



Pott Shrigley Church School

Communication Policy

October 2018

Policy effective from: October 2018

Review date: Summer 2021

Introduction

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 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 welcoming relationships with parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end parents and staff should always be addressed in an appropriate manner.

We will try to make written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions to our society by all cultural groups represented in our school. All communications will be in line with the Christian ethos and Christian Values embraced by the school community.

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
- Action coordinated

Communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated. Good communication promotes partnership.

Aim

To ensure that Pott Shrigley Church School is a thriving and successful school, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents and with members of the governing board and wider community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

We must also safeguard the wellbeing of the school community and we encourage staff to be mindful of their work/life balance. There is no expectation of staff to send/read or respond to emails (from colleagues or parents) during evenings and weekends. Parental communication should be limited to the working school day.

Objectives

All communications at Pott Shrigley Church 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 Christian values.

Responsibilities

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

Headteacher

- 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.
- If a parent contacts the headteacher via e-mail, s/he should respond by e-mail within 2 school days. Depending on the nature of the e-mail the headteacher may contact the parent by letter within 5 working days with further detail as appropriate.

All staff

- Should take professional responsibility to ensure they are informed of all relevant information.
- 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

- Communicate effectively with the headteacher over strategic and operational matters.
- To ensure the use of trusted online spaces when communicating between governors or with the school.
- Use a variety of communication methods to promote & explain the work of the governors.
- To ensure the posting of minutes of meeting in appropriate places.

Internal methods of communication

- Initial induction - providing staff with important information about organisation and procedures in school.
- Staff briefings and staff meetings - all formal meetings should be structured and minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda.
- E-mail - quick and effective, however it should not replace face to face meetings where discussion is required.

Communications with Parents/Carers

Letters:

Staff will respond to parents' letters within two working school days. The response may be face-to-face or by letter. Any letter of complaint must be referred to the Head Teacher immediately. Letters to 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.

E-mail/Text: The school has an e-mail/text system (Parent Mail) 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 printed & filed with appropriate dates/times.

Staff should forward relevant emails from parents to the headteacher, if necessary, 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).

Telephone calls:

Office staff will not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency.

Social Media Sites/Blogs:

Staff must not to communicate with parents via social networking sites. Advice will be sought and necessary action taken should it be discovered that any communication through social media reflects negatively on the school or its staff and governors.

Staff **will not** communicate with pupils on social media. Should this be discovered, advice will be sought and the necessary actions taken. This is a safeguarding issue.

Staff **will not** communicate with ex-pupils on social media. Should this be discovered, advice will be sought and the necessary actions taken. This is a safeguarding issue.

Staff should ensure that their own privacy settings on social media are set to the most secure and private option possible.

Parents' Consultation Evenings & Written Reports:

Parents meet their child's teacher/s twice during the year for a private consultation at a Parents' Evening (October & February). Once a year, we provide a full written report to each child's parents on their progress (July). This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. Pupils are also given an opportunity to comment on their progress.

News:

The week's news is e-mailed out weekly in the *Heads Up!* A hard copy is available if requested.

We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being. When children have particular education 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.

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. We will also use the website to communicate information about events in school, trips and parents evenings as and when appropriate.

Home-School Communication:

- An 'open door' policy allows immediate contact, where possible.
- Home School Agreements are signed on entry.
- Pre-school visits take place during the summer term, prior to entry, for those joining Reception in September.
- The weekly school news is e-mailed out & posted on the school website. A hard copy is available on request.
- Parents/carers will be contacted if there is an unexpected cancellation of a club.
- Questionnaires are sent out to parents for a variety of reasons and the results are analysed & used to improve the school.

We recognise that children's protection is a shared responsibility, and that Pott Shrigley Church 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 Safeguarding Lead or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, who may share this information with Social Care.

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 & governors.

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