The Slough and East Berkshire C. of E.

Multi Academy Trust

Colnbrook C. of E. Primary School

Communication Policy

including expectations for respectful communication

Owner:	Headteacher
Date Ratified by Governing Board	March 2025
Signed	
Date Policy to be reviewed:	March 2026

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." **Joshua 1:9**

Our Vision Statement

At Colnbrook we want to grow young people who believe in themselves so they are confident and courageous and not discouraged from their path. They are resilient when faced with challenge. We want our pupils to believe in each other and to feel supported; never alone on their journey.

Our pupils will have the strength of character to set themselves aspirational goals in learning and life. They will achieve their best and create their own inspirational story and memories.

These values are at the heart of everything we do here at Colnbrook Church of England Primary School. They reflect the qualities that staff and governors want the children to develop and display in all that they do.

Aspiration, Resilience, Respect, Responsibility, Community, Compassion.

Contents

1. Introduction and Aims

At Colnbrook C. of E. Primary School, we strive to develop close relationships with our families. Being a one-form entry school enables us to build lasting relationships that supports the ability for the school to deliver a strong education for our children. This policy sets out how the school will communicate with parents/carers and how parents can contact the school. It also sets out expectations for respectful communication.

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

2. Communication Statement

In line with our school values and Christian ethos, Colnbrook C. of E. Primary School strives to be an open and approachable school that is committed to engaging with the wider community.

All staff at the school are expected to show respect for everyone that they meet, by always being polite and courteous. The school expects all those who visit, contacts by phone, or emails the school to always treat our staff respectfully and courteously. In addition, we expect all those who 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 expectations set out in this Communication Policy.

The school has a duty of care to our staff, including the leadership team, as well as to our pupils and we remain wholeheartedly committed to both. We take any aggressive behaviour, including any threatening language or behaviour, towards any member of our staff seriously, whether this is during a telephone conversation, email or during a visit to the school.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Overseeing systems and processes that ensure communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

3.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy, the school's acceptable use policy and SEBMAT Data Protection and IT Security Policy
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Teaching staff cannot, and are not expected to, monitor emails from parents or take telephone calls from parents 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. Staff will **aim** to respond to communication within two working days, but this timescale may need to be extended given other duties and expectations of staff. Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours 8:00am – 4:00pm, or their working hours if they work part-time.

In line with our approach to supporting staff wellbeing, and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so.

The SEBMAT Data Protection and IT Security Policy is available on the school website.

3.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is always respectful
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Responding to communications from the school (such as completing online forms) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with any appropriate actions set out in section 7.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours 8:00 – 4:00 pm, or during school holidays.

4. Routine Communication

The sections below explain how we keep parents up to date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

Parents should monitor all the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

4.1 Email

Through our communication system, Teachers2Parents, we use emails regularly to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests

Paper copies of information are available from the school office on request.

4.2 Text messages

We will text parents about:

- Payments
- Short notice changes to the school day
- Reminders about upcoming events
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

4.3 School newsletter

The weekly school newsletter includes a school calendar of useful dates for the forthcoming weeks.

Where possible, we try to give parents at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials).

Any such event will be included in the school newsletter and included on the calendar.

4.4 Phone calls

School staff may make phone calls to parents to discuss sensitive matters, such as a pupil's medical condition or behaviour. Staff may speak to parents at the end of the day when children are collected to discuss some matters, such as behaviour, but will call home if this is not possible.

4.5 Forms

Through our communication system, Teachers2Parents, we send electronic forms to complete regularly:

- Letters and information about trips and visits
- Consent forms

Paper copies of forms are available from the school office on request.

4.6 Reports

Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- Progress report form handed out during October and February parents' evenings
- A report on Phonics Screening Check (Year 1 only) and KS2 SATs tests (Year 6 only)

4.7 Meetings

We hold two parents' evenings per year. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, attendance or wellbeing.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

4.8 School website

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information

Parents should check the website and the latest newsletter before contacting the school as lots of useful information can be found there, without the need to contact the school.

The school website also publishes key school policies. These documents outline the agreed approach our school takes in many areas including behaviour, teaching and learning and health and safety. Parents may find these documents useful to clarify the school's approach.

5. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents should use the list in appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and email address.

- **Consider which communication method is best for the situation**: some conversations are best face to face, whilst others may be quickly resolved over the phone.
- **There is always a senior member of staff, who you can talk to, on the gate at the start and end of each day**. Class teachers or teaching assistants may be available for quick queries or messages at drop off or pick up times. During drop-off we request that these conversations are kept as short as possible as teaching staff are expected to begin teaching at 8:45am. If you require a longer conversation, you can arrange a meeting with the class teacher via the school office.
- **Our office hours are 8am to 4pm**. Staff are not expected to be available in the evenings, at weekends or during the school holidays.
- **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. 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.
- **Appointments with staff should be booked in advance**. 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.
- **All communication must be respectful**.

Parents should ask to speak to a member of the senior leadership team if attempts to resolve a question, concern or issue has not been successful after speaking to a relevant member of staff in the table in appendix 1. Matters will only be escalated to the headteacher as a last resort.

6. Contact from the 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.

There is no expectation for staff to respond to queries outside their working hours.

- **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. Our school's first priorities are to safeguard pupils and 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 pupils' work or carrying out other school duties**.

  Parents are asked to email the school email: mail@colnbrookprimary.com, with the subject line clearly marked for the member of staff most appropriate (see appendix 1). This message will then be forwarded to this staff member by the school office. Most often, your child's class teacher will be the main contact for questions or messages. **We will aim to reply to emails within 2 working days.**

- **Telephone**: please use the main office number (01753 683661) to request for a teacher to contact you. Office staff will relay messages to teachers as soon as possible. Lessons cannot be interrupted for teachers to take calls. **We will aim to respond to you within 2 working days.**

  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. The headteacher will be the final arbiter on determining the level of urgency of a request.

