



KINGSNORTH and BRENZETT CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Name of Policy:	Communication	
Date Written:	December 2019	
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Updated By Who:	Executive Headteacher	
Policy Originated from:	Kingsnorth Primary School	
Date To Be Reviewed:	December 2022	
Policy Approved By:	SLT:	
	Staff:	
	Governors:	

Our Vision Statement:

Kingsnorth...the best days of OUR lives!

Kingsnorth Values Statement

At Kingsnorth we ACHIEVE by...

Aiming high Academically, Spiritually, Socially and Emotionally

Challenging ourselves constantly to improve our learning

Helping each individual reach their potential

Inspiring others and being inspired

Encouraging risk taking

Valuing others and feeling valued

Enriching lives through our Christian Values to become future citizens of the world

Our 5 Key Christian Values are:

Thankfulness, Friendship, Trust, Compassion and Endurance

Statement of Intent

'Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish level and the Diocese of Canterbury.

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers all pupils.'

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

All children have equal access to the curriculum regardless of their race, gender, or disability. Our behaviour policy underpins all that we do at Kingsnorth and should be closely linked to our other policies.



Introduction

To support Kingsnorth and Brenzett CE Primary Schools in our aim to become thriving and successful schools we must communicate effectively – with each other, with our pupils, with their parents/carers and with other members of the wider school community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain. Good communication between all these groups is essential, and children achieve more when everyone works together. Parents/carers, the School Governors and PFA can naturally help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve.

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 and show an awareness of ‘Packtyping’ and of differing and different communication styles when engaging in any form of communication, especially verbal, face to face exchanges.

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

*‘Tell me and I’ll forget;
Show me and I may remember;
Involve me and I’ll understand.’* Chinese Proverb

Purpose

In our schools, we strive to maintain clear and effective communications with all parents/carers and with the wider community and stakeholders. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values by keeping parents and the community well informed about many aspects of school life. This reinforces the important role that parents and members of the community play in supporting our school.

We have various strategies for communicating with parents and the community. Some of our communications are in accordance with a statutory requirement; while others reflect what we believe is important for our school.

We make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We use an easy-to-read font (Arial pt12), and add pictures where appropriate. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of discrimination. We recognise and celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the cultural and other groups represented in our school and community.

Kingsnorth and Brenzett CEP schools believe that:

- Families are a crucial influence on the education and development of our pupils, and effective partnerships between the school and home have a positive impact on pupils’ learning



- It is important that parents/carers have access to relevant information and that they receive our support, guidance and help quickly and effectively
- It is important that parents/carers are consulted and given opportunities to provide feedback to the school

Kingsnorth and Brenzett CEP schools recognise:

- The important role played by parents/carers, other adults, siblings and peers as key educators
- The importance of effective systems for facilitating communication, not only to support the learning and well-being of our pupils, but also to reinforce our reputation as a “warm and welcoming school”

Objectives

All communications at Kingsnorth and Brenzett CEP schools should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents, Governors and other stakeholders well informed
- Maintain our ‘warm and welcoming’ atmosphere at **ALL** times
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all
- Be easy to read and accessible (Arial pt12)
- Be actioned within a reasonable time
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.
- Be compatible with our core values as reflected in our Aims and School Values
- Not assume too much! It is the school’s responsibility to allay concerns of families.

General Principles

The school will endeavour to resolve any issues that concern parents as quickly and effectively as possible and will endeavour to acknowledge the communication should it not be possible to deal with the matter in the short term. We have an ‘open door’ approach.

The school will use a variety of methods to respond to communications received – email, telephone, a meeting, or letter. Letters will be available on the school website for any student with a long-term illness and distributed to other absentees when they return to school.

Communication on issues that affect the safety or wellbeing of a student(s) will be treated as priority. A calendar of important dates, including parents meetings, trips, tests, closure days, etc, will be published on the website and the regular newsletters.

If a complaint is received by the school then the procedures contained in the Complaints Policy will be followed.

The school will consult with parents and provide opportunities for feedback through questionnaires, open evenings and other means.

