

Hipsburn Primary School

Communications Policy

January 2019



Hipsburn Mission Statement:

"The most valuable gift we can give a learner is to enable them to think for themselves, to care for others and thereby acquire a sense of self-worth and confidence which can be used to benefit both society and the individual."

Communications Policy

AIM

At Hipsburn Primary School we aim to have clear, effective, quality communication among staff and with students, parents, governors and members of the wider school community. We strive to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

OBJECTIVES

All communications at Hipsburn Primary School should:

- Keep staff, students, parents and other stakeholders well informed
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon free English and be easily understood by all
- Be actioned within a reasonable time
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context / audience
- Take account of relevant school policies e.g. Confidentiality, Safeguarding, Equalities, GDPR

RESPONSIBILITIES

This section details the responsibilities of the different groups within the school.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) i.e. the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher

- 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 governors 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 SLT and colleagues informed.

Governors

- To ensure the use of a secure online collaboration tool (School 360) when communicating between governors or with the school
- Using a variety of communication methods to promote & explain the work of the governors including termly updates, the Parent Pop-In forums and the designated noticeboard in the entrance corridor
- To ensure the posting of the non-confidential minutes of full governing body meetings on the noticeboard once they have been agreed and signed.

INTERNAL METHODS OF COMMUNICATION (WITHIN SCHOOL)

- All staff receive an induction pack providing them with important information about organisation and procedures within the school (currently been reviewed)
- An integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff both formal and informal: e.g. teachers' staff meetings, morning briefings and whole staff meetings
- All formal meetings should be structured and minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda
- E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating information however it should not replace face to face meetings where discussion is required
- Written communications should be placed in staff trays, in the staffroom, which staff must check daily and clear regularly
- Teachers' meetings & SLT meetings take place every week and the minutes are placed in the staffroom. Events are discussed in advance at meetings but staff also have the responsibility to check future actions
- Staff Briefings, Teacher (and when appropriate) Whole Staff meetings take place each week.
- Weekly notices are e-mailed out to staff and placed on the noticeboard in the staffroom
- The pin board in the staffroom is used for day to day notices
- Reminders or letters to individual parents are sent to classes in boxes to be given out by the class teachers and should be given to children the same day.
- The school uses emails to contact parents directly and most correspondence plus diary dates are also displayed on the school website.
- Urgent messages for parents/carers will be shared by telephone as early as possible.
- A list of all those not subscribing to email updates will be kept by the office and hard copies sent to all those on the list

EXTERNAL METHODS OF COMMUNICATION (WITH PARENTS)

Letters

Staff will endeavour to reply to parents' letters as quickly as possible. Letters will be acknowledged in three working days and a reply sent within ten working days or an update will be sent explaining the reason why this is not possible. Letters must be approved by a member of SLT before posting. Copies of correspondence with parents will be placed on student files.

E-mail

Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information however it does not replace face to face meetings where some discussion is required.

All e-mails should be treated as letters and should be checked carefully. Staff should acknowledge e-mail as they would a letter, within three working days and send a full reply within ten working days or an update will be sent explaining the reason why this is not possible.

E-mails sent by school staff should be written carefully, in the same way as a letter written on school headed paper.

Emails sent to school staff at weekends may not be dealt with until the following working week, and emails sent in holidays will probably elicit no reply until school reopens.

Under no circumstances should staff contact students, 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. Detailed notes from telephone calls, including main points of discussion and action required/taken should be kept on children's files. Office staff will not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency.

Meetings with parents

Any parent wishing to meet with a member of staff should contact the school in advance and request a meeting with the member of staff. This request should be responded to within the usual communications protocols and in a timely manner. Parents should not come to the school to talk to a member of staff without an appointment. If a parent comes to the school without a prior appointment, the member of staff may still choose to meet with them, but there is no expectation to do so. Parents (like all visitors) should report to Reception prior to meeting with a member of staff.

If the meeting is required to take place outside office hours, separate arrangements can be made. A member of staff may ask for their line manager to accompany them.

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. 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 their line manager and seek further advice. The line manager 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.

Staff will set their social networking sites to 'private' and will not communicate with parents or students via social networking sites or accept them as their "friends". Staff will not accept pupils or ex-pupils as "friends" The exception is networks or blogs set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning.

Written Reports

Once a year, we provide a full written report to each child's parents on their progress. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. Pupils are also given an opportunity to comment on their progress.

Parents Progress and Attainment Meetings

These meetings are held twice per year, usually in the Autumn and Spring terms. A new system for making appointments is being introduced by the school. If it is impossible for parents to attend during the window offered they should speak with the class teacher to see if an alternative date can be mutually agreed upon. 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, or if they are making less than expected progress, 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.

Newsletters

Newsletters are usually e-mailed out to parents each half term. If a parent has not signed up for email then a hard copy will be sent out in the child's book bag. A copy is also always placed on the website.

School Website

The school website provides an opportunity to share information about the school and promotes the school to a wider audience.

Home-School Communication

Parents of children joining Preschool and Reception in September are invited to welcome meetings in the preceding Summer term.

Home School Agreements are signed on entry to Reception and will remain effective throughout your child's time at Hipsburn.

The half-termly school newsletter is e-mailed directly to parents and posted on the school website. Paper copies are sent to parents/carers not on the email list.

Parents/carers will be emailed and/or telephoned if there is an unexpected cancellation of a club

We recognise that children's protection is a shared responsibility, and that Hipsburn should provide a safe and secure environment. If any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Mr Moloney, or the Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DSL) who is Miss Haswell, who may share this information with Social Services.

Other policies that might be of interest to you:

- Child Protection
- Complaints procedure
- GDPR

SignedDate (Chair of Governors)

SignedDate (Headteacher)

Hipsburn Primary School January 2019

Date of next review January 2021