

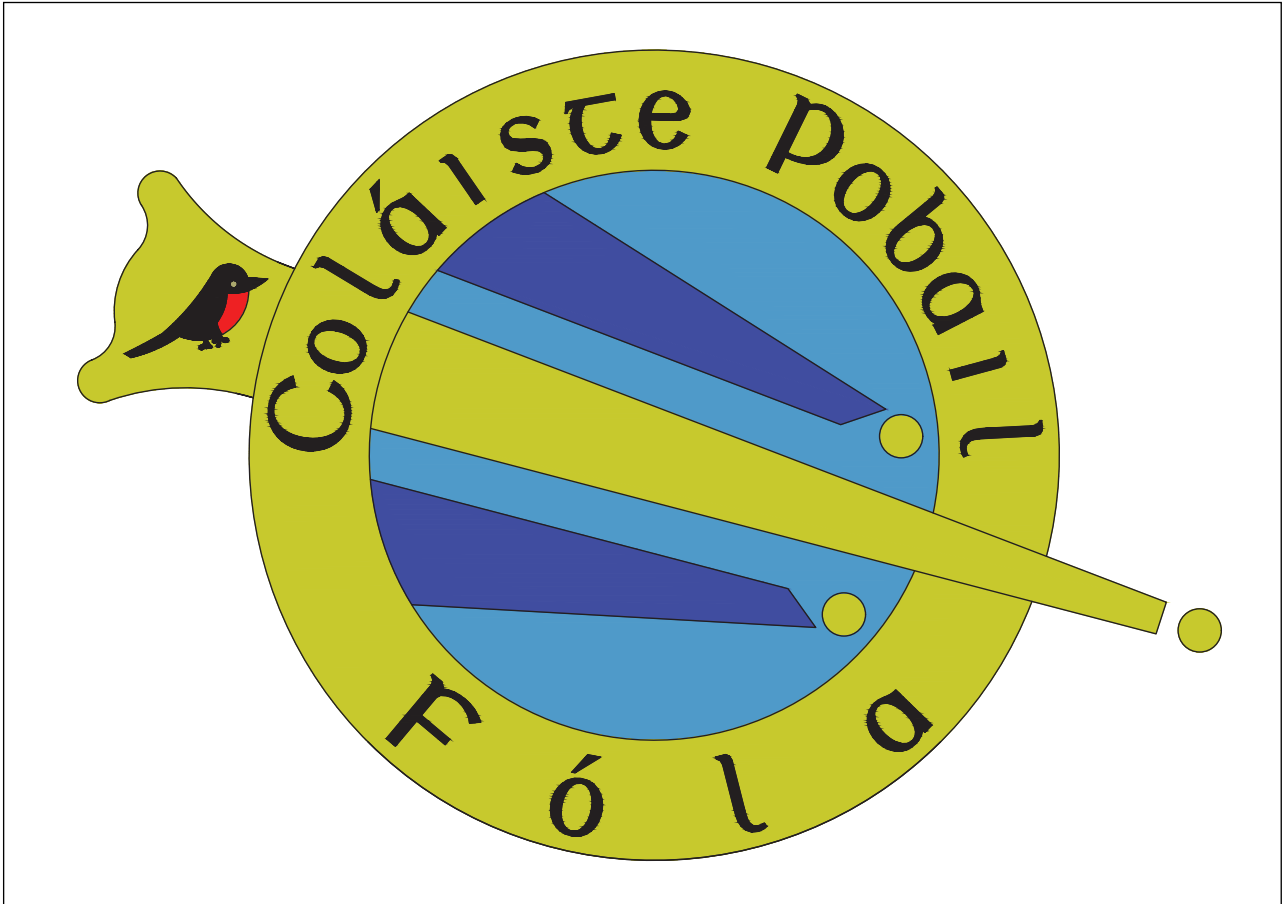
---

# Communications Policy

Coláiste Pobail Fóla

Communications Policy - 18 April 2023

---



---

## Introductory Statement

This policy sets out the framework within which the whole school manages to effectively communicate with all of its stakeholders

## Scope

Coláiste Pobail Fóla is committed to appropriate and effective communication with all stakeholders both internally and externally. The definition of communication is the imparting or exchanging of information by speaking, writing, or using some other medium.

