

# Lawley Primary School

## Communications Policy

2016/2017

## **Lawley Primary School Communications Policy**

### **Introduction**

This communications policy sets out all the expected procedures for oral and written communication, which should be adhered to by all members of staff in school.

### **Aims of the policy**

To support Lawley Primary School in its aim to continue to be a thriving and successful school we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents 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.

### **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
- the understanding that communication is as much about attitude and behaviour as it is about message
- listening
- the responsibility from ALL staff to support effective communications and to recognise that the quality of their communications 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.

### **Objectives of communication at Lawley Primary School**

- to keep staff, pupils, parents, Governors and other stakeholders well informed
- to be open, honest, ethical and professional
- to use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all
- to action communications within a reasonable time
- to use the method of communication that is most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience
- to take account of other policies, in particular our equal opportunities, Child Protection and use of ICT including the social network policy.
- to be compatible with our core values as reflected in all our policies and ethos

### **Internal methods of communication**

#### **Meetings**

There is an integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff, both formal and informal.

All formal meetings are planned, structured and minutes taken. Members 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 subject leaders' reflection on priorities, activities and future plans. For all other meetings notes should be taken, action points progressed and feedback given to staff.

Staff meeting minutes are available on the workgroup and in the minute folder which is kept in the Deputy Head Teacher's office.

All TA minutes are kept in their minute book and Lunchtime Supervisor minutes are available from the School Business Manager.

### **E-mail**

Information and notification of initiatives are communicated through the use of email where appropriate. This is mainly regarding teaching resources, information for all class teachers and support staff and messages from admin staff.

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

To ensure that each member of staff is up to date with information, it is vital that staff check their e-mails regularly throughout the day. The school office will receive a large amount of parent communication throughout the day and they are directed not to disturb teachers and TAs during lessons, except in emergency situations.

**It is the responsibility of all class teachers to ensure that they check their emails at lunch time and the end of each day. It is also the responsibility of support staff to check their emails regularly and at least daily.**

### **Mobile phones**

**Personal mobile phones must not be used during the school day, they must not be on view during the school day or when in contact with the children.**

In exceptional cases, such as family illness, mobile phones may be permitted however the specific circumstances should be discussed with the Headteacher.

### **Mobile phones must never be used to photograph children.**

Only school cameras are permitted for this.

During trips and off site provision, staff must ensure they can be contacted by mobile phone at all times; the school has mobile phones available for this purpose. During off-site visits staff may use their own mobile phone to contact school or parents in the case of an emergency.

**Pupils should not bring mobile phones to school.** Any exceptional circumstances must be discussed with and approved by the Headteacher.

### **Talking to Pupils**

All staff are expected to talk to pupils with respect, following agreed procedures and the Child Protection Policy. Shouting in pupils' faces and gesticulating at them is unacceptable behaviour. Communications with children must be clear and unambiguous. Wherever possible, two members of staff should be present if there is a need to discipline a child - following the Behaviour Policy.

### **Telephone and Verbal Messages from Parents**

Administrative staff must ensure that all messages from parents regarding their child/ren are passed on to class teachers immediately by email whenever possible. The administrative team have been instructed to only disturb teachers in emergency situations.

### **Written Communications**

These are placed in pigeon holes in the staff room, handed to staff personally or emailed.

**It is the professional responsibility of all staff to check all methods of communication regularly.**

## **Weekly Diaries and Newsletter**

Information concerning what is happening in school during the week is written on the board in the staff room. The daily diary also informs staff of the events of the day.

All staff are provided with an overview of important dates at the beginning of term and the calendar on Outlook also holds this information.

All staff are expected to check the various forms of information daily and note dates and events that affect them.

The fortnightly newsletter must be read by every member of staff to ensure that they are fully aware of what is being shared with parents. This newsletter is emailed to all staff and members of the Governing Body.

Office staff must ensure that teachers are copied into any letter concerning their own class.

## **External methods of communication**

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/carers 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.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents/carers, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional at all times; to this end parents will always be addressed in an appropriate, professional manner. It is preferable that titles and surnames are used, rather than first names, however the use of first names may be appropriate and this decision is left to the professional judgement of the member of staff.

## **Communication with Parent and Carers**

### **Talking to Parents**

**Conversations with parents/carers, whether face-to-face or by phone, should be logged on Bromcom.**

Please be aware of your body language and tone of voice when talking to parents. It is essential that all conversations with parents are conducted in a professional manner.

When concerns are raised regarding behaviour, the behaviour of a child should be considered over time and reflection taken on how this has been managed in the classroom. The conversation should always be about the behaviour of the child and not the child as a person.

Only teaching staff should discuss concerns with a parent. All support staff should discuss their concerns with the Class Teacher or a member of SLT.

The school encourages parents to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. Teachers arrange to see parents as soon as possible. Many parents have the opportunity to have a brief word with the teacher when they collect them at the end of the day. At the start of the day, parents and carers are

asked to speak to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Serious concerns from parents and carers should be recorded on a meeting form (Tdrive-Safeguarding – Incident report forms “Conversation/meeting with parent”).

