

Buckden CE Primary Academy

Communications Policy 2019



Aims of the policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that effective communication and consultation takes place between the school, parents, carers, pupils and other stakeholders and that there are robust processes to facilitate this.

The school recognises that engaging and working with parents and carers is a vital key in providing their child with an excellent education. Parents and carers are offered opportunities throughout the year to convey to us what they expect from and think of the school. Our wish is to involve as many parents and carers in their child's education as possible.

Our aims include the following:

- To make the school as welcoming and inclusive as possible.
- Signage will be clear, informative and positive.
- All written and telephone enquiries will be dealt with promptly and parents and carers can expect an response within 5 working days. (published in parents' prospectus)
- A variety of forms of communication with parents and carers for example, telephone contact, e-mail, post and text.
- Parents and carers are contacted for positive as well as negative reasons.
- Information is given to parents and carers on what pupils will be taught
- Parents and carers will be encouraged to help or support their child's learning at school and at home. Information will be provided in a timely way to enable this support to be effective.

Communication with parents and carers

1.1 Choosing the correct member of staff to address a query

Please see updated staff list produced by November each year, which details who to contact and how to progress any query that is not successfully resolved.

1.2 Letters

Staff will always reply to a letter from parents and carers as quickly as possible. A response to acknowledge receipt of a letter will be made by telephone, letter or email within 3 working days and responded to within 5 working days. Letters to parents/carers must be processed through the school administration team and approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team before posting/emailing. Letters/emails being sent out to all parents/carers should be approved by the Senior Leadership Team responsible for communication and sent out using SIMS. Copies of correspondence with parents and carers will be placed on pupil files on SIMS. Any letters of concern or complaint should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy (copy available on the policy page of the school website).

The school will use standard templates for letters where possible.

Whole school information is included in a weekly newsletter, published on Friday each week during school term time. A link to an electronic copy of this is emailed to all parents and carers as well as being published on the school website. Hard copies of the newsletter are available from the school upon request.

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide the school with a current email address for prompt and effective communication. However, If we are unable to obtain a current email address for any parent or carer, communications will be delivered home in hard copy by their child or sent by post.

The correct salutations must be used when writing to or emailing parents/carers/partnerships. The use of a parent, carer or staff member's first name is not appropriate; therefore, all communications will be to and from Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc and sign off is always full name Ms/Mrs/Mr/Dr Teacher Surname. Any relevant line manager must be copied into letters or emails.

1.3 E-mail

E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is the school's preferred method of communication. Emails received will be treated in the same way as letters: acknowledged within 3 working days and responded to within 5 working days. Emails should be short and clear and the same care and consideration should be given as when sending a letter. Any items longer than a paragraph should be attached in word format. A staff contact list is published on the school website.

Parents and carers may wish to contact the school via email for a general enquiry as an alternative to telephone or letter. The school email address is: office@buckdenacademy.org

Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils or parents and carers using their own personal email address.

1.4 Telephone Calls

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time and running clubs or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents and carers may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

In a non-emergency a return call will be made within 3 working days, 3 attempts will be made to make contact, leaving a voicemail on the 3rd attempt. Any follow up action from the request /query/problem being dealt with within 10 working days. Staff will make a record of a telephone conversation with a parent/carers on the PR log.

1.5 Texts

Automated texts from SIMS are sent to parents/carers (including in the event of an emergency closure of the school) but are not used for general communications from members of staff and staff should not respond by text to a text message received from a parent/carer (but should respond using an alternative means of communication such as email or telephone if appropriate).

1.6 Absence

If a child is absent, parents and carers are asked to contact the school as soon as possible on the morning of the absence, for full details please refer to the Attendance Policy (copy available on request).

1.7 Meeting with Parents and carers

Parents and carers wishing to meet a member of staff must contact the school to make an appointment. This request should be responded to within 5 working days.

Parents and carers should report to reception prior to meeting with a member of staff. A member of staff may ask a senior colleague to accompany them.

Staff should call a meeting to a close in the event of the parents or carers becoming angry or abusive. This should be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Actions could be taken under the Persistent Complaints and Harassment Policy.

1.8 Social Networking

The School has a Twitter account which is used to provide updates to parents and pupils who wish to subscribe to this. It is not compulsory to do so and therefore any key messages will be relayed through formal school communication channels.

1.9 Reports and Progress

Parents and carers receive an interim progress report and a full annual report to provide information about their child's progress in each academic year.

In addition, parents and carers have the opportunity to meet their child's subject teachers twice a year, at parents evening. Parents and carers should contact the school if issues arise about their child's progress or wellbeing. The first point of contact should be the child's class teacher .

We welcome the presence of any other adult a parent or carer wishes to invite to a school meeting for support or to act as an interpreter. Prior notice must be given to the school

1.10 Accessibility

We will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to enable a parent or carer with a disability to participate fully in a meeting or to receive and understand a communication.

Published November 2015

Amended and ratified November 2017

Amended November 2019 (note changes from timescales)