Coláiste Pobail Fóla has developed a Communications Policy and associated procedures to ensure that all stakeholder communication is appropriate, timely and relevant for the professional benefit of the College, its staff and learners. The Communications Policy and its associated procedures are concerned with managing the transfer of information owned by or relating to the College and by staff of the College in their official capacity.

All staff of the College must be aware of the relevant laws, professional expectations and guidelines for interacting with staff, learners, the media and other College stakeholders.

## Objectives

In our school we strive to maintain clear and effective communications with all parents/guardians and the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values, through keeping parents and the wider community well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents and members of the community play in supporting the school.

### **The objectives of the Communications Policy are:**

- to define the responsibilities of staff and representatives when communicating for

### **College purposes;**

- to ensure that all opportunities to promote the College through appropriate communication channels are explored;
- to ensure that tone and message communicated from the College is consistent with our brand guideline; and
- to minimise the potential negative impact to the College, its learners and third parties as a result of incidents and violations.

---

All communications at Coláiste Pobail Fóla should;

- keep staff, pupils, parents, SNAs, Board of Management members, the ETB, the Department of Education and other interested parties well informed
- be open, honest, ethical and professional
- use jargon-free, plain language which aims to be understood by all use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience
- take account of all relevant legislation and school policies
- be compatible with our core values Coláiste Pobail Fóla.

## Personal and Confidential Information

Personal data is protected in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988 and General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

The privacy of personal communications is preserved in accordance with the Human Rights Act. Some categories and items of information regarding both staff and students need to be kept confidential.

All staff are bound to take care with the handling and transmission of confidential information, with regard to how and to whom the information is transmitted.

All staff must undergo GDPR training from ETBi and keep up to date with any changes relating to their role.

Internal communications using electronic media must be conducted under the internet usage policy of the College.

Further information on how data is handled in the school is available at the link below.

[https://www.cpfola.ie/files/ugd/fca5a9\\_95d4b9a4ad5b4b4399b447304f192316.pdf](https://www.cpfola.ie/files/ugd/fca5a9_95d4b9a4ad5b4b4399b447304f192316.pdf)

Communications with outside agencies are also covered by this document.

---

# Policy in relation to some significant communication channels

## 1. Teacher to teacher communication

Recognising its importance, the school encourages best practice in communication at intra-departmental level; between year heads and class teachers and subject teachers; and between senior management and all subject teachers. Also, good personal relationships between staff members are encouraged.

Each department is to elect a Subject Department Head for each academic year. This role rotates between department members at the start of each academic year. Department meetings will be held at least 3 a year per subject. The minutes are recorded and posted to the staff admin folder.

New teachers are offered an induction course at the start of the year. They will also be supplied with an updated staff handbook.

Notices are sent by email from the Principal/Deputy Principal and posted on the VShare dashboard, every effort is kept to keep these communications to a minimum.

Communications outside the agreed hours of 8am-5pm are not permitted unless in extenuating circumstances as per the Right to Disconnect Guidelines linked below;

[https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/what\\_you\\_should\\_know/codes\\_practice/code-of-practice-for-employers-and-employees-on-the-right-to-disconnect.pdf](https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/what_you_should_know/codes_practice/code-of-practice-for-employers-and-employees-on-the-right-to-disconnect.pdf)

## 2. Teacher to student communication

Outside of normal communication during class times, teachers will assign work on Apple Schoolwork and communications can take place over email.

Students will learn email etiquette and appropriate communication styles during Mentoring Classes.

## 3. ISA Communication

It is expected that ISAs will communicate regularly face to face, and by email with teachers and the Senior Leadership Team. Meetings will be held as regularly as possible with the Deputy Principal and/or Principal. Each ISA must upload logs and observations onto their dedicated private channel in Microsoft Teams using the appropriate templates on a weekly basis, as outlined in Circular 30/2014.

