



## HARWELL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

### COMMUNICATION POLICY

Reviewed Gov Working Party	12 November 2020
Ratified by FGB	17 November 2020
Next Review Due	Academic Year 2022/2023

*To conform with the requirements of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations), all data is handled in accordance with our Privacy Notice. A copy of which is on the school website.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It involves:

- Respectful listening
- Respecting confidentiality
- Developing and sharing understanding
- Building trust
- Management of relationships and appropriate involvement of people
- An awareness of attitude and behaviour as well as the clarity of the message
- Coordinated, timely, effective action if required

## **AIM**

At Harwell School we aim to build on our partnerships with parents and the wider community through effective and efficient communication. We aim to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

We communicate through a range of different strategies; some as a result of a statutory requirement and others reflect what we believe is important to our school.

Good communication between school and home is essential.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Children achieve more when school and parents work together. Parents can be more supportive if they know what the school is trying to achieve and how they can help.

All communications at Harwell 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 method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience
- Take account of relevant school policies
- Be compatible with our core values as reflected in our Vision and Raising Achievement Plan.

**Harwell School Vision:** At Harwell School our vision for your child is to help them to develop a love of learning, along with the skills and the ways of thinking, to excel at whatever they choose to do in the future.

## **ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

### Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- To ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels, where practicable face to face. Covid19 has increased the use of virtual meetings and internal communication via google documents.
- 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

### All Staff

- 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. Covid19 has increased the use of virtual meetings and internal communication via google documents.
- 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 SLT and colleagues informed

### Governors

- To only use school emails and governor google drive when communicating between governors or with the school
- Using a variety of communication methods to promote & explain the work of the governors
- To ensure the timely posting of FGB minutes of meetings on the governor noticeboard

## **INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

- All staff receive an induction with important information about organisation and procedures within the school - a copy of the induction folder is in the staff room
- Copies of key policies and information are placed on the noticeboard in the staff room
- All staff have access to the school calendar online and main items from the calendar are copied to the whiteboard in the staff room
- There is an integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff both formal and informal: e.g. weekly briefings, teachers' meetings, teaching assistant meetings, Office meetings, Key Stage meetings, whole staff meetings, staff and governor social events Covid19 has increased the use of virtual meetings but reduced the school's ability to hold regular face to face meetings.
- All formal meetings should be structured and minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda.

- Monday morning briefings (via google doc due to Covid19), Teachers' meetings (virtual due to Covid19), TA meetings (suspended due to Covid19 and replaced with staff newsletters, emails and FAQ sheet) & SLT meetings (a mix of virtual and face to face due to Covid19) take place every week
- Lunchtime Supervisor meetings take place once a term (suspended due to Covid19)
- Key Stage meetings take place as required
- Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information however it should not replace face to face (or virtual) meetings where discussion is required
- Printed letters to individual parents (e.g. bump letters) are given out by the class teachers and must be given to children the same day
- Email is the method used for communication of information to parents. Printed copies are sent via class teachers to go home with those children whose parents are unable to access email

#### School Council (suspended due to Covid19)

- The School Council is made up of two children from each class who are voted for by their peers at the beginning of each school year
- The School Council meet with the Headteacher at least once each term
- Prior to each meeting School Councillors take comments from their peers on school issues and following each meeting they feedback to their class
- Minutes of these meetings are taken by a Year 6 pupil and are shared with School Council members and class teachers

### **EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

#### Emails

This is the main method Harwell School uses to ensure general messages and information are communicated to parents. However, it is acknowledged that electronic communication will not take the place of face-to-face conversation.

- Any communication that needs to be sent to parents using this system must be approved by a member of the SLT
- Staff will acknowledge and respond to emails in a timely manner
- Email communications concerning a child are forwarded to the relevant teacher for a response
- Email communications concerning a child are kept for the academic year in a digital folder and then deleted in accordance with the school's Retention & Disposal schedule. If any are required for evidence trailing, in which case a copy should be printed, retained and then securely disposed of in accordance with the school's Retention & Disposal schedule.
- If a parent communicates with the school using email with a complaint the complaints policy and procedure is to be followed

- Parents are encouraged to contact the school with general requests using email where possible . All email communications should be sent to the school office in the first instance: [office.2563@harwell.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.2563@harwell.oxon.sch.uk)
- Parents are asked to send any emails regarding an urgent safeguarding, Health & Safety or GDPR breach issue to [schoolbusinessmanager@harwellprimaryschool.co.uk](mailto:schoolbusinessmanager@harwellprimaryschool.co.uk) for the immediate attention of the SLT
- Whilst most communication will be sent electronically, on occasion the school will send a letter to parents via their child
- It is acknowledged that there are some families who do not have electronic means of communication and arrangements are made accordingly

### Letters

- Staff will acknowledge and respond to letters in a timely manner
- Any letter of complaint must be referred to the Head Teacher immediately and the complaints policy and procedure is to be followed
- Letters to parents of a sensitive nature must be approved by the Head Teacher before they are sent. Termly letters, and trip letters, should be proofread before they are sent (allow sufficient time for this to happen)

### Telephone Calls

- Parents are encouraged to phone the school if there is any immediate information the school needs to know e.g. pupil sickness or to make an appointment (via telephone or virtually via google meet during Covid 19) with a staff member
- The school will endeavour to respond quickly and appropriately
- The school will also phone the parents if there is an urgent issue concerning a pupil or specific issue
- Office staff will not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency

### Newsletters

- Newsletters are e-mailed out approximately fortnightly
- If a parent has no access to email, then a hard copy will be sent out in the child's book bag
- Copies of the newsletter are added to the school website and the parent noticeboard (suspended due to Covid19)
- Newsletters should not name children with photographs.