7. Expectations for respectful communication

7.1 Expectations of conduct

We expect parents, carers and other visitors to:

- Respect the ethos, vision and values of our school
- Work together with staff in the best interests of our pupils
- Treat all members of the school community with respect – setting a good example for children with speech and behaviour
- Seek a peaceful solution to all issues
- Correct their own child's behaviour (or those in their care), particularly in public, where it could lead to conflict, aggression or unsafe conduct
- Approach the right member of school staff to help resolve any issues of concern

7.2 Unacceptable conduct

We recognise that discussions regarding children may sometimes evoke strong emotions. We are committed to providing a supportive environment where these concerns can be addressed constructively. Whilst emotional responses are understandable, respectful dialogue is essential to resolve matters. The school reserves the right not to respond to communications that are aggressive or disrespectful.

If a parent, carer or visitor behaves in an unacceptable way towards a member of the school community, a senior member of staff will first seek to resolve the situation through discussion and mediation.

Conduct that is considered unacceptable includes:

- Disrupting, or threatening to disrupt, school operations (including events on the school grounds)
- Swearing, including using offensive language and/or gestures
- Displaying a temper, or shouting at members of staff, pupils or other parents
- Threatening another member of the school community verbally, physically or online

- Sending abusive messages to another member of the school community, including via text, email or social media
- Physical intimidation including standing very close to another adult with the intent to intimidate
- Physical assault including hitting, pushing, slapping, spitting, punching or kicking.
- Posting defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about the school, its staff or any member of its community, on social media platforms
- Use of physical punishment against your child while on school premises
- Any aggressive behaviour (including verbally or in writing) towards another child or adult (e.g. including gestures such as pointing in an aggressive way or clenching fists)
- Disciplining another person's child – please bring any behaviour incidents to a member of staff's attention
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, or transphobic discriminatory or negative comments
- Breaching the school's health and safety policy
- Smoking, vaping, or drinking alcohol on the school premises
- Possessing or taking drugs (including legal highs)

This is not an exhaustive list of all unacceptable conduct. The final arbiter of what is, or is not, acceptable conduct is the headteacher.

If threatening, abusive or discriminatory behaviour is displayed towards staff, in-person or online, we may contact the police and may consider banning the offending adult from entering the school premises in future.

School staff have the right to end an interaction with a parent or visitor who displays unacceptable conduct, and a senior member of staff will investigate whether communication expectations have been breached.

7.3 Breaching communication expectations

If the school suspects, or becomes aware, that a parent or other visitor or individual connected to the school has breached the communication expectations, the school will gather information from those involved and speak to the individual about the incident.

Depending on the nature of the incident, the school may then:

- **Send a warning letter to the individual**. This may include the opportunity for the parent or visitor to provide their version of events, or for the headteacher to remind the parent or visitor of expected conduct.
- **Invite the individual into school to meet with a senior member of staff, or the headteacher, to discuss the situation,** ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all parties. Following this, confirmation of expectation and actions will be sent in writing to the individual.
- **Place conditions on the individual's contact with this school** which may include supervised meetings or restrictions on communication.
- **Contact the appropriate authorities** such as the police in cases of suspected criminal behaviour including discrimination or assault.
- **Seek advice from SEBMAT's legal team regarding further action** in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous.
- **Considering imposing a ban, banning and/or removing a person from the school site**. Individuals who cause a nuisance and have been banned from the site will be considered trespassers. This would result in their removal from the school premises under section 547 of the Education Act 1996.

If considering imposing a ban on an individual, the headteacher will act in accordance with the Department for Education guidance on Controlling access to school premises.

The school will always respond to an incident in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to breaches of the communication expectations rests with the headteacher.

Under section 547 of the Education Act 1996, the local governing board have nominated the headteacher as the 'appropriate person' in relation to banning an individual from the school premises.

8. Accessibility

We aim to make communications accessible to all. We have taken the following steps to achieve this:

- All communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible.
- Accessibility is considered when designing and updating the school website, such as providing alt text for images (a brief description of the image) and using text colours that show up clearly against the background colour.
- Team members will endeavour to provide information in an accessible format (e.g. through support with their clinical team members, such as Speech and Language Therapists).

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request reasonable adjustments, such as:

- School announcements and communications in accessible formats.
- Translations of important documents and communications for those who speak languages other than English by using online translation tools.

9. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every year.

The policy will be approved by the local governing board at each review.

10. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- SEBMAT Data Protection and IT Security Policy
- SEBMAT Staff code of conduct
- SEBMAT Complaints Policy
- Home-school agreement
- Staff and pupil wellbeing policy

Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

- Email mail@colnbrookprimary.com or call the school office on 01753 683661.
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for emails)
- We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff

Remember: check our website first, much of the information you need is posted there.

We try to respond to all emails within 2 working days.

I have a question about…	Who you need to talk to…
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher
Payments	School office
School trips	Your child's class teacher or the school office
Uniform/lost and found	School office
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01753 683661, selecting option 2. If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact the school office.
Bullying and behaviour	Your child's class teacher
School events/the school calendar	Your child's class teacher or School office
Special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)	Your child's class teacher in the first instance, or the SENDCo
Before and after-school clubs	School office
PTA	School office

Governing board	School office
Catering/meals	School office

Parents should ask to speak to a member of the senior leadership team if attempts to resolve a question, concern or issue has not been successful after speaking to the relevant member of staff in the table above. Matters will only be escalated to the headteacher as a last resort.