



Home-school Communication Policy

Water Primary School

Water Primary, a small school with a big heart. In our Water family, we encourage passionate curiosity and a deeper understanding of the world around us in an environment where everyone is valued, empowered and achieves their full potential.

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Contents

1. Introduction and aims	2
2. Roles and responsibilities	3
3. How we communicate with families and carers	3
4. How families and carers can communicate with the school	5
5. Accessibility	6
6. Monitoring and review	7
7. Links with other policies	7
Appendix 1: school contact list	7

1. Introduction and aims

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with families
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from families
- Helping families reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible

This policy aims to promote the essential partnership between the school, families, staff, students and the wider community through efficient and effective communication. The school believes that by engaging and working with all stakeholders, particularly our families, is vital in our role to provide children with an excellent education and a safe learning environment, as well as helping our students become well rounded citizens with a strong set of values.

We believe that effective communications underpin our core values. We remain committed to being an open and approachable school that engages with our community and puts children at the centre of everything we do. As a school, we also greatly value your support in enabling us to do this in an effective, timely and sustainable manner.

We are proud of our strong relationships with our families and community. I would like to request that families join us in promoting a culture of empathy and understanding by fostering respectful interactions and communication. By doing this, we can create a safe and supportive environment for all. It is appropriate to reiterate that the vast majority of families' communication to school is exemplary, as is that of the children, however, it is important to note that we have a duty of care to our staff as well as to our children and we remain wholeheartedly committed to both.

All staff at the school are expected to show respect for everyone; they will endeavour to deal effectively with any reasonable request they receive. The school also expects all those who visit or contact our school to treat our staff respectfully and courteously at all times. The same level of courtesy is expected with email communication. We strongly encourage all those who may wish to communicate with our school to do so in a manner that does not discriminate against any member of our diverse community and consistently adheres to our Communications Policy. We take any aggressive behaviour or threatening language towards any member of our staff seriously, whether this is during a telephone conversation, email or during a visit to the school. If a caller or visitor's behaviour is deemed discriminatory, rude, abusive, aggressive or raises their voice to any member of our community, they will be advised to stop their behaviour. If the behaviour persists, we will terminate the call or ask the visitor to leave the premises. Families and visitors should be aware that a request for an appointment must be made in advance if they wish to see a particular member of staff. We greatly value the support of families and the wider school community and thank you for adhering to this notice.

By being clear and having open communication between the school and families, this has a positive impact on pupils' learning as it:

- Gives families the information they need to support their child's education
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with families
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with families are effective, timely and appropriate
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from families in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- Working with other members of staff to make sure families get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during the school hours 8:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. or their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so. Please note, staff will always endeavour to communicate with families in a timely manner.

2.3 Families

Families are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our parent code of conduct.

Families should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours (8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.), or during school holidays.

For further reference, please see the parent code of conduct policy on the school website.

3. How we communicate with families and carers

The sections below explain how we keep families up to date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

Families should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

3.1 Text messages

We will text families about:

- Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Information regarding school events.
- Links to important letters
- Links to the newsletter

PLEASE DO NOT USE THE TEACHERS2PARENTS APP AS THIS OFTEN MEANS FAMILIES ARE NOT RECEIVING IMPORTANT TEXT MESSAGES.

Families are asked to provide a priority contact list when they begin at Water Primary School. The first person named in this list is then added as priority contact on the texting system. If families would like more than one person on the texting system, we ask that they contact the office directly with this request.

3.2 School calendar

Our school website www.water.lancs.sch.uk includes a full school calendar for the school year. The weekly newsletter also has key dates and events scheduled to be happening. As a school, we do try to organise events well in advance however this is not always possible. We will endeavour to communicate any changes of dates with families as soon as possible.

Where possible, we try to give families at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials).

3.3 Phone calls

School will contact you through a phone call for various reasons. These could be:

- To ask about school absence
- To get verbal permission for an event
- To inform you of an incident/accident
- To address a concern raised
- To discuss any safeguarding concern

This is not an exhaustive list but some examples of where or why school may contact families through a phone call.

3.4 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms

Letters are also added to our school website www.water.lancs.sch.uk We try to reduce the amount of paper we use as a school so letters are often attached as a link via the texting service.

3.5 Reading Record Books

Children all receive a reading record book. School will try and check these daily however please note that this may not always be possible. Please try and refrain from using these to communicate with the class teacher.

