



Stokes Wood Primary School – Communications Policy

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 Stokes Wood Primary School is 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 community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

Objectives

All communications at Stokes Wood 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 and procedures.
- Be compatible with our core values, ethos and School Improvement Plan. To create an open door culture for communication with all stakeholders.

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 or email, 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.
- To check the Half Termly Calendar at the beginning of the half term and the Weekly Diary each week.
- To ensure that emails are checked at least once a day (Monday to Friday) and responded to if necessary. Any communication which is important and needs to be actioned within 24 hours will be communicated in person.

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 governor.
- 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 a Staff hand book/Induction Policy at the beginning of each academic year (and when they start the school), 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, office meetings, Key Stage meetings, year group meetings, whole staff meetings.
- All formal meetings (staff and SLT) 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 an in depth discussion is required.
- Written communications should be placed in staff trays, in the staffroom, which staff must check daily and clear regularly.
- The minutes of staff meeting minutes (every week), TA meetings (every half term) and SLT meetings (approximately every 3-4 weeks) are placed in the staffroom and e –mailed out to staff as appropriate. Events are discussed in advance at meetings but staff also have the responsibility to check future actions.
- Office meetings take place once a week. Key stage meetings are held informally or formally, as required.
- Governors' meeting minutes are placed in the governors' secure area on the school website.
- Reminders or letters to individual parents 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. ALL letters must be seen by a member of SLT before going out and a copy should be sent to the office for the website where relevant and for information. Any errors in letters etc are either edited or returned for editing.

External methods of communication

Stokes Wood Primary School 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 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 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 should always be addressed in an appropriate manner. Teaching staff will not accept friendship requests from parents 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.

- The school uses School Comms to communicate with parents by text or e-mail.

- Urgent messages for parents/carers will be sent by text or a phone call as early as possible and followed up by the office staff to ensure receipt.
- A list of all those not subscribing to School Comms will be kept by the office & hard copies sent to all those on the list.

Communications with Parents/Carers Letters: Staff will respond to parents' letters requiring an answer within 48 hours (2 school days) to acknowledge receipt of the communication. Up to a further 5 school days can be granted where further investigation of the matter is required. Any letter of complaint must be referred to the Head Teacher immediately. Letters to individual parents must be approved by the Head Teacher before they are sent. Copies of all correspondence to individual parents will be placed in pupil files, either hard files or electronic files. A copy of general letters will be placed in letters to parents' folder in the office and electronic copies on the office drive.

E-mail/Text: The school has an e-mail/text system which it uses to communicate with parents. Any communication that needs to be sent to parents using this system must be approved by the Head Teacher. If a parent communicates with the school using 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 should forward relevant emails from parents to the Head Teacher and should always do so if the content is a complaint. All e-mails requiring an answer should be responded to within 48 hours (2 school days) to acknowledge receipt of the communication. Up to a further 5 school days can be granted where further investigation of the matter is required. If a parent wishes to contact a teacher or member of staff via e-mail then the school account should be used office@stokeswood.leicester.sch.uk or the class email address where appropriate. Please use BCC in the email as appropriate to ensure that data protection regulations are being adhered to. Class e-mail addresses can be used to communicate information to parents personal to the children in that class. For example homework, school trip.

E-mail communications concerning a child are kept for the academic year in a digital folder unless they are required for evidence trailing, in which case a copy should be printed.

Telephone calls: Office staff will not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency. An arrangement will be made for a call back.

Social Media Sites/Blogs: Staff are advised not to communicate with parents via social networking sites or accept them as "friends". Staff will not accept pupils or ex-pupils as "friends".

Written Reports: In the Summer term, we provide a full written report to the parents of each child, on their progress. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. Pupils are also given an opportunity to comment on their progress.

Newsletters: Newsletters are e-mailed out weekly. If a parent has not signed up for School Comms then a hard copy will be sent out in the child's book bag. It is also put on the school Facebook and on the outdoor screens.

In addition, parents meet their child's teacher/s twice during the year for a private consultation at a Parents' Evening. We encourage parents to contact the school at any time if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being. When children have

particular educational needs, or if they are making less than expected progress, parents 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 with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our school, or to receive and understand communication. Parents of children with a Pupil Passport (individual education plan) will have the opportunity to review the Passport at least twice a year.

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.
- Home visits and pre-school visits take place prior to term 1 for those joining nursery and reception.
- Information is displayed on the outdoor electronic screens which is updated regularly.
- The weekly school newsletter is e-mailed out through School Comms and posted on the school website and the outdoor screens. Paper copies are sent to parents/carers not on the School Comms list.
- Parents/carers will be texted or phoned if there is an unexpected cancellation of a club or other event.
- Parents are invited to meet governors informally at Open Evening and other events where they have the opportunity to discuss various topics.
- Once a year a survey is sent out to parents and pupils and the results are analysed and used to improve the school.

We recognise that children's protection, safety and welfare are a shared responsibility, and that Stokes Wood 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 Leader for Children Protection and Safeguarding or the Deputy DSLs, who may share this information with Social Services.

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.

Other policies that might be of interest to you.

- Child Protection
- Complaints Procedure
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Data Protection
- Visitor Code of Conduct Policy

Date reviewed: Feb 2024 Next review date Feb 2025