



MARYLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

PROTOCOL FOR COMMUNICATION

Principles: Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflects the school's reputation.

Our communication must be of a high standard, including grammar and presentation to reflect on 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.

Parent Mail	To reduce costs: -Texts are to be sent out by 1 designated person (unless requested by HT) -Most communication needs to be emailed. (free) -Text messages are only to be used for same day communication (emergency)
Event advertisement	To ensure high attendance: event advertisements will be printed on paper and distributed to all parents to advertise and ensure high attendance. Parental request. <i>Aim: to stick something on the fridge.</i>
Emails	External incoming emails, including complaints, will be treated in the same way as letters.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a parent communicates with the school using email with a complaint or a matter that requires an action, a copy should be printed & filed. • Staff should forward relevant emails from parents to the Senior Leadership Team and should always do so if the content is a complaint • All e-mails requiring an answer should be acknowledged within 2 working days and fully responded to within 5 school days. <p>Internal: Any policy changes, or teaching directives from postholders must be made clear and sent to all teaching staff involved, including SLT.</p> <p>Email groupings must be kept up to day. If staff member leaves, they must be removed from groupings including All Staff.</p> <p>This applies to Governors' groupings.</p> <p>Staff should empty inboxes and other folders regularly.</p>
Newsletter	Whole school information is included in a monthly newsletter, published on the 1st of every month 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.
Staff Updates	Sent out monthly. All staff must acknowledge that they have read staff updates through signing a 'X' or replying with a confirmation email to the sender.
Governors' Updates	The staff update may serve dual purpose and be sent to governors. Governors may also receive their own updates regarding issues such as the community.
Morning briefings	These can be notified on the staff board, but good practice is to inform staff the day before or sooner so they can manage their time. The office & welfare team will have weekly briefings during the Covid period for consistency of communication
Website	

January 2020. Updated September 2020



COMMUNICATION POLICY

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 parents informed of developments and concerns.

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.
 - It is the responsibility of all staff members to keep up to date with communication, particularly Staff Updates which contain vital information on a range of topics from health and safety to new regulations.
 - Protocol for intercom announcements cannot disrupt lesson time, they must be made out of teaching time. Whole school announcements should be kept to an absolute minimum. Where individual staff are needed, the phone is a preferred method. Intercom announcements are to be for emergency use.

Internal Methods of Communication

- All formal meetings should be structured and minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda. The agenda should be sent out in good time before the meeting where possible.
 - The use of Zoom or Google Meet can be used to facilitate virtual meetings in case of emergencies.
- E-mail should **not** replace face to face meetings where discussion is required
- Staff meetings & SLT meetings take place every week. Event planning discussed by working parties will be shared with all staff but staff also have the responsibility to check future actions
 - All teaching staff and phase leaders should attend staff meetings on a Monday and INSET days. In the event that they are unable to attend they should arrange a time with the person leading the meeting to go through key points and policy changes.
- All staff **must** view the communication screen in the staffroom by 8.30am for up to date information.
- Letters to individual parents are sent to classes 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.
- The schools uses ParentMail to communicate with parents by text or e-mail. Parents must download the app. Those who do not have access to the internet or subscribe to Parentmail are sent paper copies via the school office.
- Telephone contacts to the office from parents will be recorded on Parental Communication Sheet by office and given to appropriate member of staff. Parental Communication Procedure should be followed.

- All staff must acknowledge that they have read staff updates through signing a 'X' or replying with a confirmation email to the sender.
- Any policy changes, or teaching directives from postholders must be sent to all staff involved, including SLT.

Staff Whats App group to be used for urgent reminders and to be kept formal. It is not to be used for 'chat'.

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

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional.

To this end parents should always be addressed in an appropriate manner.

All staff should not accept friendship requests from parents on social media.

We will try to make written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias.

Communications with Parents/Carers/Visitors

E-mail/Text: The school has an e-mail/text system Parentmail which it uses to communicate with parents. The Finance Manager and Technical Manager will manage this system and all messages must be approved by the Head Teacher.

Telephone calls: Office staff will not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency.

Social Media Sites/Blogs: Staff are advised not to communicate with parents via social networking sites or accept them as "friends". Staff will not accept pupils or ex-pupils as "friends" and follow Maryland's Code of Conduct.

Written Reports: We provide a written report to each child's parents on their progress, three times a year. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development.

In addition, parents meet their child's teacher/s three times a year at the **Parents' Evening**. We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being. When children have particular education needs, parents 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 school, or to receive and understand communication.

School Website: The school website provides an opportunity to share information about the school and is an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience.

How will this policy be monitored and evaluated?

This policy will be monitored through on-going school self-evaluation. The Head Teacher will use a variety of methods to evaluate this policy with staff, parents.

Meetings

Parents/carers/visitors are welcome to meet with a member of SLT to discuss any matters relating to the school. Where possible appointments should be made ahead of time but where the matter is deemed urgent (eg. relating to safeguarding) by either parties, SLT have an Open Door approach so should make themselves available regardless of an appointment or not. Our aim is to see the parents as quickly as possible; we try to arrange a meeting on the same or next day.

Parents/carers should make an appointment ahead of time to meet with the class teacher, (not address matters at the class door), this gives staff enough time to make arrangements for their class whilst the meeting takes place.

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