

## Itchen Abbas Primary School Communication Policy



At Itchen Abbas Primary, we are very proud of the supportive, family ethos based on mutual respect and care that is integral to our school. We are privileged to be part of a community dedicated to the care and wellbeing of all our children, striving for the best possible outcomes in life for everyone. We are committed to working in partnership with parents as we recognise that by working together successfully, we can support our children to become well-rounded individuals, well-equipped for the challenges of life. As such, our school staff and parents are expected to behave in a way which models respectful, compassionate communication to all and set this example to our children. We recognise that all members of our community are entitled to be treated with politeness and respect in our communications and relationships with each other.

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It is through effective and interactive communication that information is transmitted, understanding is developed and shared, trust is built, confidentiality respected and action coordinated. Communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated from both parties. Good communication promotes partnership.

This policy has been written alongside our Staff Code of Conduct policy and Code of Conduct for Parents and Visitors Policy.

### **Objectives**

All communications at Itchen Abbas Primary School should:

- Respect the caring ethos of our school
- 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 methods of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience
- Take account of relevant school policies
- Be compatible with our core values
- Should be respectful and avoid inflammatory comments

### **Responsibilities**

Senior leadership team (SLT)

- To ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels.
- 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 and parents.
- To keep governors informed of developments and concerns.

## All staff

- To communicate regularly with each other to ensure information is available and understood within the context of the classroom and working environment.
- 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 leadership team and colleagues informed.

## Governors

- To ensure the use of trusted online spaces when communicating between governors or with the school
- Using a variety of communication methods to promote & explain the work of the governors
- Listening to people online to hear what is being said about the school
- To ensure the posting of minutes of meeting in appropriate places

## Parents

- To ensure all contact information is up to date
- To inform school of the first day of any absence from school (preferably by email)
- To inform the school of any changes or events which could impact on your child's well-being
- To check that communication via your child has reached the appropriate member of staff
- To read communication from the school and check the school calendar for forthcoming events

## **Communication Within School (between school staff)**

- All staff receive an induction pack providing them with important information about organisation and procedures within the school
- An integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff both formal and informal: e.g. teachers' meetings, teaching assistant meetings, whole staff meetings, etc.
- All formal meetings should be structured and minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda.
- E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating information, however it should not replace face to face meetings where discussion is required
- Senior Leadership (SLT), Staff meetings and Teaching Assistant Communication Meetings take place every week. The minutes are made available to all. Staff are expected to check future actions and to read minutes of meetings they are not present for
- Governors' meeting minutes are available upon request from the School Office.
- Weekly notices for the current week and following week are recorded on the staffroom whiteboard which is also used for day to day notices
- Reminders or letters to individual parents are sent by email or letter. Every class must have a system for distributing letters and other materials to go home with the children.
- The schools uses One.Com to communicate with parents by-mail and Facebook to share news
- Urgent messages for parents/carers will be sent by email or phone call as early as possible
- A list of all those not subscribing to One.Com will be kept by the office & hard copies sent to all those on the list

## Communication with Parents / Carers

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, other schools, the community and with outside agencies. Our aim is to have clear and effective communications with all parents and the wider community. We aim to make written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting school.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end, parents should always be addressed in an appropriate manner and we expect staff and parents to remain polite and respectful in their communications with each other as outlined in our Code of Conduct for Parents & Visitors Policy.

School staff will not accept friendship requests from parents on social media.

