THE STONEHENGE SCHOOL

Home to School Communications Policy 2025

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Contents

1. Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, honest, 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 and participation in school life

- Helps the school improve, through feedback on what is working well and whether areas of school life can be improved

- 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.

The school's primary function is to provide a high-quality education to the pupils of The Stonehenge School. Its resources, and therefore staff time is heavily focused on this moral purpose, and it is important that means of communication supports this. Staffing is a finite resource and therefore the school needs to strike a clear balance in order to ensure the progress made by pupils is maximised, and that the most effective means of communication is utilised.

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

- Ensuring that communication is efficient allowing the school to focus on its primary purpose

- Monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and recommending changes to the Governing Body

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 core school hours between 8:25am and 3pm, or their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a manageable 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.

Teachers will not respond to requests to contact parents during times when they are responsible for a class.

Senior leaders may decide who responds to a communication dependent on its nature and who is best placed to respond or manage it.

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times and is in line with the Parents Code of Conduct.

- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance (refer to How Parents and Carers can communicate with the school – on our Contact Us tab of website)

- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner

- Ensuring that we have up-to-date contact details (phone and email)

- Any emails should be appropriately formal so that the correct salutation (Mr/Mrs) to address the staff member, and features of text messages are not in use (emojis etc)

- Checking all communications from the school, including on Class Charts

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 core school hours or during school holidays.

The Stonehenge School Parent Code of Conduct can be found here.

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 Class Charts

Class Charts is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is the school's preferred method of communication. It will send notifications and announcements via the app and by email. We will use Class Charts to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Weekly newsletter

- Upcoming school events

- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)

- School surveys or consultations

- Class activities or teacher requests

- Vacancies

- Behaviour incidents, including detentions

- Extra-curricular activities

- General correspondence

3.2 Text messages

Text messaging incurs a cost to the school, therefore is not our preferred method of communication. We will use text messaging to provide short notice information.

We will text parents about:

- Short notice changes to the school day

- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

- To signpost to our website, social media sites or an email for important information and increase our reach

3.4 Phone calls

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time and running clubs or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents and carers may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

In a non-emergency a return call will endeavour to be made within 5 working days, with any follow up action from the request /query/problem being dealt with within 10 working days. Staff will make a record of a telephone conversation with a parent/carer in the Class Charts notes section.

3.5 Letters

Letters home are limited, however on occasions, the school may post the following information:

- Consent forms (generally only in new admissions packs)

- Exclusions

3.7 Reports.

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

- Progress reports covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance

- A report on the results of public examinations

- Information about vocational qualifications gained (or credits gained towards these)

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 one parents' evening per year for each year group (with the exception of Year 7 who also have a 'settling-in' parents' evening with their tutors). 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.

Parents and staff must organise meetings in advance via email or phone. Staff members, including the senior leadership team are not available on demand due to the busy nature of a school. Staff

have the right to decline a meeting request if they feel it has no purpose, where efforts have already been made to create a satisfactory conclusion, or where expectations are unrealistic. School leaders have a legal responsibility to exercise a duty of care towards staff.

3.9 School website

Key information about the school is posted on our Stonehenge School 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

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents should visit the 'Contact us' page on The Stonehenge School website where a list of staff can be found. This will help parents/carers 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, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 5 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 10 working days. Staff will make a record of a telephone conversation with a parent/carer on the school Class Charts log.

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 aim to contact them within 5 working days as above.

This policy aims to ensure that a balance is maintained between the priority that staff time is dedicated to teaching commitments and essential meetings which are critical to the quality of education that pupils receive, with the need for effective communication. If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time.

If the issue is urgent, parents 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 or check the school website.

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address using the contact details on the school website or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule meetings within 7 working days of the request, but this will depend on the nature of the request. Some requests will be assessed to be urgent and will take place as soon as the school (and other relevant agencies) deem necessary.

- Staff will schedule meetings to occur between 8am and 4:00pm
- Any concerns they have about their child's learning
- Updates related to pastoral support, their child's home environment, or their wellbeing

Parents and carers should report to reception prior to meeting with a member of staff. A member of staff may ask a senior colleague to accompany them.

In the event of parents/carers becoming aggressive or abusive, the meeting will be terminated and reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team who will follow up in accordance with the Parent Code of Conduct.

5. Inclusion

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

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 3 years.

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/Carer Code of Conduct

- Staff Code of Conduct

- Complaints

Appendix 1

Concerns and Complaints

The school welcomes parents raising concerns with the school. We want all pupils' experience of school to be the best that it can be, and we want parents' experience of school life to be positive and efficient to support family life and wellbeing.

Thoughts or concerns raised by parents often give insights that lead to more effective ways of working or highlight needs that may be hidden from sight. The school will look to use concerns or parents' thoughts to improve experiences for individual children, groups of children or systems.

However, there will be times when parents feel that a complaint has not been resolved adequately. In this situation, a parent should follow the school's complaints procedure.

Unreasonable Complaints or persistent contact – DFE model policy

Unfortunately, there are times when the complaints system is used in a vexatious manner and not in the interests of children. This can have a serious impact by:

- Persistently diverting resources away from the teaching and learning of other children within the school e.g., by taking up a teachers planning time, diverting curriculum leadership to dealing with a complaint

- Using the system to put pressure on the school to treat individual children, or children, in a manner that is contrary to statutory guidance or good practice or school policy

- Using the system to harass a member of staff reducing their ability to carry out their job effectively and damaging their wellbeing

- Aggressively using the complaints system to mask or divert attention away from safeguarding issues

Based on experience, this use of the complaints system is often accompanied by the use of social media to portray an unbalanced view as they know that schools do not engage with parents through social media. In addition, other parents are frequently cited as supporting the complaint.

The school's view is that this type of use of the system should be viewed as unacceptable behaviour within our school community as it harms the education and wellbeing of the children within the school community.

The DFE's model policy for 'Managing serial and unreasonable complaints' provides useful guidance when an individual is behaving in a manner that hinders the fair consideration of a complaint. Their examples include:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance

- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process

- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure

- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice

- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on

- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales

- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced

- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds

- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)

- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education

- seeks an unrealistic outcome

- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy, and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with

- uses threats to intimidate

- uses abusive, offensive, or discriminatory language or violence

- knowingly provides falsified information

- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.