

Athelstan Primary School

Communications Policy

By signing up to the Department for Education's staff wellbeing charter we are committed to prioritising staff's wellbeing. Therefore, our aim is to develop a long-term strategy to improve all of our staff's wellbeing. As a result, we regularly review all our policies to ensure we drive down any unnecessary workload.

To support Athelstan Primary School in its aim to become a thriving and successful school, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents and carers and with other members of the wider school community. We expect all communication to be clear, professional, timely, courteous and appropriate. Communication includes the use of telephone, letter, email, website, social media, text messages, push notifications, platforms such as Zoom and face-to-face meetings. Our aim is to be as helpful as possible and offer a high level of personal service.

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and recognises that the quality of their communication reflects on the school's reputation.

This policy is available to all interested parties and staff via the school website and is reviewed annually, and as events and legislation requires, by the Headteacher and Governors.

Objectives

All communication at Athelstan Primary School should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents and carers, governors and other stakeholders well informed;
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional;
- Use jargon free, plain English and be easily understood by all;
- Be actioned within a reasonable time;
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience;
- Take account of relevant school policies;
- Be compatible with our core values.

Internal Communication

We use a number of different ways to communicate with all staff within school.

Written Communication

These are either handed to staff personally, emailed or shared via google drive.

Email

Information and notification of initiatives may be communicated through the use of email where appropriate. Email is a quick and effective way of communicating information so all staff should check their school account regularly during non-teaching times. A staff newsletter is emailed to staff every Thursday with details of the week ahead. There is an expectation that staff should not send emails to one another on weekdays after 6pm or before 7.30am, or at any time during the weekend, unless otherwise agreed between themselves.

Google Drive

All school policies are on the Google Drive, accessible to all staff.

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones and/or smart watches should not be used during lessons or when in contact with the children. In exceptional circumstances, such as family illness, the Headteacher may authorise the use of a mobile phone.

Non-intrusive work related mobile phone use is acceptable during PPA or other release time. During trips and off site provision, staff should ensure they can be contacted by mobile phone at all times.

Pupils bringing mobile phones to school do so at their own risk; these are locked away in classrooms throughout the day, but are not signed in and out by a member of staff.

Staff Meetings

Staff meetings are held once a week for Continued Professional Development. Members of the Senior Leadership Team also meet weekly to discuss school priorities and future plans; minutes are taken and these are shared with all staff. There is also a meeting with TLRs every Wednesday morning, prior to the weekly SLT meeting. Members of SLT also meet briefly each Monday and Friday morning before school.

Notice Boards

There are a number of notice boards located in the staffroom, including a staff wellbeing board, where staff can leave positive messages for their colleagues and find further information regarding mental health. A daily blackboard is used each morning in the main corridor with any key information for the day ahead.

Parent/carer notices are displayed in the foyer, together with a range of forms and leaflets. Pupils have a sports noticeboard in the hall to celebrate our pupils taking part in physical activities outside of the school day.

External Communication

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain with parents and carers, other schools, the community and with outside agencies. In our school, we aim to have clear and effective communications, which keep parents and carers well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents and carers play in supporting the school.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents and carers, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. To this end, parents and carers will always be addressed in an appropriate manner, and staff will avoid developing close friendships with parents and carers.

We try to make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the diverse groups represented in our school.

Communication with Parents and Carers

Raising a Query

If a parent or carer wishes to raise a query, they are encouraged to contact the class teacher in the first instance. This may be done verbally, by letter or by emailing the member of staff directly or emailing the office asking for the query to be dealt with. Staff email addresses are available on the 'Contact Us' page of the school website or may be obtained by contacting a member of the school office. We aim to acknowledge any letter or email within one working day and to action it within three working days wherever possible. Please note that emails will not be responded to before 8am or after 6pm in the evening (Monday -Friday) or at any time during the weekend.

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with the class teacher's response then they may ask to speak to the Year Group Leader. Again, this contact may be made verbally, by letter or by email, within the same timeframe as above.

Parents' and Carers' Meetings

Parents and carers are encouraged to speak to their child's teacher at any time regarding any issues or concerns. There are two formal Parents'/Carers' Evenings per year and two 'Open Evenings'.

