



## **Milton Road Primary School**

### **Communications Policy**

At Milton Road Primary School, we believe that clear and effective communication plays an integral part in ensuring the smooth running of the school, for the benefit of the whole school community. The aim of this policy is to foster good communications between all stakeholders and the school.

#### **Objectives**

We believe that at Milton Road Primary School all communications should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents, governors and other stakeholders well informed.
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional.
- Be actioned within a reasonable time.
- Use the methods of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.
- Take account of relevant school policies.
- Be compatible with our core values.

#### **Responsibilities**

##### **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**

- To ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels; where practicable and appropriate, information should be shared face to face.
- To ensure that staff have the relevant information available to communicate with colleagues effectively.
- To maintain open channels of two-way communication and to listen to feedback and comment from all staff.
- To keep governors informed of developments and concerns.

##### **All staff**

- To communicate regularly with each other, preferably face to face, to ensure information is available and understood within the context of the classroom and the working environment.

- To ensure they are informed and have access to information in order to be as effective as possible in their role and to support their work within the school.
- To use open channels of two-way communication to keep the leadership team and colleagues informed.

## **Governors**

- To ensure the use of trusted online spaces when communicating between governors or with the school.
- To use a variety of appropriate communication methods to promote and explain the work of
  - the governors
- To ensure the timely posting of minutes of meetings on the school website

## **Internal methods of communication**

At Milton Road Primary School, we have a number of ways of communicating between staff and there are clear expectations with regard to how these should be used.

- An integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff both formal and informal: e.g. teachers' meetings; teaching assistant meetings; Office staff meetings; Key Stage meetings; whole staff meetings; INSET days.
- All formal meetings should be structured and minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda.
- Whilst E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating information, at Milton Road Primary school we believe it should not replace face to face meetings where careful discussion is required.
- Written communications should be placed in pigeon holes, in the staffroom, which staff must check daily and clear regularly.
- Staff meetings take place every week and the minutes are circulated via email.
- SLT meetings take place every week.
- TA meetings take place at last half-termly.
- Key Stage meetings are held informally or formally, as required.
- Full Governing Body meeting minutes are presented on the school's website ▪ Weekly briefing notes are e-mailed out to staff and placed on the noticeboard in the ▪ staffroom.
- The whiteboard in the staffroom is used for day to day notices.
- Reminders or letters to individual parents are sent to classes to be given out by the class teachers and must be given to children the same day.
- Every class must have a system for distributing letters and other materials to go home with the children.

## **External methods of communication**

As a school, we have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers; other schools; the community and with outside agencies. Our aim is to have clear and effective communications with all parents and the wider community. We believe that effective communication enables 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 school. Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end parents should always be addressed in an appropriate manner. Teaching staff will not accept friendship requests from parents on social media. At Milton Road Primary School, we will try to make written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of discrimination in any of our communications.

### **Communication with Parents/Carers**

As a school, we welcome contact with parents/carers because we believe this fosters mutual understanding and support which has a positive effect on children's performance and their attitudes to learning. At Milton Road Primary School we want to ensure that parents/carers always have an appropriate and helpful response to their communications. However, unlike some businesses and other occupations, we are mindful of the fact that the professional duties of staff can make it difficult for them to speak or meet with parents/carers during the school day. Due to teaching commitments, staff will typically be unavailable between 8.50 am and 3.25 pm each day. There are also other times outside these hours when staff attend meetings and may therefore also be unavailable. We are aware, therefore, that the important business of working with and responding to parents/carers must be managed within this context.

Teachers welcome brief messages from parents/carers when they are collecting or bringing in their children from the playground.

### **Principles for responding to parents/carers**

In order to achieve the most effective balance for children, parents/carers and teachers, we are guided by the following principles:

As a school we:

- Welcome contact from parents/carers;
- Respond as quickly and fully as possible to parents/carers;
- Involve parents/carers in our work with children;
- We share relevant information as often and as fully as possible with parents/carers.

When correspondence is made to an individual parent/carer on an important matter, the letter will be sent by Parentmail, post or handed directly to the parent/carer to ensure confidentiality and security. On some occasions it may be appropriate for the school to contact parents/carers by email. For day to day or routine matters correspondence will be sent via Parentmail. The school will refer breaches of the communications code to the Chair of Governors.

### **Guidelines on responding to parents/carers**

As a school we believe that it is helpful for parents/carers to know how they can expect their telephone calls, letters, emails and requests for meetings with the school to be dealt with. The following guidelines show how we aim to respond to parents/carers.

