**ST LEONARD'S C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL, BRIDGNORTH**

# Communication Policy

Ratified by the Governing Body: November 2026

Review Date: November 2028

## 1. Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, open communication across our school and with parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning and our staff 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
- Helps staff to manage the pressures of their work life more effectively, supporting their wellbeing.

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

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

### 2.1 Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents/carers are effective, timely and appropriate
- Liaising with staff over the best way to ensure communications between staff are effective, timely and appropriate, and reflecting that in this policy
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

### 2.2 Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with parents/carers is effective, respectful, and timely
- Responding to parent/carer communication within a reasonable timeframe (typically within three working days, during term time), unless absence prevents this.
- Communicating with colleagues in a way that supports wellbeing and effective collaboration (e.g. using appropriate channels and timing)
- Using school-approved communication platforms to ensure clarity, consistency, and safeguarding
- Respecting agreed school norms around contact outside core hours (e.g. no expectation to check/respond to emails outside 8:30am–5pm or during school holidays)

### 2.3 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Address communications to reception in the first instance
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school

Abusive or aggressive behaviour – in person, by phone or email – will not be tolerated.

Parents/carers should not expect staff to respond to communications outside the school's parent-facing contact hours of 8:00 to 4:00, or during school holidays.

## 3. How we communicate with parents and carers

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

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

### 3.1 Email

We use email to keep parents/carers informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Our weekly newsletter
- Student progress reports
- Other school-related activities

### 3.2 Text messages

We will text parents/carers about:

- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Absences

### 3.3 School calendar

Details of key events can be found on our website and in our newsletter.

### 3.4 Phone calls

We view phone calls as valuable opportunities either to inform parents/carers of incidents or to share positive news about their child.

### 3.5 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms

Updates on relevant policies and expectations (e.g. behaviour)

### 3.6 Reports

Parents/carers receive reports from the school about their child's learning.

We also arrange regular meetings where parents/carers can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

### 3.7 Meetings

We hold 2 progress evening(s) for each year group. During these meetings, parents/carers 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/carers to arrange meetings between progress evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress or wellbeing.

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

We also hold an open evening at the end of the summer term which is a further opportunity to discuss a child's progress and meet the child's new teacher for the next academic year. The open evening follows the annual school report which is sent home in July.

### 3.8 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
- Information about before and after-school provision

Parents/carers should check the website before contacting the school.

## 4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents/carers 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.

### 4.1 Email

Parents/carers should always email the school about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge emails within three working days. Where a full response cannot be provided within that timeframe, we will explain the next steps and indicate when a fuller response can be expected. Timings for complaints vary, and parents/carers should refer to our Complaints Policy.

If a query or concern is urgent and parents/carers need a response sooner than this, they should call the school.

### 4.2 Phone calls

If parents/carers need to speak to a specific member of staff about a non-urgent matter, they should email the school office. The relevant member of staff will contact them within three working days.

If this is not possible because of teaching or other commitments, someone will respond to arrange a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents/carers have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within three working days of the request.

If the issue is urgent, parents/carers should call the school reception.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

Where there is an immediate risk of harm to a child or another person, parents/carers should contact the emergency services or the appropriate safeguarding agency without delay.

For more general enquiries, please call the school reception.

If parents/carers phone the school to speak with a member of staff, our reception team will take a message and pass it on promptly. Calls will be returned within three working days.

### 4.3 Meetings

If parents/carers would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the school reception to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within five working days of the request.

### 4.4 Managing serial and unreasonable complaints

This section may also be used to manage unreasonable or persistent contact that is not directly associated with, or resulting from, a formal complaint.

St Leonard's School is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

St Leonard's School defines unreasonable behaviour as that which hinders our consideration of complaints because of the frequency or nature of the complainant's contact with the school, such as, if the complainant:

- refuses to articulate their complaint or specify the grounds of a complaint or the outcomes sought by raising the complaint, despite offers of assistance
- refuses to co-operate with the complaints investigation process
- refuses to accept that certain issues are not within the scope of the complaints procedure
- insists on the complaint being dealt with in ways which are incompatible with the complaints procedure or with good practice
- introduces trivial or irrelevant information which they expect to be taken into account and commented on
- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales
- makes unjustified complaints about staff who are trying to deal with the issues, and seeks to have them replaced
- changes the basis of the complaint as the investigation proceeds
- repeatedly makes the same complaint (despite previous investigations or responses concluding that the complaint is groundless or has been addressed)
- refuses to accept the findings of the investigation into that complaint where the school's complaint procedure has been fully and properly implemented and completed including referral to the Department for Education
- seeks an unrealistic outcome
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff regarding the complaint in person, in writing, by email and by telephone while the complaint is being dealt with
- uses threats to intimidate
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence
- knowingly provides falsified information
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

Complainants should try to limit their communication with the school that relates to their complaint, while the complaint is being progressed. It is not helpful if repeated correspondence is sent (either by letter, phone, email or text), as it could delay the outcome being reached.

