Holymead Primary School

Communication Policy

November 2022

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Introduction

This communications policy sets out all the expected procedures for oral and written communication, which should be adhered to by all members of staff and governors.

Aims of the policy

To support Holymead Primary School in its aim to continue to be a thriving and successful school we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents and with other members of the wider school community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

Definition of communication

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information.

It involves:
• the management of relationships and the need to involve people
• the understanding that communication is as much about attitude and behaviour as it is about message
• listening
• the responsibility from ALL staff and governors to support effective communications and to recognise that the quality of their communications reflects on the school's reputation

For the purposes of this policy communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated; not only the responsibility for communication but also how effectively that responsibility is carried out.

Objectives of communication at Holymead Primary School

• to keep staff, pupils, parents, governors and other stakeholders well informed
• to be open, honest, ethical and professional
• to use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all
• to action communications within a reasonable time
• to use the method of communication that is most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience
• to take account of other policies, in particular our equal opportunities, Child Protection and use of ICT including the social network policy.
• to be compatible with our core values as reflected in all our policies and ethos

Internal methods of communication

Meetings

There is an integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff, both formal and informal.

All formal meetings are planned, structured and minutes taken. Members are invited to contribute to the agenda. It is important that time is put aside for structured opportunities for staff to engage in team working and to contribute to subject leaders' reflection on priorities, activities and future plans. For all other meetings notes should be taken, action points progressed and feedback given to staff.

Staff meeting minutes are available in the minute folder which is kept in the Head Teacher's office.

All LSA minutes are kept in the LSA minute book and Lunchtime Supervisor minutes are available from the Deputy Head Teachers.

E-mail

Information and notification of initiatives are communicated through the use of email where appropriate. This is mainly regarding teaching resources, information for all class teachers and support staff and messages from admin staff.

E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating information; however it does not replace face to face meetings where some discussion is required.

To ensure that each member of staff is up to date with information, it is vital that staff check their e-mails regularly throughout the day. The school office receives a large amount of parent communication throughout the day and they are directed not to disturb teachers and LSAs during lessons, except in emergency situations.

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that they check their emails each day.

Mobile phones

Please read the separate e-safety and mobile phone policies.

Personal mobile phones must not be used during the school day; they must not be on view during the school day or when in contact with the children.

In exceptional cases, such as family illness, mobile phones may be permitted however the specific circumstances must be discussed with the Head Teacher first.

Talking to Pupils

All staff are expected to follow the Behaviour Policy.

Telephone and Verbal Messages from Parents

Administrative staff must ensure that all messages from parents regarding their child/ren are passed on to class teachers immediately by email whenever possible. They (admin staff) should let staff know they have an email waiting. The administrative team have been instructed to only disturb teachers in urgent or emergency situations. Urgent information, such as a child going home with a different adult, should be taken round to staff by the admin staff as soon as it is received.

Written Communications

These are placed in pigeon-holes in the staff room, handed to staff personally or emailed.

It is the professional responsibility of all staff to check all methods of communication regularly.

What's On and Newsletter

Information concerning what is happening in school during the week is written on the board in the staff room.

All staff are provided with an overview of important dates at the beginning of term and the calendar on the website also holds this information.

All staff are expected to check the various forms of information daily and note dates and events that affect them.
The fortnightly newsletter must be read by every member of staff to ensure that they are fully aware of what is being shared with parents. This newsletter is emailed to all staff and members of the Governing Body.

Office staff must ensure that teachers are copied into any letter concerning their own class.

External methods of communication

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain; with parents and carers, other schools, the community and with outside agencies.

Good communication between the school and the home is essential, and children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can naturally help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve.

In our school we aim to have clear and effective communications with all parents/carers and with the wider community. 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 the school.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents/carers, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional at all times; to this end parents will always be addressed in an appropriate, professional manner. It is preferable that titles and surnames are used, rather than first names, however the use of first names may be appropriate and this decision is left to the professional judgement of the member of staff.

Communication with Parent and Carers

Talking to Parents

Conversations with parents/carers, whether face-to-face or by phone, should be logged either in teachers' files or if of a serious or repetitive nature in the incident book in the Head's office.

Please be aware of your body language and tone of voice when talking to parents. It is essential that all conversations with parents are conducted in a professional manner.

When concerns are raised regarding behaviour, the behaviour of a child should be considered over time and reflection taken on how this has been managed in the classroom. The conversation should always be about the behaviour of the child and not the child as a person.

Only teaching staff should discuss concerns with a parent. All support staff should discuss their concerns with the class teacher or a member of SLT.

The school encourages parents to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. Teachers arrange to see parents as soon as possible. Many parents have the opportunity to have a brief word with the teacher when they collect them at the end of the day. At the start of the day, parents and carers are asked to speak to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher.

Serious concerns from parents and carers should be recorded on a safeguarding form (Tdrive-Safeguarding – concern report forms and entered on cpoms by the safeguarding team).

