

St. Columba's Catholic Primary School

Station Road, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear. NE28 8EN

Telephone and Fax: 0191 200 7235

www.stcolumbasprimary.co.uk

Email Address: stcolumbas.primary@northtyneside.gov.uk

Headteacher: Mrs. C. Jordan

Thursday 16th July

Re: Preferred methods of communication to parents

Dear Parents,

Thank you so much for the time you have taken to complete and return the slips regarding preferred methods of communication. We had a tremendous amount of replies back from families, 72 in total. You can find a detailed break-down of the results and additional comments on our school website under Virtual Office – Communication Feedback.

Having listened to your valuable feedback, we have agreed upon the following improvements:

Emails

We will continue to send letters and newsletters home by email however we will no longer be using ParentMail as our system for doing this. We are moving to a new, hopefully more reliable provider, called Schoolcomms. Parents will not have to do anything at all as we can transfer your email addresses from our existing system to the new one.

Text Messages

Schoolcomms also provides a text messaging service which we will use as a way of sending out urgent messages. We will send text messages to the mobile number we have listed as the primary contact for your child. If any message goes to a number you do not wish to be the primary recipient, please contact the school office and we will change your preferences.

Schoolcomms (emails and texts)

Schoolcomms offers a free, smartphone app for parents. Please see the attached letter with regards to downloading this app for your phone if you are interested. You do not have to do this in order to receive emails or text messages, but it does save the school money if text messages can be received through this app where possible.

Twitter and the School Website

Twitter will continue to be used as a way of celebrating the children's achievements and sharing their learning with you on a daily basis. The school website will continue to be updated regularly regarding curriculum activities, policies and news.

Facebook

We have set up an official St. Columba's Facebook page. This page is now live and can be found by searching for St. Columba's Roman Catholic Primary. This page will be a way of sending our short reminders to parents about diary dates and events. Parents are also willing to ask questions and post constructive comments which the school will be able to respond to.

Iona Star and Weekly Notices

We will continue to send out the newsletter and notices weekly. We will post these on the website. We will also email the Iona Star to parents and send out paper copies to ensure all receive the various important messages.

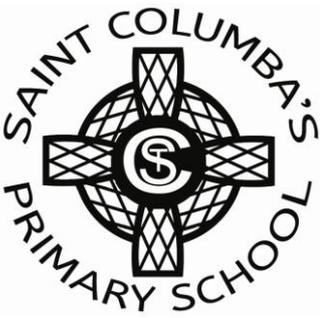
We have listened to parents' concerns regarding more notice for diary dates. In September, we will send out an events list for up and coming dates we have booked in for the academic year ahead. Any dates we need to add during the year, will be done so with as much notice as possible.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Mrs Jordan or the School Office. Once again, thank you for your valuable feedback.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs C Jordan





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SchoolComms App

Improved text messaging system – and you can help the school save money

From time to time, we send information to parents via text message to your mobile phone. A new, free, smartphone app for parents is now available for download called 'School Gateway' for Apple (iPhone 3GS or later, iPad, iPod Touch) and Android (2.3 / Gingerbread or later) devices.

Please could you download this new app to your phone (it's free) as it will help us improve communication with parents – and save the school money.

The set-up process is simple and will take no more than a couple of minutes:

1. Search for "School Gateway" in the Apple App Store/Google Play or on your phone go to www.schoolgateway.com/apple (Apple) or www.schoolgateway.com/android (Android)
2. Install the app and if you are asked then say yes to "Allow Push Notifications"
3. When you launch School Gateway for the first time, please select 'New User' and enter the email address and mobile telephone number you have registered with the school
4. The system will send a PIN code to your phone; please enter this PIN code and the app will be activated for you.

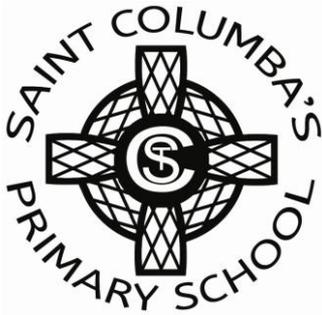
As soon as you've got the system set-up, all of the text messages we send you will appear in the app; you'll receive notifications/alerts as normal.

If you would like to find out more click [here](#)

If you've recently changed your email address or mobile telephone number, please let us know so we can update our records.

Thank you for your help.





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Re: Break-down of results

Thank you so much for the time you have taken to complete and return the slips regarding preferred methods of communication. We had a tremendous amount of replies back from families, 72 in total. Some parents ticked more than one method of communication; therefore the results are as follows:

Text message service – 56
Twitter for reminders and notices – 18
Iona Star on website – 23
Iona Star via paper copy – 39
Iona Star sent via email – 32
Letters about trips and events sent via email – 34
Letters sent home via children – 52

A summary of some of the additional comments have been:

Not keen on ParentMail

Don't feel that ParentMail adds anything useful.

Texts or other emails would be much more efficient for parents.

ParentMail is a great idea however I can't use the app on my phone, nor can I open the email attachments as it's a hassle to log onto my PC to read the notices.

I prefer paper copies, however sometimes they are forgotten or missed due to absence from school and ParentMail has proven to be a great back up!

Weekly newsletters have made a big difference in feeling part of the school community, thank you!

I would prefer an events list in advance as it gives more notice than the weekly newsletter if time is needed off work.

A way to download permission slips from the website and then email them back to school would be great. Thank you.

Very happy to receive all information online or by text.

Texts would be most useful.

Love your Twitter account.

I love how the Iona Star is being communicated weekly; it is a great way of keeping parents informed.

A Facebook page would be useful.

I always look also at the notice board on the school building.

Communication is 100% better! Any further improvements would be a bonus.

Keeping the website current will be great.

Messages and information should be communicated in several ways to ensure dissemination to as many parents as possible. Also, as many parents work or have other commitments, information / important dates should be communicated more in advance.

The weekly Iona Star newsletter and the improved website are so much better.

