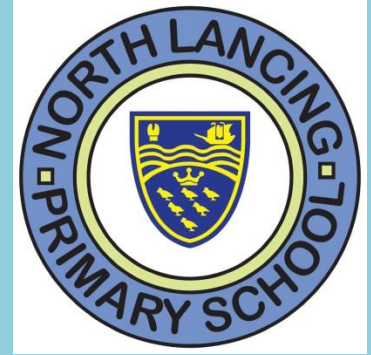


NORTH LANCING PRIMARY SCHOOL



Communication Policy 2024-2025



North Lancing Primary School

Communication Policy

Aims

North Lancing Primary School believes 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

Purpose

The purpose of this Communication Policy is to lay out the guiding principles and way in which North Lancing Primary and its representatives will communicate with each other, our children, their parents/carers and all other members of both the wider school and local communities. This recognises the critical role communication plays in the effective running and reputation of the school.

Definition of communication

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It involves the management of relationships and the need to involve people. Communication is as much about attitude and behaviour as it is about message. We should also remember the importance of listening. Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communication and needs to recognise that the quality of their communication reflects on the school's reputation. For the purposes of this policy communication includes not only the message, but also how that message is communicated; not only the responsibility for communication, but also how effectively that responsibility is carried out.

Our Stakeholders

1. Children
2. Staff
3. Parents/carers
4. Governors
5. Wider school community – including other local schools in Adur
6. The Lancing and Shoreham community

Objectives:

All communications at North Lancing Primary School should:

- Reflect the aims and values of the school
- Keep staff, pupils, parents and other stakeholders well informed
- Be clear, respectful and professional
- Be open and honest
- Be timely and proactive
- Use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all
- Accessible and two-way
- Appropriate - using the method most suitable to the context, message and stakeholder
- Consistent in both their message and, where possible, the way they are delivered
- Mindful of safeguarding and the welfare of the children

Communication with parents and other important stakeholders

Effective communications enable us to share our school aims and values as well as keep parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the vital role that parents play in supporting the school and their child/ren.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, it is essential that relationships are professional and parents are addressed in a formal manner in all written communication, whatever the form.

North Lancing Primary School aims to make written communication as accessible and inclusive as possible. We will ensure that all of our parents can access a form of communication, making alternative arrangements where necessary (e.g. EAL, SEN, IT access or literacy issues). We will seek parental feedback on the school communication via a parent survey.

Communication Procedures

The school office can be contacted between 8:00am and 4.00pm on school weekdays.

Postal Address	Telephone	Email:
North Lancing Primary School Mill Road Lancing West Sussex BN15 OPT	01903 752301	office@northlancing.co.uk

Key Contact Numbers and Addresses:

Contact us...	
School Office	01903 752301
Office Email	office@northlancing.co.uk
StudyBugs	https://studybugs.com/signin
SENCo	inclusion@northlancing.co.uk
Breakfast club	hellobreakfastbuddies@gmail.com
Chartwells	westsussex@chartwells.co.uk or 01243 836130
School Website	https://northlancing.w-sussex.sch.uk/

Communication Guide	
Message, Queries, Concerns	Person to contact and method to use
If your child is absent from school...	Please notify the school office each day of absence by 9.00 am either by Studybugs or by telephone (where you can leave a message) or in person. Please note that this notification does not guarantee that absences will be authorised.
If you have a quick message for your child's teacher about collection, concerns, home learning...	Talk to your child's teacher after the class has been dismissed. Urgent messages may be left at the school office.
If you have a general enquiry or question ...	Check the school website, email the office or ask at the school office.
If you would like to talk about your child's learning/ progress...	Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher via the school office (telephone, Studybugs or email)
If you are concerned about social behaviours or bullying...	Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher via the school office (telephone, Studybugs or email) If, following your discussion you would like more information, or a concern continues, make an appointment via the office to meet with a member of the leadership team.
If you would like to discuss something related to your child's teacher...	Make an appointment to meet with the leadership via the school office (telephone, Studybugs or email)
If you would like to discuss your child's special educational needs...	Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher via the school office. If, following your discussion they recommend involvement from the SEND Team, make an appointment via the school office
If you have a query out about after school clubs ...	Check the school website, or contact the office (telephone, StudyBugs, email or in person)
If you have a query about Breakfast club...	The breakfast club (Breakfast Buddies) is run externally by Lorna Taylor. Contact Lorna via email at: hellobreakfastbuddies@gmail.com
If you have a query about 'Stay and Play' after school child care ...	Contact the Stay and Play team via the school office (telephone, StudyBugs, email or in person)
If you have an enquiry about finance ...	Check the school website, or contact the office (telephone, StudyBugs, email or in person)
If you have a school lunch enquiry...	For general enquiries or support with meal ordering, please contact Chartwells at westsussex@chartwells.co.uk or call (term time only) 01243 836130 .
If you wanted to check if the school is open...	Please check the school website, StudyBugs or Email

If having followed the steps above, your question or concern remains unresolved, please make an appointment with the school office to meet with an Assistant Headteacher or the Headteacher.

