HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION POLICY

Building trust. Sharing information.
Strengthening partnership.



RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL

INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

This policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework
and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures and guidance.

RIVERSIDE BRIDGE SCHOOL
INSPIRE, EMPOWER, ACHIEVE

OUR COMMITMENT

At Riverside Bridge School, every policy reflects our commitment to creating a safe, inclusive and ambitious school community in which every pupil is valued, every voice matters and every family is respected and supported.

Our policies translate our values into consistent practice. They support high expectations, clear responsibilities, effective partnership and informed decision-making, ensuring that the needs, rights, wellbeing and future outcomes of our pupils remain at the heart of our work.

We work collaboratively, act with integrity and continually reflect upon and improve our practice to achieve the best possible outcomes for every pupil.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Our Policy Principles underpin how we work together and guide the decisions and actions we take to support every pupil and their families.



POLICY PURPOSE & FRAMEWORK

Riverside Bridge School policies set out the expectations, responsibilities and approaches that support safe, consistent and high-quality practice across the school. They translate our values, statutory responsibilities and professional expectations into clear guidance for everyday decision-making and practice.

Each policy forms part of the Riverside Bridge School Policy Framework and should be read alongside any related policies, procedures, statutory guidance and school frameworks referenced within the document.

Policies apply to the members of the school community identified within each document, including staff, governors, parents and carers, volunteers, contractors and other professionals where relevant. Everyone is expected to understand and apply the requirements appropriate to their role and to seek further guidance where clarification is required.

CURRICULUM DRIVERS



Our Drivers provide a shared golden thread across curriculum, school life, policy and leadership, helping ensure that our decisions and practice remain focused on the experiences and futures we want for every pupil.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This policy sets out Riverside Bridge School's approach to communication between home and school. It explains the principles, expectations, responsibilities and arrangements that support clear, respectful, accessible and effective communication between families and the school, strengthening partnership and ensuring that information is shared in ways that support the safety, wellbeing, learning and development of every pupil.

At Riverside Bridge School, we recognise that strong relationships with families are fundamental to achieving positive outcomes for pupils. Parents and carers hold essential knowledge about their child's needs, communication, routines, health, wellbeing and experiences, while school staff contribute professional knowledge of learning, development and provision. Effective communication brings these perspectives together and supports shared understanding, timely decision-making and consistent support.

Communication should be open, respectful, proportionate and purposeful. It should strengthen trust and partnership rather than create unnecessary pressure for families or staff. Different forms of communication serve different purposes, and the school will use the most appropriate channel according to the nature, urgency, confidentiality and complexity of the information being shared.

Riverside Bridge School recognises that families access communication in different ways. Language, literacy, disability, digital access, availability and individual circumstances may affect how easily families can receive, understand or respond to information. Communication should therefore be accessible and inclusive, with reasonable adjustments, interpretation, translation or alternative formats provided where required.

Digital communication is an important part of the school's communication arrangements and enables families to receive updates, celebrate learning and maintain regular contact with staff. It does not replace meaningful professional discussion where a telephone conversation, meeting or formal process is more appropriate. Sensitive, confidential, safeguarding or complex matters must be managed through appropriate channels rather than routine messaging platforms.

Professional boundaries are also essential. Staff are not expected to remain continuously available outside their agreed working responsibilities, and routine digital communication should not create an expectation of immediate response. Families should nevertheless have clear routes for raising urgent, safeguarding or significant concerns through the school's established procedures.

Safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection underpin all home–school communication. Information must be shared appropriately and securely, and concerns arising through any communication method must be acted upon in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Our responsibility to pupils, families and the school community

Riverside Bridge School has a responsibility to provide communication arrangements that are clear, accessible, respectful and responsive while maintaining appropriate safeguarding, confidentiality and professional boundaries.

