



Tibberton CE Primary School and  
St Lawrence CE Primary School Federation

# Communications

**Revised: March 2021**

**Consultation with staff and Governors**

**and adoption of policy: Spring Term 2021**

**Review date: Spring Term 2024**

# Communications Policy

## 1. Purpose

To promote partnerships between the school, parents and carers, pupils and the wider community through efficient and effective communication.

## 2. Definition of communication

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflects on the school's reputation. Parents and carers, and pupils, also have a part to play in reflecting the school's reputation. We strive to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and effective in their purpose.

## 3. Principles

Tibberton CE Primary and St Lawrence CE Primary Federation uses a variety of different methods to maintain effective communication with parents and carers, other schools, the wider community and outside agencies. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practicable means to contact the recipient.

Communication on issues that affect the safety and wellbeing of a pupil will be treated as a priority. The school holds emergency contact details for all pupils and families are asked to alert the school immediately if contact information needs to be revised.

Staff will always seek to establish friendly relationships with parents and carers, but they will ensure relationships are professional and parents will be addressed in a formal manner. Staff are to avoid developing close relationships with parents and carers. The use of a parent, carer or staff member's first name is not appropriate; therefore, all communications will be to and from Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc.

The Communications Policy embraces the principles of the federation's Equality Statement and Online Safety Policy.

## 4. Introduction

Tibberton CE Primary and St Lawrence CE Primary recognise the importance of clear and effective communications with all stakeholders (pupils, parents and carers, staff, the local and wider community outside agencies, etc), and is committed to being open and accessible for all who have an interest in the school.

The key stakeholders for a school are parents, carers and pupils and this Policy addresses the main ways in which the school will ensure there is effective two-way communication between home and school.

Parents and carers have a key role to play in their child's education. The school will make every effort to encourage and make arrangements for parents and carers to contribute to creating a shared view of their child's needs.

## 5. Aims of the policy

The aims of this policy are to ensure that effective communication and consultation take place between the school, parents, carers, pupils, and other stakeholders and that there are robust processes to facilitate this.

The federation recognises that engaging and working with parents and carers is a vital key in providing their child with an excellent education. Parents and carers are offered opportunities throughout the year to convey to us what they expect from and think of the schools. Our wish is to involve as many parents and carers in their child's education as possible.

Our aims include the following:

- To make the schools as welcoming and inclusive as possible.
- Signage will be clear, informative, and positive.
- All written and telephone enquiries will be dealt with promptly and parents and carers can expect an acknowledgement within 2 working days.
- A variety of forms of communication with parents and carers for example, telephone contact, e-mail, post, and text.
- Parents and carers are contacted for positive as well as negative reasons.
- Information is given to parents and carers on what pupils will be taught and tips for helping their child will be provided.
- Parents and carers will be encouraged to help or support their child's learning at school and at home. Information will be provided in a timely way to enable this support to be effective.

## 6. Communication with parents and carers

### 6.1 Choosing the correct member of staff to address a query.

If you have a generic whole school or whole class question, please contact the school office. Please address all queries to the class teacher in the first instance. If you are dissatisfied with the response, please make an appointment to speak to the Assistant Head. The protocol would be to arrange an appointment with the Headteacher if you were dissatisfied with the response from the Assistant Head, and to only escalate this to the Executive head if still not satisfied. This is also in line with the Complaints policy for the federation.

### 6.2 Letters

Staff will always reply to a letter from parents and carers as quickly as possible. A response to acknowledge receipt of a letter will be made by telephone, letter or email within 2 working days and it will be responded to within 10 working days. Letters to parents/carers must be processed through the school administration team and approved by a member of the Senior Leadership Team before posting/emailing. Letters/emails being sent out to all parents/carers should be approved by the Headteacher or Executive Head and sent out using Parent Mail. Copies of correspondence with parents and carers will be placed on pupil files. Any letters of concern or complaint should be dealt with in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy.

The school will use standard templates for letters where possible.

Whole school information is included in a weekly newsletter, published on Friday each week during school term time. A link to an electronic copy of this is emailed to all parents and carers as well as being published on the school website. Hard copies of the newsletter are available from the school upon request.

Parents and carers are encouraged to provide the school with a current email address for prompt and effective communication. However, if we are unable to obtain a current email address for any parent or carer, communications will be delivered home in hard copy by their child or sent by post.

The correct salutations must be used when writing to or emailing parents/carers/partnerships. The use of a parent, carer or staff member's first name is not appropriate; therefore, all communications will be to and from Mr, Mrs, Miss, Ms, Dr etc and sign off is always full name Ms/Mrs/Mr/Dr Teacher Surname.