3.6 Reports

Families receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- A report on Key Stage (KS) 1 and KS2 SATs tests
- A report on the results of public examinations

We also arrange regular meetings where families can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

3.7 Meetings

We hold two families' evening(s) per year (Autumn and Spring Term). During these meetings, families can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

The school may also contact families to arrange meetings between families' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

Families of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

3.8 School website

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision

Families should check the website before contacting the school.

4. How families and carers can communicate with the school

Families should use the list in appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and email address.

4.1 School Office

Families should contact the school office either by phone or using the email address enquiries@water.lancs.sch.uk. Families should always email or ring the school about non-urgent issues in the first instance. Please do not contact the Headteacher on their email as these can occasionally be missed or not forwarded to the correct person.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 2 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and families need a response sooner than this, they should explain this to the school office manager who will be able to direct you to the correct person.

4.2 Phone calls

If families need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office on enquiries@water.lancs.sch.uk or alternatively ring the school office on 01706 216414.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. **We aim to make sure families have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 2 days of your request.**

If the issue is urgent, families should call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

4.3 Meetings

If families would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address (see appendix 1), or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within 5 working days of the request.

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if families need to speak to them urgently, we recommend they book appointments to discuss:

- Any concerns they have about their child's learning
- Updates related to pastoral support, their child's home environment, or their wellbeing

To ensure effective communication, meetings between parents and staff will focus on discussions related to their children's progress and well-being. Parents are welcome to raise safeguarding concerns about other children, but please be aware that conversations about those children cannot take place during these meetings.

We ask that all parents maintain a respectful attitude; those who do not may be asked to leave. Additionally, any instances of unacceptable behaviour may be reported to Lancashire County Council and could result in a ban from the school premises.

Relevant staff members may attend meetings to take notes, ensuring effective documentation and collaboration in line with our organisational procedures.

If you have any concerns, I urge you to follow the graduated response procedure outlined below:

- 1. Speak to your child's class teacher first. They are usually able to resolve issues promptly. You can schedule a meeting by contacting the school office, emailing enquiries@water.lancs.sch.uk, or approaching them either before or after school hours. Your class teacher will arrange a follow-up meeting to ensure your concerns are addressed.**
- 2. If the issue remains unresolved, please request a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. A meeting will be scheduled, and appropriate actions will be taken. A follow-up meeting will be offered to ensure a satisfactory resolution.**
- 3. Should your concerns persist, you may request a meeting with a school governor and the headteacher.**
- 4. If you believe the school has not followed its policies adequately, you may choose to escalate the matter by raising a formal complaint, details of which can be found on the school website.**

5. Accessibility

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school.

5.1 Families with additional communication needs

We aim to make communications accessible to all. We have taken the following steps to achieve this:

- All whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) on request, can be made available in multiple formats
- All communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible
- Accessibility is considered when designing/updating the school website
- Staff are trained on accessibility and will endeavour to provide information in an accessible format

Families who need help communicating with the school can request reasonable adjustments, such as:

- School announcements and communications in accessible formats
- Sign language interpreters for meetings

Please contact the school office to discuss these.

5.2 Families with English as an additional language (EAL)

We currently make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in various languages, these can be translated on request by a family who joins our school with English as an additional language.

Families who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

6. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 2 years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Staff wellbeing
- Social media policy

Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

- Email or call the school office on enquiries@water.lancs.sch.uk or 01706 216414
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for emails)
- We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff

Remember: check our website first, much of the information you need is posted there.

www.water.lancs.sch.uk

We try to respond to all emails within 2 days.

Please note, staff well-being is paramount and is not an expectation for staff to contact families outside of the school hours.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Class teacher
Payments	Office manager Mrs Graham
School trips	School office or Class Teacher
Uniform/lost and found	School office or Class Teacher

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
Attendance and absence requests	<p>If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01706 216414</p> <p>If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact the school office and request a school holiday form.</p>
Bullying and behaviour	Class Teacher
School events/the school calendar	<p>Website/Newsletter</p> <p>School Office</p>
Special educational needs (SEN)	<p>SENDCo</p> <p>Mrs Edington</p> <p>Deputy SENDCo</p> <p>Miss Launder</p>
Before and after-school clubs	School Office
Hiring the school premises	School Office or Headteacher
Governing board	School office or Headteacher
Catering/meals	School office

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy. This can be found on the school website, under policies.