



Communications Policy

Policy Dated: October 2010
Review Date: October 2013

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, with other schools, with the community, with outside agencies, and within the school. Good communication between all these groups is essential, and children achieve more when everyone works together. Parents, carers, members of the School Governance Committee and friends of the school can naturally help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve.

2 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 In our school, we strive to maintain clear and effective communications with all parents, carers and with the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values by keeping parents and the community well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents and members of the community play in supporting the school.
- 2.2 We have various strategies for communicating with parents and the community. Some of our communications are in accordance with a statutory requirement; while others reflect what we believe is important for our school.
- 2.3 We make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We use an easy-to-read font, and add pictures where appropriate. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination. We recognise and celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the cultural and other groups represented in our school and community.

3 Range of Communication Methods

- 3.1 Existing methods of communication include:
- Assemblies
 - Comments box
 - Flyers and prospectus
 - Headteacher in the playground
 - Headteacher's report to School Governance Committee
 - Homework books / Induction packs for new staff
 - Informal meetings between staff
 - Letters for particular issues
 - contributions to the Garrison / Station magazine
 - Newspapers (Sixth Sense)
 - Notice-boards
 - Open days

- Parents' Evenings
- PSHE / circle time and feedback sheets
- Pupils talking to SCE advisers
- Pupils talking to TAs, learning support staff and other adults in the school
- Questionnaires
- Reports to parents
- Representation at Garrison / Station Meetings
- School Council
- School Governance Committee (SGC) Meeting Minutes
- School Improvement Plan
- School Prospectus
- School Website
- Self Evaluation Form (OfSTED)
- SSVC, BFBS TV and radio
- Coffee afternoons
- Weekly newsletters
- Word of mouth

4 Home-School Agreement

- 4.1 . IThis is a requirement of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. It explains the school's aims and values, the school's responsibilities towards the children, the responsibilities of parents, and what the school expects of the children. We ask parents to sign this agreement when their child starts at our school. The agreement is reviewed every 3 years.
- 4.2 The agreement covers the standard of education in our school, the ethos of the school, and our expectations regarding attendance, behaviour, and homework.

5 School Brochure

- 5.1 The school brochure contains a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of provision at our school. We update this each summer term.
- 5.2 The School Profile complements the work of our school and contains information about the most recent activities and successes of the school, including progress, priorities and performance.
- 5.3 Information is published on our school website, which has details of staff, school events, the current Ofsted report and school policies.

6 Public Access to Documents

- 6.1 The school makes a range of documentation available to parents on request and through our web site.

7. Home-School Communications

- 7.1 We send a newsletter to parents at the end of each school week. It contains general details of school events and activities. Parents expect the newsletter, and appreciate the regularity of the contact. We send other letters of a general or specific nature when necessary.
- 7.2 At the beginning of each term, all teachers write to the parents of the children in their classes with details of the work to be covered during the forthcoming term. We invite parents to support their child's work through a range of suggested activities to be shared with the child at home. We also invite parents to take part in educational visits that are linked to the work.
- 7.3 Children in all classes have a Reading Record Book / home school diary in a book bag. This can be used by parents to record a wide range of information that they wish to share regularly with the teacher. Teachers use the home-school diary to record homework assignments, and as a regular channel for communication with parents.
- 7.4 The school encourages parents to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. Teachers see parents immediately, if at all possible. Where this is not possible, the parent makes an appointment. Parents usually have the opportunity to talk with staff when they bring their children to school, or when they collect them after school.
- 7.5 We hold a meeting for new parents prior to their child's entry, and a meeting for Year 6 parents annually to talk about the national tests. The residential visit that Year 6 children make involves meetings with parents regarding the requirements and content of the visit, and a post-visit sharing session.
- 7.6 If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, we contact a parent or carer by telephone on the first day of absence, to find out the reason for the absence. If no contact can be made with any named person, we may contact the Unit Welfare Officer / Families' Officer to ensure the pupil's well-being and safety.

