The Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust

Learning Communities, Inspired by Faith

Trust Communications Policy 2025

The Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust,
St Wilfrid's Catholic High School & Sixth Form College,
Cutsyke Road, Featherstone WF7 6BD

Telephone: 01924 802285 **X:** @theBKCAT
Email: admin@bkcat.co.uk **Website:** www.bkcat.co.uk

POLICY DOCUMENT	Trust Communications Policy
Legislation/Category: Academy Schools	**Recommended**
Lead Member of Staff:	Trust Head of Governance
Approved by:	Trust Board
Date Approved:	November 2025
Revision Date:	November 2028
Review Frequency:	3 Years

Mission Statement

All policies are written in line with our Trust Mission statement:

"Inspired by faith through love, friendship and joy."

We embrace the teachings of Jesus Christ, infusing every aspect of our trust with **love**. Our pupils, families, and staff are encouraged to show compassion, kindness, and respect to one another, creating nurturing environments where everyone feels valued and loved. We foster a deep sense of love for God, self, and others, empowering our pupils to make positive contributions to society.

We recognise the importance of relationships and the power of **friendship** in shaping lives. Our schools foster an atmosphere of genuine fellowship, where pupils form deep connections with their peers, teachers, and the wider community. We promote inclusivity, understanding, and empathy, cultivating an environment where diversity is embraced, and friendships are built on mutual respect. Our pupils learn the value of teamwork, cooperation, and service, as they become compassionate leaders who forge lasting friendships rooted in faith.

We believe that **joy** is a reflection of God's presence in our lives. Our schools are places where joy abounds, where pupils are encouraged to find joy in learning, discovering their talents, and building meaningful relationships. Through engaging and innovative teaching, we inspire a lifelong love of learning, instilling in our students a sense of wonder and curiosity about the world around them. We celebrate achievements, milestones, and special moments, ensuring that joy permeates our school communities.

Contents

Mission Statement 1

1. Introduction 3
2. Excessive Parental Contact / Demanding Behaviour 5
3. Communication of Political Views and standpoints 7
4. Legal Framework 8
5. Related School Policies 9
6. Inappropriate Behaviour 9
7. Use of social media 10
8. Managing inappropriate conduct 12

Operational & Strategic Decisions Protocol 13

1. Introduction

Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust schools strive to build strong relationships with parents, carers and visitors, to help create stimulating, happy and safe learning environments which continues from school to home and the wider community, providing all our pupils with the opportunity to achieve their personal best. The trust, support and co-operation of parents is fundamental to the continued success of our schools.

Our staff come to work to educate and support our pupils and we believe it is important for everyone involved with school life to communicate in a respectful manner, whether in person, on the phone, or online. In this way, staff, pupils, parents, carers, and members of the public always behave respectfully to each other, which helps to promote the most constructive working and learning environment. Please note that our staff do not consent to being recorded during meetings or telephone calls, and if they become aware that the exchange is being recorded, they have the right to end the conversation immediately. See the Trust Data Protection Policy (Section 14 – Surveillance) for more information about call recording.

We ask that all parents, carers, visitors and members of the public:

1. Treat each other, staff members, pupils and external agencies with dignity and respect.
2. Positively support the ethos of the school by setting a good example in their speech and behaviour (including online) towards all pupils, staff members and other adults.
3. Work constructively with staff members to resolve any issues of concern, including clarifying specific events in order to bring about a positive resolution.
4. Only ever send emails to staff that are constructive and respectful.
5. Refrain from communicating (by telephone, email or at meetings in person or remotely) in a manner which could be perceived as threatening or demanding.
6. Work alongside the school to improve their child's behaviour where necessary, understanding and accepting that a behaviour policy is fundamental and necessary to a safe and purposeful learning environment – this policy (and consequences outlined within) apply to ALL pupils; it is not democratic or open to negotiation.

7. Make reasonable requests for meeting times, and not expect to see any member of staff without a prior appointment. (We will always try to accommodate a meeting or phone call as soon as possible, but do have many commitments, including teaching, throughout the day and we would ask that you understand and respect this).
8. Agree to communicate or meet with the member of staff which the school deems most appropriate in dealing with the particular situation. (N.B. The member of staff will be commensurate with the stage and scale of the concern and the choice of staff member is not open to negotiation.)
9. Make every effort to positively promote the school to the wider community and not publicly undermine the school or the implementation of school policies or publicly manifest complaints or criticisms online, on social media platforms (e.g. WhatsApp / Facebook) or in public forums.
10. When making a decision to contact the school, please remember that schools might not have the capacity to enter into lengthy or regular email or telephone conversations, and the capacity of a school can fluctuate due to a variation of internal and external factors. **We do not have the capacity to meet persistent or immediate demands from parents / carers.**
11. Note that staff should be given at least two working days to acknowledge receipt, though we will always endeavour to respond as soon as possible. The response timeline will be context dependant.
12. Be aware of school and Trust policies and know that copies are available via the school's or Trust's website, as appropriate, or from the school directly. When raising a concern, we would ask parents to ensure that they act in accordance with relevant school policies.

Any abusive, foul, or insulting language, physical attacks or aggressive or threatening behaviour towards staff members, governors, pupils, parents or any member of the public within our premises, on the phone or online, at face-to-face meetings or remotely will not be tolerated under any circumstances. This also extends to posting or publishing comments online that risk bringing an individual or a school's reputation into disrepute.

Anyone exhibiting these behaviours will be formally warned by the school that this will not be tolerated, and any future violation of this policy could then result in all future communications with the school being restricted to writing.

The school will consider contacting the Police and / or taking legal action as appropriate.

All members of our school communities have the right to work without fear of abuse or violence at all times.

This Policy outlines the manner in which everyone is expected to act whilst on school premises or virtually, as well as further detailing the type of behaviour which will not be tolerated.

All employees of BKCAT schools:

- Are required to demonstrate the highest possible professional standards at all times.
- Deal with all pupils, fairly and consistently.
- Communicate with all parents and visitors with the highest level of professional courtesy.
- Are aware of and conform to all safeguarding routines in the school.
- Always uphold the professional integrity of the school and teaching profession.

2. Excessive Parental Contact / Demanding Behaviour

BKCAT schools are very busy places, and our priority will always be to teach, supervise and support our pupils. We are committed to working positively with home to effectively deal with any issues or concerns. However, we would ask parents / carers to understand that we simply do not have the capacity to engage in excessive communications or lengthy meetings.

Once the school has given a reasonable amount of time to address an individual issue or concern, we will not engage in further communication regarding those issues to which we have already responded.

BKCAT schools cater for a diverse pupil population, all with individual (sometimes complex) needs. We have a duty of care to support all pupils, a range of statutory responsibilities and

limited capacity / resources: carrying out these roles effectively for all pupils is not possible where individual parents / carers demand a disproportionate or unreasonable amount of time through emails, phone calls or meetings. We will ensure that communications cease when we deem that the excessive contact is to the detriment of our ability to carry out our respective duties in the interests of all our pupils.

Please note that it is not possible to interrupt members of staff during the school day as they need to remain with their classes and often have commitments before, during and after school. If you need to speak to a staff member, please contact the school office who will acknowledge receipt of your query within 2 working days. This inability to respond instantaneously is consistent with arrangements in the NHS and other organisations.

Any emergency situations will be dealt with separately.

Please remember that any time dealing with complaints, excessive communications or questioning of school procedures is time away from our primary aim of supporting our pupils.

Please note the following:

- If parents / carers are rude, abusive or speak in an inappropriate tone over the telephone, our staff will politely end the call.
- If any email is rude or inappropriate in tone, we reserve the right not to reply, or we may choose to take the action outlined within this policy.
- If parents / carers are rude, abusive or speak in an inappropriate tone during a face-to-face meeting or a virtual meeting, our staff will terminate the meeting immediately.
- In either case, the school will forward a copy of this policy to reiterate our expectations and rights with regard to appropriate communication.
- In circumstances where school has listened to the request of a stakeholder (i.e. parent or pupil), considered the request and shared the outcome of this with the stakeholder, should the stakeholder continue to repeat or labour the same request, school reserves the right to cease communication or to limit the reply with a repeat of key messages already shared.
- In such situations where staff feel that they have been misquoted or misrepresented, the school reserves the right to limit contact to written communications. This is entirely at the discretion of the school.

