

Friday, 16 January 2015

Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you for taking the time to respond to the communication questionnaire. We had 56% of parents respond whose thoughts and comments have helped us review our processes and improve areas of our communication in school. The responses and feedback can be found below.

Yours faithfully,



Wenda Smith  
Head of School

---

## St Martin's Communications Survey December 2014 – Responses and Feedback

---

### Do you regularly (more than once a week) use the school website?

Yes	70%
No	30%

The website is reviewed and updated frequently and we will continue to incorporate your suggestions for making it as user friendly as possible. As a growing school community you will find that the website grows and changes with us, reflecting the whole school as well as having more detailed information about each class within their own dedicated section. We are glad so many of you find it useful and we appreciated the comments about it. The operating system is due to be upgraded next summer and this will mean functionality will improve for use on mobile devices and enable us to offer a greater range of services through this medium.

### In what format would you prefer the weekly newsletter?

Email	82%
Paper	18%

We appreciate that an online version of the newsletter is not suitable for everyone and that sometimes a paper copy is preferred. In the past, the school newsletter has contained a summary of the week with information about upcoming events and reminders for the coming week(s). From 2015, the format of the newsletter will change and become more focussed on **the things you need to know** so as to organise yourself and your child(ren) ready for the coming week. News stories will continue to be published on the website and the emailed version of the newsletter will contain links to the website so that you can access up to date stories and your child's class blog quickly and

*Excellence. Inspiration. Care.*

easily. We have decided that this [newsletter will also be sent home as a hard copy](#) unless you request not to receive one. This is easily done through the school office. Please remember to update changes to email addresses on your Arbor Parent Portal as this will be used to form the mailing list for the newsletter.

#### **Which forms of communication do you find useful?**

Text	96%
Email	89%
Face to Face	82%
Letters in School Bags	82%
Newsletter	64%
Website	46%

We are really pleased that most forms of communication used by the school are seen as useful and hope that the changes made to the newsletter will ensure that information is not duplicated on the website, giving each a different purpose.

#### **Which online services are you likely to use?**

Online Payment	96%
Trip Consents	89%
Children's Data	81%
All other consents and permission slips	81%
Reporting Academic Progress	74%

Over the course of the next twelve months we will be working with our school operating system providers to implement as many of the changes above as are possible. All payments to the school office can be made online and we have had a positive response from parents opting to pay using online banking. Also an [online uniform ordering](#) facility will be available this term which will allow you to order directly from the supplier rather than the school which we hope will make purchasing uniform an easier experience.

#### **Do you find the text message system useful?**

Yes	100%
No	0%

Fantastic. We will continue to use the text messaging service for reminders and emergency whole school and specific class group communications. Due to limits on the lengths of text messages we can send, these may be a prompt to read an email or a letter in your child's book bag.

#### **Parental Comments:**

Many of those who responded also added additional comments regarding improvements they would like to see in terms of home school/school home communications and some also thanked the school for the wide and varied ways in which they were communicated with. We have included the issues raised below and explained the school's approach to resolving each one.

#### **It would be useful to have a 'to do' section listing what needs to be done/brought into school all in one area on the website.**

Each week, class teachers post a blog on the school website which [contains a summary of the week's activities](#), as well as [homework and information about what is happening](#) the following week including reminders of class-based activities. From 2015, [class teachers will make this 'reminder' section more obvious](#). Links to each class blog are published in the newsletter each week. Unless there is essential maintenance taking place on the site, each class blog will be live and updated by the end of the working day each Friday.

*Excellence. Inspiration. Care.*

**I would find it helpful to receive information about things we are required to do in a uniform manner. Plenty of notice always appreciated, and text reminders day before are great. Thanks.**

All class teachers should inform parents of regular 'uniform' requirements at the start of the academic year once the timetable has been set. We appreciate however, that there are 'dressing up' days or special events which require a change from the norm. Although information about these days will be contained on the website, class blogs and within the newsletter, the school will **remind all families two days before** so that there is plenty of time to get organised for the day.

### **Earliest notice possible please of events, especially those requiring parent attendance**

The school will endeavour to give **two weeks notice of all events and activities in writing** to all families. However, sometimes this may not be possible and it is essential that we remain flexible so as to keep our curriculum as exciting and varied as possible. For those families requiring more notice, the **Google calendar** on our website is a great way to get one step ahead. Easily sync'd to your own digital calendars, it will alert you when new events have been added and automatically remind you prior to the big day. Please note however, that specific information, i.e. arrangements for a school trip or payment information, will not be sent home until closer to the event.

**It is a bit disappointing that considering the school are very "Apple" focussed with iPads and Mac, that the arbor system is not user friendly on an iPhone. You need to log onto a computer to be able to view it properly, so it is not very often that it is checked/updated.**

We are aware of the issues when accessing Arbor on different platforms and have passed this on to the software developers. There is an App available in the App store but it is currently only available for iPads and has limited functionality. We will inform you as increased functionality is developed.

**When sending money into school it frequently comes back home in bag. Would prefer to transfer money. I would find a paper list of key events and dates useful, and a basic timetable so for example I can clearly see when PE kit, swim stuff, homework etc is needed.**

Payment online is already in place. Please contact the school office for more information. We hope that the paper copy of the new newsletter format will provide you with an 'at a glance' list of upcoming events at school. The **Google calendar** on our website will give you an overview of events so you can see when you need to bring in your child's swimming kit etc.

We appreciate that sometimes returned letters and information that should come in to school can be missed when teaching staff check through each child's school bag. To make this easier both for your child and the staff at school, we kindly request that your child's **school bag contains only what is absolutely necessary for each day** and that old letters, homework or support materials are kept at home. This will help your child to become much more independent at school as they will be able to see clearly things which need to be handed in. Please ensure that all monies sent into school are sealed in an envelope with your child's name, class, amount contained and what it is for marked clearly on the front. A new, centralised '**School Post Box**' is now available for families to use. This is located at the rear entrance to the school which is used by all children every morning. Anything for the attention of the school office can be posted in the post box which will be emptied at 9am every school day by the office staff.

*Excellence. Inspiration. Care.*

**Last year there was a much greater use of text messages for reminders of events, lost property etc. This was fantastic and it would be nice to see a return to this again. It also seems that if a child has lost some uniform (which is expensive to replace) the parents are now expected to contact all the other parents independently, which was not the case last year, and makes things more stressful. Please can text/emails be sent for these situations again? Finally, letters in bags does seem to have some problems, with some children not getting a letter, while others have more than one in their bag.**

Issues surrounding lost items can be frustrating for parents and the school endeavours to return all left items to their rightful owners as quickly as possible. Information published on the website explains clearly the schools approach to lost property and the measures we can all take to ensure that items are returned easily, including making sure all items are named and helping children identify their own clothing easily. If the school is contacted regarding lost items, every step is taken to find them but there are occasions when items are taken home in error. Parents using their own communication network, which is set up when they join the school, is a fast and effective way for the right people to be contacted at the right time. Parents are also welcome into school to look through the unnamed and unclaimed items in lost property. Please contact the school office for assistance.

Teachers will endeavour to make sure letters are given to each child. To ensure that every child receives a letter at the same time, **emailed copies** will also be sent home at the end of the day to avoid confusion.

*Excellence. Inspiration. Care.*