

Home School Communication Policy

This Policy was formally adopted by the Governing Body in:	November 2023
Policy to be reviewed every 2 years	
Next review date:	November 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

Vision

At the Federation of Follifoot & Spofforth CE Primary Schools our vision is that everyone will; LOVE, LEARN & THRIVE.

LOVE

We nurture each individual, build positive relationships with everyone and value their uniqueness.

LEARN

We inspire children to have a lifelong love of learning. They develop wisdom, knowledge and skills and become fluent learners.

THRIVE

We develop children socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually, helping them to be the best versions of themselves preparing them well for their futures in a diverse world.

Our vision translates directly into this policy;

- All communication between home and school will be made in a professional and mutually supportive fashion.
- Staff and parents will work together in regard to conducting themselves in a kind, respectful and productive manner that recognises and celebrates diversity and difference. They will manage their feelings and behave appropriately in a range of communication.
- All staff have the opportunity to thrive in a safe welcoming and inclusive work place.
- We believe that everyone is equal and has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. Our school is a place where everyone should be able to thrive in a loving and hospitable community. Adult behaviour will be managed in accordance with our vision.

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, Staff Code of Conduct and the school's 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)
- Ensuring that all communications are treated as confidential within the school context.
- Ensuring that all communications are dealt with respectfully and with courtesy.

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication within 48 hours of receiving communications during core school hours, 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.

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Refer to the communication flowchart included in this policy to ensure communications are sent to the right person/people.

- Read the key communication issued by the school through the Federation Fortnightly Newsletter, letters and messages sent. All communications for Follifoot and Spofforth CE Primary School are sent through to parents on Email through Scholarpack. This is managed by the school admin team.
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Respond 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, carers and visitors behaviour policy.

Parents should allow up to 48 hours for staff members to respond. They should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours, or their working hours if they are part time, or during weekends or the 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 ParentMail

We use the ParentMail App to keep parents informed about the following things:

- School surveys or consultations
- Consent forms/permissions

3.2 Email (via Scholarpack)

We use email to keep parents informed of:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- Class activities or teacher requests

3.3 Text messages (via Scholarpack)

Text messages will be sent about:

- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

3.4 School calendar

Our Federation Fortnightly Newsletter includes key dates for the coming weeks in the half term ahead. Key dates for the school year are regularly published on the school website and each half term, the longer term 'Federation Key Dates' are recirculated to parents.

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). This is sent via Scholarpack and dates are also on the Federation Website.

3.5 Phone calls

We welcome telephone calls to school for reporting absences. Please telephone us to communicate brief information about your child that the school needs to know in an emergency, e.g. to let us know that you will be late collecting your child. We ask parents to telephone the school ([Follifoot 01423872580](tel:01423872580) or [Spofforth 01937590655](tel:01937590655)). The school office is open between 8.30am and 4.00pm, Monday - Friday during term-time. At all other times there is an answering service available to take your message.

Letters

Parents are regularly emailed:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Our Federation Fortnightly Newsletter

If a parent requires a letter to be printed this can be done by request through the main office.

3.7 Reports

Parents 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 KS1 and KS2 SATs tests
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Support Plans
- Reports are shared with Parents via Parent Mail
- SEND plans go via Scholarpack

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 two parents' evening(s) per year. During these meetings, parents 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 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
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

3.10 Class Dojo

Class Dojo is an online learning platform. It allows us as a school to connect to parents/carers through communication features, such as a feed for photos and videos from the school day and messaging that can be translated into more than 35 languages. Classes can be shared with other staff members in school, including school leaders, so that learning can be shared and celebrated. It is free to use (you do not need the paid version) and the app can be downloaded onto your electronic device.

School Story

School Story is where we post letters and whole school news, updates and reminders. Fortnightly, the school newsletter will be available here.

Class Story

Class Story is where individual class teachers share photos, videos, activities and files to share, support and celebrating learning in their class. Teachers will also use this page to send reminders.

Messages

Messaging allows us to communicate with every family in our school, including sending letters and celebration messages. Messaging is also a way to connect directly with your child's class teacher. **Parents/carers should only send messages to class teachers that relate directly to learning.** Any messages sent must be in keeping with the school's vision and ethos.

