

Home-School Communication Policy

Low Ash Primary School



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Statement of intent

Low Ash Primary School is committed to fostering a positive relationship with the pupils' parents. Crucial to this is building and maintaining effective ongoing communication between the school and the parents about the pupil's academic performance and personal wellbeing.

Nurturing a positive communicative relationship with parents can help to establish a relationship of trust and confidence for both the school and the parents. It can also help the pupil's attendance, attainment, and wellbeing, and better understand the individual needs, abilities, and interests of the pupils.

Having effective communication in place helps to ensure that parents are more involved in their child's life at school. Effective communication can also ensure that parents are involved in decision-making about their child's needs in the school, such as IHPs or any other actions that impact on the child's educational experiences which require parental involvement.

From the school's point of view, communication with parents should be streamlined, appropriate and focused on the positives of the pupil's educational experiences. This policy outlines how the school puts appropriate systems in place to ensure that communication always remains professional, and that communication doesn't become excessive, unjustified or otherwise unengaging for the parents.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to relevant guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2024) Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance
- DfE (2022) Working together to improve school attendance: guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities

The policy is implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Home-school Agreement Policy
- Remote Education Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Communications Policy
- Pupil and Parent Voice Policy
- Parental Communications Audit
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Marketing and Communications Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that channels of communication between the school and parents are clear, effective, and understood by all.
- Reviewing any pre-existing channels of communication and identifying any improvements that could be made.

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that channels of communication between the school and parents are clear, effective, and understood by all.
- Ensuring that parents understand how they can best and most appropriately contact the school.
- Leading, developing and implementing any new strategies of communication between the school and parents.

Teachers will be responsible for:

- Responding to queries, comments, and concerns from parents in a positive and proactive fashion.
- Initiating first contact with parents by introducing themselves to the parents of pupils at the start of each academic year.
- Working closely with parents to best support their children in their educational experiences.

Parents will be responsible for:

- Reading the key communications circulated by the school and responding or acting on these when required, e.g. by attending parent-teacher meetings.
- Regularly checking the school website and school ping messages for detailed information about the school calendar, term dates, exam details, monitoring and assessments, school achievements and other useful information.
- Raising any issues or concerns they may have with the appropriate point of contact, e.g. contacting the class teacher with education-related issues.
- Ensuring that parental contact details are up to date.

3. Value of communication

There are a myriad of benefits to the school developing and maintaining positive and consistent channels of communication between themselves and parents. The school will use effective communication to inform parents about its overall aims, ambitions and ethos, whilst using more targeted approaches to inform parents of more specific details pertaining to their children on a more individual basis.

The school, parents and pupils will benefit from there being a two-way communicative approach between the school and parents. That approach is one which will be built on consistency, transparency, respectfulness and valuing each other's contributions.

Parents want to know how their child is progressing at school, in both their academic performance and personal wellbeing, whilst teachers want to understand the needs and backgrounds of the pupils in their classroom. The school will employ an effective system of two-way communication to allow for these details to flourish.

Positive parental support will greatly impact on the pupils themselves. Supportive rapport between the school and parents will increase pupils' confidence and engagement in their learning. This in turn will help to increase how involved parents are in their child's education.

Teachers in turn will value a strong home-school communication thanks to the opportunities for personalisation in a pupil's learning. The school will use strong home-school communication so that the teacher can be made aware of any needs, interests or areas of concern for the pupil on an individual basis.

4. How the school communicates with parents

The school will utilise a variety of physical and digital mediums to communicate with parents.

Channels can include, but aren't limited to, the following:

- The school website
- The school newsletter
- The school's social media channels
- School Ping
- Phone calls
- Text messages
- Face to face meetings

The school will avoid technical or complicated educational jargon when communicating with parents – instead emphasising accessibility for parents of all backgrounds. A warm, friendly, welcoming tone across all channels will be utilised to aid in fostering that trustworthy relationship. The school will always respond promptly to emails, letters, and phone calls from parents.

5. Appropriate forms of contact

The school will ensure that contact details are clearly signposted for the benefit of parents; however, the school will also ensure that appropriate means of contact are always prioritised. To clarify means of contact, the school will highlight the most appropriate channels through which parents can contact the school.

The school will have an email address and telephone number for general enquiries publicly available on the school website. Enquiries meant for specific staff members (i.e. teachers or SENDCO) can then be referred to the appropriate member of staff.

