



MEREVALLEY FEDERATION

HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION POLICY

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1. Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

- Gives parents/carers the information they need to support their child's education
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers
- Builds trust between home and school, which helps the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs

The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible

In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's IT acceptable use policy
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours of 8:30am – 3:30pm or their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so.

2.3 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school
- Keeping the school updated of any changes in contact details, including email addresses and telephone numbers

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our parental code of conduct.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours or during school holidays.

3. How we communicate with parents and carers

The sections below explain how we keep parents up-to-date with their child's education and what is happening in school.

Parents should monitor all of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

3.1 Parentmail

We use Parentmail to send parents the majority of our communication. This includes the following:

- Weekly newsletters
- Information about upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Information and consent forms for class activities, including trips and visits to school
- Information and consent form for clubs

3.2 Text messages

We will text parents about:

- Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

3.3 School calendar

Our school newsletter includes a full school calendar for the term. This is updated and shared with parents as changes are made throughout the term.

We try to give parents as much notice as possible of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials).

Any such event will be included in the school calendar.

3.4 Phone calls

School staff will telephone parents if they need to communicate urgent information, for example if the child is unwell and needs collecting. Phone calls may also be arranged with parents by teaching staff to discuss children on an ad hoc basis at the request of the school.

3.5 Reports

Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance
- A report on Key Stage (KS) 1 and KS2 SATs tests with their end-of-year report

3.6 Meetings

We hold a parents' consultation meeting during the autumn and spring terms. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

3.7 School website

Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- School times and term dates
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about before and after-school provision

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents should use the list in appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and email address.

4.1 Email

Parents should always email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

Parents can contact the school using email as follows:

- The email address office@merebrookschool.co.uk can be used by Merebrook parents with specific queries. This email address is monitored by our office staff.
- The email address parents@emersonvalley.org.uk can be used by Emerson Valley parents with specific queries. This email address is monitored by our office staff.
- The following email address: learningmentors@emersonvalley.org.uk can also be used by Emerson Valley parents for any concerns about wellbeing. This email address is monitored by our Learning Mentors.
- We aim to acknowledge all emails within 2 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 4 working days.
- If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school.

4.2 Phone calls

If the issue is urgent, parents should call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact them within 2 working days.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 3 days of their request.

Parents are reminded that school phone calls are recorded and staff are instructed to end calls if parents do not adhere to our parental code of conduct during these calls.

Office staff have been directed to ask parents about the reason for their call and may not be able to pass the call to the appropriate person if the reason for the call has not been disclosed. It may not be possible for parents to speak to the member of staff that they are requesting. Please refer to Appendix 1 for information regarding staff roles and responsibilities

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address (see appendix 1), or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within 7 working days of the request.

While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day if parents need to speak to them urgently, we recommend they book appointments to discuss:

- Any concerns they have about their child's learning
- Updates related to pastoral support, their child's home environment, or their wellbeing

5. Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy annually.

The policy will be approved by Executive Headteacher and shared with the Governing Board.

6. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- IT acceptable use
- Parent code of conduct
- Complaints
- Home-school agreement

Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

- Email or call the school office
- Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for emails)
- We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff
- Include your child's full name in the subject line
- We try to respond to all emails within the timeframes set in Section 4.1

Remember: check our website first, much of the information you need is posted there.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning, class activities, lessons or homework	Your child's Class Teacher
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Merebrook: Your child's class teacher Emerson Valley: Learning mentor contactable via learningmentors@emersonvalley.org.uk
Payments or school trips	School Office
Uniform / Lost property	School Office
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, please report this via parentmail. If you want to request approval for term-time absence, please complete a leave of absence form. This can be found on the school website or can be collected from reception.
Bullying and behaviour	Merebrook: Miss Hurwood (Head of School) Emerson Valley: Mrs Avola (Senior Learning Mentor)
School events/the school calendar	Refer to school newsletter, other letters of communication and the school website
Special educational needs (SEN)	Mrs Protheroe, Federation SENCO: senco@merevalley.org.uk
Before and after-school clubs	School Office
PTA:	Merebrook: choms@merebrookschoool.co.uk Emerson Valley: office@emersonvalley.org.uk
Governing board	Chair of Governing Board, Mr Nick Sharp. Contactable via office@merebrookschoool.co.uk or office@emersonvalley.org.uk
Catering/meals	Chartwells meal provider, contactable on: 01908 615705