

SHIREMOOR PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY



At Shiremoor Primary School, our 3 core words are: Aspire, Respect and Challenge and we endeavour to put these at the heart of all we do. We value open and effective communication with parents and believe in fostering a strong partnership to support the education and well-being of our children.

To enable us to communicate effectively with all parents, it is important that we have contact details in the form of phone numbers, emails and home addresses. As a school, we will ask parents to update these annually. We ask that families inform school immediately in the event that contact information needs to be revised.

We refer to 'families' as all those individuals who have a role in the up-bringing and care of the child.

At Shiremoor Primary School, we welcome involvement with parents and whilst we offer many formal opportunities for parents to visit school, we also encourage parents to make appointments at any other time to talk about their child's progress, ask questions or provide us with information. Communication is a two way process.

Purpose of General Methods of Communication from school to home:

- **Twitter (Now named 'X')** – For positive daily communication about what children have been learning in school, or for achievements. This platform is used also for occasional emergency information (which will also be emailed where appropriate). Whilst parents can post on 'X', school does not respond to any comments on this platform and reserves the right to block anyone using this method of communication inappropriately.
- **School APP-** This is for emailed letters to parents around school visits, clubs or events and allows us to explain any requirements and to allow parents to provide permission or make payments.
- **School website-** Information about all aspects of school life, which is updated weekly for general letters, regularly for dates and annually for policy information. Please have a look at the website.
- **School Prospectus-** available on the website or from the school office. Update annually providing general information about school.
- **Half-termly newsletters**, which give an overview of events that have happened in the term.
- **General information letters** are sent as emails but are also placed on the website. **If any parent would prefer paper copies of letters, rather than emails, please notify the office who will print these for you.**

Individual Methods of communication between school and home:

- Informal conversation, pre-arranged meetings, email and phone

Our preferred method of communication is face to face. This is because the tone of emails can be misread. Emails take up more time in the day before a resolution is found. Phone calls can prohibit a two-way conversation. Meeting face to face allows time to be set aside for any matter allowing complete focus. It also allows all parties to be able to have a discussion so that everyone can go away with an understanding of the outcome of the meeting.

The school's main office should generally be the initial point of contact, and the office staff will direct the communication to the relevant teacher or senior leader. All staff are here to help.

Whilst we endeavour to get back to parents swiftly, due to the volume of children and the workload of staff, we cannot always respond as quickly as we would like. Emails, letters and phone calls will be triaged and ***you will receive a response within 5 working days for non-emergency matters.*** Safeguarding matters will be responded to in school immediately and you will receive follow-up information on the same day.

Other opportunities for communication about your child:

- We offer 3 Parent's Evenings a year to enable parents to meet with class teachers to discuss academic progress and to get a picture of their child within the context of school. We would always rather that parents raised queries or issues as they arise instead of waiting for Parent's Evening. It is possible to request meetings with class teachers via the office.
- Every term we host an SEN Parent drop in for any parent who wishes to speak to the class teacher about their child's individual support or needs or to meet with the SENCO.
- Each child receives an annual school report to communicate information around achievements and progress within school.
- Children who have diagnosed additional needs may also receive individual support plans if a child requires support beyond that generally available to all children

Please consider the following points:

- At Shiremoor Primary School, we fully appreciate that your child is precious to you and we want you to know that we take our responsibilities to your child very seriously, however, we are a large primary school and have to be mindful that we have to be equally attentive to, and supportive of, all families.
- School does not monitor emails outside of the normal working hours evenings, weekends or holidays. Whilst parents/ carers may compose emails at hours to suit their own needs, they can only be addressed during working hours.

- Parent communications must be conducted in a respectful and constructive manner, free from abusive, rude, or offensive language. One of our key words is respect and we expect that adults model this at all times on school premises. Staff are not required to speak to people who are being verbally aggressive in tone either by phone or in person and can choose to terminate a call or meeting.
- If an email is received which is aggressive in tone, sets unreasonable demands or could otherwise be interpreted as harassing, or if the email exchange is not moving forward constructively, school may choose not to respond and to seek professional advice.
- When teachers are safeguarding children at the start or end of the day, they cannot spend time being distracted from this purpose, and, therefore contact should be via the office.
- Confidentiality: School recognizes the importance of maintaining confidentiality and will handle all parent communications with utmost care and discretion.

Respect and Integrity:

Our school values the relationship between home and school. We take any parental concerns very seriously and are pleased that the vast majority are resolved by the class teacher. However, we feel it appropriate to write to you regarding the use of social media in relation to communication about school. Trial by social media is something that has become more prevalent in recent years and is not helpful. It is a fact that people will comment on social media in a way that is not necessarily the way they would communicate in person. It is very easy for social media to be misused and become a forum for some members of our school community to openly comment on school issues, which is not appropriate.

We would therefore like to remind you that using social networking sites is not the correct forum to raise any issues or concerns about the school, staff, other parents or pupils. Any negative remarks on these sites can be seen as defamation of character, harassment or slander.

If at any time you have an issue, your first port of call should always be the class teacher. If your concern remains unresolved, then contact the Head Teacher and, if you are still dissatisfied, then you should put your complaint in writing to the Chair of Governors. This is in accordance with the school's complaints policy.

May we also take this opportunity to remind you that it is not acceptable to upload photographs or video clips of your child taken at school, which include other children onto social networking sites without the permission of the parents'. We all have a responsibility to safeguard children.

We are looking to maintain the strong relationship that we have with parents and wish to work with you on this issue.

Feedback and Continuous Improvement:

The school welcomes feedback from parents regarding their communication experiences, as it helps us to continually improve our communication practices. Parents are encouraged to provide constructive feedback and suggestions, either through surveys, meetings, or other designated feedback channels.

By adhering to this communications policy, we can ensure effective and respectful communication between parents and the school, fostering a positive and supportive environment for our pupils' educational journey.