- When the school judges email correspondence to be excessive, the school reserves the right to:
  - cease communication.
  - limit replies to a repeat of key messages already shared.
  - arrange an alternative method of communication.
  - set out a plan for a reasonable, manageable schedule of contact.
- Following reasonable attempts by the school to arrange a meeting at a mutually convenient time, or if a meeting is refused, then communication on this issue will cease.

Whilst we welcome feedback and regularly consult with a range of stakeholders in making key decisions, ultimately the school has to make decisions in good faith, which we deem to be in the best interests of our pupils. Whilst it is never our intention to disappoint, it is not always possible to secure agreement or consensus (and schools are not duty bound to do so). Decisions around behaviour expectations, uniform, teaching and learning strategies or strategic direction are at the discretion of the Headteacher and do not require consensus or parental approval. Equally, the school reserves the right to disregard advice given or offered by stakeholders (however well-meaning) that it believes are not in the best interests of its pupils or staff. This includes advice that either exceeds or contradicts DfE (Department for Education) guidance. We are therefore unable to enter into lengthy discussion or debate regarding such issues. This position is protected by law. Please see our published 'Operational and Strategic decisions protocol' (Appendix One).

3. Communication of Political Views and standpoints

We want our pupils to develop a strong understanding of current and historical affairs; continuing to develop their own opinions and we fully recognise the benefit of healthy, respectful debate.

However, in line with the provisions set out within the Education Act (1996), the school is not permitted to allow the pursuit of partisan political activities by staff or pupils. This can include, and is not limited to, displaying political symbols and campaign slogans (all graffiti, whatever the intention, is not an accepted part of our behaviour policy). Where political issues are discussed in lessons or extra-curricular activity, steps will be taken to ensure there is a balanced presentation of opposing views.

Given that some topics are incredibly complex and engender strong emotive responses, staff and pupils are asked to take into account the sensitivity of key topics. It may be that, at the discretion of the Headteacher, the school decides that it is not appropriate to open certain topics to whole class or group debate. This is in the interests of avoiding any pupil, or group, feeling marginalised and is ultimately in the interest of protecting community cohesion and our fundamental value of kindness.

4. Legal Framework

4.1 This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including but not limited to the following:

The Education Act 2011

The Education Act 1996

The Children Act 2004

4.2 The Malicious Communications Act 1988 prevents the sending of communications (including online messages or letters) that convey a threat, a grossly offensive or indecent message, or false information, if the intention of the sender is to cause distress or anxiety to the reader or recipient. The offence is punishable by up to six months in prison or a fine.

4.3 The Protection of Harassment Act 1997, which makes it a criminal offence to pursue a course of conduct that, in the eyes of a reasonable person, amounts to harassment, or to harass two or more individuals with the intention of persuading a person to do or not do something. As such, online trolling or cyber-bullying can be criminal offences, for which there are serious consequences. Under section 2 of the Protection of Harassment Act 1997, a person guilty of the offence of harassment, which is a summary offence, can be imprisoned for a term of up to six months or given an unlimited fine. There is also a more serious offence, which involves a course of conduct that puts a person in fear of violence, which is an indictable offence carrying a potential sentence of five years in prison (section 4 of the Protection of Harassment Act).

4.4 The Defamation Act 2013 which covers libel and slander and allows legal action to be taken in respect of comments which you make (or have made) relating to the school

or its employees where such comments cause (or may be likely to cause) serious harm to the reputation of the school or its employees. This would include any comments you make online, such as Facebook or other social media platforms.

4.5 This policy also has due regard to statutory guidance, including (but not limited to the following):

DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education.

5. Related School Policies

5.1 This Communications Policy has due regard to the following Trust/school policies and procedures:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equality and Diversity Statement
- E-Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Zero Tolerance Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Acceptable Use Agreements

6. Inappropriate Behaviour

6.1 Though fortunately rare, the school takes any instances of inappropriate behaviour very seriously and will not tolerate any circumstances which may make pupils or members of staff feel threatened. A perceived threat, or any action which makes another individual feel threatened, can be sufficient to bar parents from the premises.