### 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. The website contains a range of specified information that gives parents a full picture of provision including:

- Medium term curriculum plans for each year group
- Half termly class newsletters
- Newsletters

- School brochure
- Calendar showing all the latest dates and events related to the school
- Relevant policies and reports
- Useful resources for parents
- A list of term and holiday dates is available to download
- The school website provides a platform for communication to parents from the Harwell School Association

### School brochure

The school brochure contains a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of provision at our school. This is updated every year.

### Social Media

- Class facebook pages for parents to exchange information must include the School Business Manager as a member and are monitored periodically to ensure that the content complies with the Parent Code of Conduct
- Staff are advised not to communicate with parents via social networking sites or accept them as “friends”
- Staff will not accept pupils or ex-pupils as “friends”

### Communication with teachers

- Teachers welcome the opportunity to talk to parents and they should always be the first point of contact for parents if they have any questions or concerns about their child
- During Covid19, teachers may be briefly available to talk to parents at the end of the school day and will arrange to either telephone or have a virtual meeting with parents as appropriate
- If there is an immediate issue, parents may request to talk to the class teacher by appointment which can be made via the school office
- If the concern cannot be dealt with by the class teacher or the parent is not happy with the outcome then the Assistant Headteacher or Headteacher should be contacted via the School Office
- In addition, parents meet their child’s teacher twice a year for a consultation at parents’ evening (in the autumn and spring terms). This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child’s successes and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for improvement
- When children have special educational needs, or if they are making less than the expected progress, parents may be asked to meet with teachers more regularly
- We will also make any 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 a communication

### Communication with separated parents

- Requests from split parents for separate communication are accommodated
- Newsletters and documents are downloadable from the school website with other necessary documentation either e-mailed or posted out
- Separate appointments to see the class teachers at parents' evenings are accommodated if necessary
- Additional annual reports are posted on request

### Parent Visits to school (suspended due to Covid19 with virtual visits and meetings if possible)

- Parent teacher meetings take place twice a year
- Families are invited to share in their child's achievements during class outcomes (typically half termly)
- Parents are invited to attend the annual parent/teacher/governor workshops
- Families are invited to join the school at Harvest Festival, Carol singing, concerts, plays and other occasions as appropriate

### Home Visits

Home visits and pre-school visits take place during the Summer Term for children joining Foundation Class in the following September.

### Reports

Once a year, we provide a full written report to each child's parents on their progress.

### Annual Parent Survey

Once a year, governors send a questionnaire to parents and the results are analysed to inform governors and used to improve the school.

### Noticeboard (suspended due to Covid19)

Information is displayed on the notice board in the KS2 playground. This is a very useful means of communication between school and parents and also the HSA and wider community.

### Mobile phones

Staff -

- Mobile phones should not be used during lessons or when in contact with the children
- In exceptional cases, such as family illness, the circumstances should be discussed with the Headteacher
- Non-intrusive work-related mobile phone use is acceptable during PPA or management time

- During trips and off-site provision, staff should ensure they can be contacted by either mobile phone or landline, at all times

Pupils –

- Pupils who bring mobile phones to school must hand them into the class teacher at the start of each day and collect them at the end of the day

Work experience students (suspended due to Covid19)

- Mobile phones must be handed into the school office at the start of each day and collected at the end of the day
- Mobile phones can be collected at lunchtime but then handed back into the office for the afternoon period

Parents/carers –

- Use of mobile phones whilst on the school site should be courteous and appropriate to the school environment
- Parents are welcome to photograph or film school events such as shows or sports day, but images that include any children other than their own should not be published (e.g. on social networking sites) without the permission of the parents/carers of those other children
- Parents and visitors are required to turn phones off when volunteering in classrooms (suspended due to Covid19)
- Under no circumstances is mobile phone use permitted when helping with swimming changing (suspended due to Covid19)
- Making voice recordings on a mobile phone or other device during meetings or discussions with staff or governors is not permitted

### Harwell School Association

The school communicates with parents by email on behalf of the HSA. The HSA also has their own section of the school website. The HSA welcome all stakeholders to join them in trying to raise funds that support the school in several ways:

- Annual donation to the school
- Specific projects
- Provision of £5 per child towards a class trip
- Year 6 Leavers Presents

The Committee organises a wide range of events and activities involving pupils, parents and local residents all of which raises the profile of the school in the community.

### **MONITORING & REVIEW**

We use parent and community feedback to continually self-evaluate and consider ways that our communication system can be improved. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or sooner if necessary.

### **LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

This policy should be read alongside:



- Social media policy
- Codes of conduct
  - Parents and carers
  - Staff
  - Volunteers
  - Governors
- Complaints
- Privacy notices