



# **Harbour View Federation**

# **COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

## **Aim**

To ensure that Twin Sails Infant School & Nursery and Hamworthy Park Junior School are thriving and successful schools, we must communicate effectively with our staff, with our pupils, with their parents/carers and with other members of the wider community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

## **Objectives**

All communications at Harbour View Federation should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents/carers, 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 and School Improvement & Development Plan.

## **Responsibilities**

This section details the responsibilities of the different groups within the school.

### Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- To ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels, where practicable face-to-face.
- 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.
- To keep governors informed of developments and concerns
- To check and authorise all communications to parents/carers.

### All Staff

- To communicate regularly with each other, preferably face to face, 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.
- To ensure that any communication with parents/carers are prepared and sent in a timely manner
- To ensure that before any letters are sent to parents/carers they are given to the Heads of School to check and authorise.
- To ensure that emails are checked at least once a day and responded to, if necessary. Any communication which is important and needs to be actioned within 24 hours will be communicated in person.

- Although staff may receive emails at any time, staff are not expected to respond to an email outside of normal working hours.
- Staff are advised not to communicate with parents/carers via social networking sites or accept them as “friends”. Staff will not accept pupils or ex-pupils as “friends”.

### Administration Manager

- Will ensure school communications inform the federated practice.
- Will ensure the schools’ Calendar of Events are synchronised and do not conflict across the federation.
- Will monitor school websites and check they are up to date and compliant.
- Will provide both schools with the federated information for the monthly newsletter.

### 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 to hear what is being said about the school, directing any queries or questions, as is appropriate. To encourage parents/carers/carers to speak directly with the school, if appropriate to do so.
- To ensure the posting of minutes of meeting in appropriate places.

A list of our Governors is available to view via both school websites. Governors can be contacted by the following channels:

- In writing and sent c/o Governor’s name to the relevant school via post or by hand.
- Via email to either [office@twinsailsinfant.co.uk](mailto:office@twinsailsinfant.co.uk) or [office@hpi.poole.sch.uk](mailto:office@hpi.poole.sch.uk).

### Internal Methods of Communication

- All staff receive an induction pack providing them with important information about organisation and procedures within both schools
- An integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff both formal and informal: e.g. teachers’ meetings, teaching assistant meetings, Admin Team meetings, year team meetings, whole staff meetings
- E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating information however it should not replace face to face meetings where discussion is required
- Written communications should be placed in pigeon holes, in the staffroom, which staff must check daily and clear regularly
- Teachers’ meetings & SLT meetings take place every week, minutes are taken at SLT meetings. Events are discussed in advance at meetings but staff also have the responsibility to check future actions
- SLT meetings and whole staff meetings are held as and when required, Continued Professional Development for Teaching Staff are held weekly, staff briefings take place weekly, TA meetings take place regularly, when required. Business Management meetings take monthly.
- Governors’ meeting minutes are available to view via the office.
- The notice boards/whiteboards in the staff areas are used for day to day notices
- Both schools use ParentMail to communicate with parents/carers by text or e-mail.
- Our preferred method of communication to parents/carers is electronically via ParentMail. If letters to individual parents/carers are sent to classes, they are to be given out by the class teachers and must be given to children the same day. Every

class must have a system for distributing letters and other materials to go home with the children.

## **External methods of communication**

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/carers and the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents/carers well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents/carers play in supporting school.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents/carers, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end, parents/carers should always be addressed in an appropriate manner. Teaching staff should not accept friendship requests from parents/carers on social media.

We will try to make written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions to our society by all cultural groups represented in our school.

**Letters:** Staff will respond to parents/carers' letters requiring an answer within 48 hours (2 school days) to acknowledge receipt of the communication. Up to a further 5 school days can be granted where further investigation of the matter is required. Any letter of complaint must be referred to the Head of School immediately. Letters to parents/carers must be approved by the Head of Schools before they are sent. Copies of all correspondence to individual parents/carers will be placed in pupil files. A copy of general letters will be placed in 'Letters File' in each school office.

**Email/Text:** Both schools use ParentMail to communicate with parents/carers. Any communication that needs to be sent to parents/carers using this system must be approved by the Heads of School. 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 and filed. Staff should forward relevant emails from parents/carers to the Heads of School and should always do so if the content is a complaint. All emails requiring an answer should be responded to within 48 hours (2 school days) to acknowledge receipt of the communication. Up to a further 5 school days can be granted where further investigation of the matter is required. If a parent wishes to contact a teacher or member of staff via email then the account should be used ([office@twinsailsinfant.co.uk](mailto:office@twinsailsinfant.co.uk) or [office@hpj.poole.sch.uk](mailto:office@hpj.poole.sch.uk)). Please use BCC in the email as appropriate to ensure that data protection regulations are being adhered to. Texts will only be sent out for emergency or urgent messages only.

**Social Media Sites/Blogs:** Staff are advised not to communicate with parents/carers via social networking or accept them as "friends". Staff will not accept pupil or ex-pupils as "friends".

**Written Reports:** Once a year, we provide a full written report to each child's parents/carers on their progress. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development.

**Newsletters:** Newsletters are sent out monthly. If a parent has not signed up for ParentMail then a hard copy will be sent out with the child.

In addition, parents/carers meet their child's teacher/s twice during the year for a private consultation at Parents' Evening. We encourage parents/carers to contact 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/carers 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 schools, or to receive and understand communication. Parents/carers of children with an IEP (Individual Education Plan) will have the opportunity to review the IEP at least twice a year.

School Websites: The school websites provide an opportunity to share information about the schools and is an opportunity to promote our schools to a wider audience. Please visit [www.twinsailsinfant.co.uk](http://www.twinsailsinfant.co.uk) or [www.hamworthyparkjuniorschool.co.uk](http://www.hamworthyparkjuniorschool.co.uk)

#### Home-School Communication

- Home School Agreements should be signed on entry to every new academic year.
- Home visits and pre-school visits take place during September for children joining Nursery.
- Information is displayed on the notice boards outside the schools which are updated regularly.
- The monthly newsletter is emailed out through ParentMail and posted on the school websites. Paper copies are sent to parents/carers not on the ParentMail list.
- Parents/carers will be texted or phoned if there is an unexpected cancellation of a club.
- Governors are available to meet informally with parents/carers at parents evening twice a year where they have the opportunity to discuss various topics.
- Once a year a questionnaire is sent out to parents/carers and the results are analysed and used to improve the schools.

We recognise that children's protection is a shared responsibility, and that the school's within Harbour View Federation 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, or the Deputy DSL, who may share this information with Social Services.

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

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

#### Related policies:

- Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Complaints Procedure
- Staff Code of Conduct
- GDPR Regulations 2018
- Core Values Booklet