

Parent Communication Policy

APPROVING BODY	Headteacher
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VERSION	1
SUPERSEDES VERSION	N/A
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FURTHER INFORMATION / GUIDANCE	

Structure

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4. Communication Guidance for Parents
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Appendix 1 - Infographic – insert Step-by-Step – ‘What do I do if I have a concern?’

1. Aims

This policy aims to promote the essential partnership between the school, parents, staff, pupils and the wider community through efficient and effective communication.

We believe that engaging and working with our families, is vital to our role to provide children with an excellent education and a safe learning environment, as well as helping our pupils to become well rounded citizens with a strong set of values. We remain committed to being an open and approachable school that engages with our families and puts children at the heart of our decision making. We also greatly value your support in enabling us to do this in an effective, timely and sustainable manner.

Communication is a fundamental aspect of school life and we recognise the role it plays in creating a positive, purposeful environment. We all have a collective responsibility to communicate in a manner that is respectful, thoughtful and kind and this policy provides guidance to ensure we all communicate effectively with one another.

2. Objectives

All communications with the school should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents and other stakeholders well informed
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon-free language
- Be conducted in a timely manner
- Use the most appropriate method of communication

This Parent Communication Policy has 3 key features:

- Communication Statement
- ‘Communication Guide’
- ‘What do I do if...’ guide (See Appendix 1)

3. Communication Statement

We strive to be an open and approachable school that is committed to engaging with the wider community. We would like to thank the overwhelming majority of visitors and parents/carers who are consistently pleasant and polite in all their communications with the school.

All staff at the school are expected to show respect for everyone they come into contact with, by being polite and courteous at all times. The school expects all those who visit or contact our school to treat our staff respectfully and courteously at all times. The same level of courtesy is expected with email communication. We strongly encourage all those who may wish to communicate with our school to do so in a manner that does not discriminate against any member of our diverse community and consistently adheres to this Communication Policy. In particular, any correspondence should have due regard of the 'Communication Guidance' (Section 6) and the 'What do I do if I have a concern - the 5-step approach' (Appendix 1).

It is important to note that we have a duty of care to our staff as well as to our pupils and we remain wholeheartedly committed to both. We take any aggressive behaviour or threatening language towards any member of our staff seriously, whether this is during a telephone conversation, email or during a visit to the school. If a caller or visitor's behaviour is deemed discriminatory, rude, abusive or aggressive, they will be advised to stop their behaviour. If the behaviour persists, we will terminate the call or ask the visitor to leave the premises and ask for support from the Police if required.

Parents and visitors should be aware that, where possible, a request for an appointment should be made in advance if they wish to see a particular member of staff.

4. Communication Guidance for Parents

- I. **Consider which communication method is best for the situation** – some conversations are best face to face, whilst others, given their nature, may be quickly resolved over the phone or via the 'Contact Us' form/email. Others might be best addressed via Class Dojo direct message.
- II. **Our office hours are 08.30-15.30** - staff are not expected to be available in the evenings or at weekends. These are our school office hours. Please note that teachers might choose to reply up until 5:00pm. Breakfast and after school messages might also be picked up a little earlier or later if sent to extended school staff via Class Dojo.
- III. **We will respond within 2 working days** - we want our communication to be timely as this is in the best interest of our pupils and we will endeavour to respond to all appropriate communications. The greatest challenge we face is the high volume of communications we receive. We will prioritise communications based on need but must stress that we cannot operate as an emergency service. There may be times that we are able to respond sooner than this; however, there may also be times when the school is exceptionally busy, when this timescale is not achievable.
- IV. **Appointments with staff should be booked in advance** - this is to avoid disappointment. Many of our staff will be teaching, in meetings or in training during the course of a school day. Anyone arriving to reception unannounced will be advised to request a meeting, unless the matter is deemed an emergency.
- V. **All communication should be respectful**

A summary infographic of this guidance can be found in Appendix 1.

5. Contacting school

Staff want to respond to parental queries at the earliest opportunity and will do their best to do so. However, the majority of teachers' time is taken up teaching and preparing for lessons. Teachers' responsibilities extend beyond the classroom, and they may be unable to respond to you on the day a query is made. We have also agreed with staff that there is no expectation to respond to queries outside their working hours.

If you require support or have a query, in the first instance, please approach your child's class teacher.

