# Communication Policy

(The best way to communicate with our school)

## *Federation of Boldmere Schools*

**Version:** June 2025

**Ratified by the Governing Body:**

**Signed by the Governing Body:** Chair: Mrs Laura Shergold

**To be reviewed: when required**

Aims and intentions:

Effective communications enable us to share our school aims and values as well as keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the vital role that parents play in supporting the school and their child/ren. Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, it is essential that relationships are professional and parents are addressed in a formal manner in all communication, whatever the form.

The federation of Boldmere schools aim to make our communication as accessible and inclusive as possible. We will ensure that all of our parents can access a form of communication, making alternative arrangements where necessary.

For the purpose of this policy, the term parents refers to parents, carers and family members in general connected with the school community.

The policy is broken down into the following four sections:

1) Key Policy Objectives
2) Roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders
3) How the school communicates with parents
4) How parents are encouraged to communicate with school

## Section 1) Key Policy Objectives:

All communications at the federation of Boldmere schools should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents and other stakeholders well-informed
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use standard English and be easily understood by all
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context and audience
- Either be neutral or offer a balanced presentation of views

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## Section 2) Roles and Responsibilities of all stakeholders

*The senior leadership team (SLT) - The school's SLT is responsible for:*

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Implementing, monitoring and regularly reviewing this policy
- Ensuring a collaborative and respectful relationship is established and maintained with all stakeholders in the best interests of children

*Staff - All staff are responsible for:*

- Working collaboratively and effectively (with other members of staff) to make sure parents get accurate and timely information
- Responding to communication from parents in line with this and other relevant school policies
- Ensuring that communication with the parents is respectful at all times and aligned to the school's core values (Respect, Kindness, Appreciation, Resilience, Co-operation and Honesty)

*Parents - Parents are responsible for:*

- Working collaboratively and effectively to make sure school is given accurate and timely information and ensuring that any issues or concerns are shared appropriately with the school rather than in the public domain i.e. on social media / networking sites
- Checking and responding to communications from the school (such as requests for consent or providing up to date contact information) in a timely manner
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance (see table below)
- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times and aligned to the school's core values (Respect, Kindness, Appreciation, Resilience, Co-operation and Honesty) adhering to the safety statement published by the schools

## Section 3) How the school communicates with parents:

*Face to face discussion*

Face to face communication is the best and preferred method of communication and usually leads to the swiftest resolution of any issues. Teachers' availability for face to face communication is restricted due to their teaching commitments; this will always take priority meaning the window for face to face communication is limited. In their absence, senior staff are always available on the school gate and should be the first port of call for face to face communication, particularly where the concern is of an urgent nature.

*Telephone calls*

Parents may contact staff and vice versa by telephone. In ordinary circumstances, telephone calls would only be made and received during school office operational hours; 8.15am – 4:00pm. Outside of these times, parents may leave a message on the answering service. Parents should understand that teachers have minimal time during the working day to make or receive telephone calls due to their front-facing teaching commitments. Depending on the nature of the query or concern, teachers will respond within the same

timeframe as for written communication. Where relevant, notes from telephone calls, including main points of discussion and action required/taken will be logged and placed in pupils' files.

*Formal letters (sent via the school office)*
Parents may write to the school, marking the letter to the attention of the relevant member of staff. Staff will endeavour to reply to parents' letters as quickly as possible. Letters will be acknowledged in 3 working days from receipt and a reply sent within 7 working days. Copies of correspondence with parents will be placed on the pupil's file. Informal letters addressed directly to class teachers are not encouraged.

*Email*
Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information. All email should be treated as letters and should be checked carefully for technical errors and the appropriate tone (in accordance with the responsibilities set out above).
Staff should acknowledge an email within 3 working days and send a full reply within 7 working days. On occasion, there may be a legitimate reason for a delay extending beyond 7 working days, such as consultation or investigation. Parents will be kept informed where delays occur.
Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils, parents or conduct any school business using personal email addresses.

*Parentmail*
A large bulk of the school's communication with parents is via Parentmail through our MIS (Arbor), which is a quick, economic and efficient method for the school to communicate with parents. Parentmail is used to send out a variety of information, either to a targeted group, or to all parents on Parentmail. School will work on the assumption that ALL children's parents access Parentmail communication.

*The weekly newsletter*
A weekly newsletter aims to keep parents informed and up-to-date regarding school notices and events. Newsletters will routinely be shared via Parentmail and uploaded on to the school websites.

*School approved social media platforms*
For some non-essential but relevant information sharing with parents, school may use a designated social media platform. Examples of this include sharing information about children's achievements in school, providing updates that give a flavour of curriculum coverage in classes and giving informal reminders/updates.

*Meeting with parents*
We encourage parents to contact the school if issues arise regarding their child's progress or wellbeing. For everyday issues, parents should contact their child's class teacher in the first instance, via any of the communication methods detailed above. For persistent or serious issues requiring urgent attention, parents should contact the head teacher. Any parent wishing to meet with a member of staff should contact the school office in advance and request a mutually agreeable time to meet with that member of staff. The subject for the meeting should be shared in advance to help staff be fully prepared, ensuring the meeting is productive. Whilst staff will endeavour to ensure meetings have productive outcomes, a resolution is not always guaranteed. In such circumstances it is perfectly acceptable to call a meeting to a close in order to allow time for further investigation if required.

*Planned meetings*
There are pre-arranged meetings throughout the school year, examples of which include the following:

- Parents' consultation evenings.
- Meetings held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content and arrangements.

- Information meetings for new parents i.e. at the start of reception or the start of year three are held each year.
- Curriculum meetings as determined in year groups.
- Additional meetings (usually termly) for those children with SEND to review targets and progress.

