

# Bell Farm Primary School Communications Policy



## Contents:

### [Statement of intent](#)

1. [Legal framework](#)
2. [Roles and responsibilities](#)
3. [Internal and external communications](#)
4. [Continuous home-school communication](#)
5. [Email communication](#)
6. [Meetings](#)
7. [Recording meetings](#)
8. [School prospectus](#)
9. [Emergency communication](#)
10. [Accessing information](#)
11. [Monitoring and review](#)

## **Statement of intent**

At Bell Farm Primary School, we understand the importance of the relationship between parents, pupils and the school.

We have a strong inclusive ethos where pupils have positive relationships with staff members and with each other. This policy sets out the aims of the school with regards to internal and external communication, and the responsibilities of the school, its staff members and parents.

The school aims to promote effective communication between pupils, members of staff, parents, stakeholders and all members of the school community. The school's objectives are to:

- Have a clear and professional communication strategy in place which helps to keep parents well-informed about their child's educational progress and any other matters related to their child's overall wellbeing.
- Improve the quality of education by making sure there is a robust process in place for consultation between the school, parents, staff members and pupils on key areas.
- Monitor and evaluate communication issues through regular meetings with staff, parents and members of the school community.

## **1. Legal framework**

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2002
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act 2000

1.2. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Freedom of Information Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Adverse Weather Policy and Guidance
- Staff Handbook
- Staff Behaviour Policy/Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedure

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

2.1. The headteacher is responsible for:

- Placing key policies, documents and procedures in areas that maximise their accessibility and usefulness to the entire school community.
- Communicating the curriculum clearly to parents.
- Informing parents of all school events within appropriate timelines.
- Regularly keeping parents informed of their child's progress.
- Informing parents about the types of data that the school holds concerning pupils, who controls the data, why that data is held and who it may be shared with. This information will be concise, transparent and easily accessible; written in a clear and plain language; and free of charge.
- Ensuring that parents understand their right to access information about their child that is held by the school.
- Ensuring that parents also understand their rights to rectification, to erasure, to restrict processing, to data portability and to object to processing.
- Ensuring that consent obtained from parents, or pupils, regarding the processing of personal data, is freely given, specific, informed and an unambiguous indication of the individual's wishes. Consent cannot be inferred from silence, pre-ticked boxes or inactivity.
- Ensuring that individuals are informed of their rights to withdraw consent and are provided with easy ways to do so.
- Ensuring that information regarding staff pay and conditions of service is made available to all who are employed at the school.
- Taking steps to ensure parents who do not have access to the internet can still access the information that is included on the school website.

2.2. Staff members are responsible for:

- Ensuring the principles and procedures of this policy are followed.
- Communicating proactively with parents about pupil progress and helping parents to support their child's learning.
- Ensuring that relevant information is passed on to supply staff.
- Engaging with all methods of communication.

2.3. Parents are responsible for:

- Reading the key communications circulated by the school and responding and/or acting on communications, e.g. by attending meetings.
- Engaging with verbal communications, so that they understand the information being communicated to them.
- Accessing to the school website or reading the newsletters for detailed information about the school calendar, term dates, exam details, monitoring and assessments, school achievements and other useful downloads.
- Informing the school of medical conditions or allergies their child has, along with medical documentation relating to these conditions.
- 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.

### **3. Internal and external communications**

3.1. A daily email is sent to staff at about 8am with information for the day and upcoming events

3.2. A weekly briefing takes place on a Wednesday at 8.20am. All staff are expected to attend.

3.3. All staff members must read the Staff Handbook, which details a variety of school procedures.

3.4. Written communications to staff members are delivered via pigeonholes or by email. Staff should check emails every day.