Letters

Staff and governors will endeavour to respond to parents' letters as quickly as possible. All written communications to parents must be approved by the Head Teacher before they are sent. Copies of significant correspondence with parents, including emails, should be placed in pupil files.
A letter will be sent to parents when a teacher has been off for more than a week to update them on the situation and what procedures have been put in place. Regular letters will then be sent as and when more information is available.

LETTERS PROCEDURE:

1. All letters sent out from Holymead Primary School must be read and authorised by the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teachers. No letters must be issued that have not been read and authorised.
2. All authorised letters must include the standard school letterhead and be read and signed by the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teachers.
3. All letters to parents must be handed to the office a minimum of 10 working days prior to their needing to be sent. The School Business Manager should be aware of all correspondence that needs to be sent out to parents.

We believe we will achieve greater success when all staff take collective responsibility for maintaining high standards in school by issuing standard letters regularly.

Standard Letters are available for the following issues:

1. PE Kit
2. Homework
3. Misplaced school equipment
4. School uniform
5. Behaviour

These letters are available from the office. An additional photocopy should be given to the office to put in the pupil's record file.

E-mail

The school has a text messaging and email system (ParentMail) it uses to communicate to parents, on a fortnightly basis for the newsletter or to update parents with regards to return times for visits.

Any communication that needs to be sent to parents using these systems must be approved by the Head Teacher.

All communications from parents and governors should be sent via the office, not through personal emails.

A copy of any e-mail received by any member of staff from a parent should be saved and a hard copy stored in the school office if it is of an important nature. Any important or personal information received by email should be shared with the deputy or head.

Telephone Calls

The telephone should always be answered professionally using "Good morning/afternoon, Holymead Primary School how can I help you?"

Admin staff must not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call, but take a message.

Staff should always tell a member of SLT if a parent contacts them, so that they can be supported, especially if the phone call relates to a complaint.

Social Networking Sites, Blogs etc

Staff must not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept them as their "friends". The exception to this rule would be when school has established Tapestry, See-saw and Google Classroom, for the purpose of online teaching and learning.

Staff must also be aware of the impression that is given to others when they use social networking sites, particularly when absent from school due to illness.

The Social Media/Acceptable Usage criteria (as documented in the staff handbook and code of conduct) should be adhered to at all times.

Written Reports

Once a year we provide a full written report to each child's parent or carer on their progress in each subject. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. Pupils are also given the opportunity to comment on their own progress and parents are invited to make a similar comment.

During the autumn and spring terms, parents' evenings are held when teachers share the child's targets for the next term.

In addition, when children have special educational needs, or if they are making less than the expected progress, we find it helpful to meet with parents 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. Please let the school know in advance what is required.

School Prospectus

The school prospectus on the website contains a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of provision at our school. A Parent Handbook is given to all parent/carers when their child starts school.

School Website

The school's website provides information about the school and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience.

Fortnightly Newsletter

A school newsletter is sent to parents every other Thursday. Any items to be added must be sent in the week prior to it being emailed. It contains general details of school events and activities, along with learning achievements. Parents expect the newsletter, and appreciate the regularity of the contact. As with all other letters sent out from Holymead Primary School, the Newsletter must be read and authorised by the Head Teacher.

We send other letters of a general nature when necessary and store copies on the school's website and in the main office.

Reading Diary and Homework Book

Children in all classes have a reading diary and a homework book. This enables parents to record a wide range of information that they wish to share regularly with the teacher. Teachers use the reading diary and homework book to record homework activities and as a regular channel for communication with parents.

Regular Meetings with Parents and Carers

We arrange various meetings for parents throughout the year. Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content and arrangements. A meeting for new parents is organised each May/June.

Communication with other schools and outside agencies

We hold information on pupils in our school, and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Details have been sent to parents about the types of data we hold, why we hold that data, and who we may pass it on to. This is a requirement under GDPR. The privacy notice is in the Parent Handbook. Parents have a right to view the information we hold.

Prior to pupils joining Reception, they are invited to visit the school to enable us to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to Holymead Primary. In-year applications for transition to Holymead Primary School may result in a meeting with parents and child prior to the child starting at the school if requested.

We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed about ways in which these needs may be met in order to help children to participate fully. Support comes from medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), from Educational Psychologists, SALT, from health professionals and specialists. It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as the Attendance Support Team, Social Services and Child Protection Units.

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school should provide a safe and secure environment. Our daily contact with children means that we are in a unique position to identify and help children who may be suffering from any form of abuse.

When any member of staff has any concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead & Designated Safeguarding Lead Deputies, who may share this information with the Social Services and other external services. All information shared by staff should be recorded on a pupil concern form, signed and dated and handed to one of the Designated Persons- see list by school office.

There should be no delay in reporting and recording concerns.

Date: 21.11.22
(Review date – November 2024)

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS
unicef
UNITED KINGDOM
GOLD – RIGHTS RESPECTING

Rights Respecting School Article 1:
Everyone under 18 has these rights
Rights Respecting School Article 28:
You have the right to a good quality education.
Rights Respecting School Article 29:
Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.
Rights Respecting School Article 42:
You have the right to know your rights!