Range of Communication Methods used across our schools

Existing methods of communication include:

- ✓ Collective Worship
- ✓ Home School Agreements
- ✓ SLT and Staff at the gate
- ✓ Headteacher reports to School Governors
- ✓ Induction packs for new children starting school
- ✓ Induction packs for new staff
- ✓ Text messaging (Mon 8am – Fri 4pm – unless exceptional circumstances)



- ✓ Daily Staff Briefing at 8:30am (when possible – Covid dependent)
- ✓ Reading Logs/Records
- ✓ Informal meetings with staff
- ✓ Letters for particular issues (Giving 7 days' notice where at all possible)
- ✓ Notice-boards on the school site
- ✓ Open afternoons
- ✓ Reports to parents
- ✓ Parents' Evenings
- ✓ Pupils talking to FLO, support staff and other adults in the school
- ✓ Questionnaires
- ✓ School Council
- ✓ School Governors Meeting Minutes
- ✓ School Improvement Plan
- ✓ School Prospectus
- ✓ Parents' Handbook
- ✓ School Website
- ✓ Staff / governor development time and induction training
- ✓ Governor Blog
- ✓ Staff meeting
- ✓ School community events (eg Fun Run)
- ✓ Regular news letters
- ✓ Emailing of letters and news bulletins
- ✓ Letters published on the school website
- ✓ Word of mouth
- ✓ PFA Events
- ✓ Flyers and letters from PFA
- ✓ Local Press coverage
- ✓ Staff emails (Accessed - 7am-7pm - Monday to Friday)
- ✓ Virtual and online meetings where necessary.

This is an extensive list but by no means an exhaustive list.

Home-School Agreements

Our home–school agreement is shared with all parents annually. It is a requirement of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. It explains the school's aims and values, the school's responsibilities towards the children, the responsibilities of parents, and what the school expects of the children. We ask children, parents and staff to sign this agreement when their child starts at our school, and to renew it each year.

The agreement covers the standard of education in our school, the ethos of the school, and our expectations regarding attendance, behaviour, and homework.

School Prospectus/Parent Handbook

The school prospectus and parent handbook contain a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of provision at our school. We update this regularly as needed.

Information is published on our school website, which has details of staff, school operations and the current Ofsted report and key school policies.

Public Access to Documents

Our school makes a range of documentation available to parents. Items include minutes of Governors meetings, school policies, including those that the Governors are required to ratify in relation to the following matters: sex education, health and safety, curriculum, performance management, admissions, and action planning following an inspection. There is also a range of National Government, Trust and Local Authority documentation. We make copies available on request and through our web site.



Home-School Communications

We send regular newsletters to parents via email, at the end of each school week. It contains general details of school events and activities. Parents expect the newsletter, and appreciate the regularity of the contact. We send other letters of a general or specific nature when necessary. Parents/carers are encouraged to receive information electronically.

At the beginning of each 'old' term, all teachers write to the parents of the children in their classes/year groups with details of the work to be covered during the forthcoming term. We invite parents to support their child's work through a range of suggested activities to be shared with the child at home. We also invite parents to take part in any educational visit that is linked to the work.

The schools encourage parents to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity – primarily with the welfare team. Teachers should see parents at the earliest opportunity, if at all possible. Where this is not possible, the parent should make an appointment. (Parents usually have the opportunity to talk with staff when they bring their children to school, or when they collect them after school – Covid dependent)

Covid dependent - We hold a meeting for new parents prior to their child's entry, and a meeting for Year 6 and Year 4 parents annually to talk about assessments and trips. The residential visits that children make involve meetings with parents regarding the requirements and content of the visit. We always aim to give parents as much notice as is possible. The school will endeavour to give parents 7 days' notice of any meeting about class/school events.

If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, we contact a parent or carer by telephone on the first day of absence, to find out the reason for the absence. If no contact can be made with any named person, we may contact the Attendance and Behaviour Officer to ensure the pupil's well-being and safety.

Communication from parents	Suggested response time
Phone Calls	Returned within 24 hours of parent's call
Email	Email reply within 72 hours of receipt (set up an automated 'out of office reply' when you are away)
Written Letter	Acknowledge receipt of letter within 72 hours

Communications with other schools and outside agencies

Toward the end of the academic year, we pass on information about the children to their next classes or intended secondary schools. We try to give a view of the whole child, and we include their expected national test results, their strengths and weaknesses, their interests and responsibilities (eg House Captain, Sports Captain, school council representative etc). There is also an electronic transfer of further information about the children, organised by the government. We may also send on items of work and other paper documentation.

We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on better ways to meet these needs, so that children may participate more fully. Support comes from other services (eg speech and language therapy), from specialist teams within Social Services and other agencies within the community. We will always involve parents by seeking additional advice, help and support.

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that safeguarding is a shared responsibility, and that our school should provide a safe and secure environment. Outside the family home, we are the people most in contact with our children, and we are therefore in a unique position to identify and help children. When any member of staff has concerns about the welfare of a child, these will be passed on to the Designated



Safeguarding Lead (DSL), who may share this information when it is in the child's best interests to do so.

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.