3.5. Under no circumstance will staff members' personal details be shared with parents.

3.6. Parents will be contacted through the following methods:

- Letters home
- Text messages
- Phone calls
- The school website
- School newsletters
- Parents meetings
- Eschools
- Zoom meetings
- Social media

- 3.7. Parents will be given the opportunity to sign up to receive newsletters, etc., via email.
- 3.8. For general enquiries, parents are required to ring the school office, which is open from Monday to Friday between 8:30am and 4:30pm, on 01932 224009
- 3.9. For non-urgent enquiries, parents are required to email the school using [info@bell-farm.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:info@bell-farm.surrey.sch.uk)
- 3.10. All emails to the school will specify the member of staff that the query is addressed to.
- 3.11. All emails to the school will be treated as confidential, unless there is a specific reason not to do so.

#### **4. Continuous home-school communication**

- 4.1. Class teachers will write to parents regularly in the curriculum newsletter detailing the work that will be taught.
- 4.2. The school regularly updates parents of ways in which they can support pupils' development and progress through activities to be completed at home.
- 4.3. The school subscribes to an electronic communication system, Tucasi, Schools Cash Office, which is utilised to achieve effective and consistent communication with parents. The school will ensure that:
  - The school office team are able to access and use the messaging system.
  - Parents are asked to provide their consent and details for the use of the system on registration.
  - If any changes are made to the service, or manner in which data is processed on the system, parents are informed
  - Any parents who cannot be contacted via the messaging system are contacted via another method set out in this policy.
- 4.4. Pupils in each class have a reading diary/planner which can be utilised by parents to record information that they wish to share regularly with their teacher.
- 4.5. ESchools, the school's learning platform, is used to record homework assignments and as a regular channel for communication with parents.
- 4.6. Class teachers will be available to discuss pupils' progress and any concerns with parents at the end of each school day.
- 4.7. Members of the senior leadership team and the pastoral officer will be available at school drop off and at the end of each school day for parents to speak to.
- 4.8. In the summer term a meeting will be held by the headteacher for new parents of reception children, prior to their child's entry to the school in September.
- 4.9. If a pupil is absent from school, and the school has no indication of the reason for the absence, the school will contact a parent via text message to find out the reason

for the absence. A telephone call will be made on the third day following an absence if a reason has still not been given. If no contact can be made with any named parent, the school has the right to visit the family home to ensure the pupil's wellbeing and safety.

## **5. Email communication**

- 5.1. All members of staff will have their own email account.
- 5.2. 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.
- 5.3. Staff members will not engage in personal correspondence with pupils.
- 5.4. Communication between pupils and parents with staff members will be carried out via the school email address, and not via staff members' personal email addresses.
- 5.5. Under no circumstances will adverts be embedded into emails.
- 5.6. Parents will only use staff email addresses to contact staff directly.
- 5.7. Parents will be aware that teachers are not in a position to check emails consistently throughout the day.
- 5.8. The school will aim to respond to all email enquiries within five working days. Staff and parents will be made aware that part-time staff may take longer to reply due to the nature of their work schedule.
- 5.9. Staff will not open attachments or click on links if an email looks suspicious in anyway. The actions suggested by Eduthing, marking the email as spam, should be followed and the email should be deleted. If staff are unsure if an email is suspicious they should forward it to Eduthing.

## **6. Meetings**

- 6.1. A programme of all staff meetings will be set out in the school diary.
- 6.2. For all formal meetings, minutes will be taken, action points progressed, and feedback given to staff members.
- 6.3. Meetings will take place virtually via zoom or in person.
- 6.4. When parents wish to organise meetings with members of staff, they will first contact their child's classroom teacher
- 6.5. Parents will be required to organise meetings with members of staff prior to conducting a meeting.
- 6.6. If parents urgently need to have a meeting with a member of staff, they will phone the school office and the office staff will do their best to find a senior member of staff to speak to parents.

- 6.7. Lessons will not be interrupted to accommodate parents needing to speak to a teacher.
- 6.8. For non-urgent meetings between parents and members of staff, the school will aim to meet parents within five working days.
- 6.9. The school will determine the level of urgency in requests for meetings, which will aid in managing multiple demands.

