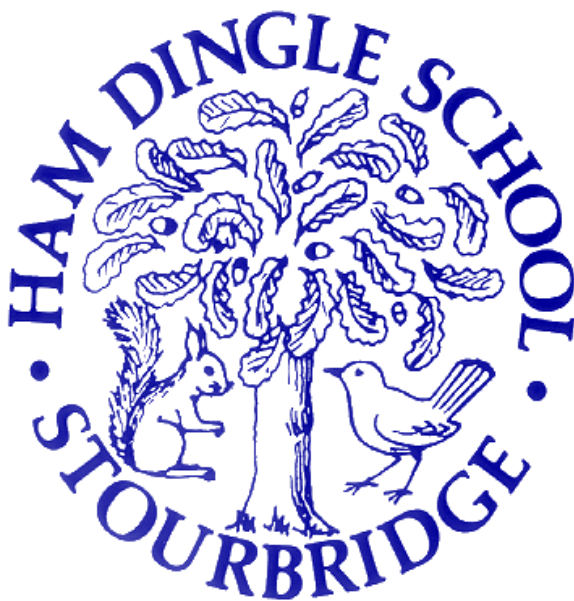


Ham Dingle Primary School



Communications Policy

Responsibility for monitoring this policy: Mrs J Grace

Reviewed April 2017

Review Every 3 Years

Approved by Governing Body.....Mr George Craig - Chair of Governors

Aim

To support Ham Dingle Primary School in its aim to become a thriving and successful school we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents and with other members of the wider school community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

Definition of communication

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It involves:

The management of relationships and the need to involve people. Communication is as much about attitude and behaviour as it is about message. We should also remember the importance of listening. **Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflects on the school's reputation.**

For the purposes of this policy communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated; not only the responsibility for communication but also how effectively that responsibility is carried out.

Objectives:

All communications at Ham Dingle Primary School should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents, Governors and other stakeholders well informed
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all
- Be actioned within a reasonable time
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience
- Take account of relevant school policies in particular Equal Opportunities and Computer Use

Internal Methods of Communication for Staff

Staff Meetings

There is an integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff both formal and informal. All formal meetings should be structured and minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda. It is important that time is put aside for structured opportunities for staff to engage in team working and to contribute to subject leader's reflection on priorities, activities and future plans. For all other meetings notes should be taken, action points progressed and feedback given to staff.

Availability of Minutes/Notes of Meetings

The approved minutes of meetings are available on the staff notice board.

Email

Information and notification of initiatives are communicated through the use of e mail where appropriate. Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information however it does not replace face to face meetings where some discussion is required.

Mobile Phones

Staff - 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 they can be contacted by mobile phone at all times.

Pupils – Pupils should not bring mobile phones into class/school. Any exceptions must be discussed with and approved by the Headteacher. Pupil's devices should be left in the school office on arrival and collected at the end of the day.

Written Communications

These are placed in pigeon holes, in the staff room, which staff should check regularly, handed to staff personally or emailed.

Staff Briefings

Staff Briefings take place on a weekly basis (8.20am Fridays). The diary for the following week is discussed and information shared. The main points are emailed to all staff and a hard copy placed on staff notice board.

Notice Boards

Staff Notice Board is located in the staffroom. Parents notice board is located outside the main reception area and outside in the KS1 and KS2 playgrounds.

External Methods of Communication Between Staff, Parents and Other Agencies

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, other schools, the community and with outside agencies. Good communication between the school and the home is essential, and children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can naturally help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve. In our school we aim to have clear and effective communications with all parents and with the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting the school.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end parents will always be addressed in an appropriate manner and staff will avoid developing close friendships with parents.

We try to make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the cultural groups represented in our school.

Communications with Parents/Carers Letters

Staff will endeavour to respond to parents' letters as quickly as possible. Any letter of complaint should be referred to the HT. Letters to parents must be approved by the HT before they are sent. Copies of all child specific correspondence with parents will be placed in pupil files.

E mail

The school has a text messaging and email system it uses to communicate to parents. Any communication that needs to be sent to parents using this system must be approved by the Headteacher. If a parent communicates with the school using email, a copy should be printed. Staff should forward e mails from parents to the Headteacher and should always do so if the content is a complaint. A hard copy of any e mail sent to a parent or received by you from a parent should be

filed and a copy stored in the school office. Responses to emails should be a formal letter which is kept on file with the original email.

Telephone calls

Staff should check their phone messages each day. A file note will record the details of the conversation and will be placed in staff pigeon hole or handed directly to member of staff. Office staff should not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call. Calls should be responded to as soon as possible that day. Parents should not have access to staff private mobile numbers or home telephone numbers.