The first open evening is for parents and carers to discuss with their child's class teacher how their child has settled in and the second is to discuss their child's end of year report, and meet their child's teacher for the following year.

Information Events

These take place throughout the year for different age groups. Examples are as follows:

- Termly Showcases for every year group where parents and carers are invited into school to see what their children have been learning about.
- Meeting and transition mornings for new starters in Reception and for pupils moving from EYFS to Y1
- Year 6 SATs' meetings and a Y1 Phonics Screening Check meeting

Celebration Assemblies

Parents/carers of pupils receiving a golden award are invited to the weekly FS/KS1 or KS2 Celebration Assembly each Monday/Friday. A message is sent to parents/carers the day before the assembly, inviting them to attend.

Electronic Postcards

Teaching staff regularly email postcards to parents/carers to celebrate their children's achievements in school.

Newsletters

A weekly newsletter is sent out to parents and carers every Friday via email, and is also placed on the school website. At the beginning of every half term, Need 2 Knows (N2Ks) are uploaded onto the school website. The N2Ks inform parents/carers about the learning for that term in each subject area. The vast majority of all letters are now emailed rather than being sent home as hard copies. The school also uses Google Forms for a number of purposes, such as surveys and when signing pupils up for an after-school club. Where parents live separately, there is an option for both parents to receive letters but it is the responsibility of the parents to request this at the school office.

Email

Parents and carers may use email to contact a member of staff directly or to email the Office. Teaching staff check emails daily and will aim to respond during working hours in line with the timescales set out early in the 'Raising a Query' section.

School Website and App

The school website provides information about the school and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience. Copies of letters sent to parents and the school calendar are included on the website. The website also has an app, which is used to send messages to parents/carers.

Text Messaging

The school has a text messaging service, but this is only used for emergencies.

Social Media

The school has a Twitter account and an Early Years Instagram account, which are used to celebrate achievements and showcase different events. The school will not routinely respond to queries sent as tweets by parents and carers. Staff will not communicate with parents or pupils via social media (such as Facebook) or accept them as their 'friends'.

Tapestry in FS and Y1

The school uses Tapestry in the Early Years, Y1 (and Y2 for pupils still on the Read Write Inc programme). This is an app that allows parents and teachers to collaboratively share, record and view a child's learning and development journey through observations, photos and videos.

Telephone Calls

Office staff will not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call. They must wait until break time or after school, with the exception of emergencies. Staff will endeavour to call parents or carers back by the end of the day unless there is a meeting.

Reading Record

Each child has a Reading Record, which we encourage parents and carers to write in when they hear their child read at home. These may also be used to write a message to the class teacher, but it is the responsibility of the child to then give their teacher the Reading Record and to alert them to the message.

Written Reports

- At the end of the year, a full written report is given to each child's parents or carers on their attainment in each subject. Parents and carers are invited to an 'Open Evening' once they have received the End of Year Report, if they wish to discuss the content. They are also invited to complete a Google Form with any comments they may wish to make. In Year 6, parents also receive a written statement about their children's results for the end of Key Stage SATs. At the end of Year 1, parents are informed in writing as to whether their child has met the expected standard in the Phonics Screening Check. This is also the case at the end of Year 2, for those pupils who retook the Check, as a result of not meeting the expected standard in the previous year.

Safeguarding Pupils

Athelstan Primary School has a duty to safeguard all pupils and this includes protecting children on the worldwide web. Parents and carers are therefore strongly advised not to place photos of other people's children on social media sites (e.g. Facebook) without the express permission of the parents concerned. Pupils are asked to sign an ICT Acceptable Use Policy every September for the academic year, detailing responsible use of the internet. Pupils are educated on how to be safe online during Computing and RSHE lessons and if there is a dedicated E-safety Week.

Any communication with the school which is deemed to be a safeguarding issue will be dealt with by one of the Safeguarding Team. Please refer to Sheffield's Safeguarding Policy for further details which can be found on the school website.

Complaints Procedure

Please approach the class teacher initially with regard to any complaint. We pride ourselves on dealing with any complaint fairly and promptly. If you wish to take the matter further, please refer to our Complaints Policy which can be found on the school website.

Lisa Watson

Dated: September 2025

Review : September 2027