

Communication Policy



Approved by the Board of Management on: 11th June 2024

Signed: A Phelan

Chairperson

Signed: Anthony Creevey

Principal

Date of next full review

As required

Principal: Anthony Creevey
Correspondence: Swords Road, Whitehall, Dublin 9
Email/Web: info@clonturkcc.cdetb.ie

01 559 6960
www.clonturkcc.ie

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Aim

In line with our school ethos and pillars of Respect, Kindness, Pride and Ambition, this policy aims to promote partnership and ensure that effective communication and consultation takes place between the school, parents/guardians, students and other stakeholders. This policy aims to safeguard the wellbeing of staff by setting out communication boundaries. It aims to clarify the use of our communication platforms.

To be effective, communication must be open and respectful on both sides. Staff and parents/guardians are encouraged to ensure that all communication remains polite and professional at all times.

Scope

This policy applies to all community members, with a particular focus on parent/guardian and staff communication. The policy pertains to all school communication platforms as well as in-person meetings and phone calls.

School Events and Meetings

- Details about events at the school are published via our School App, School Website, Facebook and Instagram pages, or emailed. Urgent messages will be sent via the school app, so it is essential that every parent/guardian has the app downloaded.
- Queries about events at the school may be made through the Clonturk App or by e-mail using the address: info@clonturkcc.cdetb.ie or by phoning 015596960.
- Prospective parents are invited to an online induction session in August where the main channels of communication are outlined and information about the school is presented.
- A calendar of important dates, including parent/teacher meetings, trips, closure days etc will be published on the school website each August.
- Parents and students are invited to a “settling in” Tutor meeting in the Autumn term to meet the student’s Tutor and review how the student has settled into the school year. This is not an academic progress meeting.
- Parents and students in each year group are invited to attend parent teacher meetings with subject teachers every year, at which time academic progress will be discussed. Parent Teacher Meetings consist of short 5-minute interactions with each subject teacher. Due to time constraints, it is strongly recommended that the following agenda is adhered to:
 - Alerting to any gaps in the student knowledge in the subject area
 - Strategies for improvement
 - Key areas to focus on for upcoming exams
 - Discuss any issues that might be interfering with the students learning
 - Anything of a sensitive nature or anything requiring a longer conversation should be communicated via email, phone or if necessary, a separate meeting can be arranged.

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Communication Platforms

Clonturk App (Unique Schools)

All parents are asked to download the Clonturk App by searching Clonturk Community College in Apple and Android app stores. The Clonturk App acts as a single point of engagement between parents/guardians and the school and should be the primary communication platform.

On the app parents/guardians can:

- Send queries to staff. Messages will be directed to the appropriate staff member by our administrative staff.
- Receive important notifications and reminders such as Parent Teacher Meeting dates and school closures
- View news and updates such as extra-curricular events
- Input notes for lates and absences
- Pay for administration fee and school trips

Staff can:

- Take photos of events using the cloud cam so as not to store photos on their devices.
- Upload photos and news about extracurricular and school events.

Email

Parents/guardians are requested not to contact subject teachers, tutors or SNAs directly. Unless direct communication is opened with a parent/guardian by a staff member, all communication should be sent via the school app. All community members should refrain from emailing before 8am or after 5pm.

Microsoft Teams

Staff and students should avoid posting on Teams before 8am or after 5pm unless completely necessary. Staff should also be mindful of the frequency of posts as this can be disruptive to both teaching and learning as well as down time.

VShare

Staff will use VShare to record academic, behavioural and attendance records.

Every parent/guardian will be furnished with a username and password for VShare, where they will be able to view academic, behavioural and attendance records. Parents will be directed to VShare through the Clonturk App.

Students will also have access to VShare where they can view their timetable as well as their academic and attendance records.

School Journal

Every student is issued with a school journal. There is also a section in the journal where a parent/guardian can communicate directly with the class teacher if needed. Students are required to write all homework in their journals. Parents/guardians are asked to sign the school journal on a weekly basis.

