TrustEd Schools

Stokesay Primary School

Communication Policy

Review frequency	Annually
Date of determination	11/11/26
Committee	Stokesay LGB
Date of next review	September 27
Policy owner	William Vaughan

Communication Policy for Parents and Staff

1. Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, open communication across our school and with parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning and our staff 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
- Helps staff to manage the pressures of their work life more effectively, supporting their wellbeing.

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

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents/carers are effective, timely and appropriate
- Liaising with staff over the best way to ensure communications between staff are effective, timely and appropriate, and reflecting that in this policy
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

2.2 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with parents/carers is effective, respectful, and timely

Responding to parent/carer communication within a reasonable timeframe (typically within three working days, during term time), unless absence prevents this.

- Communicating with colleagues in a way that supports wellbeing and effective collaboration (e.g. using appropriate channels and timing)
- Using school-approved communication platforms to ensure clarity, consistency, and safeguarding
- Staff are not expected to check, read or respond to communications outside the hours of 7am and 7pm or during school holidays. This represents the maximum period within which communications may be reviewed and does not indicate standard parent-facing contact hours.

Ensuring that parents/carers have login details for appropriate school systems. Issues with access should initially be addressed to reception.

2.3 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Address communications to reception 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.

Parents/carers should not expect staff to respond to communications outside the school's parent-facing contact hours of 8:30am to 4:00pm, or during school holidays. The separate 7:30am to 17:00pm window in section 5.3 applies only to routine internal communication between staff.

3. How we communicate with parents and carers

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

Parents/carers 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/carers informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations

Our regular newsletter

- Student progress reports
- Other school-related activities

3.2 Text messages

We will text parents/carers about:

- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Absences

3.3 Phone calls

We view phone calls as valuable opportunities either to inform parents/carers of incidents or to share positive news about their child.

3.4 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms

Updates on relevant policies and expectations (e.g. behaviour)

3.5 Reports

Parents/carers receive reports from the school about their child's learning.

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

3.6 Meetings

We hold 2 progress evening(s) for each class. During these meetings, parents/carers 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/carers to arrange meetings between progress evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress or wellbeing.

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

3.7 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/carers should check the website before contacting the school.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents/carers 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/carers should always email the school about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge emails within three working days. Where a full response cannot be provided within that timeframe, we will explain the next steps and indicate when a fuller response can be expected. Timings for complaints vary, and parents/carers should refer to our Complaints Policy.

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

4.2 Phone calls

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

If this is not possible because of teaching or other commitments, someone will respond to arrange a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents/carers have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within three working days of the request.

If the issue is urgent, parents/carers should call the school reception.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

Where there is an immediate risk of harm to a child or another person, parents/carers should contact the emergency services or the appropriate safeguarding agency without delay.

For more general enquiries, please call the school reception.

If parents/carers phone the school to speak with a member of staff, our reception team will take a message and pass it on promptly. Calls will be returned within three working days.

4.3 Meetings

If parents/carers would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the school reception to book an appointment.

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

If parents/carers need to speak to their child's teacher, the Headteacher, SENCO or Pastoral Lead urgently, we recommend that they book a telephone or in-person appointment to discuss:

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

4.4 Managing serial and unreasonable complaints

This section may also be used to manage unreasonable or persistent contact that is not directly associated with, or resulting from, a formal complaint.

Stokesay Primary School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

Stokesay Primary School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact Stokesay Primary School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

Any communication plan will normally set out the reasons for the arrangements, the permitted method and frequency of contact, the named point of contact, any exceptions for urgent safeguarding or welfare matters, and the review date.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from Stokesay Primary School.

5. Communication between staff and parents/carers

5.1 Staff responsibilities to parents/carers

All staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication within the school or with parents/carers is respectful at all times
- Responding to communication from parents/carers 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/carers get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)
- Working with colleagues in line with this policy
- Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours 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.

5.2 Staff communication considerations

Staff should all endeavour to support each other in their work and communications. The following are examples of the types of considerations:

- Can a notice regarding something for implementation be sent a day in advance? This reduces pressure on staff.
- Is consultation on a matter needed? If so, it is important to involve staff, for example through asking for comments on a draft. If consultation is not needed, staff should aim to give final copies of matters as a way of reducing work load.
- Avoid "reply all" messages as a matter of course – only where necessary.
- Where possible, where a selection of staff is needed to hear a message, send emails to the right staff – not all staff.

- A regular staff bulletin and staff briefings are good for sharing key information.
- When writing a non-urgent email out of hours, consider scheduling the email to go out during working hours. Do this through: Options -> Schedule send -> Chose time ->

5.3 Staff emails

In our school, communication between staff via emails has been agreed as:

- Email times: for usual communications, emails will be sent between staff on work days between 7:30am and 5:00pm.
- Email times for unusual / urgent communications will also naturally occur, and in these cases, the person communicating outside usual hours will consider work-life balance in the mix before doing so. This is because there are many occasions across a year, where to stick to the usual working hours times would be detrimental to staff wellbeing (e.g. updating your line manager of an absence / illness); are necessary for staff or student welfare / safeguarding; or are necessary for the smooth running of the school. Examples include:

○ updating your line manager / school about your absence (as soon as possible, in line with our attendance policy)

○ safeguarding matters (without delay, in line with KCSIE) ○ closure for snow

○ significant changes of which staff need prior warning (school trip cancelled / duties changed for the next day).

6. Accessibility

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

6.1 Parents/carers with additional communication needs

We aim to make communications accessible to all. Parents/carers who need help communicating with the school can request reasonable adjustments, such as large print, alternative electronic formats, support with reading or responding to communications, or another appropriate format. Please contact the school reception to discuss individual needs.

6.2 Parents/carers with English as an additional language (EAL)

We currently make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in the following languages: › English

Parents/carers who need help communicating with the school may request translated information or interpreting support where reasonably available.

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

7. Monitoring and review

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

The policy will be approved by the local governing board (LGB) which includes staff governors.

8. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Complaints
- Well-being Charter

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 the school office on admin@stokesayprimary.co.uk or,

Call the school office on 01588 672275

- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for emails)
- 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 aim to acknowledge emails within three working days. Where a full response cannot be provided within that timeframe, we will explain the next steps and indicate when a fuller response can be expected.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT…	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher via School Reception
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Pastoral Lead
Payments	School reception or the relevant school role

School trips	School reception or the relevant school role
Uniform/lost and found	School reception or the relevant school role
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01588 672275 If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact school reception
Bullying and behaviour	Assistant Headteacher
School events/the school calendar	School reception or the relevant school role
Special educational needs (SEN)	SENDCO via school reception
I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT…	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
Before and after-school clubs	School reception or the relevant school role
Governing board	School reception or the relevant school role
Catering/meals	School reception or the relevant school role

Complaints

If you would like to make a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in the school's published Complaints Policy, available on the school website or from school reception.