In delivering this responsibility, we will:

- treat families as valued partners in their child's education;
- communicate respectfully, professionally and constructively;
- provide information that is clear, accurate and timely;
- use communication methods appropriate to the nature and sensitivity of the information;
- make communication accessible and provide reasonable adjustments where required;
- recognise and respond to language, literacy and communication needs;
- maintain clear routes for routine, urgent, safeguarding and formal communication;
- ensure confidential and sensitive information is shared securely;
- protect the privacy and dignity of pupils, families and staff;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries and realistic response expectations;
- ensure staff use school-approved communication systems;
- respond appropriately to concerns raised by families;
- promote positive communication that celebrates pupils' progress and achievements;
- monitor communication arrangements and respond to recurring barriers or concerns;
- review communication systems as the needs of pupils, families and the school change.

Through these commitments, we aim to ensure that communication between home and school strengthens trust, supports genuine partnership and enables families and staff to work together effectively in the best interests of every pupil.

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APPROVED BY: Governing Board

APPROVED ON: September 2026

REVIEWED DUE ON: September 2027

Section 01

SCOPE

Defining communication. Clarifying application. Supporting partnership.

This policy applies to all staff, governors, volunteers, parents, carers and, where appropriate, pupils of Riverside Bridge School.

It establishes the principles for effective communication between home and school, ensuring that all communication is professional, respectful, secure and focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for every pupil.

The policy applies to all approved methods of communication used by the school, including digital communication platforms, email, telephone calls, written correspondence, face-to-face meetings, text messaging and any future communication systems adopted by the school.

Section 02

PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Communicating respectfully. Building trust. Working together.

Communication at Riverside Bridge School is founded on partnership, professionalism and mutual respect.

Every interaction between home and school should strengthen relationships, promote understanding and contribute positively to each pupil's education, wellbeing and development.

Our communication is guided by the following principles:

- Communication is respectful, professional and solution-focused.
- Information is shared clearly, accurately and in a timely manner.
- Families are treated as valued partners in their child's education.
- Communication is accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of our school community.
- Confidentiality and safeguarding are maintained at all times.
- Concerns are addressed constructively and through the appropriate channels.
- Digital communication supports, but does not replace, meaningful professional relationships.
- Staff wellbeing is promoted through appropriate professional boundaries and reasonable communication expectations.
- Communication contributes to trust, collaboration and positive outcomes for pupils.

These principles underpin every form of communication used by Riverside Bridge School and reflect our commitment to maintaining strong partnerships with families.

Section 03

COMMUNICATION METHODS

Choosing appropriately. Sharing clearly. Maintaining access.

Riverside Bridge School uses a range of communication methods to ensure that information is shared effectively, appropriately and securely.

Different methods of communication serve different purposes, and the school will always seek to use the most appropriate channel for the information being shared.

Approved communication methods may include:

- secure digital communication platforms;
- email;
- telephone calls;
- face-to-face meetings;
- written correspondence;
- text messaging;
- newsletters and whole-school communications;
- the school website and other approved information channels.

The school uses approved digital communication platforms to support day-to-day communication with families. The current platform and associated operational expectations are identified within the school's Home-School Communication Guidance.

The school reserves the right to introduce alternative communication platforms where these better meet operational, educational or safeguarding requirements. Any changes will be communicated to families and implemented in accordance with this policy.

Communication methods will always be selected with consideration for accessibility, confidentiality, safeguarding and the nature of the information being shared.

Section 04

EXPECTATIONS FOR STAFF

Communicating professionally. Maintaining boundaries. Supporting families.

Staff play a vital role in maintaining positive relationships with families through professional, respectful and effective communication.

All communication should reflect the values of Riverside Bridge School, support collaborative working and promote confidence in the school's provision.

Staff are expected to:

- communicate courteously, professionally and respectfully at all times;
- use only school-approved communication systems when communicating with families;
- maintain appropriate professional boundaries in all forms of communication;
- share information that is accurate, relevant and appropriate;
- celebrate pupils' achievements and provide positive feedback regularly;
- ensure confidential and sensitive information is communicated securely and appropriately;
- follow safeguarding procedures where concerns are identified through any form of communication;
- protect the privacy and dignity of pupils and families when sharing photographs, videos or other information;
- avoid engaging in lengthy discussions through digital messaging where a telephone conversation or meeting would be more appropriate;
- adhere to agreed working practices that promote staff wellbeing and healthy work-life balance.