## **7. Recording meetings**

- 7.1. If parents wish to record a virtual and/or face-to-face meeting, they will discuss their intentions beforehand with the school no less than 24 hours before the meeting commences.
- 7.2. Parents and/or other individuals will require the school's permission to record any meetings which take place either face-to-face or virtually.
- 7.3. The school will decide if recording requests are appropriate, in consideration of the meeting's subject matter
- 7.4. The school will accept all recording requests in exceptional circumstances, e.g. if parents are hard of hearing and/or have a memory-related disability.
- 7.5. For virtual meetings and/or face-to-face meetings to be recorded, consent will need to be obtained from all participants.
- 7.6. The final decision to permit any individual and/or parental recording of meetings will reside with the school.
- 7.7. If parents and/or other individuals fail to obtain the school's permission to record before the meeting begins, and insist on recording without permission, the school will be permitted to suspend the meeting.
- 7.8. Any complaints surrounding the school's rejection of a parent's request to record a meeting, or the school's suspension of a meeting due to permission not being granted, will be dealt in line with the school's Complaints Procedure.

## **8. School prospectus**

- 8.1. The prospectus and school website and Eschools will be utilised to communicate information regarding the following:
  - Clubs and activities
  - School hours
  - School uniform
  - Term dates
  - The school calendar
  - Ofsted reports
  - Informal communication between teachers and parents
  - Homework
- 8.2. The school prospectus will be updated by September each year

- 8.3. The content of the prospectus will complement the work of the school, as well as contain information about the most recent activities and successes of the school, including progress, priorities and performance.

## **9. Emergency communication**

- 9.1. All parents will ensure that the school has their latest contact details, including their address, telephone number and email address, so that they can be contacted in the event of an emergency.
- 9.2. If a pupil or staff member is seriously ill or injured, the school will attempt to contact the emergency contact(s) via telephone.
- 9.3. Where an incident affects the whole-school community, such as power failure or snow, the school will send all parents an email or text message directing them to a special message posted onto the school's website.
- 9.4. If the school is closed for more than one day due to adverse weather or similar problem, an update will be posted on the website at least once a day.
- 9.5. The local radio station, BBC Radio Surrey, Radio Jackie and Eagle Radio, 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.
- 9.6. In the event of a serious incident, the school will follow its Lockdown procedures and/or emergency plan

## **10. Accessing information**

- 10.1. In accordance with an individual's right of access under the GDPR, personal information (such as educational records), confirmation of data processing, and other supplementary information will be shared with individuals who request access.
- 10.2. The procedure below will be followed in terms of Subject Access Requests (SARs):
- The requests will be made in writing, either by letter or email to the school office, [info@bell-farm.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:info@bell-farm.surrey.sch.uk), and will be responded to within one month of receipt.
  - The period of compliance may be extended by a further two months where the requests are complex or numerous. If this is the case, individuals will be informed within one month of receipt of the request, with an explanation of why an extension is required.
  - The parent of a pupil, will have the right to access the information that the school holds about the child in question.
  - Individuals have the right to access their personal data free of charge.
  - Where requests are manifestly unfounded or excessive, a reasonable charge for the administrative costs of providing the information will be applied, or the request will be refused.



- If any request is refused, the individual will be informed of their right to complain to the supervisory authority and to a judicial remedy without delay within one month.

10.3. 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.

10.4. The procedure below will be followed in terms of FOI requests:

- The 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.
- The school holds the right to charge the requester a fee, if complying with the request would cost the school an excess of £450.
- Certain information will not be shared, such as that explained in Part 2 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Further details can be found in the school's Data Protection and Freedom of Information Policies.

Policy source: The Schoolbus Website, February 2021

<b>Status of Statutory Policy</b>	<b>Date</b>
Policy authored by Anne Cooper	March 2021
Policy reviewed	June 2022
Agreed by Staff	July 2022
Agreed by Governors	N/A
Next Review (Annually)	June 2023