Where appropriate to do so, parents are encouraged to defer any communication with school staff if a planned meeting is imminent.

*Possible contentious meetings*
A member of staff may ask for another member of staff to accompany them and should always do so when the meeting may be contentious, or has the potential to become contentious, or if their input will add value to the meeting. When possible, a member of the school's senior leadership team will attend this meeting. The key discussion points, actions and decisions should be recorded. Staff should call a meeting to a close in the event of the parent becoming angry, abusive or unreasonable. The member of staff should report such an incident to the head teacher and seek further advice, drawing reference to the parent conduct policy if appropriate.

*Social Media / Networking Sites (See also E-Safety Policy)*
Staff will not usually* communicate with parents via social networking sites nor accept them as their "friends" and will never do so where pupils are concerned. The exception is networks or blogs set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning. Neither parents, staff nor children should ever use social media / networking sites to share school-related or pupil-related allegations or issues in the public domain.
*It is recognised that some staff, i.e. those that live in the immediate school community and/or those whose children attend the school will have established friendships of others within the school community. Staff should address any queries related to this to a member of the school's leadership team.

*Written reports*
Parents are provided with written reports three times a year identifying pupils/ areas of strength and areas for further development. When pupils have special educational needs, or if they are making less than expected progress or experiencing behavioural or social difficulties, staff may arrange to meet with parents more regularly.

*School Website*
The school website is multi-functional in that it provides the following: information about the school; an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience; guidance on admissions for prospective parents and pupils; up-to-date policies available for parents to view. It also has a regularly updated area for information for current parents. Copies of all newsletters to parents, key calendar dates and extensive current curriculum information (including half-termly curriculum overviews) is also provided on this platform.

*Communication with other schools and outside agencies*
It is routine practice for schools to share information with one another concerning pupils, with schools statutorily obliged to do so when children change schools either in year or at the end of a key stage. In addition, schools are uniquely placed with regard to child protection and in the interests of safeguarding children, will communicate as required with relevant agencies (further detail provided in the school's child protection and safeguarding policy).
As part of our curriculum and extra-curricular provision, the school will regularly invite guest speakers, experts and representatives from a range of organisations and institutions to the school to speak to and engage with our pupils. Prior to these visits, we will agree the terms and content of their input into the provision and ensure that it is in accordance with our policies.

## Section 4) How parents can communicate with school

| Message, Queries, Concerns | Preferred Method of Contact |
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| If your child is absent from school… | Please notify the school office each day of absence by 9.00am either by telephone, email or via the contact form on the school website. Please note that this notification does not guarantee that absences will be authorised. |
| If you have a quick message for your child's teacher about collection, minor concerns, home learning etc… | Talk to your child's teacher when collecting if appropriate or share via a member of the school's SLT. |
| If you have information about your child to pass on to your child's class teacher… | Share via a member of the school staff on the school gate. |
| If you would like to talk about your child's learning progress… | Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher via the school office or attend one of the informal parent drop-ins offered by the school. If, following your discussion you would like more information, make an appointment to meet with a member of the school's SLT. Where the infant school is concerned, parents may email progress concerns to the relevant year group email address. |
| If you have serious concerns about social behaviours or bullying… | Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher via the school office. If, following your discussion you would like more information, make an appointment to meet with a member of the school's SLT. |
| If you would like to discuss a concern related to your child's teacher… | Make an appointment to meet with an assistant head teacher or the head teacher. |
| If you would like to discuss your child's special educational needs | Make an appointment to meet with the SENDCO via the school office or directly via the SEN team email. |
| If you would like to find out about after school clubs or have a query... | Check the school website, telephone, email or ask at the school office. |
| If you have a query about Busybodies Breakfast / after school club… | Contact Busybodies directly by telephone or the designated Busybodies email address. |
| If you have a pay query … | Enquiries can be made to the school's office staff. |
| If you have a school dinner enquiry… | Please contact the school office directly. |
| If you wanted to check if the school is open… | Please check the school website and class DOJO (juniors). In the unlikely event of unscheduled closures, parents will be notified by all available means of communication. |
| If you have a safeguarding concern relation to a child… | Please contact the school's designated safeguarding lead and/or assistant head teacher. On occasions that are outside of school hours, please use the safedsl email address to make the school aware and if urgent, contact Birmingham Children's Trust on 0121 303 1888 |
| Key correspondence details: | Infant school – enquiry-inf@boldmere.bham.sch.uk<br>0121 464 2338<br>Junior school – enquiry-jun@boldmere.bham.sch.uk<br>0121 464 3656<br>School SENDCO – senteam@boldmere.bham.sch.uk<br>Safeguarding contact – safedsl@boldmere.bham.sch.uk<br>Busy Bodies – busies@boldmere.bham.sch.uk<br>Busy Bodies office – |

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| | 0121 464 1343 |

If having followed the above the steps above, your question or concern is not resolved, please make an appointment with the school office to meet with a member of the school's senior leadership team.
Staff will aim to respond to communication during core school hours (8.15am-4pm Mon-Fri), 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.
Any communication, written or verbal, that is considered disrespectful, inappropriate, disproportionate, abusive, vexatious or threatening will be treated in line with our parent code of conduct and may involve the school seeking the support of the local authority.

Complaints
All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the school's separate complaints policy, available on the school website.
The school does not accept or act upon anonymous communication unless in relation to matters of serious child protection.

Requests for Information Please refer to our Data Protection and GDPR Policy for copies of children's records, freedom of information and Subject Access Requests. This will detail procedures and protocols, including timings.