6.2 The use of foul and abusive language will not be tolerated on the school premises or any context.

6.3 Any individual at school should not be discriminated against, whether a staff member, pupil, or another adult, on the basis of their age, race, ethnicity, religion, cultural belief, attainment, disability, gender, sexuality or background.

6.4 Bullying, harassment, or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

6.5 The school holds the right to escort anyone off the premises who is displaying aggressive or disruptive behaviour.

6.6 Under section 547 of the Education Act 1996, it is an offence for any person to cause a nuisance or disturbance on school premises, in such circumstances the police may be contacted to assist in the removal of individuals from the premises, where necessary.

6.7 As outlined in this policy, the persistent occurrence of unacceptable behaviour can result in individuals being permanently banned from the premises.

6.8 The sending of abusive or threatening written or email messages will be treated in the same way as any other abusive or threatening behaviour.

6.9 The following are examples of inappropriate behaviour which may result in sanctions being issued against an individual:

- Causing intentional damage to school property.
- Breaching the school's security procedures.
- Verbal abuse: swearing, talking in an aggressive manner, using offensive language or raising their voice at another individual.
- Making racist or sexual comments or discriminating against any member of staff or pupil for any reason of position, gender or any other personal characteristic or behaviour.
- Physical violence.
- Physically intimidating an individual such as by standing in very close proximity
- The use of threatening body language such as shaking a fist or wagging a finger close to an individual's face.
- Writing or online messaging abusive or defamatory comments regarding an individual or the school, including on social media.

7. Use of social media

7.1 Everyone is expected to act in an appropriate manner when communicating about the school on any social network sites. Routine sentiment analysis of social media platforms is conducted to flag any inappropriate online conduct. Parents, and members of the school community are encouraged to flag any inappropriate social media engagement with a member of the SLT. If the school is made aware of

inappropriate social media engagement it will be at the discretion of the Headteacher on delegated persons to decide the appropriate course of action to be taken in line with this and related policies.

7.2 The use of appropriate language and conduct extends to messaging platforms including SMS (text) to groups or persons connected to the school, and where the language is deemed inappropriate it could be viewed as inciting hatred towards the school or members of the school community. If the school is made aware of inappropriate social media engagement or private group conversations it will be at the discretion of the Headteacher or delegated persons to decide the appropriate course of action to be taken in line with this and related policies.

7.2 Parents and visitors must not attempt to befriend or otherwise contact members of staff or pupils through social media. Where contact has been attempted, this should be reported to the Headteacher.

7.3 Online content (including rumours, allegations and criticism) which are damaging to the school, or any members of the school community should not be posted. In the event of defamation, the school will consider legal action.

7.4 All members of the school community, including parents and visitors are encouraged to use social media responsibly in order to set a positive example for pupils.

7.5 Cyber bullying of any kind will not be tolerated and will be dealt with as a serious incident.

7.6 Any cases of social media use that breach the guidelines of this policy will be reported to the Leadership Team immediately.

7.7 The Leadership Team will report offending individuals using the appropriate 'report abuse' section on the specific social media site and will arrange a meeting with the individuals concerned to discuss their use of social media.

7.8 The individual will be advised to remove any posts or comments that are harmful, immediately.

7.9 The Leadership Team may contact the police for legal action where necessary.

7.10 The school reserves the right to cease communication (except when in relation to the safeguarding of young people) with any individual who behaves outside the acceptable behaviour outlined in this policy.

8. Managing inappropriate conduct

8.1 In the instance of inappropriate behaviour, the school will follow a number of procedures, depending on the severity of the situation:

- Contact will be made by a member of the Leadership Team to discuss the issues raised in a face-to-face or virtual meeting or a written warning will be issued.
- Anyone who is creating a nuisance or disturbance will be asked to leave the premises or remove evidence of inappropriate online engagement.
- Persistent inappropriate online engagement will result in the person being blocked and reported. We will always do what we can to diffuse issues in the appropriate manner to seek resolution.
- The school may issue a letter banning any individual from the site.
- If an individual has been previously barred from the premises, or is causing a serious disturbance, the school will contact the police in order for the individual to be removed from the premises.
- The school will always contact the police in the event of any serious threat or incidence of violence and assault, and in the event of any actual harm caused to an individual.