Across our Federation, we are committed to ensuring the well-being of all staff. We have set quiet hours to remind parents that teachers are unavailable outside of set hours. Staff will only use messaging to acknowledge and respond to or to generic messages in keeping with the school's vision and values. Some examples are:

- *Thank you for sending me your learning – it's great to see you having lots of fun!*
- *I am so proud of your learning this week.*
- *Please remember to bring your glasses to school tomorrow.*
- *Congratulations on being star of the week, keep up the amazing work!*

Ensuring the safety of everybody in our school community is of paramount importance to us. We have a number of policies and procedures that keep staff, children, parent/carers, governors and visitors safe. Prior to using the app, all parents/guardians must read, sign and return our Class Dojo Parent User Agreement. We will never share your child's full name on Class Dojo. A copy of our Parent User Agreement can be found on our school website and will be sent out to all parents.

Class Dojo must **never** be used to report a child's absence from school, a safeguarding concern or to report an issue in school. Queries or requests for support with any problems should be communicated to the school office via telephone or email.

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 can email the school office about non-urgent issues in the first instance. Please see communication flowchart (appendix 1) included in this policy to know who to direct your email to.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within one working day, and to respond in full (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 call 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 schedule a phone call 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 five days of your request.

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

Urgent include things like:

- Safeguarding or welfare issues
- Family emergencies

For more general enquiries, please call 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 or call the school to book an appointment.

We will aim to schedule meetings within three - five working days of the request.

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day, lengthier discussions will require a meeting scheduling.

4.4 Home-school communications app

We encourage all parents to engage with the use of ParentMail, as this is the main form of communication provided by the school.

ParentMail is used to send out a variety of information, either to a targeted class or group, e.g. specific communications regarding class trips and special events, or to all parents, e.g. urgent messages such as an unplanned school closure.

For further information about how ParentMail works please click on the following link:

Link: www.parentmail.co.uk

5. INCLUSION

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

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

- English

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 two years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

7. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- Parent, Carers and Visitors Behaviour Policy
- Staff code of conduct
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Home-school agreement
- Complaints 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:

- Consult the communication flow chart
- Email the most appropriate address from the list below
- Include your child's full name in the subject line

We try to respond to all emails within 48 working hours.

Parent Communication Flow Chart

We know that when parents have a concern that relates to their child at school, whether it's pastoral, curriculum or staffing in nature, they often feel the best way forward is to ask to see the headteacher. In our experience many of these concerns can often be most quickly resolved by talking first to the most appropriate person. The flow chart below outlines who this will be.

Learning or Pastoral Concerns	Concern relating to particular learning or physical needs	Concerns & Queries relating to school administration
Please raise your concern with your child's class teacher.	Please raise your concern with your child's class teacher in the first instance.	Please speak to Mrs Giddings or Mrs Horner
↓	↓	
If you still have concerns, please contact our senior teachers Mrs Bromley (Follifoot) or Mrs Blades (Spofforth)	If you still have concerns, please arrange an appointment with our SENDCO Mrs Ashton .	
↓	↓	
If you feel this has not been successful, please make an appointment to see our Executive Headteacher Mrs Holland if you remain concerned following the steps above.	If you feel this has not been successful, please make an appointment to see our Executive Headteacher Mrs Holland if you remain concerned following the steps above.	
Teachers are available after school for informal conversations and appointments can be made with all of the above by telephoning the school office Follifoot 01423872580 or Spofforth 01937590655 or emailing: Follifoot: office@ffspschools.co.uk or Spofforth: admin@spofforth.n-yorks.sch.uk		
If you are Emailing /writing to the school, it is really helpful if you give us as much information about the background of your concern or complaint as possible, including who it involves, and what you would like the outcome to be.		

Our Co-Chair of Governors (Mrs Emma Booth and Mrs Marianne Tharby) are also here to support when a parent has a concern or complaint. They can be contacted through the school offices.

Our full school complaints policy can be found on our website, or a hard copy can be obtained from the school office.

School contact details

Parents should consult the information below to ensure communication can be shared and concerns resolved as quickly as possible. Please include the staff members name in the email subject so your email can be forwarded to the right person.

SCHOOL	EMAIL ADDRESS
Follifoot School Office Telephone: 01423872580	office@ffspschools.co.uk
Spofforth School Office Telephone: 01937590655	admin@spofforth.n-yorks.sch.uk

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy.