

SHEEN MOUNT PRIMARY SCHOOL

COMMUNICATIONS POLICY



PURPOSE & OVERSIGHT

The purpose of this Communications Policy is to lay out the guiding principles and way in which Sheen Mount and its representatives will communicate with each other, our children, their parents/carers and all other members of both the wider school and local communities. This recognises the critical role communication plays in the effective running and reputation of the school.

A copy of this policy will be shared on the school website, accessible by all. Responsibility for communications lies with the headmaster/mistress and the Pastoral Committee will provide a monitoring role.

OUR STAKEHOLDERS

1. Children
2. Staff
3. Parents/carers
4. Governors
5. Wider school community – including other local schools and the Borough
6. The local East Sheen community

THE WAY WE COMMUNICATE – OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All communications should be:

- A reflection of the aims and values of the school
- Clear, respectful and professional
- Open and honest
- Timely and proactive
- Accessible and two-way
- Appropriate - using the method most suitable to the context, message and stakeholder
- Consistent in both their message and, where possible, the way they are delivered
- Mindful of safeguarding and the welfare of the children

WHAT COMMUNICATIONS SEEK TO ACHIEVE – OUR OBJECTIVES

- To keep staff, pupils, parents, governors and other stakeholders well informed and engaged in:
 - the education of the children; and
 - all other aspects of the school
- To foster an inclusive community centred around the school

- To establish ways of communicating which are both efficient and effective to make best use of people's time
- Enable the school and all the people in it be the best they can be

COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH BY AUDIENCE

Children

Our approach to communicating with the children will always be child centred, where all interactions are positive, professional and delivered in a way which is age appropriate.

All communications, be they written, verbal, or non-verbal, including the use of appropriate physical contact, will always be adapted to suit the individual needs of the child and take account of the different circumstances and environments in which they take place. They always provide the opportunity for a two-way interaction.

Staff

All communications which staff have with stakeholders will reflect our guiding principles and the approaches outlined by this policy.

Communication between staff and pupils will seek to encourage the children's education, social and emotional development and keep them informed of their individual progress and targets. This will primarily be through face to face interactions but may also include other appropriate channels.

Communication with parents/carers is outlined in more detail below with essentially an 'open door policy' existing for all parents/carers communications needs. Where any issues arise the process for escalation is from class teacher to phase leader and then to either deputy or head teacher. A governor would only be involved if a formal complaint was made – as per the formal complaints policy which can be found on the school web-site.

Parents/carers

We aim to ensure that parents/carers are fully engaged in the education of their child/ren including keeping them up to date on what they are doing and their progress educationally, as well as ensuring we provide information to support their learning outside of school. We also aim to keep parents/carers up to date with the general activities of the school and involved in the social side of the school, including working closely with the Parent Staff Association (PSA).

Setting clear expectations from the start about how we operate in the school and what's expected of the children and their parent/carers is communicated through the signing of the Home school agreement. This is signed when the child joins the school and again at the start of Key Stage 2.

Communications between school and home focus around a key number of areas:

- Induction – the framework for the year sets the context for what to expect and how to engage in a dialogue with the school

- Curriculum – what children will learn, how they will learn, ongoing dialogue with parents and what needs to be done at home
- Progress – how are they doing, what progress they've made, how to work together to support development and expectations going forward
- School life – full school to individual classroom – what's happening at school that parents might want to know
- Activities – outings, school trips, 'special days' and sports day – the extra things that enrich the school experience
- Extra- curricular – clubs and sports – what happens outside of academic hours

In general, the primary method of communication between the school and home is the weekly newsletter, sent out via email and posted on the school website. This includes all of the key pieces of weekly information. For all policies, forms, curriculum information and past newsletters the school website is the central repository for all information. Parents can communicate to the school in any number of ways – in person on the playground or at the classroom door, by a pre-arranged meeting for longer conversations or by phone or e-mail into the school office.

Governors

We work to develop and maintain strong relationships with and have highly engaged governors. In addition to the significant amount of information shared through the Full Governing Board and sub committees, we actively encourage wider engagement with teachers, staff and children. Staff attend governor meetings to share insights and provide input and governors are encouraged to visit and engage in the daily life of the school as much as they can and particularly around their areas of focus.

Wider school community – including other local schools and the Local Authority (LA)

We have an open and supportive working relationship with the Local Authority, ensuring we deliver against our statutory reporting duties, as well as keeping up to date on national initiatives and any change of policy affecting the school and our work.

We work collaboratively with other local schools, working to support each other where it makes sense and sharing best practice, so we can learn from each other.

The local East Sheen community

We recognise that the school has an important role at the centre of the community and are therefore active in our local community. From engaging with our neighbours to supporting community events or local services, we take a proactive role in working in the East Sheen community. We also ensure that on an ad hoc basis we communicate about anything which the school is doing that could be of interest or mutual importance to the community in accordance with the communications principles.

MOBILE PHONES

Children should not bring mobile phones to school. Any exceptional circumstances must be discussed with and approved by the Headteacher. Children in Year 6 who are being encouraged to be independent and walk to and from school alone may wish to bring in a mobile phone so that they can keep in touch with their parents – these must be handed into class teachers on arrival in school.

The use of mobile phones by staff is outlined in the Sheen Mount User Guide (SMUG), which covers the following guidance:

- Mobile phones should not be used when working with children
- If phones are used to take pictures of children in school and on trips and visits staff should be aware of safeguarding protocols and ensure that images are not shared on social media
- Images should be deleted from devices and cloud storage when they have been uploaded to the school multi-media drive.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Any social media channels should not be used at school and they should be blocked on all school computers.

Parents are asked not to share any photographs taken at school events on a social media platform that can be viewed outside of a secure group.

The school has a Twitter account. All tweeting is limited to the head and deputy head and should be reasonable.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Guidance on the taking and use of photography is covered in the school's Data Protection Policy, which can be found on the school website, and should be followed in all communications.

MEASUREMENT & REVIEW

Understanding the effectiveness of communications across all stakeholder groups and being able to adapt accordingly is critical. We therefore use a range of approaches to capture insights and review our success:

1. Annual review of communication effectiveness (summer term) – the school reviews the effectiveness of all major communications channels on an annual basis. This will include, but not be limited to:
 - Website
 - Newsletter
 - Interaction between parents and staff in both formal (ie conferences) and informal settings
 - Interactions between the school and other stakeholders

This uses feedback from 'today' to inform the forward-looking plan taking into account any major changes in communications needs (eg building works, changes to government policy) or changes to channels.

2. Biannual survey – a comprehensive survey conducted by the Pastoral Committee on behalf of the governors for communications uses a range of methods to capture feedback from children, staff and parents on the effectiveness of various aspects of the school. This includes a specific section on communications and in the years undertaken feeds into the annual review.
3. Specific metrics - in addition to anecdotal and qualitative feedback gathered for purposes of assessment, on an ad hoc basis metrics which are available will be used to determine the effectiveness of channels eg using website hits to analyse the impact of particular messaging.
4. Governor oversight – the Pastoral Committee will monitor communication in line with the communication policy. This will include monitoring the website to ensure that it meets statutory requirements and working with the school to conduct the annual assessment of communication effectiveness and planning.