### **Telephone Calls**

**Messages:** All telephone calls are received through the main office. A message will be taken and sent to the relevant person as soon as possible. Office staff will normally take details of the caller's name and telephone number and purpose in calling. The person concerned will try to respond as

soon as possible and by the end of their next working school day if possible. It must be noted that there are a number of the teaching staff at Milton Road Primary School who work part-time, as such, they will only be available to respond upon their return to work. The school's telephone number is 01223 712333.

**Urgent calls:** The call will be put through to the most appropriate or available senior member of staff if possible or a message will be taken.

**Messages for pupils:** Messages for children will be taken by a member of the office staff and passed on as soon as possible.

**Busy times:** Whilst every effort is made to answer telephone calls, there are inevitably very busy times in the office, typically at the start and end of the school day. If calls are not answered the school has an answerphone facility where messages may be left. This is checked regularly and if a message is left it will be passed on to the appropriate person.

**Telephone calls made at arranged times:** If teachers have arranged with parents/carers for them to receive calls at particular times of the school day, those teachers will try to ensure that they are available. Should other commitments or events make this impossible, a staff member will take a message and the person concerned will try to call back the same day.

### **Letters and emails**

All correspondence should be directed to the school office. In the case of emails, if the correspondence is for a particular member of staff, this should be indicated in the subject title.

At Milton Road Primary school, we will always try to acknowledge letters and emails received from parents/carers within five working days during term time.

The school email is [office@miltonroad.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:office@miltonroad.cambs.sch.uk)

The postal address is: Milton Road Primary School, Ascham Road, Cambridge, CB4 2BD

If more time is required to provide a fuller response or to arrange a meeting, staff will try to include in the acknowledgement details of when these will happen.

### **Complaints**

We believe that most issues can be resolved quickly and informally, usually by speaking to the class teacher. If, following this, a concern is ongoing or remains unresolved then parents can speak to a member of the senior leadership team. If a resolution can still not be found, then parents/carers can access the school's complaint policy; this can be found on the school web-site, but is also available, on request, from the school office. The policy sets out the process of how to make a complaint and also explains how the school will respond.

### **Meetings**

Where situations are more complex, a face-to-face meeting may be preferable to a letter or phone call. On such occasions, this will be arranged at the earliest convenience for parents/carers and staff.

### **Meetings with the class teachers**

Understandably, we believe that the class teacher should be, in most circumstances, the first point of contact for any concerns about a child. Given their teaching commitments, teachers are inevitably busy during the school day, but mutually agreed appointments can be made through the office, for parents/carers to meet with teachers.

Depending on the nature of the situation, a meeting may include:

- senior members of staff: Inclusion Coordinator/ SENCO; Deputy Headteacher; Headteacher
- Education welfare Officer
- Other agencies e.g. Locality Team, School Nurse, Health worker

A record of the meeting may be kept and notes shared with all parties, where appropriate. Parents/carers will only be invited to discuss their own children. Staff will not talk about other children in front of other parents/carers. All meetings and discussions are confidential between the staff involved and the parents/carers, and parties should not divulge information to others without the agreement of parents/carers and the school. Parents/carers are not permitted to make electronic recordings of meetings.

**E- Mails** The school has a system of sending all standard forms of communication home to parents/carers who have requested it via Parentmail unless otherwise requested. Parents/carers must ensure that the school office is informed of any changes to email addresses.

**Website** The school seeks to put as much information as possible on its website. Most general information that parents/carers would seek can be readily found at: [www.miltonroadschool.org.uk](http://www.miltonroadschool.org.uk)

Parents/carers are encouraged look at the website on a regular basis.

**Facebook** The school seeks to use social media e.g. Facebook to inform parents/carers of the following:

- School events i.e. sports days
- Reminders of dates i.e. educational visits
- Vacancies at the school

This is to have a broad range of communication tools to reach all parents/carers who may not read or have access to emails/newsletters/website. The school follows the following social networking policy;

## **Social Networking Policy**

### **Rationale**

The widespread availability and use of social media applications brings opportunities to engage, and communicate in new ways. As an inclusive school we want to ensure that our means of communication reach everyone in our desired audience of parents/carers. We recognise that some parents/carers will read the weekly newsletter regularly; others may appreciate the immediacy and familiarity of Facebook.

It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our duties to our school, the community, our legal responsibilities and our reputation.

For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for how we communicate with parents/carers as well as our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice. They apply to all members of staff at the school and have relevance for parents/carers and our wider community.

