Communication Policy

Ringmer Primary and Nursery School

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February 2022:	Reviewed by Headteacher and Child Centred Group.	
April 2024	Reviewed by Headteacher and Secretary. Information regarding school planners added. Information regarding excessive or unreasonable levels of communication added including example communication plan (Appendix 1)	

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Introduction

Positive communication is an essential element of the aims and vision of Ringmer Primary and Nursery School. This enables our children and families to feel valued and listened to. The majority of this communication takes place through the frequent verbal interactions between families and staff as children are brought to and from school as well as via each child's planner, Google Classroom, text and email, telephone and Google Meets.

Aim

To ensure that Ringmer Primary and Nursery School Primary School is a thriving and successful school, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our children, with their families and with other members of the wider community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are open, honest, respectful, ethical and professional.

Contact details

The school holds emergency contact details for all children on the our Management Information System - Arbor - and families are able to use the Arbor Parent Portal to ensure that these are up to date. Families are expected to inform the school immediately in the

event that contact information needs to be revised. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practicable means to contact families.

Communications with Families

Hereafter the term 'families' will be used to refer to all those individuals who have a role in the up-bringing and care of the child.

Families are welcome to visit the school to discuss their child's progress, ask questions, and gain support or to have the opportunity to talk about their child/home issues with their child's class teacher first, then a member of the senior leadership team or a member of staff with specific responsibility within the school, i.e. the SENDCo.

Outside of teaching their designated class all staff have additional duties which they perform either before school, during break/lunch or after school. These duties will include care of children, organisation of extra-curricular activities or whole-school coordination of a curriculum subject. We aim to be able to facilitate requests for an immediate meeting, however for the reasons stated above, when this is not possible, staff may not be able to facilitate an immediate, unscheduled appointment but will aim to do so within 5 school days.

Arranging a mutually convenient appointment allows the school time to organise cover to make staff available to speak to the families and to gather any necessary information prior to the meeting. This process will make the meeting much more conducive.

The following list, whilst not exhaustive, covers the main ways in which we will communicate with families. All response times are indicative and where extensions are needed i.e. for further investigation a holding response will be given to the family along with an updated expected response time

Planner

Learners in Years 1- 6 have their own student planners which contains a wealth of learning resources as well as vital communications for parents such as: recommended reads, acceptable use policies and emotional vocabulary progression. Additionally these planners allow families to communicate with the classteacher on a daily basis sharing brief messages for information. Teachers will aim to review planners daily and we request that families do the same. The planners are stamped or signed weekly by the classteacher.

Termly Curriculum Overview

Families will receive a termly Year Group termly curriculum overview via Google Classrooom from their child's class teachers. This will identify the focus of the learning taking place during the period indicated and identifies how families can support their child's learning at home. This overview will also be uploaded on to each class's page on the school website.

Termly Knowledge Organiser

Families will receive a Year Group termly knowledge organiser via Google Classroom from their child's classteacher. This will detail the key/sticky knowledge that your child will be taught each term. The knowledge organizer will be uploaded on each class's page on the school website.

Emails and Electronic Information

The school uses the Arbor system which allows us to email letters and other communications to families. Not only is this more environmentally friendly as it decreases paper usage, it also reduces photocopying and other costs in the school. We urge families to provide us with a valid email address.

Families are permitted to use email as a means of providing a quick, effective way of communicating information about their child or to arrange a meeting with their teacher. We request that families refer to the school's weekly bulletin before emailing the school office for previously shared information. In the case of excessive levels of communication the school will introduce a communication plans.

Families are reminded that teachers will be forwarded emails that are for their attention, all emails should be sent to the school office – office@ringmerprimary.school. Staff, if appropriate, may forward emails to the Headteacher.

Emailing your child's teacher to inform them you will be collecting them for an appointment or to change pick-up arrangements is not appropriate due to the high- likelihood that the message will not be read in time. It is important that families pass this information via the school office who will pass the message to the class, either by email, or if after 1pm via telephone to ensure the message is received before the end of school.

All emails requiring an answer should be responded to within 3 school days. Staff are not expected to, and are discouraged from, checking and responding to emails outside of their working day. However, staff are encouraged to work flexibly and respond to emails in a way that suits them to balance their working hours. Staff do not expect families to read, respond or action emails outside hours that suit them. Email does not replace face to face meetings where some discussion is required. All staff should seek face to face communications, when email is not the most effective form of communication. Staff and families are discouraged from entering into in-depth discussions about a child's progress or well-being via email.

Where it is not possible to use email, most written correspondence is passed on to families through face to face interaction at the end of the school day. Where this is not appropriate, it is forwarded through the Royal Mail postage service.

Telephone calls

Inbound
All telephone calls will be answered by staff in the main office. It is our policy that office staff do not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency. Messages are taken and forwarded to the relevant person. If the call requires a response from a member of staff, we aim to do this within 3 working days.

Outbound
Telephone calls will be made where immediate contact with a family member is required i.e. for injuries or accidents. A member of staff will call the first named emergency contact as listed. Where no contact is made, a call will then be made to the second named contact and so forth. In the event that no live contact can be made, the member of staff will either leave an answer phone message or ensure that repeat calls continue to be made to the contact numbers, where possible.

Google Classroom

Google Classroom connects the school and families through building virtual classroom communities. It enables staff to share photos, videos, announcements and celebrations as well as messaging between school and home. As with emails, staff are not expected to, and are discouraged from, checking and responding to Google Classroom outside of their working day. However, staff are encouraged to work flexibly and respond to Google Classroom in a way that suits them to balance their working hours. Staff do not expect families to read, respond or action Google Classroom outside hours that suit them. Google Classroom does not replace face-to-face meetings where some discussion is required. All staff should seek face-to-face communications, when Google Classroom is not the most effective form of communication. Staff and families are discouraged from entering into in-depth discussions about a child's progress or well-being via Google Classroom.

