



Communications Policy
Darrington CE Primary School

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.

Aim

To ensure that Darrington CE Primary School is a thriving and successful school, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents/carers 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.

Objectives

All communications at Darrington CE 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 methods of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.
- Take account of relevant school policies.
- Be compatible with our core values and School Development Plan.

Responsibilities

This section details the responsibilities of the different groups within the school.

Senior leadership team (SLT)

- 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 colleagues effectively.
- To maintain open channels of two-way communication and to listen to feedback and comment from all staff.
- To keep governors informed of developments and concerns.

All staff

- To communicate regularly with each other, preferably face to face, 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.

Governors

- To ensure the use of trusted online spaces when communicating between governors or with the school.
- Using a variety of communication methods to promote and explain the work of the governors.
- Listening to people online to hear what is being said about the school.
- To ensure the posting of minutes of meeting in appropriate places.

Internal methods of communication

- All staff receive an induction pack providing them with important information about organisation and procedures within the school.
- An integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff both formal and informal: e.g. teachers' meetings, teaching assistant meetings, whole staff meetings.
- All formal meetings should be structured and minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda.
- E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating information however it should not replace face to face meetings where discussion is required.

- Written communications should be placed in pigeon holes, in the photocopier room, which staff must check daily and clear regularly.
- Teachers' meetings take place every week and the minutes are placed in the shared drive on the school network. Events are discussed in advance at meetings but staff also have the responsibility to check future actions.
- Support staff meetings take place at least once a term.
- Governors' meeting minutes are available from the school office.
- Weekly meetings will communicate the weekly staff bulletins for the following week and also e-mailed out to staff and placed on the noticeboard in the staffroom. It is staff responsibility to check or ask SLT for a copy if they miss the meeting.
- The school 'communication book' is used for day to day notices and is placed in the staff room.
- Reminders or letters to individual parents/carers are sent to classes to be given out by the class teachers and must be given to children the same day. Every class must have a system for distributing letters and other materials to go home with the children.
- The schools uses Parentmail to communicate with parents by text or e-mail.
- Urgent messages for parents/carers will be sent by text as early as possible and followed up by the office staff to ensure receipt.
- A list of all those not subscribing to Parentmail will be kept by the office and hard copies sent to all those on the list.

External methods of communication

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, other schools, the community and with outside agencies. Our aim is to have clear and effective communications with all parents and carers and the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents and carers well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that they play in supporting school.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents and carers, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end parents/carers should always be addressed in an appropriate manner. Teaching staff will not accept friendship requests on social media. We will try to make 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 to our society by all cultural groups represented in our school. Similarly, school staff should always be addressed in an appropriate and respectful manner; personal, defamatory or abusive comments or behaviour will not be accepted.

Communications with Parents/Carers

Letters:

Please address all correspondence to:

Darrington CE Primary School

Denby Crest

Darrington

WF8 3SB

We will respond to letters received at this address within 3 working days, term-time only. If the letter requires investigation or is of a complex nature, then an interim acknowledgement letter will be sent within this timescale. A full response will then be issued within 10 working days of the acknowledgement letter. Any letter of complaint received at the school will be referred to the Head Teacher immediately.

All letters to parents must be approved by the Head Teacher before they are sent. Copies of all correspondence to individual parents and carers will be placed in pupil files. A copy of general letters will be available from the school office.

E-mail:

Please address all emails to admin@darringtonschool.org.uk

The school email address will be monitored daily during term time. We will acknowledge all emails received to the published email address within 24 working hours. If the email requires investigation or is of a complex nature, then an acknowledgement email will be sent. A full response will then be issued within 5 working days of the acknowledgement email. The school has an e-mail system (Parentmail), which it uses to communicate with parents. Any communication sent to parents and carers using this system must be approved by the Head Teacher or School Business Manager.

If a parent or carer communicates with the school using an email with a complaint or a matter that requires an action, a copy should be stored in a digital file or printed and filed. Staff will forward relevant emails to the Head Teacher and/or relevant member of staff as appropriate. Complaints will be referred to the Head Teacher and chair of Governors, as appropriate, for consideration into the complaints process. E-mail communications regarding a child will be stored for the duration of the time when the child concerned is in school.

