



Communication Policy

Introduction

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It is through effective and interactive communication that information is transmitted, understanding is developed and shared, trust is built, confidentiality respected and action coordinated. Communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated. Good communication promotes partnership.

Aim

To ensure that Bearwood Primary and Nursery School is a thriving and successful school, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents and with other members of the wider community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

Objectives

All communications at Bearwood Primary and Nursery School should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents, governors and other stakeholders well informed.
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional.
- Use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all.
- Be actioned within a reasonable time.
- Use the methods of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.
- Take account of relevant school policies and procedures.
- Be compatible with our core values and School Improvement & Development Plan.

Responsibilities

This section details the responsibilities of the different groups within the school.

Senior leadership team (SLT)

- To ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels, where practicable face to face.
- To ensure that staff have the relevant information available to communicate with colleagues effectively.

- To maintain open channels of two-way communication and to listen to feedback and comment from all staff.
- To keep governors informed of developments and concerns.

All staff

- To communicate regularly with each other, preferably face to face or email, to ensure information is available and understood within the context of the classroom and working environment.
- To ensure they are informed and have access to information in order to be as effective as possible in their role and to support their work within the school.
- To use open channels of two-way communication to keep the leadership team and colleagues informed.
- To check the communication book each week after the briefing.
- To ensure that emails are checked at least once a day and responded to if necessary. Any communication which is important and needs to be actioned within 24 hours will be communicated in person.

Governors

- To ensure the use of trusted online spaces when communicating between governors or with the school
- Using a variety of communication methods to promote & explain the work of the governor
- Listening to people online to hear what is being said about the school
- To ensure the posting of minutes of meeting in appropriate places

Internal methods of communication

- All staff receive an induction pack providing them with important information about organisation and procedures within the school
- An integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff both formal and informal: e.g. teachers' meetings, teaching assistant meetings, Office meetings, key stage meetings, whole staff meetings
- All formal meetings (staff and SLT) should be structured and minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda.
- E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating information however it should not replace face to face meetings where an in depth discussion is required.
- Written communications should be placed in pigeon holes, in the staffroom, which staff must check daily and clear regularly
- Teachers' meetings & SLT meetings take place every week and the minutes are placed in the staffroom as appropriate. Events are discussed in advance at meetings but staff also have the responsibility to check future actions

- TA meetings, Whole Staff meetings & Office meetings take place once a week. Key stage meetings are held informally or formally, as required
- Governors' meeting minutes are placed in the governors folder in the foyer.
- The whiteboard in the staffroom is used for day to day notices
- Reminders or letters to individual parents are sent to classes to be given out by the class teachers and must be given to children the same day. Every class must have a system for distributing letters and other materials to go home with the children. ALL letters must be seen by a member of SLT before going out and a copy should be sent to the office for the website. If the letter has mistakes in, then it will be sent back to the teacher to correct.
- The schools uses Tucasi and MME to communicate with parents by text or e-mail
- Urgent messages for parents/carers will be sent by text or a phonecall as early as possible and followed up by the office staff to ensure receipt
- A list of all those not subscribing to Tucasi will be kept by the office & hard copies sent to all those on the list

External methods of communication Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, other schools, the community and with outside agencies. Our aim is to have clear and effective communications with all parents and the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting school.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end parents should always be addressed in an appropriate manner. Teaching staff will not accept friendship requests from parents on social media.

We will try to make written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions to our society by all cultural groups represented in our school.

Communications with Parents/Carers

Letters: Staff will respond to parents' letters **requiring an answer within 48 hours (2 school days) to acknowledge receipt of the communication. Up to a further 5 school days can be granted where further investigation of the matter is required.** Any letter of complaint must be referred to the Head Teacher immediately. Letters to parents must be approved by the Head Teacher before they are sent. Copies of all correspondence to individual parents will be placed in pupil files. A copy of general letters will be placed in letters to parents' folder in the foyer.

E-mail/Text: The school has an e-mail/text system which it uses to communicate with parents. Any communication that needs to be sent to parents using this system must be approved by the Head Teacher. If a parent communicates with the school using email with a complaint or a matter that requires an action, a copy should be stored in a digital file or printed & filed. Staff should forward relevant emails from parents to the Head Teacher and should always do so if the content is a complaint. **All e-mails requiring an answer should be responded to within 48 hours (2 school days) to acknowledge receipt of the communication. Up to a further 5 school days can be granted where further investigation of the matter is required.** If a parent wishes to contact a teacher or member of staff via email then the school account should be used school@bearwood.poole.sch.uk. Please use BCC in the email as appropriate to ensure that data protection regulations are being adhered to.

E-mail communications concerning a child are kept for the academic year in a digital folder unless they are required for evidence trailing, in which case a copy should be printed.

Telephone calls: Office staff will not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency. This includes ringing the phone in the main corridor during teaching time.

Social Media Sites/Blogs: Staff are advised not to communicate with parents via social networking sites or accept them as “friends”. Staff will not accept pupils or ex-pupils as “friends”.

Written Reports: Once a year, we provide a full written report to each child’s parents on their progress. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. Pupils are also given an opportunity to comment on their progress.

Newsletters: Newsletters are e-mailed out weekly. If a parent has not signed up for Tucasi then a hard copy will be sent out in the child’s book bag.

In addition, parents meet their child’s teacher/s three times during the year for a private consultation at a Parents’ Evening. We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child’s progress or well-being. When children have particular education needs, or if they are making less than expected progress, parents will be invited to meet with their child’s teacher more regularly. We will also make reasonable adjustments to our arrangements if this will enable a parent with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our school, or to receive and understand communication. Parents of children with an IEP (individual education plan) will have the opportunity to review the IEP (individual education plan) at least twice a year.

School Website: The school website provides an opportunity to share information about the school and is an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience.

Home-School Communication:

- Home School Agreements are signed on entry
- Home visits & pre-school visits take place during term 1 for those joining Oak 1 and offered to Oak 2 in September
- Information is displayed on the notice board outside school which is updated regularly
- The weekly school newsletter is e-mailed out through Tucasi & posted on the school website. Paper copies are sent to parents/carers not on the Tucasi list
- Parents/carers will be texted or phoned if there is an unexpected cancellation of a club
- Parents are invited to meet governors informally at parents evening twice a year where they have the opportunity to discuss various topics.
- Once a year a questionnaire is sent out to parents and the results are analysed & used to improve the school

We recognise that children's protection is a shared responsibility, and that Bearwood Primary and Nursery School should provide a safe and secure environment. If any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed to the Designated Senior Person for Children Protection, or the Deputy DSP, who may share this information with Social Services.

How will this policy be monitored and evaluated?

This policy will be monitored through on-going school self-evaluation. The Head Teacher will use a variety of methods to evaluate this policy with staff, parents & governors.

Other policies that might be of interest to you.

- Child Protection
- Complaints procedure
- Staff code of conduct
- Data Protection
- Visitor code of conduct policy

Date reviewed: September 2018

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