

Communications Policy



Author:	Personnel Committee
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1. Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs
- The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:
 - Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
 - Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers
 - Helping parents/carers 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
- In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

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

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during school opening hours and within their working hours. Staff will **aim** to respond within 2 working days of the request/query being raised, dependant on their working hours. In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff achieve 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.

2.3 Parents

Parents 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.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of school opening hours or during school holidays.

3. How we communicate with parents and carers

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

Parents 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 Email

We use email to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations

- Class activities or teacher requests
- Regular Newsletters
- Sports news

3.2 Text messages

We will text parents about:

- Short-notice changes and unplanned events
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

3.3 School calendar

Our school website and newsletter includes a full school calendar which is regularly updated.

Where possible, we try to give parents 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).

Any such event will be included in the school calendar.

3.4 Phone calls

Parents/carers will not routinely be contacted to request forgotten equipment, including PE kit.

We may phone parents about the following

- Request for permissions
- Pre-arranged parent consultations
- Medical updates
- Behaviour concerns
- Safeguarding/welfare checks
- Attendance checks

3.5 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits if a reply slip is required
- Consent forms
- Curriculum information

3.6 Homework diary

Homework diaries will be signed each week by your child's class teacher. From time to time teachers may use the homework diary to pass on short messages.

3.7 Reports

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

- An interim Learning Behaviour and Attitude report sent out at the end of the Autumn Term
- 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 KS2 SATs tests

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

3.8 Meetings

We hold a parents' evening during Autumn and Spring Term, over two evenings and an open afternoon in the Summer Term. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

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

Parents 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.

3.9 School website

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

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Celebrating the work and life of the school
- Policies and procedures
- Contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents 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 Email

Parents should always email the school about non-urgent issues in the first instance. Parents should not email staff directly using their personal school email address.

We aim to respond (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within two working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should phone the school.

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact them within two working days.

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 parents have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within two days of your request.

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

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues
- Medical issues

For more general enquiries, please phone the school office.

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the school office (see appendix 1), or phone the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within two working days of the request, with the aim of the meeting date being held within two weeks depending on the nature of the meeting and whether multi agencies are involved (excluding school holidays).

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if parents 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

5. Accessibility

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

5.1 Parents 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 and newsletters) are available in multiple formats upon request
- All communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible
- Accessibility is incorporated into the school website, icon on the home page
- Staff will endeavour to provide information in an accessible format
- Parents 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 Parents with English as an additional language (EAL)

We currently make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email and newsletters) available in the following languages:

- English
- Google translate facility is incorporated into the school website so that all information can be translated into another language
- Parents 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 year.

The policy will be approved by the Governing Body.

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
- Home-school agreement
- Staff wellbeing
- Single Equality Information and Objectives 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 admin.office@ringwood-junior.hants.sch.uk or 01425 473554. The office is open from 8:20am to 4:00pm so emails received outside of these times may not be seen until the office is next open.
- 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

We try to respond to all emails within 2 working days.

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

We try to respond to all emails within 2 working days.

School will not tolerate abusive or offensive behaviour.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's teacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	The Pastoral Team – Mrs Young, Mrs Gosling, Miss Whalley, Mrs Mullis, Mrs Evans, Mrs Thornton
Payments	Mrs East, School Office
School trips	Mrs East, School Office
Uniform/lost and found	Your child's teacher
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01425 476770 or email absence@ringwood-junior.hants.sch.uk If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact Mrs Evans, Headteacher
Bullying and behaviour	Mr Crane, Assistant Head
School events/the school calendar	Mrs Yemets, IT Technician, School Office
Special educational needs (SEN)	Mrs Thornton, Assistant Head/SENCO

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
Before and after-school clubs	Mrs James, School Office Mrs Coutts, 115 Club
Hiring the school premises	Mrs East, School Office
PTA	Mrs Bygrave, PTA Chair
Governing board	Mrs Laughton, Chair of Governors – contact using the school email address above.
Catering/meals	Mrs Mason, Education Catering - contact using the school email address above.

Complaints

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