



# Communication Policy

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At REAch2, our actions and our intentions as school leaders are guided by our Touchstones:

- Integrity** We recognise that we lead by example and if we want children to grow up to behave appropriately and with integrity then we must model this behaviour.
- Responsibility** We act judiciously with sensitivity and care. We don't make excuses, but mindfully answer for actions and continually seek to make improvements.
- Inclusion** We acknowledge and celebrate that all people are different and can play a role in the REAch2 family whatever their background or learning style.
- Enjoyment** Providing learning that is relevant, motivating and engaging releases a child's curiosity and fun, so that a task can be tackled and their goals achieved.
- Inspiration** Inspiration breathes life into our schools. Introducing children to influential experiences of people and place, motivates them to live their lives to the full.
- Learning** Children and adults will flourish in their learning and through learning discover a future that is worth pursuing.
- Leadership** REAch2 aspires for high quality leadership by seeking out talent, developing potential and spotting the possible in people as well as the actual.

## **1. Aim**

To ensure Martlesham Primary Academy is a thriving and successful educational setting, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents and carers, and with other members of the wider community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

## **2. Definition of Communication**

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It is through effective and interactive communication that information is transmitted, understanding is developed and shared, trust is built, confidentiality respected, and action coordinated.

We should also remember the importance of listening.

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

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 has been carried out.

## **3. Principles**

All communications at Martlesham Primary Academy should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents and carers, governors and other stakeholders well informed.
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional.
- Use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all.
- Be actioned within a reasonable time.
- Use the methods of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.
- Ensure that staff are fully informed of all relevant school activity to enable them to be as effective as possible in their role.
- Take account of relevant school policies.

- Be compatible with our school values.
- Comply with agreed practice for written communications with parents, carers and other external contacts.
- Ensure that consultation issues, plans and changes which may affect the work of the school are inclusive of all appropriate stakeholder groups.

#### **4. Responsibilities**

##### Senior Leadership

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 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.

##### Parents/Carers

Read the key communications issued by the school, including the newsletter and where a response is required (e.g. school trip letter), reply within the established timeframe.

Raise issues or concerns at the earliest opportunity with the school in the appropriate manner.

Act on the communication (e.g. attending special meetings).

Communicate with respect and courtesy.

## **5. Methods of Communication between Staff**

### Internal

All staff receive a Staff Handbook, updated annually, providing them with important information about organisation and procedures within the school.

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- A Work Plan of key dates, events and meetings for the coming academic year is published every summer term for the following year, to enable staff to plan accordingly. This then informs the list of dates which are given to parents and carers.
- All formal meetings should be structured and minuted using the agreed school minute formats (either staff meeting, child discussion, staff discussion, parent discussion or outside agency/visitor communication record) and where possible, members invited to contribute to the agenda.
- Information and notification of initiatives are communicated through face-to-face discussion, and where necessary, the use of email to follow up with. Email 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 sent electronically to reduce printing costs, but where hard copies are necessary, they should be handed to staff personally.
- Where e-mails are used for communication, they should not require specific action to be taken, unless this has already been discussed in a face-to-face situation to clarify any points staff may have about what is expected.
- Staff meetings take place every week on a Monday from 3.45pm to 5.00pm.
- The minutes of each meeting are emailed to all relevant staff and placed on the staff notice board, as well as saved on Teams.

- The school diary is accessible online, and all members of staff can access it. Events are discussed in advance at meetings, but staff also have the responsibility to check future actions.
- The whiteboard in the staffroom is used for day to day notices and contains the main events which are taking place over the following week.
- Within each individual class, class teachers organise their own methods of communicating information to the children. This may be a news board or other type of notice, as appropriate for each year-group.
- Reminders or 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.

### External

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, and carers play in supporting the school.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents and carers, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end, parents and carers should always be addressed in an appropriate manner, e.g. Mr/Miss/Mrs etc. We will try to make 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 to our society by all cultural groups represented in our school.

## **6. Communication between Parents/Carers and the School**

To ensure there are clear lines of communication within the school, please find below a range of ways that parents/carers can get in touch so that they know who to approach to ensure their query is dealt with effectively.

<b>Your Query</b>	<b>Who you need to talk to</b>	<b>How to get in touch</b>
Anything to do with your individual child: their progress, behaviour or something that has happened on the school playground.	Your child's Class Teacher is always the first port of call for any of these queries; they may then involve a member of the Senior Leadership team if necessary.	Make an appointment via the school office or email <a href="mailto:office@martleshamacademy.org">office@martleshamacademy.org</a> and this can be passed to them. Please note that each teacher will have different times available.  Unfortunately, your child's teacher is not available at the start of the day as they are with pupils in class.
Messages about medical appointments, childcare arrangements, who is collecting your child etc.	School Office.	An email is the best for these matters. The school office will ensure class teachers are aware and record on the pupil's files.
Anything to do with your child's Special Educational Needs/ Disability (SEND) provision or any concerns you have about possible SEND.	Again, your child's class teacher is the first port of call for any of these queries or conversations as they are teacher responsible and know them best.  They may then involve the Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCo), Miss Hudson if necessary.	Make an appointment via the school office or email which can be passed to them. Those parents wishing to meet with Miss Hudson need to be aware of Miss Hudson's teaching responsibilities and so is not available every day in her SENCo capacity. Please make an appointment via the school office in this instance.
Any queries with administration: pupil records, contact numbers, admissions etc.	School Office.	Office email or telephone.