### Our methods of communication include:

Method	How is this used?	Additional information
Letters	Teachers will aim to respond to letters from parents within two school days. Any letter of complaint must be referred to the Head Teacher immediately. Letters to parents must be approved by the Head Teacher before they are sent. Copies of all correspondence to individual parents will be placed in pupil files. A copy of general letters will be placed on the school website.	The school aim to respond within two school days. This may be an acknowledgement if further information is required.
E-mail	The school has an e-mail system (one.com) which it uses to communicate with parents. If a parent communicates with the school using email with a complaint or a matter that requires an action, a copy should be stored in a digital file or printed & filed. Staff should forward relevant emails from parents to the Head Teacher and should always do so if the content is a complaint. E-mail communications concerning a child are kept for the academic year in a digital folder unless they are required for evidence trailing, in which case a copy may be printed.  Emails can also be used by parents to inform us of child absence from school or to pass on messages.	We aim to respond to e-mails requiring an answer within two school days (this timeframe will commence on the next school day if the email is sent after 3.00pm)
Telephone calls	Office staff will not interrupt teachers during teaching hours for staff to answer a telephone call (or answer a query from a visitor to school). The office is open to answer phone calls from 8.15am – 3.45pm. When the office is not manned, <b>please leave a message</b> ; we will return your call.	If a telephone call requires a response, this will be made within two school days.
Reporting sickness	Parents should email the school office on the first day to report absence through sickness.	
Newsletters	Newsletters are e-mailed out weekly by the school office.	Most email letters are sent on a Friday afternoon. Some will be sent across the week when the Headteacher deems this appropriate

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.	
Social Media	Social Media is used to pass on news and share events and examples of good learning with our community.	Our school uses Facebook to share learning.
Parents Evening	All parents are invited to Parents' Evenings twice per year. The meetings give parents and class staff the opportunity to talk through each child's progress, and time to look at work completed by the child during the term.	Parents are allocated a 10-minute time slot; if more time is necessary, staff will be happy to arrange another meeting on a different date.
Written Reports	Once a year, we provide a full written report to each child's parents on their progress. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. Pupils are also given an opportunity to comment on their progress.	
Additional Meetings	<p>We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being. When children have particular education needs, or if they are making less than expected progress, parents will be invited to meet with their child's teacher more regularly. We will also make 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 communication.</p> <p>Teachers are available on the school playground at the end of the school day and can be approached for an informal catch up. An appointment can be made through the school office for longer or more private meetings with your class teacher or other school staff. We aim to offer parents a meeting as quickly as possible, within 5 school days of the request being made.</p>	<p>Additional meetings will last a maximum of 30 minutes; a second meeting can be arranged if required. These will take place outside of school hours unless agreed by the Headteacher.</p> <p>Notes of meetings will be taken by a member of staff and a copy kept in the child's personal file and one given to parents.</p> <p>Staff and parents have the right to request another member of staff to be present for any meeting (including parents evening).</p>
SEN (ISP) Review Meetings	<p>Parents of children with an Individual Support Plan (ISP) will have the opportunity to review the ISP three times in a year. This meeting will last a maximum of 30 minutes and will review progress in the previous term and any changes to the provision in the following term.</p> <p>Children with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) will also receive an Annual Review to which all professionals involved will be invited. Notes from these meetings will be kept in the child's file and copies given to parents.</p>	ISP meetings will last a maximum of 30 minutes and will review progress towards previous targets and set the next term's new targets.

Other Home-School Communication includes:

- Parents will read and sign the home-school agreement on joining the school
- Home visits take place for those joining the school in Year R in September
- A half termly overview is sent out to parents at the beginning of each half term
- Parents/carers will be emailed or phoned if there is an unexpected cancellation of a club
- An annual questionnaire is sent out to parents and the results are analysed & used to improve school practice

We recognise that children's protection is a shared responsibility and that Itchen Abbas Primary School should provide a safe and secure environment. If any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for or the Deputy DSL, who may share this information with Children's Services. Sharing information to protect the welfare of a child remains our priority and takes priority over Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

### **How will this policy be monitored and evaluated?**

This policy will be monitored through on-going school self-evaluation. The Head Teacher will use a variety of methods to evaluate this policy with staff, parents & governors.

Other policies that might be of interest to you.

- Code of Conduct for Parents & Visitors
- Complaints procedure
- Staff code of conduct
- Child Protection
- Data Protection

Date ratified by Governors: June 2023

To be reviewed every 3 years

Date for next review: June 2026