

# Barkisland CE (VA) Primary School

## Communications Policy



Barkisland CE (VA) Primary School recognises the importance of maintaining lines of communication with parents and carers, with other schools, with the community, with outside agencies, and within the school. Good communication between all these groups is essential, and Barkisland Primary School is committed to being accessible and open to all who have an interest in the school.

Children achieve more when everyone works together. Parents, carers, governors and friends of the school can naturally help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve. Effective communication will improve relationships within the school and promote partnerships with parents and the wider community.

This policy addresses the main ways in which the school ensures effective, consistent and coherent external and internal communication.

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

### **Home-school communication**

#### **School Prospectus**

The school prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents/carers a full picture of provision at our school and is available on the school website.

#### **Home-school agreement**

A home-school agreement 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 parents/carers to sign and adhere to this agreement annually.

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

#### **Annual written report to parents/carers: children's achievements**

Every year we provide a written report to each child's parents/carers on the child's progress in the various National Curriculum subjects. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. In our school we ask the children to complete a report about their own learning and attitudes, and we invite parents/carers to make a comment on their child's report. Teachers are asked to report their 'Teacher Assessed Levels of Attainment' in all subjects using the terminology, emerging, expected, exceeding as well as awarding grades for effort. We also give in Year 6 the details of their attainment in the national tests.

As well as receiving the annual written report, parents/carers are provided with the opportunity to meet their child's teacher each term for a private parent-teacher consultation. This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child's successes, and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for improvement. Parents/carers are able to see their child's work during these meetings and given a copy of their child's target cards for Reading, Writing and Maths. We encourage

parents/carers to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being at any time throughout the academic year.

When children have special educational needs, or if they are making less than the expected progress, we find it helpful to meet with parents/carers more regularly. A child, whose progress is causing concern, or a child who has identified Special Educational Needs (SEND) will be reviewed and supported in line with the 'SEND Code of Practice' and within school policy, protocol and procedures. Parents/carers will be kept informed of all monitoring outcomes and educational provision made. **(Ref. SEND Policy)**

### Other forms of communication

As a school, we operate a wide and varied system of communication with our parents/carers. This includes, but is not limited to: telephone calls, emails, letters, notes and face-to-face appointments.

Effective telephone communication can sometimes be challenging in a school, where teachers may be teaching full time and running clubs or otherwise working with students at lunchtime or after school. Parents/carers 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. **The following response times are usually adhered to:**

Communication from parents	Usual acknowledgement time
Phone Calls	1 working day
Email	3 working days
Written Letter	3 working days

### Email

The school will take all reasonable steps to respond to any emails directed to staff via the school's email account which is [admin@barkisland.calderdale.sch.uk](mailto:admin@barkisland.calderdale.sch.uk) and these will be dealt with between the hours of 8.30am and 5pm. Any email received beyond those times will not be seen until the next working day and responded to as above. This admin email is the only email account which parents/carers are able to use to contact staff members. **Emails to individual members of staff will not be responded to.** If the message is intended for a particular member of staff, parents/carers need to make this clear within the subject field e.g. F.A.O. Mrs Smith, and this will be forwarded to the relevant person. Any correspondence to the school is always treated confidentially.

If a parent/carer wishes to make a complaint, then the school's complaint procedure policy should be referred to. This is available from school and is also on the school's website.

We send a newsletter to parents/carers (hardcopy or electronic) every week throughout the term. It contains general details of school events and activities and is available on the school website.

Parents/carers expect the newsletter, and appreciate the regularity of the contact. We send other letters of a general nature when necessary, such as:

- Progress Meetings
- Letters re. out-of-school visits – payments, confirmation and approval
- Invitations to SEND Meetings, School Performances, Sporting Events...
- Letters regarding curriculum enrichment activities – music, sport, Modern Foreign Languages etc
- Information about assemblies

At the beginning of each term all teachers write to the parents/carers of the children in their classes with details of the work to be covered during the forthcoming term. We invite parents/carers to support their child's work through discussion and shared interest. We also invite parents/carers to take part in any educational visit that is linked to the work, recognising their valuable contribution to our curriculum enrichment activities.

The school encourages parents/carers to share any issues about their child at the earliest opportunity. In the first instance it is always advisable to speak to the class teacher about any issues surrounding their child. We provide the opportunity for many parents/carers to have a word with the teacher when they bring their children to school, or when they collect them after school; we find that this 'immediacy' and 'availability' enhances the home-school communication. Where this is not possible, parents/carers are able to contact the school to make an appointment.

We arrange 'Curriculum Meetings' for parents/carers. These are mainly evening meetings to explain areas of our curriculum as requested by parents/carers through either verbal feedback or through parent/carer questionnaires. The content of these will vary from year to year.

If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, we follow our first day calling procedures to make contact with a parent/carer to ascertain a reason for the absence.

Consultation and Communication Questionnaires will be issued each year. These may take the form of an online electronic response or a hard copy form. This information is very important to us to continually improve the services which we offer.

### **Parent/Carer Access**

We welcome the presence of any other adult the parent/carer wishes to invite to a school meeting such as an interpreter, support or liaison e.g. Parent Support Services. 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, for example braille, larger font, documents printed on coloured paper.

### **Electronic communication**

We use email ([admin@barkisland.calderdale.sch.uk](mailto:admin@barkisland.calderdale.sch.uk)) and text to communicate electronically with our parents/carers.

Our school website. ([www.barkislandcofeschool.org.uk](http://www.barkislandcofeschool.org.uk)) provides information about the school, and an opportunity to celebrate the 'life of our school' with the worldwide learning community.

The school uses Twitter as a form of communication to share and celebrate daily life of the children in and surrounding school.

### **Communication with other schools and outside agencies**

Toward the end of their final term in Year 6, we pass on information about the children to their 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 (e.g library monitor, sports team captain, school council representative, playground friend, etc). There is also a statutory electronic transfer of further information about the child. We may also send on several items of work. We also arrange visits for named children to attend 'welcome sessions' in addition to those arranged for Y6 as a whole.

We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we work closely with various agencies and groups of professionals who support us to meet these needs. Support comes from medical services (such as

speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy), from child development centres, from local and LA doctors and specialists, and from school nurses. It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as Education Welfare, Social Services and Behaviour Intervention units. If a child needs additional support, parents'/carers' consent is always sought.

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. We are the people most in contact with our children, and we are therefore in a unique position to identify and help abused children. So when any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the Headteacher, who may share this information with the Social Services, preferably with parental/carers consent.

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/carers 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 2018. Parents have a right to view the information we hold on request, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

### **Public access documents**

The school makes a range of documentation available to parents/carers. We keep a main set in the school office and we make a copy of this available on request. It contains minutes of governors' meetings, and all school policies, including those that the governing body are required to draw up in relation to the following matters: **Charging and Remissions, Sex Education, Health and Safety, Curriculum Policies, Performance Management, Admissions, and Action Planning following an inspection.** It also contains a range of national and Local Authority documentation. Many policies are now available on the school website for parent access. If parents/carers require a paper copy of any documents, there may be a charge to cover printing costs.

### **Monitoring & Evaluation**

This policy will be monitored by the Headteacher.

**Policy was written on: September 2017**

**Policy approved by Governors: November 2018**

**Policy to be reviewed annually: First review by S Wilde November 2018**