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Ensure that parents/carers receive useful information in a variety of ways including social media
- Safeguard all children
- Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff and governors is protected
- Protect the school from legal risks
- Ensure that any users are able clearly to distinguish where information provided via social media is legitimately representative of the school

### **Definitions and Scope**

Milton Road Primary School's use of social networking applications is limited to Facebook at this time.

All members of our community should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation.

They must also operate in line with the school's Equalities, Child Protection and ICT Acceptable Use Policies.

Within this policy there is a distinction between use of school-sanctioned social media for professional educational purposes and personal use of social media:

Use of Social Media in practice

#### **1. School Use of Social Media for Communication with Parents/Carers and wider community**

When using social media for communication purposes, the following practices must be observed:

- The school has set up a distinct and dedicated social media site for educational and communication purposes. This is entirely separate from any personal social media accounts held by that member of staff, and will be linked to an official school email account / website.
- The content of our Facebook page will be solely professional relating to the life of the school.
- The school will not publish photographs of children without the written consent of parents / carers.
- The school will not identify by name any children featured in photographs, or allow personally identifying information to be published on school social media accounts
- Care will be taken that any links to external sites from the account are appropriate and safe
- Comments have been switched off, and if parents/carers want to contact the school they can do it by phone or email

#### **2. Personal use of Social Media**

- School staff are not permitted to invite, accept or engage in communications with parents or children from the school community in any personal social media whilst in employment at Milton Road Primary School. Any exceptions due to family connections etc. must be approved by the Head teacher
- Any communication received from children on any personal social media sites must be reported to the designated lead person for Child Protection (Nina Burton – Deputy Headteacher)

- If any member of staff is aware of any inappropriate communications involving any child in any social media, these must immediately be reported as above
- All email communication between staff and members of the school community on school business must be made from the official school email account or SeeSaw
- Staff should not use personal email accounts or mobile phones to make contact with members of the school community on school business, nor should any such contact be accepted, except in circumstances given prior approval by the Head teacher.
- Staff and parents are advised to avoid posts or comments on social media that refer to specific, individual matters related to the school and members of its community on any social media accounts
- Staff and parents are also advised to consider the reputation of the school in any posts or comments related to the school on any social media accounts
- Staff should not accept any current parent, pupil of any age or ex-pupil of the school under the age of 18 as a friend, follower, subscriber or similar on any personal social media account.

### **GDPR Compliance**

The Facebook page will be provide generic information and will be used to inform parents/carers of

1. Events e.g. school fayre
2. Reminders of e.g. educational visits
3. Any staff vacancies

The Facebook page will not share

1. Any data subject identifiable such as names of staff or children
2. Photographs or videos of staff or children
3. Location data (including e.g. School trips)
4. Any other personal data listed below

The policy is in compliance with [Chapter 2 - Article 9 | UK GDPR \(uk-gdpr.org\)](#) – which recognises that processing of personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.

A Data Protection Impact Assessment has been completed in partnership with the School's Data Protection Officer and is available on request

### **Protocol for Communications**

At Milton Road Primary School we undertake to treat all communications with parents/carers with courtesy; as a school, we expect to receive the same courtesy in return. Where communication is courteous and reasonable both parties will work towards identifying and resolving problems quickly and efficiently. The school reserves the right to take appropriate action if communications are discourteous, unreasonable or threatening or if aggressive behaviour from any party occurs on school premises.

**Agreed:** June 2022

<b>Policy Document</b>	<b>Communications Policy</b>
<b>STATUTORY FOR Maintained Schools</b>	Non-statutory
<b>Lead Member of Staff</b>	Headteacher
<b>Lead Governors (Monitoring)</b>	Chair of Governors
<b>Publication/Revision Date</b>	October 2018
<b>Governor Committee</b>	Teaching and Learning
<b>Committee Approval date</b>	October 2018
<b>Full Governors Ratification Date</b>	October 2018
<b>Review Frequency</b>	Annual
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	October 2019
<b>Publication Date: school website and Staff Information Folder</b>	October 2018
<b>Chair of Governing Body Signature</b>	
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>This Communications Policy supports the school's aims of ensuring that effective communication can play an integral part in ensuring the smooth running of the school, for the benefit of the whole school community.</p> <p>The aim of this policy is to foster good communications between all stakeholders and the school.</p>



<b>Supporting documents</b>	Persistent complaints and Harassment Policy 2018 Expected Behaviour of Parents/Carers Policy 2018 Parent/Carer Protocols 2018
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