

# Merton Junior School

## Home-School Communication Policy



*'Be wise, together we  
succeed'*

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Headteacher	Signed:	Date: June 2024
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<b>Reviews</b>		
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## 1. Introduction and aims

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. Roles and responsibilities

### 2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

## 2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents 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 get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours 8am – 5pm 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.

This policy links with our Acceptable ICT Use Policy.

## 2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) 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 our parent code of conduct.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours, Monday – Friday: 8am – 5pm, or during school holidays. Staff may respond outside of these hours and during school holidays, but are not expected to.

Our Parent Code of Conduct can be found on our school website.

## 3. How we communicate with parents and carers

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 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 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
- Monthly newsletter/s
- Information/updates from the Local Authority
- Safety announcements which we have been made aware of (from other schools/the Police)

### 3.2 Text messages

We will text parents about:

- Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day (e.g. where to pick the children up from)
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

### 3.3 School calendar

Our school website includes a full school calendar for the year and our monthly newsletter has calendar dates for the following term.

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 calendar.

### 3.4 Phone calls

We encourage staff to make contact with parents on a regular basis to discuss pupils' performance (both positive and negative). We understand that not all parents pick up and drop of their child/ren, so aren't always available for a face-to-face conversation, so we may call a parent instead. All teaching staff must make contact with parents during the first two weeks of a new school year, this may be via phone call, to let parents/carers know how a child has settled into school, and to allow the parent/carer to share any potential concerns.

### 3.5 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Termly Year Group newsletter
- Our monthly whole school newsletter

### 3.6 Homework books/school planners

Home School Books are used to record when a child has read to an adult at home, or has read to an adult at school. Staff also use Home School Books to write a weekly positive comment to parents at home. Staff and parents can use the Home School Book to ask questions or to share information (e.g. if a child can walk home when they are normally are collected).

### 3.7 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
- A report on KS2 SATs tests (Year 6 pupils)

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

### 3.8 Meetings

We hold two parents' evenings per school 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, 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.

### 3.9 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 should check the website before contacting the school.

### 3.10 Home-school communications app

We use the Arbor app to communicate with parents as well.

## 4. 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.

### 4.1 Email

Parents should always email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 3 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 working days.

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

### 4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact them within 3 working days.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 5 days of your request.

If the issue is urgent, parents should call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues (related to children and/or adults)

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

### 4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address (see appendix 1), or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within 10 working days of the request.

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if parents need to speak to them urgently, we recommend they book appointments to discuss:

- Any concerns they have about their child's learning
- Updates related to pastoral support, their child's home environment, or their wellbeing

### 4.4 Home-school communications app

At Merton Junior School we use ARBOR as a home-school communications app. Non-urgent messages and queries can be sent via this platform, and parents can pay for upcoming events/dinners, and/or view their child's attendance via this app.

## 5. Inclusion

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

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

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

## **6. Monitoring and review**

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

The policy will be approved by the headteacher and monitored by the governing board.

## **7. Links with other policies**

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Home-school Communication
- Attendance 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 the most appropriate address

- To contact the class teacher or Phase Leader please use the Year Group email accounts – [Year3@merton-jun.hants.sch.uk](mailto:Year3@merton-jun.hants.sch.uk) / [Year4@merton-jun.hants.sch.uk](mailto:Year4@merton-jun.hants.sch.uk) / [Year5@merton-jun.hants.sch.uk](mailto:Year5@merton-jun.hants.sch.uk) / [Year6@merton-jun.hants.sch.uk](mailto:Year6@merton-jun.hants.sch.uk)
- To contact the SENDCo/Assistant Headteacher/Headteacher please use the office email address – [admin.office@merton-jun.hants.sch.uk](mailto:admin.office@merton-jun.hants.sch.uk)
- To contact the school office – [admin.office@merton-jun.hants.sch.uk](mailto:admin.office@merton-jun.hants.sch.uk)

Please include your child's full name in the subject line.

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

**School office hours are 8:30am – 4:30pm Monday – Thursday and 8:30am – 4pm on Friday.**

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

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	Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) – Mrs Pike
Payments	School office – Miss Marshall
School trips	School office – Miss Marshall or Mrs Ballard
Uniform/lost and found	School office
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01256 3256 If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact the school office for a Leave of Absence Request form.
Bullying and behaviour	Phase Leader – Miss Romaine or Mr Rowland
School events/the school calendar	School office
Special educational needs (SEN)	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator – Mrs Dyer
Before and after-school clubs	School office – Mrs Ballard
Governing board	School office
Catering/meals	School office

## Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy – this can be found on our school website.