Written Reports

Three times a year, we provide a written report to each child's families on their progress. This report identifies areas of strength and next steps.

Newsletter

Our Newsletter is emailed out each Friday via Arbor and contains important reminders, dates and messages for the week ahead. Families are strongly encouraged to read these. It is also available on our website.

Parent Meetings

All families are provided with three, 10-minute meetings each academic year. Families are asked to sign up for an allocated date and time. Should an appointment day not be suitable,

families are asked to contact their child's teacher who will make every effort to arrange a more mutually convenient time.
Families are encouraged to request additional meetings should they have a concern regarding their child's progress or well-being. Likewise, staff will arrange additional meetings if necessary.

Annual Reviews for Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan

All children with an Education, Health and Care Plan will have an Annual Review each academic year to discuss their progress in relations to the aims and objectives of their plan and half termly review meetings are held to ensure provision and support is appropriate.

Personal Support Plans – APDRs/IHCP

Children on the Special Educational Needs Register, have an updated support plan every 2 terms which is provided to families. Each support plan/APDR offers practical advice to families on how they can work with school staff to support their child in achieving targets to assist the child's progress.

School Website

The school website http://www.ringmerprimary.school provides an opportunity to share information about the school and is an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience. There are additional links and advice on the website and we recommend families use this as a supportive tool.

Excessive or Unreasonable levels of Communication

If the school feels that the volume of emails / enquiries received by a family falls into the category of 'persistent, prolific, and repetitious' and do not allow the school a reasonable opportunity to investigate or respond in full before another concern is sent through then the school will set up a meeting to discuss the level of communication. If communication from a parent becomes persistent and unmanageable, the school will put a communication plan in place. Please see Appendix 1.

As part of the communication plan, the school will ask that all concerns and complaints are raised through the formal complaint process so they can be formally dealt with.

If the family/complainant becomes abusive or violent, the headteacher retains the right to bar the person from the school site.

Complaints

All formal letters of complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the school's separate Complaints Policy. All formal letters to families must be approved by the Headteacher before they are sent.

The school does not accept or act upon anonymous communication unless in relation to matters of serious Child Protection.

Requests for Information

Please refer to our Data Protection and GDPR Policy for copies of children's records, freedom of information and Subject Access Requests. This will detail procedures and protocols, including timings.

When communication becomes inappropriate, aggressive, vexatious, persistent or disproportionate and the school deems it is unacceptable, then actions will be put in place in accordance with our Parents Code of Conduct.

Appendix 1

Communications Plan

Actions to be taken	**When**	**By whom**	**Notes**
1. School to set up a new e-mail address which can be accessed by HT, SENCO and a member of administrative staff. E.g. communication@ringmerprimary.school This will be the new e-mail point of contact for the complainant.	ASAP	A member of administrative staff or another authorised staff member who can make this request to IT.	
2. A letter will be sent from the new e-mail address which outlines the communication plan as it relates to ongoing concerns. *This is distinct from any complaints which are currently being handled via the Complaints procedure. In this instance, communication should go via the clerk.*		Chair will sign the letter or another member of staff if appropriate.	
3. Any member of staff who receives regular contact from the complainant should be informed of the new comms plan. They should forward any e-mail correspondence which relates to concerns and complaints to the inbox.	Ongoing	All	
4. **Without providing the name of the complainant**, governors and staff need to be made aware that a comms plan has been sent to a parent and reminded that when *any* parent raises a complaint, they should be directing them to the complaints policy immediately.		All	Chair will lead on this communication to the governors and HT will lead on communication to the staff.
5. Ongoing: school to monitor the need to potentially ban complainants from the school site. Advice to be sought where necessary.			

Model email to parent/s

Schools may choose to adapt this model e-mail to inform the complainant of the communication plan. You can change any element of this draft to make it relevant to the incident you are dealing with.

XXX School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high-quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we are writing to inform you that under the Schools' Complaints Policy and Procedure, your recent pattern of communication with the school has been categorised as persistent.

Therefore, we have taken the decision to implement a communication plan to manage your ongoing concerns about the school.

Please note that this communications plan does not apply to any formal complaints that are currently being investigated under the policy. All correspondence relating to a formal complaint should be directed to the Clerk to the Governors.

Over the course of your recent e-mails, you have raised various concerns. However, due to the volume of e-mails that you sent when raising these concerns, we have taken the decision that they fall under the category of 'persistent, prolific, and repetitious' and do not allow the school a reasonable opportunity to investigate or respond in full before another concern is sent through.

We are committed to addressing any formal complainants that you may make and to the ongoing wellbeing and educational experience of your child/children.

The plan will work in the following way:

- The concerns you have raised previously should be raised as a formal complaint, via the Schools' Complaints Policy. The school will no longer respond to informal concerns, but the school will follow the complaints procedure in full should you choose to make use of it.
- Moving forwards, you will direct all contact to the new e-mail address: XXXXXXXXXXX
- Any e-mails that you continue to send to the Headteacher, or other members of staff, will be redirected to this e-mail address. This e-mail address will be checked at appropriate times and if you have any new concerns which the school does feel that that it is able to address informally, then you will be contacted by the relevant member of staff.
- You will still be provided with the information that you are entitled to under The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005, within the statutory time frame.
- You will also be provided with day-to-day school updates and information that relate to your children, to ensure that they can continue to engage fully with school events etc. In case of emergencies, you will still be contacted via the normal procedures.
- This plan will remain in place for 6 months and will be reviewed at the end of that period.