### 6.3 E-mail

E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating necessary information and is the school's preferred method of communication. Emails received will be treated in the same way as letters: acknowledged within 2 working days and responded to within 10 working days. Emails should be short and clear, and the same care and consideration should be given as when sending a letter.

Parents and carers may wish to contact the school via email for a general enquiry as an alternative to telephone or letter. The school email address is: [a3109@taw.org.uk](mailto:a3109@taw.org.uk) for Tibberton CE Primary School and [a3091@taw.org.uk](mailto:a3091@taw.org.uk) for St Lawrence CE Primary School.

Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils or parents and carers using their own personal email address.

### 6.4 Telephone Calls

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full-time and running clubs or working with pupils at lunchtime or after school. Parents and carers may be frustrated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

In a non-emergency a return call will be made within 2 working days, with any follow up action from the request /query/problem being dealt with within 10 working days.

### 6.5 Texts

Automated texts are sent to parents/carers (including in the event of an emergency closure of the school) but are not used for general communications from members of staff and staff should not respond by text to a text message received from a parent/carers (but should respond using an alternative means of communication such as email or telephone if appropriate).

## 6.6 Excessive Communication

Where a parent is contacting school more than once a day, or more than twice in a week, or where there is written communication week on week, then the school may request that the parent ceases contacting the school. This is to allow an appropriate period of time for staff to deal with the questions or concerns raised, and to protect the wellbeing of the members of staff.

Safeguarding concerns will be dealt with as a matter of priority, and this may delay the response to other correspondence, however the communication will always be acknowledged within 2 working days, and further contact made within 10 working days.

## 7. Absence

If a child is absent, parents and carers are asked to contact the school as soon as possible on the morning of the absence, for full details please refer to the Attendance Policy.

## 8. Meeting with Parents and carers

Parents and carers wishing to meet a member of staff must contact the school to make an appointment. This request should be responded to within 2 working days.

Parents and carers should report to the main office prior to meeting with a member of staff. A member of staff may ask a colleague to accompany them, this will usually be a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Staff should call a meeting to a close in the event of the parents or carers becoming angry or abusive. This should be reported immediately to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If the meeting was with the Senior Leadership Team, they should report this to the Chair of Governors and to the Local Authority as employers.

## 9. Reports and Progress

Parents and carers receive an interim progress report and a full annual report to provide information about their child's progress in each academic year. There will also be a 'Meet the Team' opportunity at the beginning of the new school year.

In addition, parents and carers have the opportunity to meet their child's class teachers two times a year at parents' consultation meetings. These are held in the late Autumn term and in the Summer term after end of year reports have been sent home. Parents and carers should contact the school if issues arise about their child's progress or wellbeing. The first point of contact should be the child's class teacher.

We welcome the presence of any other adult a parent or carer wishes to invite to a school meeting for support or to act as an interpreter.

## 11. Accessibility

We will endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments that may be necessary to enable a parent or carer with a disability to participate fully in a meeting or to receive and understand a communication.

Documents printed using a larger font can usually be provided and requests should be made via the main school offices.

If a translation of a document is required, in the first instance parents/carers should access Google Translate or ask a family friend if this is an option, however if a difficulty still exists then we will endeavour to provide a translated document.

Before sending or posting information electronically staff should test to ensure cross platform access.

## 12. School Website

The school website provides a range of information about the school, including:

Inclusion information

Pupil Premium information

Early Help, Safeguarding and Mental Health information

Homework

Uniform list

Timetables

School events

Holiday dates

School prospectus

It is used to promote the school to a wider audience and is updated regularly.

## 13. Seesaw App

The Seesaw platform is a powerful tool for motivating pupils as it gives them more choice and flexibility about when and where they complete their learning. It also encourages parent and carer involvement in learning, especially with extended learning tasks. This platform is also used for our remote learning offer. Further detail can be found in our Remote Learning Policy and Offer.

## 14. Communication between pupils and staff

Two-way communication between pupils and staff is an important aspect of school life. The school welcomes and encourages pupils to engage in conversation with all members of staff within the school.

When communicating with a member of staff, pupils should:

- Stand in front of the member of staff they are speaking with and make eye contact (where a child is able);
- Address the member of staff using their formal name e.g. Mrs Smith, never referring to a member of staff by their first name;
- Be respectful, do not talk over, raise voice or walk away before the conversation has ended.

When communicating with pupils, staff should use pupils' first names and full names of staff (Mr Surname and Ms/Mrs Surname) in front of pupils. We try to avoid generic terms of: Sir and Miss to convey politeness.

Staff are never permitted to use personal email accounts when communicating with pupils.

Pupils are expected to check their Seesaw accounts daily (with adult support for younger pupils) and delete / archive regularly.