Contact Us form – this form can be found in the Contact Us section on the school website. Filling out this simple form will ensure your query is directed to the right person and help this to be dealt with promptly. Schools to amend this section based on own systems

Dojo/email - emails can be a useful way of communicating quickly between parents and the school. However, as well as having many advantages, this ease of access has also increased the demands made of staff. As a school, our first priority is to deliver high quality teaching and learning. Staff cannot and are not expected to monitor and manage their inbox during lessons or at other times in the day, when they should be planning and preparing for lessons, assessing student work or carrying out school duties. To help manage the expectations of all, the following points are provided as guidance:

- We aim to respond to you as soon as possible and within 48 hours.
- Part-time staff may take longer to reply.

Telephone - please use the main school office number to leave a message for a teacher to contact you. Office staff will relay messages to teachers as soon as possible. Lessons can never be interrupted for teachers to take calls.

The school will aim to respond to you within 48 hours. If a call is urgent, please inform the office who will support you in the most appropriate way.

Meetings - these should always be pre-arranged with members of staff. If you urgently need to see someone, for instance if there is a serious family emergency or a child protection issue, please phone ahead and the reception staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff to see you. For non-urgent meetings, we will aim to meet with you within five working days. The school will determine the level of urgency at its discretion, to enable it to manage multiple demands.

Communication by letter brought in by the child - letters to teachers can be an easy way to get a message to a teacher promptly and can be used as everyday communication. The pupil is responsible for showing the letter to their teacher.

6. Contacting Parents

We recognise the importance of keeping you informed about your child's experience at our school and how they are progressing. We have timely information sent out during the academic year.

- End of Year Open Evening – Summer term
- Meet the Teacher Meetings – Autumn term
- Academic reports
- Parents' evenings – twice per year
- Class pages on the school website
- School newsletters
- Dojo
- Emails
- Letters home

Dojo and Email - our main methods of contacting you are via Class Dojo and by email. This allows us to communicate with parents quickly and cost effectively.

Telephone calls - will be made by the school to parents where immediate contact with a family member is required, e.g. when a pupil injury of significance has occurred. A staff member will call the first named emergency contact as listed. Where no contact is made, a call will then be made to the second named contact. In the event that no contact can be made, the member of staff will either leave an answerphone message or ensure that repeat calls continue to be made to the contact numbers, where possible.

Other useful places to find out important information

The **school website** holds a wealth of information about the school. On the website, parents can find forthcoming dates, curriculum information, assessment information and other details about school life. Any emergency information will be announced via Class Dojo and will then be added on the school website.

Social media - we use Class Dojo as our locked-down social media channel to share what has been happening in the school. Through this channel you can find information and celebrations in respect of pupil achievements, subject information and generic educational information. Please be respectful at all times when adding comments to Class or School Stories. Comment sections are not a suitable platform to raise a concern or complaint. Instead, this should be made directly to school in line with our complaints procedure. Please also note that staff do not receive notifications when a comment is added below a story so they can be easily missed.

No Response - if you have not received a response from the school within two working days, please contact the office by emailing info@scarcliffe.org.uk and we will chase up your enquiry. If you are unsatisfied with a response, please highlight the email FAO The Headteacher. Communication with parents is important to us, and we will continue to work with parents/carers to monitor this and our approach to improve the process further.

School office email address: info@scarcliffe.org.uk

School office telephone number: 01246 823324

Appendix 1 – Communication Guidance for Parents

SCARCLIFFE PRIMARY SCHOOL | **REDHILL ACADEMY TRUST**
Equality and Achievement

OUR COMMUNICATION POLICY

PLEASE THINK ABOUT THESE 5 STEPS BEFORE CONTACTING SCHOOL

1 Consider which communication method is best for the situation.
Some conversations are best face to face, whilst others, given their nature, may be quickly resolved over phone, via Class Dojo or using the Contact Form on our website (please say which member of staff you wish to contact).

2 Our office hours are 08.30-15.30.
Staff are not expected to be available in the evenings or at weekends.

3 We will respond within 2 working days.
We want our communication to be timely as this is in the best interest of our students and we will endeavour to respond to all appropriate communications. The greatest challenge we face is the high volume of communications. We will prioritise communications based on need but must stress that we cannot operate as an emergency service. There may be times that we are able to respond sooner than this; however, there may also be times when school is exceptionally busy, when this timescale is not achievable.

4 Appointments with staff must be booked in advance.
This is to avoid disappointment. Many of our staff will be teaching or in meetings during the course of a school day. Anyone arriving to reception unannounced will be advised to request a meeting, unless the matter is deemed an emergency.

5 All communication should be respectful.