

Home-school communication policy

Portsmouth Primary School and Early Years



PORTSMOUTH
Primary School & Early Years

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1. Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours of 8:30am until 4pm or their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so. They will aim to answer the communication within two working days but this may not always be possible.

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school

Abusive or aggressive behaviour – in person, by phone or email – will not be tolerated. Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our parent code of conduct.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours or during school holidays.

3. How we communicate with parents and carers

The sections below explain how we keep parents up to date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

Parents should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

3.1 Email

We use email to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day

- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

3.3 School calendar

Our school website includes a school calendar. The year groups will publish key dates in their half-termly newsletter.

Where possible, we try to give parents at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials).

3.4 Phone calls

- Phone calls are recorded. However, they are not routinely replayed. We record phone calls for operational reasons, such as to improve communication, provide evidence of incidents, or for training purposes. This policy confirms that the school's phone calls are being recorded. There is a notification on the school's phone line and this is part of the welcome message.

3.5 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Our half-termly newsletter

3.6 Reports

Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An end-of-year report covering their general approach to school; their achievement in English and maths and how well they are progressing; their behaviour and attitude to learning; and their attendance. It also includes information about the wider curriculum they have been taught and also provides targets.
- A statutory report on results that need to be published with parents e.g. KS2 SATs at the end of Year 6 results and the Early Learning Goals (ELG) in Year R

We also arrange regular parents' evenings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

3.8 Meetings

We hold 5 parents' evenings per year. Therefore in the Autumn and Spring Terms there are two evenings held on the Tuesday and Wednesday of a week. In the Summer, there is an additional parents' evening on the Wednesday. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

3.9 School website

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

3.10 Home-school communications app

The school uses Studybugs to record your child's attendance and also to communicate to parents/carers about attendance but also as an alternative to email communication.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents should use the list in appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and email address.

4.1 Email

Parents should always email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 2 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school.

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact them within 2 working days.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 5 days of your request.

If the issue is urgent, parents should call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address (see appendix 1), or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within 5 working days of the request.

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if parents need to speak to them urgently, we recommend they book appointments to discuss:

- Any concerns they have about their child's learning
- Updates related to pastoral support, their child's home environment, or their wellbeing

5. Accessibility

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school.

5.1 Parents with additional communication needs

We aim to make communications accessible to all. We have taken the following steps to achieve this:

- All whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) are made available in multiple formats
- All communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible
- Accessibility is considered when designing/updating the school website
- Staff are trained on accessibility and will endeavour to provide information in an accessible format

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request reasonable adjustments, such as:

- School announcements and communications in accessible formats
- The use of rooms with hearing aid loops

Please contact the school office to discuss these.

5.2 Parents with English as an additional language (EAL)

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages (our website has links to enable this translation to occur)

We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

6. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 3 years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Home-school agreement
- Staff wellbeing
- Social media policy

Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

- Email or call the school office
- We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff

Remember: check our website first, much of the information you need is posted there.

We try to respond to all emails within 2 working days.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher
Payments	School office
School trips	School office
Uniform/lost and found	School office
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, use the school's absence option on the school's phoneline or use the Studybugs App If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact the school office who will provide the relevant paperwork.
Bullying and behaviour	Your child's class teacher
School events/the school calendar	School office
Special educational needs (SEN)	Your child's class teacher
Before and after-school clubs	School office
Hiring the school premises	School office
Parent Teacher Association (PTA)	Mrs Tracy Blades or Mrs Hayley Ball
Governing board	School office
Catering/meals	School office

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy as found on our website.