Writtle Infant School

A very special place, where learning has no limits.

Communications Policy

Date of policy:	September 2020
Date last review adopted by governing body:	9th December 2022
Frequency of review:	As required

1. 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.

2. Aim

To ensure that Writtle Infant is an inclusive and supportive 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.

All communications at Writtle Infant School should:
- Keep staff, pupils, parents, and stakeholders well informed.
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional.
- Be jargon free and 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.
- Reflect our school values and aims
- Follow our e-safety policy

3. Communication with Parents and Carers

If parents have any barriers to receiving or understanding communications we will endeavour to help in any way we can. School documents can be translated on request and paper copies of all documents can be provided if required. Important dates are communicated at the start of the academic year to enable parents to plan properly.

Communication with parents takes place in the following ways:

3.1 Face to Face

Communication can be face to face, such as passing messages on the door in the morning, meeting teachers in school, or visiting the school office.

The school offers two parents evenings during the academic year to discuss children's progress. Opportunities for other meetings are available as needed. Parents whose children have Special Educational Needs will have Personal Centred Plans and termly meetings.

There are other opportunities such as Meet the Teacher sessions at the start of the school year, Family Learning Time and coffee mornings.

3.2 Phone calls
The school office is open from 8am to 4pm daily. Messages can be left on our answer phone outside of these hours. Any messages can be passed to the class teacher via the office. Office staff will only interrupt teaching for urgent calls. Teachers will return calls during lunch time or at the end of a school day. Some phone calls may need to be made from a teacher's personal phone, in which case the number will be blocked.

3.3 ParentMail
Our primary platform for communication with parents is ParentMail. All parents should sign up to this system, through which they can:
- Receive individual emails or general notices from the school.
- Receive notifications of any first aid administered to their child.
- Be notified of any awards their child has been given.
- Complete forms such as lunch orders and permission slips.
- Receive texts in the event of an emergency, such as school closure.

If families are separated, both parents have a right to information, unless legal documentation is in place.

3.4 Website
The school website is www.writtleinfantschool.com. Important school communications such as the weekly newsletter and home learning are made available on our website at the same time as they are sent to parents via ParentMail. We publish photos of the children's learning in numerous galleries. A calendar lists the dates of school holidays and non-pupil days, as well as any school events. Parents can automatically download this information to the personal calendar on their phone or other device. Statutory information and policies are also published on our website.

3.5 Class email addresses
All parents can contact their child's class teacher through our class email accounts. However these are not routinely monitored during teaching time and therefore parents@writtleinfantschool is the email to use for important messages. We will reply to parents@ within 48 hours during the week and up to 72 hours during weekends and school holidays, although replies are normally much quicker than this. Class responses may take longer, for example if a member of staff is absent. If the enquiry is more complicated, we may send a holding email until we can give a comprehensive response. If there is a common area of concern, we may send a general email to parents via ParentMail, by way of response.

3.6 Tapestry

Children's academic progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage is recorded via an online learning journal called Tapestry. Parents will be given one login, which can be shared across multiple devices, to access their child's journal. They may add comments, or see notes that the teacher or teaching assistants have made online.

4. Online learning platforms

The school may use other learning platforms to support the children's education from home. There are no facilities to communicate with the school via these channels, so any queries should be directed to the school through our email accounts.

5. Social Media

The school has a Twitter account (@writtleinfant) which is available to the public. We also have a private Facebook group for parents of children at the school. We may share resources, post information from the local community and celebrate achievements through our social media accounts. Children will not be identified in any social media posts unless their parents have agreed in advance.

We appreciate that staff may be friends with parents and have links with them via social media, such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. However, personal social media accounts should not be used for school-related communications. Any messages from parents to staff via social media will be answered with a direction to more appropriate channels.

6. Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

The communication responsibilities of the SLT are as follows:
- 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 all stakeholders effectively.
- To maintain open channels of two-way communication and to listen to feedback and comment from all staff
- To keep parents informed of developments and concerns.

7. School Staff

The communications responsibilities of all school staff are as follows:
- To adhere to policies regarding communication with parents.
- To communicate regularly with each other, 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.

8. Communication between staff

All staff have an individual school email account, which must be used for all professional correspondence. Emails must be answered in a timely manner. While emails may be monitored outside of school hours, staff should not be expected to respond outside of the hours of 7am - 7pm unless an urgent response is required.

Staff use Whatsapp outside school hours to contact each other in an emergency. During the school day, contact between classrooms and the School Office/Headteacher is conducted via Google Hangouts, or in person.

9. Communication with governors

The main communication with governors is by email and face to face meetings where possible. Governors also have access to ParentMail to be informed about events and information about the school.

10. Equality statement

The governors and staff are committed to providing the full range of opportunities for all pupils regardless of gender, disability, and ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background. All pupils have access to the curriculum and the right to a learning environment which dispels ignorance, prejudice or stereotyping.

11. Related Policies

- Child Protection
- E-safety
- Complaints policy
- Equality policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Attendance
- Behaviour
- SEND offer
- GDPR policies cover aspects of communication