If you would like to contact the Governing Body, they may be contacted directly, in writing, via the school office. All correspondence must be sealed and addressed to the Chair of the Governing Body, Mrs Jo Hall.

Internal Methods of Communication

Meetings

There is an integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff. All formal meetings should be structured and staff are invited to contribute to the agenda. It is important that time is put aside for structured opportunities for staff to engage in team working and to contribute to priorities, activities and future plans.

Email

Information and notification of initiatives are communicated through the use of email where appropriate. Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information. However, it does not replace face to face meetings where some discussion is required. All staff should seek face to face communications, when email is not the most effective form of communication.

WhatsApp

Important whole school reminders and key information will be shared on the school WhatsApp group. Messages on this group must focus on key information (nothing social). Messages on the school WhatsApp should only be posted between 7am and 6pm unless there is an emergency e.g. school closure.

Phones

During trips and off-site provision, staff should ensure they can be contacted by mobile phone at all times.

Written Communications

These are placed in pigeon holes, in the staff room (which staff should check regularly), handed to staff personally or emailed.

Staff Meetings

Minutes are taken at each staff meeting. Minutes are shared by email weekly. The main points are also printed in the weekly Friday Briefing Update that is shared with all staff. A whole school diary is kept online. Any events within classes must be recorded, by the office staff, in the online diary.

Staff Key Information Booklet

A hard copy of the Staff Key Information Booklet is shared with all staff at the beginning of the academic year. A copy is available on the server. The booklet is updated annually. It contains essential information and should be read by all staff. This is shared every September.

Staff Notice Boards

The main notice board is located in the staffroom. There is an additional noticeboard with weekly updates situated in the staffroom kitchen. The parent's notice board is located outside near the school hall.

External Methods of Communication

Communications with Parents/Carers

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, other schools, the community and with outside agencies. Good communication between the school and the home is essential, and children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can naturally help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve. In our school we aim to have clear and effective communications with all parents and with 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 the school. We try to make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the cultural groups represented in our school.

Formal letters (sent via the school office)

Staff will endeavour to reply to parents' letters as quickly as possible. Letters will be acknowledged within 48 hours from receipt and a reply sent within 10 working days. Letters must be approved by the Headteacher or an Assistant Headteacher before sending. Copies of correspondence with parents will be placed on the pupils CPOMs file. Any letter of complaint should be referred to the Head Teacher. All letters to parents must come to the Head teacher electronically.

Email

Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information. However, it does not replace face-to-face meetings where some discussion is required. All email should be treated as letters and should be checked carefully for technical errors and tone. Staff should acknowledge emails within 24 hours and send a full reply within 10 working days, unless the sender has been given a legitimate reason for the delay, such as consultation or investigation. **Under no circumstances should staff contact pupils, parents or conduct any school business using personal email addresses.**

Telephone calls

Staff should take notes about the content of telephone calls, as they would with meetings with parents. Notes from telephone calls, including main points of discussion and action required/taken should be logged and filed on CPOMs.

If a child is absent from school and there is no indication of the reason, a member of the office staff will contact a parent on the same day, to find out the reason for the absence.

Meeting with parents

We encourage parents to contact the school if issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being.

For everyday issues parents should contact their child's class teacher.

If parents have any concerns about their child in relation to the school they should:

1. Initially contact the class teacher

2. If the concern remains they should contact a member of the leadership team

Parents should not use social media as a medium to air any concerns or grievances.

Any parent wishing to meet with a member of staff should contact the school office in advance and request a meeting with that member of staff. This will then be arranged at a time convenient to both parties. The subject for that meeting should be shared in advance to help staff to be fully prepared. This will help to ensure the meeting is productive. Parents (like all visitors) should report to reception prior to meeting with a member of staff and sign in via Invenry. If the meeting is due to take place outside office hours, separate arrangements can be made.

If a meeting with a parent is taking place outside normal school hours, the member of staff should try, where possible, to ensure that another colleague is nearby. It is perfectly acceptable to call a meeting to a close in order to allow time for further investigation.

When a pupil is accompanying a parent for a meeting, it is perfectly acceptable to ask a pupil to remain out of the meeting for all or part of it, particularly if the subject matter could negatively impact on the pupil. The teacher should not feel intimidated or threatened at any time during a meeting and is encouraged to stop a meeting should this be the case.

Planned meetings

- At the beginning of the school year class meetings are arranged to share the new class expectations, curriculum, routines and additional information. Should a class teacher change during the year these meetings will be revisited where possible.
- Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content and arrangements.
- A meeting for new reception parents is held in June each year.
- Parent consultations are scheduled twice a year to discuss pupil progress and next steps.