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School Website

The school website can be found at www.clonturkcc.ie

We make every effort to keep the website up-to-date with relevant information for students and parents. On the website, you will find:

- The school calendar
- Link to VShare
- Student booklists and stationary lists
- News updates and other useful information
- All school policies and a link to provide policy feedback

Social Media

The School communicates and celebrates school activities with the school community via social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram. Please note that these channels are intended for one-way communication. Members of the school community are asked not to contact the school through private message or by commenting on these platforms as they are not monitored for this purpose.

School Office

If the above platforms have not provided the information needed, or if you need to make contact with a staff member, please make contact through the school app. Please ensure to mention the staff member's name, the student's name and a short summary of the query. This will allow our school administrator to forward your message to the relevant staff member in an efficient manner.

Whom to Contact

In the first instance, students should make contact with the classroom teacher. Building independence and communication and organisational skills, etc. Not everything needs to go through home.

If parental contact with a staff member is required, please contact the school via the app to request a call back or to make an appointment. Members of staff will endeavour to make contact at their earliest convenience. Please mention FAO [Subject Teacher] for academic and subject queries; FAO [Tutor] for pastoral issues; FAO [Year Head] for serious concerns, medical concerns, etc.

Contact Details:

School App: Find and download from app store by searching 'Clonturk Community College'

Email: info@clonturkcc.cdetb.ie

Phone: 01 5596960

Please note that it is not always possible for our school administrators to answer all phone calls. The school app is the preferable platform and often a more efficient means of communication.

Please note that it is never appropriate for parents/guardians or students to communicate with staff using staff personal email, phone numbers or social media accounts. Staff personal contact details should never be shared.

Communication Guidelines:

Below are some guidelines for maintaining respectful and open communication

- Always use a respectful and polite tone.
- Request, don't demand.
- Be ready not just to provide information, but to listen to observations and perspectives.

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- Enter the exchange with an open mind and assume a shared best interest for your child/student.
- Be prepared to work collaboratively to solve problems.
- It is not acceptable to send lengthy, emotional or heated emails to a teacher; direct person to person communication is always best.
- At no time is aggressive or disrespectful language acceptable by any party in any communication between a parent/guardian/student and teacher. A meeting/phone call may be terminated and re-scheduled for another time if required. Another member of staff or senior management may take over communication in this case.

Confidentiality

Recognise that confidentiality may limit information that can be shared from school to parents, including consequences for other students' behaviours.

Time Constraints

Effective communication can sometimes be a challenge in a school, where teachers may be teaching fulltime, facilitating extra-curricular activities in their free time, or otherwise working with students at lunchtime or after school. Parents may be exasperated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

Teachers will make every effort to respond as soon as possible to parent communications, with the understanding that the teaching day sometimes precludes immediate responses.

Please indicate the issue to be discussed as some lead time provides an opportunity for the teacher to give prior thought to the matter.

Teachers and staff may need some time to collect needed information before responding.

As it is not possible to give proper and respectful consideration in the time directly before and directly after class, please refrain from approaching or discussing issues during this time.

Parents/guardians should not approach staff members in person without a scheduled appointment. While staff are on site, it is likely that they are on their way to a classroom where students are under their care. It is not appropriate to approach a staff member on campus, such as in the carpark or at the school gate. Please always contact via the school app instead.

Staff may at times prefer to complete some administrative tasks outside of school hours, however, they are encouraged to use the "schedule send" function in Microsoft Outlook (using the dropdown menu next to the send button) so that emails arrive in the recipient's inbox between 8am and 4pm.

Staff may wish to add a line to their email signatures such as the below suggestion:

Note: My workday may look different from your workday. I do not expect you to respond outside of your working hours. #RightToDisconnect

Review

In line with our democratic principles this policy has been formulated with thorough consultation and input from students, parents, and staff. This policy is subject to periodic review through the appropriate channels such as Student Council, Staff Meetings, PGTA, Senior management and the Board of Management. If you wish to provide feedback, please do so through the policy feedback form on the website.

Please recognise that it is both our policy and our school ethos to operate with openness, collaboration and the shared best interest for every student. Thank you.

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