8 Communications with other schools and outside agencies

- 8.1 Toward the end of their final week in school, we pass on information about the children to their parents for delivery to their next school. We give a view of the whole child, and we include their expected national test results, their strengths and weaknesses, their interests and responsibilities. There is also an electronic transfer of further information about the child, organised by the government. We can also provide samples of work.
- 8.2 We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on better ways to meet these needs, so that children may participate more fully. Support comes from other services (such as speech and language therapy),

from specialist teams within Pupil and Family Services and other agencies within the community. We will always involve parents by seeking additional advice, help and support.

- 8.3 We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that safeguarding is a shared responsibility, and that our school should provide a safe and secure environment. Outside the family home, we are the people most in contact with our children, and we are therefore in a unique position to identify and help children. When any member of staff has concerns about the welfare of a child, these will be passed on to the headteacher, who may share this information when it is in the child's best interests to do so.
- 8.4 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 the Data Protection Act 1998. Parents have a right to view the information we hold, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.
- 8.5 We ensure that information for staff about pay and conditions of service received from HQ SCE and from the People, Pay and Pensions' Agency (PPPA) is made available to all who are employed at our school¹.

9 Communications within our school

- 9.1 To keep everyone up to date with events, there is a weekly and daily diary in the conference room.
- 9.2 All our systems and procedures are detailed in the Staff Handbook and are regularly reviewed at staff meetings.
- 9.3 Written communications are delivered through pigeon holes in the office.
- 9.4 There is a register file for each class containing copies of letters to be sent out and medical information.
- 9.5 Supply teachers are well known to the children and us. Relevant information is passed on to them.
- 9.6 Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff or with parents or other outside Agencies.

10 Use of Photographs and Names

- 10.1 Photographs are used in and around the school for many purposes, including displays, records of practical work (e.g. art or technology projects), and records of important school events.
- 10.2 We may use photographs of children or their work when communicating with parents and the wider community, in newsletters, in the school prospectus, on the school website, or in the SGC² report to parents. The local or national

¹ Details of the services carried out by HQ SCE and by the PPPA can be found at Annex 4

² School Governance Committee

press may on occasions publish photographs of children participating in events at school, for example the Arts Mark Awards.

- 10.3 Parental permission will always be obtained before using photographs of children or their work as detailed in 10.2 above. Lists of those children for whom permission has NOT been given will be held by each class teacher, and by the school office.
- 10.4 Photographs will be checked to ensure that they are suitable.
- 10.5 Photographs used will not be captioned with children's names.

11 Electronic Communication

- 11.1 We use the Internet and e-mail, and we have a school website. Parents are required to give permission when they register their child for him / her to use the Internet in school. A record of those who do not have permission is held by each class teacher, and by the school office.
- 11.2 All school members may communicate with others through the Internet. There are many benefits, but also a number of possible dangers. Rules for the use of the Internet are contained in our Internet policy. Safeguards in our school include constant adult supervision, sites being filtered by software, controlled links, and the use of child-friendly search engines.
- 11.3 The Internet may be used in lessons 'live' for lesson content and for interactive teaching programs through the use of the SCE Virtual Learning Environment – or Grid for Learning.
- 11.4 Our school web site provides information about the school, and an opportunity to celebrate our work with the worldwide learning community. It complies with the SCE Policy on school websites.
- 11.5 Members of staff, classes as a whole, and individual older children will all have their own school-provided e-mail accounts.
- 11.6 The school will block / filter access to **social networking sites such as "You Tube"**.
- 11.7 **Newsgroups** will be blocked unless a specific use is approved for school use.
- 11.8 Pupils will be advised never to give out personal details of any kind which may identify them or their location.
- 11.9 Pupils and parents will be advised that the use of social network spaces outside school is inappropriate for primary aged pupils.

12 Monitoring and review

- 12.1 This policy will be regularly monitored, and will be reviewed in conjunction with the School Governance Committee every 3 years or sooner if required.

D Edwards