



Policy & Guidance

Whole School Communications Policy

June 2017

At Withycombe Raleigh Primary School we strive to maintain clear and effective communications. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values by keeping parents and the school community well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents and members of the community play in supporting the school.

We have various strategies for communicating with parents and the community. Some of our communications are in accordance with a statutory requirement; while others reflect what we believe is important for our school. The aim of this policy is to ensure that all communication from the school is accurate, honest, timely and relevant.

Consistency

Consistent, good communication builds confidence, provides reassurance and ensures that Withycombe Raleigh Primary School has a strong and recognisable identity. We all work hard to ensure that our school is welcoming, friendly, supportive and positive. Our written communications should always reflect this.

Media relations

The school seeks to gain positive media coverage of the work we do in order to raise awareness of the school amongst parents and the local community.

Media relations are the responsibility of the Headteacher, the Communications Officer, and where appropriate in liaison with the Chair of Governors.

Reactive media work

All media enquiries should initially be taken by the Communications Officer or the Headteacher. The Headteacher will always act as the spokesperson for the school.

The Headteacher will assess the media enquiry on the basis of:

- Opportunity for positive coverage
- Potential for negative coverage
- Likelihood of the story 'growing'

On the basis of this he will decide whether to involve the Chair of Governors in the process.

National Media

In the case of enquires from the national media where the subject matter is sensitive and there is a possibility of adverse publicity, the Headteacher liaises with the Chair of Governors before responding. We may also liaise with the DCC Media Service team.

Proactive media work

The Communications Officer, the Headteacher and the Governors may identify events in the coming term which they believe will be of interest to the local media. In consultation with the Headteacher, the Communications Officer produces a press release and liaises with the appropriate media. It is the school's policy to develop a positive working relationship with the local press.

Communication with parents

The school aims to ensure that parents receive regular and relevant correspondence from the school and the Governors. Communications are made available through one or more of the following means as appropriate:

- email (Groupcall)
- texts (Groupcall)
- ParentPay
- pupil post/book bags
- the school website
- school notice-boards and window displays
- class notice-boards
- the PTFA, Governors and Headteacher's newsletters
- social media, class Dojo

Electronic Communication and Website

The school has developed and maintains a website aimed primarily at providing pupils, parents, prospective parents and the local community with relevant information. The school ensures that it complies with all relevant statutory guidance and best practice related to school-based websites.

The website includes:

- Important information about the school including the school prospectus
- Staff structure showing teachers and key members of staff
- Term dates for the academic year
- Relevant performance information
- Contact details
- School Policies & Documents
- Clubs timetable and application forms
- Class news and information
- Governors information including pictures and biographies
- Information about the PTFA

The Headteacher and Communications Officer review the content of the website to ensure it is accurate and up to date.

Social Media

The school is on Twitter and Facebook. The aim is to share good news about our school with our families and community and to let them know about our exciting events and love of learning. The school's social media accounts will not be used to express the personal or political views of any member of staff, nor to engage in dispute or discussion with individual parents/carers. Guidelines which are pinned to the top of the Facebook page, explain that there is a correct procedure for handling complaints.

- On Twitter, we will follow relevant figures, organisations and companies who fit with our values and interests. We use Twitter formally rather than socially so we will not follow parents or former pupils.
- Facebook will be a broadcast-only account. The Headteacher, the Communications Officer and members of the Senior Leadership Team will be able to post content, and will accept and monitor comments carefully.

All parents receive a photo & video consent [opt-out] letter from which a list of children not to be included on social media/website/newsletter/school publicity material is created and monitored.

Use of Photographs

- Photographs are used in and around the school for many purposes, including display boards outside of classrooms, records of practical work (e.g. art or technology projects), and records of important school events.
- We may use photographs of children or their work when communicating with parents and the wider community, in newsletters, in the school prospectus, on the school website, class dojo, social media, or in reports to parents.
- The local or national press may publish photographs of children participating in events at school, for example as part of a winning sports team.
- Lists of those children for whom permission has NOT been given will be held by each class teacher, by the Communications Officer and by the school office who share responsibility for ensuring these children are not photographed.
- Photographs will be checked to ensure that they are suitable (eg photos of children in swimwear would be unsuitable).
- Photographs used in any media will not be captioned with the full names of any children.

School Signage and In-School Displays

The school strives to maintain up-to-date, clear signage and displays in order to make the school and its environment easy to navigate and allow parents and children easy access to relevant information.

Notice Boards & Window Displays

The School maintains poster displays around the school, which include:

- key date information
- news about forthcoming events
- important reminders

In-coming Communication

The school strives to ensure that all of its community members have appropriate opportunities to feed in their views and comments. The school will wherever possible respond appropriately to suggestions and comments. Parent Surveys, including Ofsted's ParentView, are used to review the quality of school communication and to seek feedback on other topics. We may also send out links to Survey Monkey questionnaires about specific features of the school, such as school lunches.

The School

- To keep school staff up to date with events, there is a shared online calendar administered by the office staff, and a whiteboard in the main office for regular or upcoming events.
- Written internal communications are delivered through pigeon holes in the corridor adjacent to the admin office.
- There is a register file for each class containing copies of letters and medical information to be sent home.
- Relevant information is passed onto supply teachers.
- Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff or with parents or other outside Agencies.
- All staff have a school email address and internal emails are used to communicate with individuals or groups of staff. Communications should be brief, clear, accurate, concise and polite. Emails should not be flagged as urgent, or use all capital letters to assume greater attention for messages.

Resources

The school allocates a budget for communications and an appropriate level of funding will be used to support all school communications.

