Fairhaven C of E VA Primary School

Communications Policy

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Date Agreed by staff:	**29th April 2024**
Date for Review:	**Summer 2026**

Signed R Whiles **Date** 9th May 24
Chair of Governors

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Vision Statement

Our Christian school community strives to provide a variety of learning experiences for all our young people. We are here to nurture the gifts God gives us and to celebrate our differences. We encourage our pupils to explore their interests, find their talents, flourish and live life to the full. We want our children to live great lives and ultimately make a difference in the world.

Belief – Friendship – Diversity – Achieve

At Fairhaven we want everyone to be the very best they can.

Statement of Intent

At Fairhaven C of E VA Primary School, we strive to ensure that communication between members of the school community is clear, professional, timely and effective. We are committed to being open and accessible for all those who have an interest in the school. These people will include; parents/carers, grandparents, pupils, governors, members of staff, and people from the wider community.

We recognise that parents and carers play a vital role in their child's education and, therefore, we want to create positive ways in which channels of communication between home and school can operate. Children who observe mutually respectful home-school partnerships are likely to develop positive attitudes towards school life.

The definition of communication

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It involves:

• respectful listening.

• the management of relationships and appropriate involvement of people.

• an awareness of attitude and behaviour as well as the clarity of the message.

• timely, effective action if required.

Aims of Policy

The school's aims are to:

- Have a clear and professional communication strategy in place which helps to keep all stakeholders informed about the life of the school.

- Ensure that parents / carers are informed about their child's educational progress and any other matters relating to their child's overall wellbeing.
- Ensure parents/carers are fully aware of the ways they can contact school. And that the school is in possession of the current contact details for all parents/carers.
- Constantly endeavour to improve the quality of service by making sure there is a rigorous process in place for consultation between the school, parents/carers, staff members and pupils.
- Monitor and evaluate communication issues through regular discussions with staff, parents/carers and members of the school community.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2002.
- Data Protection Act 1998.
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000.

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the following school policies:

- EYFS Policy
- Assessment for Learning Policy (AfL)
- Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- GDPR Policy
- Home – School Agreement
- Internet Safety Policy
- Marking and Feedback Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Social Media Policy
- SEND Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Roles and responsibilities

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Placing key policies, documents and procedures in areas that are accessible and useful to the entire school community (e.g. the school website).
- Keeping parent/carers informed about the life of the school via letters and the school's newsletter.
- Providing all interested parties with essential information within appropriate timelines.
- Keeping parents/carers informed of the progress of their child at regular intervals.
- Informing parents/carers about the types of data that the school holds concerning pupils, why that data is held and, where necessary, who it may be shared with.
- Ensuring that parents/carers understand their right to view the information about their child which is held by the school.
- Ensuring that information regarding staff pay and service conditions is made available to all employees at the school.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Ensuring the principles and procedures of this policy are followed.
- Communicating the curriculum clearly to parents/carers, through termly overview plans.
- Ensuring that pupils are given appropriate feedback so they are aware of their targets, progress and are given time to act on feedback in accordance with our Marking and Feedback Policy.
- Communicating proactively with parents/carers about pupil progress, and helping parents/carers to support their child's learning.
- Ensuring that SEN Learning Plans are reviewed and updated regularly so that these can be shared with pupils (when appropriate) and parents/carers.
- Ensuring that relevant information is passed on to supply teachers.
- Updating Pupil Asset data with specific pupil information in accordance with our AfL Policy.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Reading the key communications circulated by the school and responding/acting on communication when necessary, e.g. by attending meetings.
- Using the school website for detailed information about the school calendar, term dates, school events and achievements and other useful downloads.
- Informing the school of medical conditions/allergies, along with medical documentation of these conditions.
- Informing the school of all up-to-date contact information (phone numbers, addresses, etc), including that of emergency contacts.
- Informing the school of child protection matters, legal issues or relevant duties with appropriate documentation.
- Raising any issues or concerns they may have with the class teacher or headteacher, through either a face to face meeting, a telephone call or an email to the teachers' school email. For more information on complaints please see our Complaints Policy.

