Parents, Teachers and Friends Association. The title has been changed to include 'Friends' as there were parents who wished to support the school despite the fact that their children were no longer of school age; St Monica's was obviously delighted to take them up on their offer.

The PTFA have actively raised money to support the development of learning and teaching at St Monica's and have been involved in discussions about how best this money would be used to support the whole school.

Finally; Ofsted - Parents are overwhelmingly delighted with its commitment to the academic, social and emotional needs of their children' Ofsted 2009