

Bearwood Primary and Nursery School



"Learning, Enjoying, Succeeding Together"

Communications Policy

Updated: Autumn Term 2023

Review: Autumn 2024

Bearwood Primary and Nursery School

Communications Policy

Contents

Introduction	3
Aim	3
Objectives.....	3
Responsibilities	3
Senior leadership team (SLT).....	3
All staff	3
Governors.....	3
Internal methods of communication	4
External methods of communication.....	4
Communications with Parents/Carers	5
Communication with Parents/Carers is streamlined in the following ways:	5
Letters	5
E-mail/Text	5
Telephone calls.....	6
Social Media Sites/Blogs	6
Written Reports.....	6
Celebration Newsletters.....	6
Parent Consultations / Parent Evenings	6
School Website.....	6
Home-School Communication	6
How will this policy be monitored and evaluated?.....	7

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 Vision, Bearwood Goals and associated values
- Be compatible with our 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

Information may be brought to colleagues' attention through the following channels, amongst others:

- 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, whole staff meetings
- All formal meetings (staff and SLT) should be structured and minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda.
- TA meetings, Whole Staff meetings & Office meetings take place once a week and will often include a CPD aspect
- Weekly Briefing - The weekly briefing is conducted currently in the staffroom on Thursdays at lunch time and the minutes are placed in the staffroom as appropriate. All teachers must attend.
- Staffroom notice boards - these are located in the Staff Room.
- School calendar via Microsoft Outlook. Many events are organised and dates known well in advance and it is helpful to all employees for these to be published in the school calendar. All events involving a visitor to the school or where classes or staff are completing activities additional to the usual curriculum timetable must be added onto the online whole school calendar.
- An SDP timeline is shared at the start of each half term where significant events, dates and deadlines are shared.
- E-mail - all employees have been issued with e-mail accounts. Employees are expected to check their school email accounts daily as this is the preferred method of communication for **all items, both urgent and non-urgent**;
- 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
- Governors' meeting minutes are available on request from the Headteacher.
- 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 the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher before being sent to parents, which will then be given to the office team to send out via email. If the letter has mistakes in, then it will be sent back to the teacher to correct.
- The schools uses the My Child at School (MCAS) app via Bromcom and the Marvellous Me (Mme) app to communicate with parents by text or e-mail (see 'Communication with Parents/Carers' section of this policy).
- 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

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. All staff are to follow the 'Employee Handbook' and 'Social Media' policy to ensure that a code of conduct is adhered to.

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

Communication with Parents/Carers is streamlined in the following ways:

Letters

Outbound:

Letters to parents are sent either on a Monday or a Wednesday attached to an email via MCAS (Bromcom).

'Marvellous Mondays' – Each Monday, our celebration news is sent, outlining information about those children who have been 'star' children from the previous week, including celebrating VIPs and those children who have excelled in our Bearwood Goals.

'We need to know Wednesdays' – Each Wednesday, information letters, 'Bearwood Bulletins' and upcoming dates will be sent to you. Each time there will be an email with specific year group letters attached. All information / letters shared in these emails will also be made available on the school website each Wednesday.

Letters to parents must be approved by the Head Teacher or Deputy Headteacher before they are sent. A copy of general letters will be placed in letters to parents' folder in the school office, available to parents on request.

Inbound:

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. Copies of all correspondence to individual parents will be placed in pupil files.

E-mail/Text

Outbound:

The school has an e-mail/text system also available via an app called 'My Child at School' (MCAS) which it uses to communicate with parents – letters will be attached to emails and parents/carers will be notified via MCAS. The 'Marvellous Me' app is also used to send reminder messages.

If there is an urgent information which has not been included in the main communication emails / letters then a text message or email may be sent at another time in the week.

Any communication that needs to be sent to parents using this system must be approved by the Head Teacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Inbound:

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”. Please refer to the HET Social Media Policy and Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy for further guidance on this matter.

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.

Celebration Newsletters

‘Marvellous Mondays’ – Each Monday, our celebration newsletter is sent, outlining information about those children who have been ‘star’ children from the previous week, including celebrating VIPs and those children who have excelled in our Bearwood Goals.

A half-termly celebration newsletter is also sent on the Friday of the last week of each half term, outlining and celebrating all the events and points of note that have taken place that half term.

Parent Consultations / Parent Evenings

In addition, parents meet their child’s teacher/s two 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) or a BRP (behaviour response plan) will have the opportunity to review the IEP or BRP 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 to the school and each September (via MCAS)
- Reception (Oak 2) home visits take place each June / July prior to the child starting Oak 2 in the following September. Parents of Oak 2 are also invited into school for a parent consultation during their child’s first week in Reception.
- Home visits take place during term 1 for those joining Oak 1 – the Nursery.
- Information is displayed on the notice board outside school which is updated regularly.
- The weekly school communication is e-mailed out through MCAS (on a Monday and Wednesday) & posted on the school website. Paper copies are available from the school office on request.
- 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 there is the opportunity to discuss various topics.
- Once a year, a questionnaire is sent out to parents regarding different aspects of the school and the results are analysed & used to improve the school. The results are shared with the school community.

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 & Safeguarding Policy
- HET Complaints policy & procedure
- Employee Handbook (including code of conduct)
- Data Protection
- Visitor code of conduct policy