The school will also communicate through social media accounts but will ensure that any initial contact through social media channels is redirected to the more formal and proper channels, e.g. email. This is to ascertain a clear and documented record of the conversation between the parent and the school. The school will also feature a dedicated avenue of contact for complaints or concerns from parents in accordance with the Complaints Procedures Policy.

6. Excessive contact

The school will ensure that it avoids overloading parents with excessive communications. This can be derived from sending similar updates from too many platforms, e.g. social media, text messaging, emails, newsletters.

The school will avoid using excessive contact to minimise the risk of overwhelming or demotivating parents' interest in their children's education.

The school will prioritise efficient means of communication throughout all channels used to ensure that communication channels are simplified and fit parents' preferences and to solidify a positive two-way communication.

7. Parents responding to the school

As natural role models for their children, parents will be required to model good behaviour when communicating and interacting with the school. Parents will be made aware of the school's preferred methods of contact and that those methods will be used by the parents when needed.

Parents are also made aware of the appropriate procedures the school will take if parents display unacceptable behaviour towards school staff in their communication.

When communicating with the school, parents will be expected to do the following:

- Act in accordance with the school's code of conduct
- Support the school's ethos through their behaviour and actions
- Treat all members of staff, other pupils and other parents with respect
- Work together with staff members for the benefit of their children

8. When parents should and shouldn't contact the school

Parents will contact the school if they have a concern about their child, e.g. if a pupil is being bullied or bullying is suspected of taken place.

Parents should raise any concerns in the first instance with their child's class teacher. If they are not satisfied with the outcome at this stage, the concern should then be raised with the Assistant Headteacher for that key stage.

Inclusion Leader (SENDCO) contact

Parents will also contact the school if they have a concern about their child's academic progress or their social and emotional well-being.

Parents should raise any concerns, in the first instance with their child's class teacher. A meeting will be held to discuss the parent's concerns and the class teacher can share what they see in school and what additional quality first teaching adaptations can be put into place. If, after half a term, they are not satisfied that things have improved for their child, and they would like further support, the concern should then be raised with the SENDCO.

In all instances, parents will refrain from contacting the school if they intend on displaying inappropriate behaviour towards the school.

Parents will take the work/life balance of school staff into account by avoiding contact with the school or individual staff members outside of normal school hours. This will be with the exception of emergency situations, e.g. where a safeguarding concern requires immediate attention.

School will aim to respond to all queries within 3 working days. School will respond to all safeguarding concerns on the day if received before 3.30pm.

9. Communication plan

The school will implement the below communication plan template to streamline the school's lines of communication and ensure that staff members understand their duties regarding sending and receiving communications.

Communication plan

Method of communication	Details	Intended recipient/audience	Who is accountable for this?
School newsletter	- Sent once per week on a Friday - Sent digitally via the school's main communication app – School Ping	Staff members, pupils and parents	The Headteacher
Posts on the school website	Updated regularly with statutory information, key dates etc	Parents, prospective parents	The Headteacher
Social media posts on school accounts	Our facebook page will be used to publicise general information/events in the local community that may be of interest to parents/carers.	Staff members and parents	The SLT
The school notice boards	- Details of safeguarding leads - Details of Internet Safety - General information about school events	Parents and pupils	The Pastoral Team
Letters and emails sent to parents	Formal responses ie to holiday request during term time, formal complaints	Parents	The Headteacher
Pupil home communication books	These might be set up for individual specific children if a need for more regular, daily communication is needed eg. if a child has complex medical needs	Staff members and parents	The child's class teacher along with any other adults in class working with the child

Contacting the school

Query	Who to contact	Contact information and availability
Absences	The school office	- The office can be reached on phone number 01274 582927 - The office is open between the hours of 08:30am and 4:00pm - Absence notifications can be sent by email to attendance@lowash.bradford.sch.uk
Complaints	The school office	Complaints can be sent to office@lowash.bradford.sch.uk – please refer to the Complaints Policy
Freedom of information and subject access requests	The school office	FOI requests can be sent to office@lowash.bradford.sch.uk
Safeguarding concerns	The school office	- The office can be reached on phone number 01274 582927 - The office is open between the hours of 08:30am and 4:00pm - Outside of school hours contact should be made with the Emergency Duty Team at Children’s Social Care on 01274 431010
General queries	The school office	General enquiries can be sent to office@lowash.bradford.sch.uk