### **Letters**

Staff will endeavour to respond to parents’ letters as quickly as possible. All written communications to parents must be approved by the Headteacher before they are sent. Copies of all correspondence with parents, including emails, should be placed in pupil files.

A letter will be sent to parents when a teacher has been off for one week to update them on the situation and what procedures have been put in place. Regular letters will then be sent as and when more information is available.

### **LETTERS PROCEDURE:**

1. All letters sent out from Lawley Primary School must be read and authorised by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. **No letters must be issued that have not been read and authorised.**
2. All authorised letters must include the standard school letterhead and be read and signed by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
3. All letters to parents must be handed to the office a minimum of **10 working days** prior to their needing to be sent. The School Business Manager should be aware of all correspondence that needs to be sent out to parents.

We believe we will achieve greater success when all staff take collective responsibility for maintaining high standards in school by issuing standard letters regularly.

Standard Letters are available for the following issues:

1. Inappropriate items brought from home
2. Unsatisfactory work
3. PE Kit
4. Break time refreshments
5. Homework
6. Misplaced school equipment
7. KS1 school uniform
8. KS2 school uniform

These letters are available from the office. An additional photocopy should be given to the office to put in the pupil’s record file.

### **E-mail**

The school has a text messaging and email system it uses to communicate to parents, on a fortnightly basis for the newsletter or to update parents with regards to return times for visits.

Any communication that needs to be sent to parents using these systems must be approved by the Headteacher.

A hard copy of any e-mail received by any member of staff from a parent should be filed and a copy stored in the school office. The same applies to all internal email transmissions concerning pupil matters.

## **Telephone Calls**

The telephone should always be answered professionally using “Good morning/afternoon, Lawley Primary School how can I help you?”

Admin staff **must not** interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call, but take a message.

Staff should always tell a member of SLT if a parent contacts them, so that they can be supported, especially if the phone call relates to a complaint.

## **Social Networking Sites, Blogs etc**

Staff **must not** communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites (such as Facebook) or accept them as their “friends”. The exception to this rule would be when school has established their Class Blog, for the purpose of teaching and learning.

Staff must also be aware of the impression that is given to others when they use social networking sites, particularly when absent from school due to illness.

**The Social Media/Acceptable Usage Policy should be adhered to at all times.**

## **Written Reports**

Once a year we provide a full written report to each child’s parent or carer on their progress in each subject. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. Pupils are also given the opportunity to comment on their own progress and parents are invited to make a similar comment.

During the autumn and spring terms, parents’ evenings are held when teachers share the child’s targets for the next term. There may be written contributions from the class teacher, child and parent at these events.

In addition, when children have special educational needs, or if they are making less than the expected progress, we find it helpful to meet with parents more regularly. We will also make any 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 a communication.

## **School Prospectus**

The school prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents a full picture of provision at our school.

## **School Website and Facebook Page**

The school’s website and Facebook page provide information about the school and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience.

## **Fortnightly Newsletter**

A school newsletter is sent to parents every other Thursday, however it is sent for approval to the Headteacher the Monday before so any items to be added must be sent in the week prior to it being emailed. It contains general details of school events and activities, along with learning achievements. Parents expect the newsletter, and appreciate the regularity of the contact. As with all other letters sent out from Lawley Primary School, the Newsletter must be read and authorised by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

We send other letters of a general nature when necessary and store copies on the school’s website and in the main office.

## Reading Diary and Homework Book

Children in all classes have a reading diary and all KS2 classes have a homework book. This enables parents to record a wide range of information that they wish to share regularly with the teacher. Teachers use the reading diary and homework book to record homework activities and as a regular channel for communication with parents.

## Regular Meetings with Parents and Carers

We arrange various meetings for parents throughout the year. Meetings are held prior to any residential trip to inform parents of planning, content and arrangements. A meeting for new parents is organised each June/July.

## Communication with other schools and outside agencies

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 have been 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.

Prior to pupils joining Reception, they are invited to visit the school to enable us to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to Lawley Primary. All in-year applications for transition to Lawley Primary School result in a meeting with parents and child prior to the child starting at the school.

We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed about ways in which these needs may be met in order to help children to participate fully. Support comes from medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), from Educational Psychologists, LSAT, from health professionals and specialists. It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as the Attendance Support Team, Social Services and Child Protection Units. This is all co-ordinated by Family Connect within Telford and Wrekin.

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. Our daily contact with children means that we are in a unique position to identify and help children who may be suffering from any form of abuse.

When any member of staff has any concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the **Designated Persons for Child Protection, Carol McQuiggin, Su Jones or Maria Hayward**, who may share this information with the Social Services. All information shared by staff should be recorded on a pupil concern form, signed and dated and handed to one of the Designated Persons.

**Delay in reporting and recording concerns is unacceptable.**

### **Headteacher Statement**

**The Headteacher of Lawley Primary has agreed the Communications Policy. This is in line with the curriculum aims recommended by the Local Authority, which were adapted and adopted by the Governors of this school.**

**Headteachers signature .....**

**Date 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016**

**(Review date – November 2017)**