All communication received must be addressed to the school office if by letter, or to admin@darringtonschool.org.uk if by email. Emails which are received to personal or individual school staff accounts will be automatically deleted without reading without exception.

Text messaging

School will not reply directly to text messages received on personal mobile devices. Any communications must be addressed through one of the other methods detailed above.

Telephone calls

The office number is 01977 232320

The office is open from Monday to Thursday, 8:30am to 4:30pm and 8:30am to 4pm on a Friday, with lunch taken between 12:30pm and 1:15pm. The office answer machine will be checked on a daily basis. Office staff will not interrupt teaching for staff to answer telephone calls or for anything not deemed to be urgent.

Any communications received during school holidays will be responded to upon the school re-opening and the timescales stated will apply from the first working day after a school holiday.

Social Media Sites/Blogs

We will respond to any messages on the school's Facebook page within three working days. We will not tolerate any offensive or defamatory comments on any public area of social media. Any complaints or issues must be raised through the appropriate and published contact methods within this policy. Staff are advised not to communicate with parents/carers via social networking sites or accept them as "friends". Staff will not accept pupils or ex-pupils as "friends".

Written Reports

We will provide an annual written report to each child's parents/carers on their progress. This report will identify areas of strength and areas for future development. Pupils and parents/carers are also given an opportunity to comment on their progress and the report by means of an acknowledgement slip.

Parental Contact with School

In addition to our parent consultations that take place during the year, we encourage parents/carers to contact the school using one of the published contact methods detailed within this policy if any issues arise regarding a child's progress or well-being. If you wish to speak with your child's teacher, you should arrange to speak to the teacher by making an appointment at a mutually convenient time and this must always be on school premises. Teaching staff will not leave the whole class unattended to speak with a parent/carers during school hours.

Where school identifies that a child has a particular educational need, or if they are making less than expected progress, parents/carers will be invited to meet with their child's teacher more regularly. We will also make reasonable adjustments to our arrangements if this will enable a parent/carers with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our school, or to receive and understand communication. Parents/carers of children with a

'Supporting Me to Learn' plan will have the opportunity to review the plan three times in a year at a time that is mutually convenient and agreed by school and parents.

Newsletters

Newsletters will be e-mailed to parents and carers using an appropriate system. If a parent or carer has not signed up for Parentmail, then a hard copy of the newsletter will be sent out in the child's book bag.

School Website

The school website provides an opportunity to share information about the school and is an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience.

Home-School Communication

- Home School Agreements are signed on entry.
- Pre-school visits will be arranged for those joining Reception in the following September.
- Information is displayed on the notice board outside school.
- The school newsletter is e-mailed out through Parentmail and posted on the school website. Paper copies are sent to parents/carers not on the Parentmail list.
- Parents/carers will be emailed or texted if there is an unexpected cancellation of a club.
- Periodic questionnaires may be sent out to parents to seek their views about the school, and the results are analysed and used to improve the school.

Safeguarding

We recognise that child protection is a shared responsibility, and that Darrington CE Primary School should provide a safe and secure environment. If any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed to the Designated Senior Lead for Child Protection (Headteacher, Mrs L Ranby), or the Deputy DSLs (Deputy Headteacher, Mr C Lunn or Foundation Stage leader, Mrs R Beckett), who may share this information with Social Services.

Transparency notice

A copy of our transparency notice is available from the school office or can be found on our website.

How will this policy be monitored and evaluated?

This policy will be monitored through on-going school self-evaluation. The Head Teacher will use a variety of methods to evaluate this policy with staff, parents and governors, including an annual review.

Addendum to Communications Policy in light of the Covid-19 pandemic

To minimise the risk of more people being in school than absolutely necessary, parents and carers should be using the school email (admin@darringtonschool.org.uk) or telephone number (01977 232320). They should not enter the building to speak to any member of staff.

Parents and carers must not speak to teachers when they are dropping-off or picking-up children. Teachers will be required to monitor social distancing and cannot engage in discussions as this will compromise the safety of children.

Policy title	Communications Policy
Monitoring and review	Reviewed October 2019
Links	Transparency notice
Staff responsible	Headteacher/School Business Manager
Committee responsible	Full Governing Body
Date approved	
Review date	October 2020