If any parent / carer behaves in a manner that this policy outlines as unacceptable (such as abusive, aggressive, inappropriate or excessive contact, etc) the school may choose to take appropriate action in line with our legal position or forward a copy of this policy to appropriate individuals to ensure that parents / carers are aware of expectations for future behaviour; the position of the school; our legal rights and protection and any action that we might choose to take.

9. Monitoring and review

The Trust shall be responsible for reviewing this policy from time to time to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

The Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust is an exempt charity regulated by the Secretary of State for Education. It is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales, company number 08253770, whose registered office is at St Wilfrid's Catholic High School & Sixth Form College, Cutsyke Road, Featherstone WF7 6BD

APPENDIX ONE

Operational & Strategic Decisions Protocol

Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust schools strive to build strong relationships with parents, carers and visitors in order to help create stimulating, happy and safe learning environments, which continues from school to home and the wider community, providing all our pupils with the opportunity to achieve their personal best. The trust, support and co-operation of parents is fundamental to the continued success of our school.

We will always seek, where possible, to work with parents / carers in a positive manner to ensure the highest standards within school. We value the home / school relationship and, where appropriate, regularly seek the views of our community, and often choose to share the rationale for our decisions. Whilst it is never our intention to disappoint, given a community of our size, we must accept that it is not always possible to secure agreement on all issues, and it is important to note that some decisions are not open to negotiation and that securing agreement is not necessary. In choosing to send your child to a BKCAT school, we ask that parents / carers understand that all schools (not just ours) have the right to make key operational and strategic decisions without agreement from parents. This position is protected by law.

The following list is not exhaustive, but offers examples of such areas:

- Decisions around setting, choice of teacher, class group, teaching assistant, form tutor, tutor group or tier of entry for examinations.
- Decisions regarding Behaviour or Uniform Policy (parents cannot choose for their child to 'opt out' of either policy or any of the sanctions outlined within). Indeed, parental permission or approval is not required for the issuing of a detention or Internal Exclusion.
- The nature of our rewards system and how we choose to implement it.
- Choice of curriculum content, resources or approaches to Teaching and Learning.
- Our Quality Assurance procedures, approaches to homework or marking.
- The nature of our extra-curricular offer.
- Timing of INSET / Training Days or other key events within the school calendar.
- Curriculum option pathways or subject combinations that the school decides are either in the best interest of the pupil or in terms of timetable constraints.
- The content and delivery of our internal policies and protocols.

As stated, we will always listen to concerns that are shared with the school in a respectful manner (in line with our published Communications Policy). Please note, however, that

listening does not mean that a decision will necessarily change, or that that we do not care. Sometimes we may have to respectfully agree to disagree. It is important to note that decisions will not be changed simply because some disagree, or because of disagreement within WhatsApp groups, on social media, cosigned letters or petitions. Neither will we change direction or alter a decision simply because an individual or group choose to 'shout the loudest' as this is not necessarily representative of a majority view. Put simply, no stakeholder has an absolute veto or right to demand actions from school staff. Our decisions are made in good faith and on the basis of what we consider to be in the best interests of our pupils, our community or the effective running of the school. We will always use our professional judgement, expertise and experience and operate in line with DfE advice or statutory / legal frameworks.

Following the Complaints Procedure will not change a decision unless it determines that the school has acted unlawfully or outside agreed policy positions.

We will endeavour to keep parents / carers informed regarding key decisions, where appropriate. However, to ensure that communications to parents are kept at an acceptable level, it is not always possible or necessary to share all decisions or enter into dialogue about the rationale.

Please be aware that plans change from time to time, this is often beyond our control. We will inform parents / carers as soon as possible but ask for your understanding.

Finally, given the huge volume of complex decisions we make, we will not always get everything right, we are human and will always aim to operate with the best intentions. Above all we ask parents / carers to be kind, as working together positively ensures that we can better meet the needs of children.

Please note: Our published Communications Policy outlines acceptable behaviour, how we will respond to abuse and the legal protections in place.