



# Burgh by Sands School

## Home-school communication policy

### 2024/2025

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## 1. Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

### 2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

### 2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's Online-Safety and internet acceptable use policy
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication within 48 hours of receiving communications during core school hours, or their working hours (if they work part-time).

In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so.

## 2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school

Parents should allow up to 48 hours for staff members to respond. They should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours, or their working hours if they are part-time, or during school holidays.

## 3. How we communicate with parents and carers

The sections below explain how we keep parents up to date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

Parents should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

Staff should follow safeguarding policy in only communicating with parents via school email addresses and only using school devices for texts and phone calls, wherever possible.

### 3.1 Email

We use email to keep parents informed about the following things:

- General information sharing
- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Consent forms/permissions

### 3.2 Text messages

We will text parents about:

- A recently sent email
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- General information sharing

### **3.3 Phone calls**

Whilst email is preferable, telephone calls are one appropriate way to notify us that your child will be absent from school.. Please telephone us to communicate brief information about your child that the school needs to know in an emergency, e.g. to let us know that you will be late collecting your child. We ask parents to telephone the school on 01228 576397. The school office is open between 8.30am and 3.00pm, Monday - Friday during term-time. At all other times there is an answering service available to take your message. If the call requires a response, we aim to do this within 3 working days during term-time.

### **3.4 Letters**

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms

Printed copies of letters can be done by request through the main office.

### **3.5 Reports**

Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- A report on Key Stage (KS) 1 and KS2 SATs tests

We also arrange regular meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

### **3.6 Meetings**

We hold two parents' evening(s) per year. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

### **3.7 School website**

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information

- Information about before and after-school provision

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

### **3.8 Social Media/Newsletters**

- General information sharing
- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Safeguarding advice and updates

## **4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school**

Parents should use the list in appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and email address.

### **4.1 Email**

Parents should always email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance. If a query or concern is urgent, and you need a response sooner than this, please call the school.

Please send all emails to: [office@burgh-by-sands.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:office@burgh-by-sands.cumbria.sch.uk)

We aim to acknowledge all emails within two working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within two working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school.

### **4.2 Phone calls**

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact them within two working days.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within five days of your request.

If the issue is urgent, parents should call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

### **4.3 Meetings**

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the school office ([office@burgh-by-sands.cumbria.sch.uk](mailto:office@burgh-by-sands.cumbria.sch.uk)) or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within five working days of the request.

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if parents need to speak to them urgently, we recommend they book appointments to discuss:

- Any concerns they have about their child's learning
- Updates related to pastoral support, their child's home environment, or their wellbeing

### **5. Inclusion**

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school. As a school, we work with each family in establishing a preferred method of communication, be this email, text, phone call or arranging face-to-face communication.

### **6. Social Networking Sites**

Staff will not communicate with parents via social networking sites (such as Facebook) and we kindly request that staff are not requested as 'friends'. All queries regarding school should be sent using the methods outlined in this policy.

### **7. Mobile Phones**

#### **Pupils**

Pupils should not bring mobile phones or wearable technologies to school. Any exceptions must be discussed with and approved by the Headteacher.

#### **Parents/carers**

Use of mobile phones on the school site should be courteous and appropriate to the school environment. Parents are welcome to photograph or film school events such as shows or sports day, but images that include children other than their own should not be published (eg. on social networking sites) without the permission of parents/carers of other children.

Parents are required to turn mobile phones off when volunteering in classrooms or visiting Burgh by Sands School. Under no circumstances is mobile phone use permitted when helping with swimming lessons.

Making voice recordings on a mobile phone or other device during meetings or discussions with staff or governors is not permitted.

## **8. Monitoring and review**

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every three years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

The policy should be read alongside our complaints and online safety policy and ICT acceptable user agreement.