Possible contentious meetings

A member of staff may ask for another member of staff to accompany them and should always do so when the meeting may be contentious in any way or if their input will add value to the meeting. When possible, a member of the leadership team will attend this meeting. The key discussion points, actions and decisions should be recorded. Staff should call a meeting to a close in the event of the parent becoming angry or abusive. The member of staff should report such an incident to a member of the leadership team or Headteacher and seek further advice. The Headteacher should either accompany the member of staff to a further meeting with the parent or hold it without the original member of staff present.

Social Networking Sites/Blogs etc

It is inadvisable for staff to communicate with parents: and unacceptable with pupils, via texting, social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept them as their "friends". Any school social media pages are for professional use only.

Written Reports and Formal Progress Meetings

Twice a year the school provides a written report to each child's parents on their progress. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development.

In addition, parents meet their child's teacher twice during the year for a formal parents' evening. This provides an opportunity to celebrate their child's successes, and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need. When pupils have special educational needs, or if they are making less than expected progress or experiencing challenges in school, we may arrange to meet with parents more regularly. Pupils with significant special educational needs will be offered a termly meeting with the SENCo.

School Website

The school website provides information about the school to parents and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience. It provides guidance on admissions for prospective parents and pupils. It also has up-to-date policies available for parents to view. Copies of newsletters to parents and information guides are also accessible through the website.

A calendar of school events is available on the website, and is updated with the key dates. The upcoming terms dates are always shared in the newsletter and on the website.

Newsletter

The school's newsletter is published weekly and is sent to all parents via StudyBugs; it is also available on the school website. The newsletter includes key dates, events, awards, reminders and important information. Parents are expected to read the newsletter to ensure they are in the best position to support their child/ren.

Weekly year group bulletin

In addition to the newsletter, each year group sends a weekly bulleting via StudyBugs. The weekly bulleting contains year group specific reminders, a summary of learning, an insight into the new learning to come and a list of helpful vocabulary. Parents are expected to read the weekly bulletin.

Home-school communication

Any letters from staff to parents must, in the first instance, be checked by the Headteacher. This should be sent to the HT and copied to the Office. This is to allow us to know what is going on and also store a copy for our files. A calendar of school events will be produced at the start of each term and issued to parents. We send other letters of a general nature when necessary and store copies on the school's website. The school encourages parents to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. Likewise, teachers will arrange to see parents as soon as possible if a concern arises.

Communication with other schools and outside agencies

Before joining, new pupils are encouraged to visit the school prior to starting. We offer taster days/sessions. Following parental permission, we will contact the previous school to help gather key information to aid this process. We will receive the individual pupil file from the previous school once that child is on roll.

Visits from External Agencies

As part of our curriculum, we sometimes invite guest speakers, experts and representatives from a range of organisations and institutions to engage with our pupils. Prior to these visits, we will agree the terms and content of their input and ensure that it is in accordance with our policies. No group or individual will be allowed to present views which are contrary to our Equality Objectives or contrary to British Values.

Safeguarding including child protection (See also Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy)

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school should provide a safe and secure environment. We are the people most in contact with our children, and we are therefore in a unique position to help keep children safe. Because of this when any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who may share this information with the Social Services. We are supported by and regularly communicate with various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on ways to meet pupils' needs, to ensure that all pupils can participate fully in school life. Support comes from such services as Pupil Entitlement, Educational Psychologists, Social Care, Early Help etc.

Confidentiality

We hold information on pupils in our school and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes. Details will be sent to parents about the types of data we hold, why we hold that data, and who we may pass it on to. This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998. Parents have a right to view the information we hold, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed. (Please see our Data Protection Policy)

Links with Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour Policy
- Equality Policy
- Acceptable Use
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Safe Recruitment Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy

APPENDIX A

Studybugs Communication App – report absence securely and help improve children’s health

We’re pleased to announce that North Lancing uses an efficient and secure system for reporting your child’s absence due to illness, called Studybugs.

If you haven’t already, please get the free Studybugs app, or register on the Studybugs website, and use it to tell us whenever your child’s ill and unable to attend school.

Get the app or register now (<https://studybugs.com/about/parents>)

Top 3 reasons to use Studybugs

1. It’s integrated with our systems so we know right away if your child is unaccounted for.
2. It’s quick and easy to register and use and automatically reminds you to keep us posted.
3. You’ll be helping the NHS and other public health organisations improve children’s health. (<https://studybugs.com/about/schools>)

This is also our main communication system with parents and enables us to message you with important information regarding your child or school matters / event reminders. Please ensure that you enable “notifications”.

Thank you,
North Lancing Primary School