Whenever possible, the Headteacher or Chair of Governors will discuss any concerns with the complainant informally before applying an 'unreasonable' marking.

If the behaviour continues, the Headteacher will write to the complainant explaining that their behaviour is unreasonable and ask them to change it. For complainants who excessively contact St Leonard's School causing a significant level of disruption, we may specify methods of communication and limit the number of contacts in a communication plan. This will be reviewed after six months.

Any communication plan will normally set out the reasons for the arrangements, the permitted method and frequency of contact, the named point of contact, any exceptions for urgent safeguarding or welfare matters, and the review date.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the school site.

## 5. Communication between staff and parents/carers

### 5.1 Staff responsibilities to parents/carers

**All staff are responsible for:**

- Ensuring that communication within the school or with parents/carers is respectful at all times
- Responding to communication from parents/carers in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents/carers get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)
- Working with colleagues in line with this policy
- Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours or their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting 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.

### 5.2 Staff communication considerations

Staff should all endeavour to support each other in their work and communications. The following are examples of the types of considerations:

- Can a notice regarding something for implementation be sent a day in advance? This reduces pressure on staff.
- Is consultation on a matter needed? If so, it is important to involve staff, for example through asking for comments on a draft. If consultation is not needed, staff should aim to give final copies of matters as a way of reducing workload.
- Avoid "reply all" messages as a matter of course – only where necessary.
- Where possible, where a selection of staff is needed to hear a message, send emails to the right staff – not all staff.
- A regular staff bulletin and staff briefings are good for sharing key information.

- When writing a non-urgent email out of hours, consider scheduling the email to go out during working hours. Do this through: Options -> Schedule send -> Chose time ->

### 5.3 Staff emails

At St Leonard's Primary School, communication between staff via emails has been agreed as follows:

- Sometimes staff may choose to work at irregular times that are convenient to them. For example, some staff work around family commitments or prefer to work in the early morning. In our school we therefore understand this. Therefore, if emails arrive in staff inboxes out of usual hours e.g. between 8am and 5pm on workdays then we don't expect you to read, action, or reply to it outside of the working hours unless it is convenient to them.
- To support this, we use the following footer at the bottom of our emails.
  *Disclaimer: If you are not the intended recipient of this email, please do not send it on to others, open any attachments or file the email locally. Please inform the sender of the error and then delete the original email. At St Leonard's Primary School, we value respectful communication only. We are also committed to support colleagues' work/life balance. Sometimes our staff may work at irregular times that are convenient to them; if this email arrives in their inbox out of hours, we don't expect them to read, action, or reply to it outside of their working hours which are (8am – 5pm) unless it is convenient for you. Staff will endeavour to respond to external contact into school within 7 days.*

## 6. Accessibility

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school.

### 6.1 Parents/carers with additional communication needs

We aim to make communications accessible to all. Parents/carers who need help communicating with the school can request reasonable adjustments, such as large print, alternative electronic formats, support with reading or responding to communications, or another appropriate format. Please contact the school reception to discuss individual needs.

### 6.2 Parents/carers with English as an additional language (EAL)

We currently make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in the following languages: › English

Parents/carers who need help communicating with the school may request translated information or interpreting support where reasonably available.

We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school reception to discuss these.

## 7. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 2 years.

The policy will be approved by the local governing board (LGB) which includes staff governors.

## 8. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Complaints
- Well-being Charter

## 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 the school office on [school office email address] or,

Call the school office on [school office telephone number]

- 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 aim to acknowledge emails within three working days. Where a full response cannot be provided within that timeframe, we will explain the next steps and indicate when a fuller response can be expected.

| I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT… | WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO |
|---|---|
| My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework | Your child's subject teacher via School Reception |
| My child's wellbeing/pastoral support | Head of Year or pastoral lead via school reception |
| Payments | School reception or the relevant school role |

| | |
|---|---|
| School trips | School reception or the relevant school role |
| Uniform/lost and found | School reception or the relevant school role |
| Attendance and absence requests | If you need to report your child's absence, call the school office.<br>If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact school office |
| Bullying and behaviour | Class teacher in the first instance and then the phase leader/ A member of the SLT. |
| School events/the school calendar | School office |
| Special educational needs (SEN) | SENDCO via school reception |
| I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT… | WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO |
| Before and after-school clubs | School office or the relevant school role |
| Hiring the school premises | School office or the relevant school role |
| PTA | School office or the relevant school role |
| Governing board | School office or the relevant school role |
| Catering/meals | School office or the relevant school role |

### Complaints

If you would like to make a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in the school's published Complaints Policy, available on the school website or from school office.