<b>Your Query</b>	<b>Who you need to talk to</b>	<b>How to get in touch</b>
Any queries with finance: dinner money, music lessons, school trip payments etc.	School Office.	Office email or telephone.
Any queries about fundraising in school and the Parent Teacher Association for ideas for events and volunteering to help at events.	PTA Committee.	Speak to a member of the PTA or email the office and this will be forwarded on.
Anything to do with whole school issues or ideas for the future or give some feedback.	Head Teacher, Miss Churchman.	Make an appointment via the office or email.  Please note that if your appointment is regarding your child, the Head Teacher will ask that you have already spoken with your child's class teacher in the first instance.
Any concerns regarding child welfare or family circumstances which we need to be aware of or to discuss serious issues or concerns.	Head Teacher, Miss Churchman.	Make an appointment via the office or email.

### Letters

Staff will respond to parents' letters within 48 hours (two school days). Letters can be given to your child, to give to his or her class teacher, given to the school office or posted. As with emails, letters will be treated with appropriate confidentiality.

Where the letter is in relation to a complaint made by the parent/carer, the complaints policy should be followed to ensure that the appropriate procedure is followed.

Any letters which are sent to parents/carers by the school must be checked by the Head Teacher before they are sent. Copies of all correspondence to individual parents will be placed in pupil files.

### Emails

The school has an electronic mailing system it uses to communicate with parents and carers. Any communication that needs to be sent to parents using this system must be approved by the Head Teacher.

Most people are communicating regularly by email and it has become one of the primary routes for establishing communication. That said, except for the office staff, our members of staff on the teaching and learning team are not office or computer based and therefore do not have the same level of access to email. It is not our policy to provide parents with email addresses for teaching staff. This is also one of our strategies for reducing the unnecessary and excessive workload of teachers and we request that parents do not ask teachers for them. Teaching staff are asked not to respond to any e-mails which come directly to them, without going through the appropriate channel below.

For the purposes of administration, parents and carers are asked to use the main office address for all email correspondence: [office@mariteshamacademy.org](mailto:office@mariteshamacademy.org). All emails will be treated with appropriate confidentiality. Please note all emails should specify the member of staff to whom the query is addressed. In the first instance, this is usually your child's class teacher. Parents should be aware that any e-mails which are sent to the school may not be opened immediately, and as such if your message or query is urgent, we ask that you call the school office to ensure that the school receives this timely information. Any e-mail which is sent to school will be acknowledged and responded to within two school days of the date it was delivered. The school office will ensure that your e-mail is directed to the relevant person/persons.

Where necessary, a hard copy of an email sent to a parent or received by staff from a parent will be filed on the child's personal file in the school office. The same applies to all internal email transmissions concerning pupil matters. All emails requiring an answer should be responded within 48 hours (two school days).

### Telephone Calls

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be a problem in a school, where teachers may be teaching full time and running clubs or otherwise working with pupils at lunchtime or after school.

Parents may be exasperated if they feel that a message elicits no immediate reply, when in fact there has been no available opportunity for the member of staff to reach a telephone to return a call.

Telephone calls are appropriate to notify us that your child will be absent from school, to communicate brief information about your child that the school needs to know or in an emergency, such as e.g. to let us know that you will be late collecting your child. We ask parents to telephone the school on 01473 624409. The school office is open 8.15am to 4.15pm, Monday to Thursday and 8.15am to 4.00pm on Friday during term-time. At all other times, there is an answering service available to take your message.

Any messages which are for school staff are taken by the office team and then passed on to the appropriate member of staff. Office staff will take note of the necessary details of the call. Office staff should not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call.

Where a parent or carer does call to speak to their child's class teacher, the office will liaise with the class teacher to arrange a mutually convenient time for this, within two days. As a result, it may be that a member of staff is unable to call back on the same day that the call was made.

### Social Networking

Staff will not communicate individually with parents, carers or pupils via social networking sites or accept them as "friends". Staff are instructed to report any such requests or interactions to the Head Teacher. The school uses Twitter as a way of posting reminders to parents/carers and sharing and celebrating the pupils' learning at Martlesham Primary Academy. Where this method of communication is used, a professional manner will always continue to be used, as it would be for any communication within the school.

### Written Reports

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

### Learning Reviews

Parents are invited to meet with their child's class teacher twice during the year, in the Autumn and Spring Terms for parent-teacher consultations. There is also an option to meet for a third time following the end of year report.