Internal Communication

- Teachers hold a weekly staff meeting. These meetings are minuted and records kept for future reference.
- Other meetings are held for all members of staff as and when required.
- A diary is kept in the school office for all staff to view which outlines all activities. The weekly schedule is also written on the whiteboard in the staffroom.
- All staff members are given a copy of the school's Code of Conduct Policy, which details a variety of school procedures.
- Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff or external agencies without their consent.
- All members of staff will have their own school email account and these will be used for all school related communication.
- Emails will not be used as a substitute for face-to-face communication. Staff members will consider the best way to communicate according to each individual situation.
- Staff members will not engage in personal correspondence with pupils.

Communication Channels with Parents / Carers

There are a number of channels for communication with parents.

1. **Face to Face**

Our preferred method of communication is face to face. We value the input parents/carers make to the school and promote an 'Open Door' policy and encourage open communication, feedback and discussion. Class teachers will be available to briefly discuss any concerns with parents/carers at the end of, each school day; appointments can be made to discuss anything at more length at a mutually agreeable time. The headteacher holds an informal Coffee and Chat session each half term. This is an opportunity for parents/carers to discuss school related issues.

2. **Telephone Calls**

If face to face meetings are not possible, teachers are able to telephone parents between 3.30 and 5.30 pm.

3. **Written Communication Letters and Emails Home**

- Written communications are delivered via letter or by email. All information about school events are communicated in writing. In Key Stage 2, pupils may be given letters by hand and asked to place in their book bags to take home. In Key Stage 1, members of staff will put hand delivered letters into the individual children's book bags.
- Email and internet access will be used in line with the school's Internet Safety Policy.
- Emails will not be used as a substitute for face-to-face communication. Staff members will consider the best way to communicate according to each individual situation.
- Staff members will not engage in personal correspondence with pupils.
- Written pupil reports are sent home at the end of each academic year.

4. **School website**

The contents of the website will complement the vision of the school, as well as contain information about the most recent activities and successes of the school, including progress,

priorities and performance. The school website will be utilised to communicate information regarding the following:

- After school clubs
- Local SEN Offer
- Ofsted and SIAMS reports
- Policy Sharing
- Pupil safety
- School hours
- School uniform
- Term dates
- The school calendar

The school website will be updated as and when necessary.

5. **Social Media and Newsletter**

- Information about upcoming school events are posted onto the school's Facebook pages and included in the school's newsletter.
- Reports about events and the work classes have completed are also shared through these outlets.
- Staff members will not communicate with parents/carers or pupils via social networking sites, or accept 'friend' requests, except in the case of pages set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning, in accordance with the Social Media Policy.

6. **Parent/Carer – Teacher Consultations**

- Parent – Teacher will be held during the autumn and spring term. These will be held face-to-face if possible. Alternative arrangements may involve a telephone call or a virtual meeting.

How should parents contact the school?

General Enquiries

- Telephone

For general enquiries, parents/carers are required to telephone ring the school office on

01603 – 270224. Calls are answered Monday to Friday between 9am and 3.30pm, at other times there is an opportunity to leave a message. A member of staff will aim to return the call the following day.

- Email

For general enquiries, parents/carers can email the school using the office email address: office@ southwalshamfairhaven.norfolk.sch.uk
We aim to respond to emails as quickly as possible, normally within 24 hours.

For specific class related enquiries parents/carers should contact the class or subject teacher via the class email.

- sycamoreclass@southwalshamfairhaven.norfolk.sch.uk
- chestnutclass@southwalshamfairhaven.norfolk.sch.uk
- beechclass@southwalshamfairhaven.norfolk.sch.uk
- oakclass@southwalshamfairhaven.norfolk.sch.uk

All messages will receive the following automated immediate response.

Thank you for your message. Emails will be monitored Monday - Friday between 8 am -5pm. We aim to respond within 48 hours. Please telephone 01603 - 270224 or email office@southwalshamfairhaven.norfolk.sch.uk if you require an urgent response during teaching hours.

Thank you for your patience.
Kind regards,
(Name of Class teacher)

- Communication between pupils and parents/carers with staff members will be carried out via the school email address, via Pupil Asset, and not via staff members' personal email addresses.
- Chain emails will not be allowed.
- The sending of attachments will be limited to official school documents.
- Under no circumstances will adverts be embedded into emails.