Communications within our school

To keep everyone up to date with events, there is a diary on the staff room wall and a whiteboard for the day's messages. Covid dependent - There is a daily staff briefing at 8:30 am to which all staff are expected to attend. Minutes of these meetings are taken and kept in the staffroom.

All our systems and procedures are detailed in the Staff Handbook and are regularly reviewed at staff meetings.

Written communications are delivered through pigeon holes in the staffroom. We use an internal email system to allow quick and efficient communication with all staff. It is expected that ALL staff check their emails on a daily basis to ensure messages are dealt with speedily – within the guidelines already mentioned.

There is a register file for each class containing copies of letters to be sent out and medical information.

Supply teachers are generally well known to the children and us. Relevant information is passed on to them. Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff or with parents or other outside Agencies.

Mobile Phones

Staff - Mobile phones must not be used to take calls during lessons or when in contact with the children. In exceptional cases such as family illness the circumstances should be discussed with the Head of School. Non-intrusive work related mobile phone use is acceptable during PPA or management time. During trips and off site provision, staff should ensure they can be contacted by mobile phone at all times.

Pupils – Pupils should not bring mobile phones to class. Phones in school - only for Year 6 children who walk to school - must be left at the school office in the morning and collected at the end of the day – doing so is at the owner's risk.

Social Networking Sites/Blogs etc.

Staff will not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept them as their "friends".

Use of Photographs and Names

Photographs are used in and around the school for many purposes, including displays, records of practical work (e.g. art or technology projects), and records of important school events. Photographs of children will only be used if they add value to a pupil's or group's work.

We may use photographs of children or their work when communicating with parents and the wider community, in newsletters, in the school prospectus, on the school website. The local or national press may on occasions publish photographs of children participating in events at school, e.g. sporting events

Parental permission will always be obtained before using photographs of children or their work as detailed in above. Permissions are generally sought at the beginning of each



academic year. Lists of those children for whom permission has NOT been given will be held by each class teacher, and by the school office and are on SIMS.

Photographs will be checked to ensure that they are suitable (photos of children in swimwear would be unsuitable, as would individual and close-up shots).

Photographs used must **not** be captioned with children's names.

Electronic Communication

We use the Internet and e-mail, and we have a school website. Email is a default way of communicating with and across the school. Staff access to emails is only expected during the hours of 7am-7pm - Monday to Friday. Staff can set 'out of office replies' outside of these times.

Parents are required to give permission when they register their child for them to use the Internet in school and an acceptable use policy for IT equipment. A record of those who do not have permission is held by each class teacher, and by the school office.

All school members may communicate with others through the Internet. There are many benefits, but also a number of possible dangers. Rules for the use of the Internet are contained in our Internet policy. Safeguards in our school include constant adult supervision, sites being filtered by software, controlled links, and the use of child-friendly search engines.

Our school web site provides information about the school, and an opportunity to celebrate our work with the worldwide learning community.

Members of staff, and all children will have their own school-provided e-mail accounts.

The school will block / filter access to **social networking sites such as "YouTube"** for children. Newsgroups will be blocked unless a specific use is approved for school use.

Pupils will be advised never to give out personal details of any kind which may identify them or their location. Pupils and parents will be advised that the use of social network spaces outside school is inappropriate for primary aged pupils.

Roles and Responsibilities

The school leadership team is responsible for:

- ✓ Ensuring that the school has effective communications with all its stakeholders

Staff are responsible for:

- ✓ Ensuring effective communication is kept up at all times with all families
- ✓ Responding to communications as soon as possible and for acknowledging it, should it not be possible to deal with the matter in the short term
- ✓ Regularly checking the student home-school diary for any communication from home
- ✓ Using the home-school diary as a means of communicating with home
- ✓ Ensuring that a copy of information should be published on the website

The Office Admin is responsible for:

- ✓ Ensuring that all letters, regular newsletters, etc are given to staff and governors for distribution
- ✓ Ensuring that parental contact information is accurate and current
- ✓ Ensuring that any communication for publication on the web site is uploaded at the earliest opportunity
- ✓ Informing parents and staff of developments which enhance communication



Parents are responsible for:

- ✓ Ensuring that **all** contact information for them held by the school is up to date
- ✓ Ensuring that the school is informed (at the earliest opportunity) of known absences of their child(ren)
- ✓ Ensuring that their child(ren) always carry their reading logs and books with them to school
- ✓ Signing the reading logs on a regular basis
- ✓ Checking with their child(ren) that information has been shown to the relevant staff
- ✓ Working with their child(ren) to ensure that they receive all paper communication sent by the school via pupils.

The Governing Body is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the Communication Policy.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be regularly monitored, and will be reviewed in conjunction with the Joint Local Governing Body **September 2023** or earlier if required.