

EASTINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL



Communication Policy

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Chair of Governors: Alvin Fernandes

Communication policy

1. Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on students' 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 student'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 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
- 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 E-safety and internet usage 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)

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

- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school
- Demonstrating an understanding that staff may not always respond promptly to communication outside of their individual working hours

3. How we communicate with parents and carers

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

Staff should follow safeguarding policy in only communicating with parents via school email addresses and only using school devices for texts and phone calls, wherever possible.

3.1 Email

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

- General information sharing
- Upcoming school events
- Short-notice changes to the school day or normal routine
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- Class activities or teacher requests

3.2 Text messages

We will text parents about:

- A recently sent email
- Short-notice changes to the school day or normal routine
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- General information sharing

3.3 Phone calls

Phone conversations with parents are part of the culture in school and occur on a daily basis. Phone calls can be initiated by both school and parents.

We will phone parents to inform about:

- Short-notice changes to the school day or normal routine
- General information sharing
- Sharing reports and/or updates on matters in school specifically relating to their child

3.4 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Our weekly newsletter

3.5 Reports

Once a year, we provide a full written report to each child's parents on their progress in each subject. This provides a summary of the pupil's academic development; parents are encouraged to take up any queries directly with the child's class teacher.

Reports are also produced for statutory annual EHCP review meetings.

3.6 Parent consultations and review meetings

In addition, parents' consultation evenings take place twice a year, during the Autumn and Spring terms. During these meetings, parents can talk with staff about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of success or concern.

Teachers welcome the opportunity to talk to parents as and when issues arise, either at the end of the school day or by arranging a telephone call. The school may contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

When children have Special Educational Needs, or if they are making less than expected progress, we find it helpful to meet with parents more regularly. This includes meeting to review Education Health Care Plans (EHCPs), Termly Support Plans (TSPs) and Individual Behaviour Plans (IBPs).

With every student in school possessing an EHCP, annual review meetings are held once per year when the provision and outcomes can be evaluated and updated. Interim reviews may also be arranged should serious concerns emerge regarding a child and/or should their placement be in the process of breaking down.

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 extra-curricular provision

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

3.7 School prospectus

The school prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of provision at our school.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

4.1 Email

Parents should always email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance. If a query or concern is urgent, and you need a response sooner than this, please call the school.

Please send all emails to:

eastrington.primary@eastriding.gov.uk

Your email will be forwarded to the correct member of staff. We will endeavour to respond to the majority of emails within 3 working days. If your email will take longer to deal with, we will confirm receipt of your email and give you an indication of the expected timescale for a response.

4.2 Phone calls

If you need to speak to a specific member of staff about a non-urgent matter, please email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact you as promptly as possible.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will get in touch with you to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure you have spoken to the appropriate member of staff as swiftly as possible. If your issue is urgent, please call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

4.3 Meetings

If you would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, please email the staff member of directly or the eastrington.primary@eastriding.gov.uk

Alternatively, you can call the school to arrange an appointment.

Annual review meetings are scheduled by following the SEN code of practice to provide the statutory period of time for professionals and parents to submit reports and views.

5. New pupils

Parents of new pupils are invited into school to meet the Headteacher and other relevant staff and be taken on a tour of the school. They are also given a new parent pack containing useful information, consent forms, a copy of the school prospectus and the Home-School Agreement which summarises the positive working relationship the school wishes to foster with the pupil and their family.

6. Raising concerns

The school aims to resolve issues as speedily and informally as possible. However, where it has not been possible to come to a satisfactory conclusion, parents should refer to our Complaints Policy.

7. Social Networking sites

Staff will not communicate with parents via social networking sites (such as Facebook) and we kindly request that staff are not requested as 'friends'. All queries regarding school should be sent using the methods outlined in this policy.

8. Mobile phones

Pupils

Pupils should not bring mobile phones or wearable technologies to school. Any exceptions must be discussed with and approved by the Headteacher.

Parents/carers

Use of mobile phones on the school site should be courteous and appropriate to the school environment. Parents are welcome to photograph or film school events such as shows or sports day, but images that include children other than their own should not be published (eg. on social networking sites) without the permission of parents/carers of other children.

Parents are required to turn mobile phones off when volunteering in classrooms or visiting Eastington Primary School. Under no circumstances is mobile phone use permitted when helping with swimming lessons.

Making voice recordings on a mobile phone or other device during meetings or discussions with staff or governors is not permitted.

8. Inclusion

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school. As such, we work with each family in establishing a preferred method of communication, be this email, text, phone calls or arranging face-to-face communication.

9. Internal methods of communication

9.1 Meetings

There is a weekly staff meeting which focus on different school priorities and may be minuted. Some meetings between staff take place remotely via Microsoft Teams and these may be recorded to enable other staff to watch them at a later date. Other meetings take place throughout the term; these include meetings for Teaching Assistants, Lunchtime Supervisor meetings, Pupil Progress and Attainment meetings, subject leader meetings and senior leadership team meetings.

9.2 Email

Information and requests for information as well as notification of events and initiatives are communicated through the use of email, where appropriate. Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information; however, it doesn't replace face-to-face meetings where some discussion is required.

All staff are expected to check their emails every day; however, this should not be during teaching time.

In an effort to address staff well-being, staff will not be expected to respond to any email sent outside their contracted hours until the next working day. As many of our staff work part-time, staff are not expected to respond to any emails they receive on their days off, these emails may be left until 8am on their first day back in school.

9.3 Text messaging/whatsapp messaging

Mobile phones should not be used during lessons or when in contact with the children. In exceptional cases, such as family illness, the circumstances should be discussed with the Headteacher. Non-intrusive work-related mobile phone use is acceptable during PPA or management time. During trips and off-site provision, staff should ensure that they can be contacted by mobile phone at all times.

The sending of messages on whatsapp or text messages is a useful way to communicate out of school hours; however, in order to allow staff to 'switch off' from school related issues, all staff are asked to consider whether the sending of a message to groups of staff is really necessary, particularly between 4pm and 8am on weekdays and at weekends. Staff well-being is vitally important and we ask that staff make a note of any request or information they wish to share and consider a more appropriate time or means to share this information.

9.4 Staff noticeboards

The staff noticeboards are located in the staff room. These are used to display events and notices for the week ahead as well as timetables for the hall and IT suite.

10. Retention

The majority of emails are deleted as soon as the matter has been dealt with. However, where there is an ongoing issue or complaint, copies of communication such as emails and letters may be kept for reference until the matter has been resolved. All communication will be destroyed as soon as the child leaves Eastington Primary School unless it forms part of their pupil file which is transferred to the receiving school via internal or registered post.

10. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every two years. The policy will be approved by the governing board.

11. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- E-safety and internet usage policy
- Complaints