Staff are not expected to monitor or respond to communications outside their normal working hours unless this forms part of their agreed responsibilities.

Matters requiring an immediate response should be directed through the school's established emergency or safeguarding procedures rather than routine communication channels.

This reflects the school's commitment to maintaining professional boundaries while ensuring families continue to receive timely and appropriate support.

Section 05

EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Sharing respectfully. Raising concerns. Strengthening partnership.

Positive communication is a shared responsibility. Riverside Bridge School values respectful, collaborative relationships with families and encourages open communication that supports pupils' learning, wellbeing and development.

Parents and carers are expected to:

- communicate respectfully and courteously with all members of the school community;
- use school communication systems appropriately and for their intended purpose;
- share relevant information that may affect their child's education, health, wellbeing or safety;
- ensure contact details are kept accurate and up to date;
- recognise that digital communication is intended to support routine communication and positive partnership rather than replace meetings or professional discussions;
- respect the privacy and confidentiality of other pupils, families and members of staff;
- refrain from sharing school communications, photographs, videos or screenshots through personal social media or other public platforms without the school's permission;
- support appropriate professional boundaries by recognising that staff are not expected to respond outside normal working hours;
- raise concerns constructively through the appropriate school procedures.

Routine enquiries may be made using the school's approved communication systems. However, matters relating to safeguarding, complaints, confidential discussions, significant concerns regarding a pupil's progress or urgent changes to collection arrangements should be directed through the school office or the appropriate member of staff using the school's established procedures rather than routine messaging platforms.

Where use of a digital communication platform is inconsistent with this policy or creates safeguarding, professional conduct or operational concerns, the school may restrict or withdraw access and provide an alternative communication route. Any decision will be proportionate and communicated clearly to the family.

Section 06

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION, SAFEGUARDING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Communicating securely. Protecting privacy. Maintaining safeguards.

Digital communication provides valuable opportunities to strengthen partnership between home and school. However, all digital communication must be conducted in a manner that protects pupils, families and staff while maintaining appropriate professional standards.

Riverside Bridge School is committed to ensuring that all approved communication platforms are used safely, securely and responsibly. Communication systems will be selected and managed to support effective engagement while complying with relevant legal, safeguarding and data protection requirements.

The school will:

- use only approved communication platforms for school business;
- ensure that personal information is processed in accordance with UK data protection legislation and the school's Data Protection Policy;
- obtain and manage appropriate parental consent for the use of photographs, videos and other media where required;
- protect the confidentiality of pupils, families and staff at all times;
- ensure safeguarding concerns identified through any communication platform are managed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- monitor the appropriate use of school communication systems where necessary to safeguard pupils, staff and the wider school community;
- provide guidance to staff and families on the safe and appropriate use of digital communication.

Parents, carers and staff should not share confidential information, images or communications received through school communication systems with third parties unless authorised by the school or required by law.

Any misuse of digital communication systems that places pupils, staff or families at risk may result in access being restricted and, where appropriate, further action being taken in accordance with relevant school policies.

Section 07

MONITORING, REVIEW AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Evaluating practice. Maintaining oversight. Strengthening communication.

The Governing Board has overall responsibility for ensuring that effective home-school communication supports the strategic aims of Riverside Bridge School and reflects the school's values of partnership, inclusion and professionalism.

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy, ensuring that appropriate communication systems are in place, that staff receive suitable guidance and training, and that communication practices remain effective, secure and responsive to the needs of the school community.

The implementation of this policy will be monitored through:

- quality assurance of communication practices;
- parental feedback and engagement activities;
- monitoring of the appropriate use of approved communication platforms;
- safeguarding and data protection monitoring;
- complaints and compliments;
- staff feedback regarding communication processes and workload;
- regular review of communication systems to ensure they continue to meet the needs of pupils, families and staff.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes in legislation, statutory guidance, technology or school practice require amendment.

Section 08

RELATED POLICIES & FRAMEWORKS

Connecting practice. Strengthening consistency.

This policy should be read alongside the following documents:

- Parent Partnership Policy
- Parent and Carer Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Equality, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy
- Privacy Notices