Images: Use and Management Policy

Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, all photographs and video images of children and staff are classified as personal data. This means that no image can be used for display or for school publicity unless consent is given by or on behalf of the individual concerned.

However, the Data Protection Act is unlikely to apply in many situations where photographs are taken within schools. In the small number of instances where the Data Protection Act does apply, if the photographer obtains permission from the parent or individual to take a photograph then this will be enough to ensure compliance.

There are many occasions when it is a good thing to make use of photographs and videos that include children. This is to be encouraged, however, we do all we can to ensure that images are used properly, and that as in all matters risks are minimised, and our children are kept safe and secure whether at school or elsewhere. The aim of this policy is to establish the right balance between the proper and appropriate use of technology and the safety of our children at all times.

All pictures taken will be appropriate, and will show children properly clothed for the activity in which they are engaged. We will do all we can to ensure that due sensitivity is shown in the choice and composition of these images.

Data Protection Good Practice Notes - Taking Photographs in Schools

Aim of this guidance

This Good Practice Guidance is aimed at Local Education Authorities and those working within schools, colleges and universities. It gives advice on taking photographs in educational institutions and whether doing so must comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Recommended Good Practice

The Data Protection Act is unlikely to apply in many cases where photographs are taken in schools and other educational institutions. Fear of breaching the provisions of the Act should not be wrongly used to stop people taking photographs or videos which provide many with much pleasure.

Where the Act does apply, a common sense approach suggests that if the photographer asks for permission to take a photograph, this will usually be enough to ensure compliance.

- Photos taken for official school use may be covered by the Act and pupils and students should be advised why they are being taken.
- Photos taken purely for personal use are exempt from the Act.

Examples:

Personal use:

A parent takes a photograph of their child taking part in the school Sports Day to be put in the family photo album. These images are for personal use and the Data Protection Act does not apply.

Official school use:

A small group of pupils are photographed during a science lesson and the photo is to be used in the school prospectus. This will be personal data but will not breach the Act as long as the children and/or their guardians are aware this is happening and the context in which the photo will be used.

Media use:

A photograph is taken by a local newspaper of a school awards ceremony. As long as the school has agreed to this, and the children and/or their guardians are aware that photographs of those attending the ceremony may appear in the newspaper, this will not breach the Act. In these cases the 'rolling consent' will be sufficient.

School Performances:

We do not specifically exclude video and photographic recordings of your own children during school performances. However we discourage this as it detracts from the enjoyments of performances and distracts children during productions. Only photos or video of your OWN children may be taken, stored, printed or published online.

The school will take and publish photographs for everyone to enjoy, as we know which children must be excluded from publicity due either to parental preferences or safeguarding issues.

The school will observe the way in which video recordings are made and photographs are taken during performances, and will withdraw the right of anyone to use a camera of any sort if they are felt to be making inappropriate images. Photography is forbidden in changing rooms or backstage during school productions.

Procedures for policy monitoring and evaluation

All members of staff and governors will receive a copy of this policy.

Copies are available to parents on request.

Staff Responsible Stephen Powley (Headteacher)
Sarah Smart (Marketing & Communications Officer)

To be read alongside this Policy:

- Advice for those who want to raise a concern about the school (available on our website)

Communications Checklist – Style and Reach of Communication

	Children	Head Teacher/ Teachers/ TAs	Parents/ carers	Communications Officer/ Admin Staff	Wider community
Assemblies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Head Teacher's report to School Governors		✓	✓	✓	
Homework / Letters for particular issues	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Newsletters	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Newspaper/Radio/TV	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Notice-boards and in-school display boards	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Open days	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Parents' Evenings	✓	✓	✓	✓	
PTFA meetings, social media and events	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pupils informally talking to teachers, TAs, learning support staff and other adults in the school	✓	✓		✓	
Reports to parents	✓	✓	✓		
School Council	✓	✓		✓	✓
School Governors		✓	✓	✓	
School website/social media	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Self Evaluation Form (OfSTED)		✓	✓	✓	✓
Social networking		✓	✓	✓	✓
Staff meeting minutes		✓		✓	
Texts to parents/carers			✓	✓	
Visits in person to the school office/reception	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Word of mouth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Communications Checklist – Nature and Method of Communication

	In person	Assembly	Phone/ Text	Email / website form	Prospectus	Leaflets in reception	School Website (in print by request)	Newsletter	Social media	Book Bags	Posters or school displays	Newspaper/TV/ Radio (after the event)
Absence reporting			✓									
Cancellation of a club		✓	✓	✓					✓			
Celebrations of success (eg sports team)	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Complaints (or by letter)	✓		✓	✓								
Contact information (school address, phone No etc)					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Governor communications/ minutes of meetings							✓	✓		✓		
Homework and spellings							✓			✓	✓	
Information about current class topics (topic webs)		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Information about school menus (also on ParentPay)		✓				✓	✓		✓		✓	
Invitation to parents evenings			✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	
Key information (uniform, opening times etc)					✓		✓					
Open days (for prospective parents)						✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Optional or special events (such as charity mufti day)		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PTFA communications events/news such as school disco							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Request for a meeting with teacher/parent/staff	✓		✓	✓								
School Club timetable		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓			✓
School Curriculum							✓					
School Documents (eg absence request forms)						✓	✓					
School Policies							✓					
School Profile: information included in the school profile eg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> performance data Ofsted report Christian Values/ British Values 	✓	✓			✓		✓				✓	
School trip arrangements		✓		✓				✓	✓	✓		✓
Sick or injured child needs collecting/other emergency			✓									
Special school events (eg author visit, red nose day)		✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Term/holiday dates				✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			