



River Valley CNS Communications Policy 2019-20

Rationale:

It is generally accepted that good communication between all of those involved in the school i.e. teachers, special needs assistants (SNAs), children, parents/guardians, and ancillary staff is a vital part of our school.

Importance of Communications Policy to the Characteristic Spirit of River Valley CNS

River Valley CNS is a co-educational primary school which is under patronage of Dublin Dun Laoghaire Education and Training Board (DDLETB). The school aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the child: intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual. River Valley CNS seeks to provide a high standard of education where each child is encouraged to reach his/her personal potential. The school is committed to a spirit of inclusion, equality and harmony where each child and member of the school community is valued and treated with respect.

It is the policy of River Valley CNS to respect, celebrate and recognise diversity in all areas of human life. Children attending River Valley CNS will be taught and encouraged to view diversity as something which reflects the community from which the children are drawn. The school will endeavor to encourage the children committed to its care to have a pride in what makes them different and a belief that difference, when respected and valued, gives strength and vibrancy to the whole school community and the wider community in which they live. Children in River Valley CNS are taught from Junior Infants about the rights of every citizen in Ireland to equality, regardless of their gender, race, religion, age, sexual orientation, family status, civil status, membership of the travelling community, disability (9 grounds on which it is illegal to discriminate under the Equality Act 2004)

As part of its ethos, River Valley CNS welcomes children from all faiths and none. In common with the other Community National Schools under DDLETB patronage, River Valley CNS will recognise the wishes of parents to have their children receive religious education or morality based education as an integral part of the school curriculum.

River Valley CNS will open in September 2019 with one class of Junior Infants in temporary accommodation.

Parental involvement plays an important role in the Community National School model and as such we strive for efficient communications to ensure parents/guardians are fully informed at all times.

We believe the most efficient method of communication to be email and this is also in keeping with our wish to be a green school. All parents are expected to regularly check their email and will preferably furnish an email address which has push capabilities. This will ensure that communications are not missed. Any urgent communications such as school closures will be communicated via text message

and/or letter. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that they have provided correct emails and phone numbers as well as ensuring that the school is informed of any changes to same. We would advise that all emails are saved in a separate folder for ease of access.

Aims:

River Valley CNS aims to promote and support sound communication structures in the following areas:

1. Staff Communications
2. Communication with Parents/Guardians
3. Within the wider school community (Board of Management & Parent Teacher Partnership) and staff, parents/guardians

All members of the school community are expected to familiarise themselves with the Communication Policy. It is considered that everyone has a responsibility to make themselves aware of where and how to seek information and updates as the need arises and should seek to keep themselves informed.

1. Staff Communication:

- Staff at River Valley CNS communicate through email. Staff are expected to check their emails every day to ensure communications are received and as such push email is recommended for all staff.
- All staff will be furnished with an official school email @rivervalleycns.ie which also gives access to a staff calendar. This is to be used for communications with parents regarding individual queries. If you have any concerns about a specific parental enquiry please refer to the school principal/Senior Leadership Team. Any group emails to your class' parents must also be referred to the principal/ a member of the SLT before sending. Do not give your private email or phone number to parents/carers.
- In addition to the formal communication that takes place during staff meetings, the Principal undertakes to make herself available to any member of staff who wishes to discuss school matters with him.
- The whiteboard in the staffroom will be used for general updates and information.
- Emails are used for circulating minutes of staff meetings and various correspondence.
- The SLT will inform staff of emergencies, such as school closure, through text and email.
- Email will be the primary means of communication for any communication meant for **all parents in the school** (eg World Book Day, Seachtain Na Gaeilge).
- If a teacher wishes to contact **all parents in their class** they should do so using email. **If we have more than one class of each grade, all teachers must send communications at the same time.**
- For communication between the teacher and individual parents use. PLEASE CC PRINCIPAL on all whole class emails.

2. Communication with parents and guardians:

Joining the School Community: Parents of children who are new to the school receive a document called “New Parent Information” which includes an outline of the history of the school, information on various structures within the school and points about the day to day school life. They are also advised to read all of the policies on the school website as by accepting a place at the school they agree to adhere to these policies. (www.rivervalleycns.ie/policies)

School Calendar

The Calendar outlines the dates of the three terms, mid-term breaks etc. It is available on the Parents section of the school website (<http://www.rivervalleycns.ie/school-calendar.html>)

Child Progress:

All parent/teacher contact is considered to be extremely valuable in a child’s education. As such parents/guardians will be able to communicate directly with staff via email. Of course parents can also request a meeting, if they prefer, through the school office at a mutually convenient time.

- Individual parent/teacher meetings are held in Winter & Summer Term.
- **Twice yearly** reports are issued on children’s progress, Winter & Summer term, with the main report in June.
- Staff will use email to communicate with parents.

3. Communication with teacher:

- Parent will be given their child’s teacher’s school email for informal queries. Appointments are the preferred method for discussion of learning or behaviour etc. Please do not discuss any other child or staff member in these emails and any abusive communications will not be tolerated.
- Informal communications between teachers and parents/guardians may take place should the need arise at drop-off/pick up time **but is preferable that messages are sent via email as it is extremely busy at these times.**
- Teachers are available to speak to parents/guardians by appointment. These appointments are necessary in order that the teacher may have the opportunity to make alternative arrangements for his/her class, and also may have time to gather together information about the child. Appointments can be made directly with the teacher.
- Teachers may communicate with parents/guardians using the school phone if the need arises.

4. General Communication:

- The school will send regular “River Valley CNS” emails to parents. Parents are advised to keep these in an email folder to easily reference them when required.
- Text message and/or letter are used for urgent updates. However, email is the primary method of communication.

- The School Calendar on our Website is updated with important dates.

Absences

- All absences should be explained via email. Email should include date of absence and an attached doctor's note if applicable.

5. Wider School Community:

Board of Management (BoM):

- The principal and staff rep will liaise between staff and the BoM.
- Complaints Procedure should be followed if a complaint is being made by a parent, where the BoM is only involved when resolution with the teacher and the principal have been exhausted.

Parent Teacher Partnership (PTP):

- The PTP Chairperson communicates with parents/guardians via email (ptrvcns@gmail.com)
- The principal/staff rep on PTP will liaise between staff and PTP.

Policies & Procedures

Policies & Procedures are published on the school website following their review.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was ratified by the BOM on _____ (date)

Signed _____ Chairperson

Date _____

Signed _____ Principal

Date _____

Review Date _____