“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think of these things.”

-Philippians 4: 4-8
We share with each other the EAR of Christ:

**Empathy — Affirmation — Respect**

**Empathy**

“Let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God’s righteousness.” - James 1:19

We must go to the person we seek to understand, rather than going behind their back. We should seek to understand each other’s point of view from within, especially the other’s struggles.

**Affirmation**

“Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.” - Ephesians 4:29-5:2

We acknowledge the other person’s concern and build upon what is good.

**Respect**

“So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil.” - Ephesians 4:25-27

“Rash words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

*Proverbs 12:18*

We find and act on ways to build a relationship.

We foster mutual trust through positive regular communications.
The Best Ways for Parents to Communicate

**Social Media**

*Helpful:* sharing good things about one’s family and our school community

*Not Helpful:* venting strong emotions, such as anger spreading criticism of persons and our school community

**Email/Notes**

*Helpful:* alerting teacher and student of any logistical changes

brief communication regarding student

requesting time for a phone call or face to face meeting

*Not Helpful:* expectation of immediate response or action from teacher expressing or trying to resolve complex concerns that deserve a face to face meeting venting strong emotions, such as anger

**Phone Call**

*Helpful:* ideal for a brief message stating purpose

arranging a phone call appointment for extended conversation

when a parent needs to clarify a child’s perception about a classroom incident.

*Not Helpful:* expecting an immediate response venting strong emotions, such as anger

**Face to Face Meeting**

*Helpful:* for serious concerns or multi-faceted questions that need to be addressed for strategizing and problem solving

arranging a mutually agreeable time and optimal place to meet

*Not Helpful:* Unscheduled and unannounced

At a time and place when another activity is the focus for one of the persons
In a small town somewhere in Eastern Europe lived a nice man with a nasty problem: he talked too much about other people. He could not help himself. Whenever he heard a story about somebody he knew, and sometimes about somebody he did not know, he just had to tell it to his friends. Since he was in business, he heard quite a lot of rumors and stories. He loved the attention he got, and was delighted when they laughed because of the way he told his “anecdotes,” which he sometimes embellished with little details he invented to make them funnier and juicier. Other than that, he was really a pleasant, goodhearted man.

He kind of knew it was wrong, but . . . it was too tempting, and in any case, most of what he told had really happened, didn’t it? Many of his stories were just innocent and entertaining, weren’t they?

One day he found out something really weird (but true) about another businessman in town. Of course he felt compelled to share what he knew with his colleagues, who told it to their friends, who told it to people they knew, who told it to their wives, who spoke with their friends and their neighbors. It went around town, till the unhappy businessman who was the main character in the story heard it. He ran to the rabbi of the town, and wailed and complained that he was ruined! Nobody would like to deal with him after this. His good name and his reputation were gone with the wind.

Now this rabbi knew his customers, so to speak, and he decided to summon the man who loved to tell stories. If he was not the one who started them, he might at least know who did.

When the nice man with the nasty problem heard from the rabbi how devastated his colleague was, he felt truly sorry. He honestly had not considered it such a big deal to tell this story, because it was true; the rabbi could check it out if he wanted. The rabbi sighed.

“True, not true, that really makes no difference! You just cannot tell stories about people. This is all lashon hara, slander, and it’s like murder—you kill a person’s reputation.” He said a lot more, and the man who started the rumor now felt really bad and sorry. “What can I do to make it undone?” he sobbed. “I will do anything you say!”

The rabbi looked at him. “Do you have any feather pillows in your house?” “Rabbi, I am not poor; I have a whole bunch of them. But what do you want me to do, sell them?”
“No, just bring me one.”

The man was mystified, but he returned a bit later to the rabbi’s study with a nice fluffy pillow under his arm. The rabbi opened the window and handed him a knife. “Cut it open!”

“But Rabbi, here in your study? It will make a mess!”

“Do as I say!”

And the man cut the pillow. A cloud of feathers came out. They landed on the chairs and on the bookcase, on the clock, on the cat which jumped after them. They floated over the table and into the teacups, on the rabbi and on the man with the knife, and a lot of them flew out of the window in a big swirling, whirling trail.

The rabbi waited ten minutes. Then he ordered the man: “Now bring me back all the feathers, and stuff them back in your pillow. All of them, mind you. Not one may be missing!”

The man stared at the rabbi in disbelief. “That is impossible, Rabbi. The ones here is the room I might get, most of them, but the ones that flew out of the window are gone. Rabbi, I can’t do that, you know it!”

“Yes,” said the rabbi and nodded gravely, “that is how it is: once a rumor, a gossipy story, a ‘secret,’ leaves your mouth, you do not know where it ends up. It flies on the wings of the wind, and you can never get it back!”

He ordered the man to deeply apologize to the person about whom he had spread the rumor; that is difficult and painful, but it was the least he could do. He ordered him to apologize to the people to whom he had told the story, making them accomplices in the nasty lashon hara game, and he ordered him to diligently study the laws concerning lashon hara every day for a year, and then come back to him.

That is what the man did. And not only did he study about lashon hara, he talked about the importance of guarding your tongue to all his friends and colleagues. And in the end he became a nice man who overcame a nasty problem.
COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS

*Because a child’s perception of reality can differ substantially from an adult’s perception, it is vitally important for parents and teachers to have a sympathetic, collaborative relationship with each other to be of greatest service in the child’s growth in maturity.

*The emotions arising from a concern, such as fear or anger, should be shaped in such a way that they do not dominate or cloud a communication to address and resolve the concern.

*A parent’s primary contact between home and school is the child’s teacher.

*If a problem arises, the student’s teacher/teacher team is the first line of communication.

*If a solution or a plan cannot be reached after working with the student’s teacher/teacher team, please invite administrative assistance to help.

*If there is further need beyond the initial intervention of administrative assistance, the Principal, Mrs. Cheryl Klinker, will work with the family to form a final action plan.

*Assigned by the Pastor to the School, Fr. Jonathan Norton additionally provides ordinary pastoral support throughout the school week to students and families. Fr. Jonathan can be reached through the Parish office.

*Although the Principal’s decisions in matters of school discipline and policy are final, the Pastor of St. Vincent’s, Fr. Daniel Scheidt, is available to offer pastoral support to school families within the larger context of Parish life. Appointments with Fr. Dan are scheduled through Mrs. Marie Andorfer in the Parish office.
Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring love.
Where there is offense, let me bring pardon.
Where there is discord, let me bring union.
Where there is error, let me bring truth.
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.
Where there is despair, let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness, let me bring your light.
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.

O Master, let me not seek as much
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that one receives;
it is in self-forgetting that one finds;
it is in pardoning that one is pardoned;
it is in dying that one is raised to eternal life.

Amen