Social Networking Sites/Blogs etc

Staff will not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept them as their "friends".

Written Reports.

Once a year we provide a full written report to each child's parents on their progress in each subject. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. Pupils are also given the opportunity to comment on their own progress and parents are invited to make a similar comment.

In addition, parents can meet their child's teacher three times during the year for a private consultation at Parents' Evening. This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child's successes, and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for improvement. We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being.

When children have special educational needs, or if they are making less than the expected progress, we find it helpful to meet with parents more regularly. We will also make any reasonable adjustments to our arrangements if this will enable a parent with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our school, or to receive and understand a communication.

School Website

The school website contains a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of provision at our school. This is updated regularly.

Home-school Communication

A school Newsletter is sent to parents fortnightly. It contains general details of school events and activities. Parents expect the newsletter, and appreciate the regularity of the contact. We send other letters of a general nature when necessary via 'child mail' and store copies on the school's website.

Children in all classes have a planner/reading diary. This enables parents to record a wide range of information that they wish to share regularly with the teacher. Teachers use the planner/reading diary to record homework assignments, and as a regular channel for communication with parents. Teachers should check every child's planner at least weekly and respond to parents comments even if it is just to acknowledge you have seen and read what they have written.

Meetings with Parents

The school encourages parents to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. Teachers arrange to see parents as soon as possible. Many parents have the opportunity to have a brief word with the teacher when they collect them after school or before school from 8.50am. Teacher's, whenever possible, should follow up any issues raised the same day.

We arrange various information meetings for parents throughout the year. Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content and arrangements. A meeting for new intake parents is organised each June/July.

Out of School Contact

For all trips we operate a 'no news is good news' policy in terms of contact with parents during trips. The senior leader on the risk assessment will make arrangements to contact parents if a concern arises, e.g. late back due to traffic or any emergency event. The trip leader will keep school informed as appropriate, e.g. arrived safely, any issues arising during the trip, set off for return to confirm approximate arrival time etc. Staff or pupils should not make any direct contact with parents without first contacting the senior leader named on the risk assessment.

For other out of hour's activities e.g. afterschool clubs the same protocol operates for staff to contact parents as in the normal school day.

After the school switchboard closes at 4.30pm the emergency contact for parents with children in afterschool activities between 4.30 – 6.00pm is 01384 815225.

Communication with other schools and outside agencies

Prior to pupils joining Reception, they are invited to visit the school to enable us to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to Ham Dingle Primary School.

We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on better ways to meet these needs, so that children may participate more fully. Support comes from medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), from Educational Psychologists, from health professionals and specialists. It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare, Social Services and Child Protection Units. Sensitive information is sent via recorded or registered post and logged onto integris.

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school should provide a safe and secure environment. We are the people most in contact with our children, and we are therefore in a unique position to identify and help abused children. So when any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, who may share this information with the Social Services.

We hold information on pupils in our school, and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational or safeguarding purposes. Details have been sent to parents about the types of data we hold, why we hold that data, and who we may pass it on to. This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998. Parents have a right to view the information we hold, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

For Communications to be effective...

Teachers will Endeavour to:

- Listen
- Remain calm and professional
- Respect the parents and their concerns
- Meet the needs of the child first
- Return calls asap
- Make themselves available
- Reply to messages in pupil's planner
- Provide professional follow up should it be required
- Keep appointments
- Use a sealed envelope for sensitive replies to parents

Teachers will Not:

- Accept verbal abuse
- Discuss children or their parents in public areas
- Be rude in response to parents
- Ignore messages (if they are received)
- Ignore genuine concerns
- Tolerate classroom interruptions
- Wait more than 10 minutes from the allocated time for appointments
- Respond to anonymous letters but will pass them to the Headteacher for their information purposes only

Parents will Endeavour to:

- Recognise and respect the professional status of teachers
- Treat teachers and teachers' assistants with respect at all times, particularly in the presence of children
- Communicate with teachers and teachers' assistants in a courteous and dignified manner
- Avoid discussing their individual concerns with other parents or third parties;
- Refrain from entering the teaching areas during school time, unless invited to do so for purposes of a pre-arranged meeting with a teacher. In all instances, a parent must first report to the school's reception.
- Keep appointments

Channels for Addressing Concerns:

1. Meet teacher to discuss matters irrespective of what the issue is (In difficult matters, the teacher may request the Head to attend).
2. Deputy Headteacher
3. Headteacher
4. Refer to the complaints policy on the school website