## 15. Communication between Tibberton CE Primary and St Lawrence CE Primary Federation staff

### Verbal

Staff are expected to use first names when communicating with each other and full names (Mr/Dr/Ms/Mrs Surname) in front of pupils. We try to avoid generic terms of Sir and Miss to convey politeness.

### Email

- consider whether an email is appropriate when face to face communication may be more conducive;
- avoid send all or reply all unless necessary;
- line managers are to be copied in only where appropriate;
- keep emails concise, use Standard English and bullet points if necessary;
- Staff to check emails twice a day;
- Use group emails as appropriate.

Staff should not send non-urgent emails before 8am or after 8pm. Emails should instead be saved as drafts and sent during work hours.

A weekly staff meeting will be held to share important messages, and a weekly Team Talk document will be sent out for key dates and events that week.

## 16. Dealing with the media

The school newsletters are our main avenue for communicating to our parents/carers, for wider coverage staff must first seek permission from the Headteacher or Executive Head. A member of the administrative team will then be able to liaise with local contacts such as local newspapers or the Education Noticeboard, for smaller pieces.

All media enquiries must be directed to the Headteacher or Executive head.

#### 17. School trips, visits and activities

The school will endeavour to publish all proposed trips, visits and activities on the school calendar at the start of each academic year. Parents and carers will be notified by letter of trips, visits and activities that their child/children may wish to participate in as early as possible, and ideally within at least six weeks of the proposed trip, visit or activity. Occasionally opportunities arise during the academic year to offer pupils additional trips, visits or activities that were not known or available when the school calendar was published. The school will always ensure parents and carers are notified of any additional opportunities for their child as soon as possible to ensure parents and carers have adequate time to plan for such events. If a large payment is required, parents are welcome to work with the school on a payment plan if this would be supportive.

#### 18. Severe weather and emergency closure

In the event of emergency closure, communication will be made to parents and carers via text or email. Parents and carers should also tune in to local radio and check the school website.

#### 19. Prospective parents/carers

Prospective parents and carers are invited to an Open Afternoon/Evening in the Autumn term of the year preceding their child's year of entry to the school and to attend published tours to enable them to see the school operating.

Prospective parents and carers are also invited, along with their child, to an induction afternoon/evening and other induction event during the summer term where the main channels of communication are outlined, and important information will be shared.

#### 20. Parent Teacher Association

Both schools have their own PTA. This is led by current parents and their focus is to provide support and to run events and activities. Fund raising is an important aspect of their work but is not their sole focus. Parents may contact the PTA by emailing the school office who will direct your message to the relevant PTA member. They are always happy to hear from parents who would like to join them in supporting the schools.

#### 21. Supporting parents and carers of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The federation recognises the importance of positive relationships with parents and carers of all pupils with additional needs. The SEND Code of Practice emphasises the importance of positive, supportive attitudes to parents and carers and user-friendly information and procedures. All staff will make every effort to ensure communication with parents and carers is effective.



All staff within the school are expected to help parents and carers understand how to contribute effectively to their child's education and will make every effort to ensure that parents understand their rights and responsibilities. All relevant information will be provided in a way for all to understand and respond to. If parents have an additional need or disability which makes it difficult for them to access information or the school site, we will endeavour to make alternative arrangements to support these families.

When pupils who have special educational needs are making less than the expected progress or if they are experiencing behavioural difficulties, we would expect to meet with parents and carers more regularly. Parents and carers are encouraged to communicate where they have a concern about their child's needs being met and should also refer to the Inclusion section of the website.

## 22. Communication with other Schools and outside agencies

Prior to pupils joining in Reception, they are visited at their nursery school or home to gain further information about them to help and support their transition. If a visit is not possible for any reason, a detailed phone conversation will be had. If a child joins in another year group, or midway through an academic year, we liaise with their previous school and with the parents, offering opportunities to visit the school and meet the new teacher.

We recognise that children have diverse needs, and where required we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals including medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), educational psychologists, health professionals and specialists and various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare and the local authority Children's Services. We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school must provide a safe and secure environment (see the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy copy available in the Policy Folder in the Whole School Drive or on the policy page of the school website).

We hold information on all pupils in our school and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. All personal data is held and processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (for full details see our Data Protection Policy, copy available in the Policy Folder in the Whole School Drive or on the policy page of the school website).

## 23. Investigating incidents

When investigating an incident involving pupils, members of school staff interview all pupils involved. The school will only share any information that would identify any pupils in accordance with data protection regulations, legislation, and our policies. When investigating an incident involving a member of staff, the Whistleblowing and Complaints policies will be followed.

## 24. Monitoring, evaluation and review

A member of the senior leadership team and the Governors will review this Policy at least every three years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The Policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.