Communication about Classwork and Homework

- At the beginning of each year the class teacher holds an information meeting for parents/carers sent out via email and Google Classroom. These will include details about class topics and homework expectations.
- A homework timetable is also uploaded onto Google Classroom.

Continuous Home-School Communication

- All children have a home-school reading diary which can be utilised by parents/carers to record a wide range of information that they wish to share regularly with the class teacher.
- The school regularly updates parents/carers of ways in which they can support pupils' development and progress through activities to be completed at home.

Communication in the event of Pupil Absence

- If a child is absent from school, and the school has no indication of the reason for the absence, the school will contact a parent/carer via telephone on the first day of absence, in order to find out the reason for the absence.
- If there are further days of absence and no communication with the parent/carer has been established, the school will contact all emergency contacts that the parent/carer has provided in order to find out the reason for the absence. If communication is made with an emergency contact, school will inform them that the parent/carer should contact school as soon as possible.
- If no contact can be made with any named parent/carer for five days, the school has the right to contact the Education Welfare Officer to ensure the wellbeing and safety of the pupil.

Communication with parents / carers in the event of inappropriate behaviour

- If a pupil has behaved inappropriately during the school day, the pupil's class teacher will inform parents informally at the end of the school day.
- Should there be a repeat of the behaviour or if a the behaviour has resulted in a significant physical or emotional harm to another pupil or member of staff a Record of Behaviour should be completed and a formal meeting held with parents/carers to inform them of the incident and clarify the consequences being put into place

- A behaviour plan, to address the pupil's behaviour should be agreed with the parents/carers. This should be monitored carefully by the class teacher and reviewed regularly with the parents. The behaviour plan can include the use of positive praise books and visual time out cards.
  For further details, please see the school's Behaviour Policy.

Formal Meetings with Parents/Carers

- All formal meetings will be minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda.
- For all formal meetings, notes will be taken, action points progressed and feedback given to staff members.
  Minutes of meetings will be copied to relevant staff members, as well as the headteacher, and a copy will be saved on In the headteacher's behaviour file. Key information will be shared with school governors via the headteacher's report to governors.

Emergency Communication

- All parents/carers will ensure that the school has their latest contact details, including but not limited to their address, telephone number and email address, so that they can be contacted in the event of an emergency.
- If a pupil is seriously ill or injured, the school will attempt to contact the pupil's parents/carers via telephone.
- Where an incident affects the whole school community, such as power failure, the school will post a message through Pupils Asset. School will also contact key parents by phone who will post the message on social media to inform other parents of the incident quickly. If there is opportunity to let the parents/carers know in advance, a letter will be sent home via the pupils.
- If the school is closed due to adverse weather or a similar problem, updates will be posted via Pupil Asset and our Facebook page at least once a day.
- The local radio stations will broadcast a closure announcement in the event of the school closing due to adverse weather or another emergency situation, in accordance with the Adverse Weather Policy.

Accessing Information

In accordance with section 7 of the Data Protection Act 1998, personal information, such as educational records, can be shared via a subject access request (SAR).

- These requests must be made in writing to the governing body and will be responded to within 15 school days if the request is regarding an educational record.
- If the data being requested is not in relation to an educational record, the response will be within 40 calendar days.
- Some types of personal data are exempt from the right of a SAR and so cannot be obtained by making a SAR. Information may be exempt because of its nature or because of the effect its disclosure is likely to have.
- Information regarding another individual will not be disclosed in a SAR.
- Individual requests for non-personal information cannot be treated as a SAR but will be dealt with either as a request under the Data Protection Act 1998 or as a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

In line with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, private data and public records can potentially be accessed through lodging a freedom of information (FoI) request.

- These requests will be made in writing to the school, stating the name and address of the requester, as well as a description of the information requested.
- Successful FoI requests will be responded to within 20 working days from receipt of the request, unless the request does not comply with the procedure set out in the school's Freedom of Information Policy.
- Certain information will not be shared, such as that explained in Part 2 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Monitoring and review

- The efficiency of this policy will be continuously monitored throughout the year by the headteacher and governing body.
- This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the governing body.