---

## 4. Communications with parents/caregivers

### (i) School communications with parents/caregivers.

- The school website [cpfola.ie](http://cpfola.ie) is regularly updated and contains information regarding Admissions, Policies and Procedures and Updates on the school.
- The school uses the VSware app where Attendance is logged as well as positive/negative behaviours and term reports.
- Coláiste Pobail Fóla will send text messages to parents when appropriate such as in the event of a student absence.
- Emails containing relevant information may be sent from [info@cpfola.ie](mailto:info@cpfola.ie)
- Teachers will make phone calls to parents/caregivers to flag issues.
- Teachers are not permitted to contact parents directly by email.

### (i) Parents/caregivers communications with the school.

As part of our communications policy, parents are encouraged to:

- develop close links with the school by engaging with information sent to them via the school website, email or text message.
- ensure they have provided the school with 2 phone numbers and be contactable at all times
- download and sign up for the VsWare app
- participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of the staff and all staff members in the school
- collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their children
- share the responsibility in upholding the ethos, values and distinctive character of the school
- participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.
- Parents/caregivers are requested to log absence requests on the VSware app.
- In the event of a query, parents can email [info@cpfola.ie](mailto:info@cpfola.ie) and the school administrators will reply in a day or two.
- If a parent wishes to contact a teacher they must contact [info@cpfola.ie](mailto:info@cpfola.ie) and a phone call or in-person meeting will be arranged. Parents are not permitted to email a teacher directly, if this occurs teachers are instructed to forward the email directly to the [info@cpfola.ie](mailto:info@cpfola.ie) account. The office will manage communications between staff and parents.

## 5. Communications with the wider community

The school Digital Committee will approve communications with the wider community using the school website and Twitter in accordance with DDLETB Social Media strategy.

---

## 6. Malicious Communications

The school takes all incidents of malicious communication very seriously, and will not tolerate any behaviour that may cause harm, distress, or offence to anyone within the school community.

Examples of malicious communication include:

- Bullying, harassment, or intimidation
- Threats or intimidation of any kind
- Discrimination, hate speech, or offensive language
- Spreading false rumours or making unfounded allegations
- Cyberbullying, including online harassment and trolling
- Posting or sharing inappropriate content online

All staff, pupils, parents, and visitors to the school must be aware that any form of malicious communication may result in a person being;

- (i) Asked to leave (when in person)
- (ii) When on the phone, the conversation may be ended and rescheduled for another time.

### **Procedures:**

Any incident of malicious communication must be reported to school management.

The school will investigate all reports of malicious communication promptly and impartially. This may involve speaking to witnesses, reviewing written or electronic communication, and contacting external agencies if necessary.

Depending on the nature and severity of the incident, the school may take a range of disciplinary measures, including:

- Issuing a warning or formal reprimand
- Referring the matter to external agencies, such as the Gardaí or relevant services
- Implementing a restorative justice process (where a student is concerned)
- Taking legal action, if appropriate?

All staff, pupils, and visitors to the school have a responsibility to uphold the principles of this policy and not to engage in any acts of malicious communication. The national education welfare board states that “The adults in the school have a responsibility to model the school’s standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with pupils and with each other, since their example is a powerful source of learning for pupils” We advise reporting of any incidents of malicious communication promptly.

### **The role of parents in malicious communication.**

We in Coláiste Pobail Fóla want to foster positive and respectful methods of communication within our school community. This not only extends to the students but to the whole school community e.g. the staff, pupils, parents, support service providers and the wider community. Anyone entering our building should feel safe to do so. While the behaviour of the students in our school is of vital importance, parents/caregivers and

---

other adults in the school community also have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of the students.

As also outlined by the national education welfare board, *“Parents should be expected to model the standards that pupils are asked to respect. In order to do this, they need to be familiar with the standards and to understand the importance of expecting pupils to behave according to these standards. The ways in which parents and teachers interact will provide pupils with a model of good working relationships”*

It is important that all individuals are responsible for their own behaviours when in contact with the the school either in person or via any means of communication previously outlined in this policy. All individuals are expected to communicate to each other with respect. Shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If a stakeholder displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to ;

- remove themselves from the building, when physically present in the building.
- Refrain from contacting the school in that manner again
- In certain cases, the Gardaí may be called