You will be advised of the date through a letter and asked to sign up for a specific day/time to meet with your child's teacher via our online booking system. If you are unable to use the online system you will be able to telephone or e-mail the school office who will assist you in making an appointment. We would encourage all parents to take up this opportunity. If you are unable to attend on the designated days, you can request to make an alternative arrangement directly with your child's teacher, or via the School Office at a mutually convenient time.

### SEND Reviews

Parents of children with SEND will meet with their class teacher three times a year, in the Pupil Learning Reviews. This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child's successes, and to support their child in areas where there is a need for support. We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being. When children have educational 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.

### School Prospectus

The school prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of provision at Martlesham Primary Academy. This is updated every year and placed on the website.

### School Website

The website provides information about the school, as well as latest news and information and is an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience.

### Home School Visits

Home visits take place either at the end of the term before a child starts at the school, or during the first two weeks of the term in which they start for those families with children in the Reception Class or Nursery classes. Several meetings for new parents are organised at an appropriate time for them to receive information prior to their child starting at the school.

### Notices

Information is displayed on the notice board in the school playground if it is for general information and does not require a response. Often this information will be publishing forthcoming events or giving reminders.

## Friday Flyer Newsletter

The school newsletter is sent to parents/carers via the electronic mailing system, with paper copies available on request or sent to parents who are not able to access it online. It contains general details of school events and activities and upcoming dates as well as sharing and celebrating the learning throughout the school in that week. It is published on Fridays during term-time. Parents are asked to ensure that the school has the correct e-mail address on its system for communication.

## Letters

We send other letters of a general nature out on any day if necessary, and place copies of all communication (including newsletters) on the school's website. We limit the communication so that parents/carers know what to expect and are not bombarded with communication and letters each day where possible.

## Class Induction / Meet the Teacher

At the beginning of each academic year, you are invited to a Class Induction Meeting. At this meeting, you will be given information about the class. This will include what your child will be learning, home learning expectations, expectation of behaviour, planned activities and events etc. This information will also be posted in your child's page on our school website.

## Reading Diaries

Children in all classes have a reading diary/record. This enables parents to record a wide range of information about their child's reading.

## Individual Meetings

Parents are welcome to visit the school to discuss their child's progress, ask questions, and gain support or talk about their child/home issues with either the child's class staff, SENDCo or Head Teacher.

Parents are asked to phone school staff to make an appointment. This allows the school time to organise cover to make staff available to speak to the parents. Our aim is to see the parents as quickly as possible; we try to arrange a meeting within five school days.

Your first point of contact in the school is always your child's class teacher. For all other queries, the school office will direct you to the appropriate member of staff, to deal with your query and arrange any appointments for you.

It is sometimes possible to speak with the class teacher or Head Teacher, very briefly, at the end of the school day. For longer discussions, you will need to make an appointment. We would advise you not to arrive at the school with the expectation that you can be seen straight away, as this may not be possible.

Some parents, especially of the younger children, can have a brief word with a member of school staff before and after school. Parents/carers should be mindful that teachers have limited time in the mornings as they need to register the children and begin the days learning.

### Residential Meetings

Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content and arrangements.

### Head Teacher Monthly

Head Teacher Monthly is sent to parents/carers via the electronic mailing system, with paper copies available on request or sent to parents who are not able to access it online. It contains all information the Head Teacher needs to share, both regarding events which have taken place and upcoming news. It is published monthly during term-time.

### Parent Sharing

Sharing events take place throughout the year where specific whole school or year group events have taken place.

## **7. School Office**

The school office is open 8.15am to 4.15pm, Monday to Thursday and 8.15am to 4.00pm on Friday during term-time. At all other times, there is an answering service available to take your message.

We would strongly encourage you to use one of the methods detailed above to get in contact with the school, however, should you wish to pass on a brief message, you may do so at the school office. Your message will be written down and given to the appropriate member of staff at the earliest opportunity. We ask you to notify the office if your child will be absent from school by 8.55am at the latest. If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, we will contact a parent (by telephone, if possible) to find out the reason for the absence.

## **8. Sharing Views**

### Surveys

We welcome and value feedback from parents and carers about our school's policies and practices. We use Forms to canvas the views of parents and carers about our school and report back on the outcomes.

### Parent Council

Nominated parents/carers from each year group are invited to Parent Forum meetings to discuss various topics with the Head Teacher.

## **9. Communication with the Community**

Members of the local community are invited to school functions such as Special Assemblies, Harvest, Christmas Fairs, Christmas Carol Services and school productions. Guest speakers from local churches, community organisations and charities come into school to speak to the children. Information about local community events and activities are featured in the Friday Flyer.

## **10. Safeguarding**

We recognise children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm; that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that Martlesham Primary Academy 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 identify and help any child needing protection. So, when any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for Children Protection, or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, who may share this information with Social Services.