



Communication Policy

The Mary Bassett Lower School

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 for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Setting clear standards for 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

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Governing Body will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that channels of communication between the school and parents/carers are clear and effective.
- Reviewing any pre-existing channels of communication and identifying any improvements that could be made.

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents/carers are effective, timely and appropriate
- Regularly reviewing this policy

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with school protocols, the staff Code of Conduct and the school's Acceptable Use policy

- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents/carers get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)
- Responding to queries, comments, and concerns from parents/carers in a positive and proactive fashion.
- Working closely with parents/carers to best support their children in their educational experiences.

Staff **will not** respond to communications outside of school hours 8am to 6:00pm or their working hours (if they work part-time), or during school holidays. Members of the Senior Leadership Team may respond outside of working hours/days in some circumstances and this decision will be made by their own professional judgement.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is always respectful
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff. Staff will support if parent/carers are unsure of who to communicate with.
- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school
- Ensure the school has the most up-to-date contact, medical and dietary information for their child. This is to be provided by updating the Arbor app or by emailing the school office.

Communication with the school

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

We will only communicate with parents/carers in respect of their own child at the school. The only exception to this would be if this is a safeguarding concern about another child.

Requests to raise a concern on behalf of another parent will be declined, as this ensures factual accuracy and all relevant information is provided, as will requests for information on another child

Positive parental support will greatly impact on the pupils themselves. Supportive rapport between the school and parents/carers will increase pupils' confidence and engagement in their learning. This in turn will help to increase how involved parents are in their child's education.

Teachers in turn will value a strong home-school communication thanks to the opportunities for personalisation in a pupil's learning. The school will use strong home-school communication so that

the teacher can be made aware of any needs, interests or areas of concern for the pupil on an individual basis.

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

Meetings

1. Face-to-face conversations are the best way of communicating with the school at drop off or pick up for quick, short messages.
2. The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher will be at the school gate every morning, if they are unavailable another member of the school Senior Leadership Team will replace them.
3. When a member of staff is not able to speak to you immediately face-to-face due to school commitments, or a longer conversation is deemed necessary or appropriate, then a request for an appointment can be made to discuss the matter, either in person or by telephone, later. Parents/carers must email the school office to request an appointment and the school will aim to arrange that meeting within 3 - 4 working days.
4. Outside of teaching hours, all staff have additional duties which they perform either before school, during break/lunch or after school so availability of staff outside of teaching hours should not be assumed.
5. Should a meeting be requested the decision of which staff member will attend will rest with the Headteacher.
6. We hold two parents' consultation meetings per year. During these meetings, parents/carers 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 SENDCo will be available during these meeting times for drop in sessions.
7. The school may also contact parents/carers to arrange meetings between parents/carer consultations if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.
8. Parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), or who have other additional needs, will also be asked to attend additional meetings.
9. Some meetings may be held by phone call or virtually using Google.

Email

1. Parents/carers are welcome to email the school, office@marybassett.co.uk, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.
2. Emails will be most helpful if they are concise, explaining concerns in a clear way. Lengthy and overly detailed accounts can make it more difficult to understand what is being explained and to respond in a timely or clear way.
3. The school will aim to respond within 2 working days. If a response is unable to be provided within this timeline, which can be to ensure a full and considered response, then a revised

timeline will be provided and communicated. We ask that parents await a response from the school and that further emails are not sent pending that response, unless the new deadline has passed.

4. If there is a change in a child's medical needs, this information must always be shared by email through the school office.
5. If emails are rude, abusive or do not meet generally accepted standards of communications expected, they will be referred to the HT and if communications continue in this way, after notifying the parent/carer the approach is not acceptable, the HT and Chair of Governors will consider appropriate actions available to manage the situation.

The School App - Arbor

The School App is our chosen communication route as:

- It removes the risk of data breaches caused by human error when sending emails to large groups of recipients.
- All messages from the school can be accessed in one place removing the risk of messages being lost amongst the email inboxes of our community.

We use The School App – Arbor to keep parents/carers informed about the following:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Consent forms
- A weekly newsletter

Parents/carers will be invited to download The School App onto their phone using a link.

On occasion, a formal letter may be sent to an individual family. On these occasions, the school office will send attachments by email.

Phone calls

School office: **01525 373017**

1. If a query or concern is time sensitive and urgent the parents/carers should call the school office, who will liaise as necessary at the earliest opportunity. In most circumstances,

teaching and leadership staff are unlikely to be available to receive calls due to teaching and other commitments.

2. If the query or concern is not time sensitive and urgent then parents/carers should email or call the school office and the relevant member of staff will aim to 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.
3. For general enquiries, please call or email the school office.
4. Staff will call parents/carers if their child presents as unwell during the school day.
5. Parents/carers are expected to call or email the school office before 9.30am if their child is absent.
6. We will call parents/carers if their child has had a head injury, even if minor (see First Aid Policy).
7. Staff will call parents/carers if their child requires an ambulance

Social Media and Online Platforms

1. The school will not respond to concerns raised via social media or online platforms such as Instagram.
2. Should the school be made aware of any threat of any kind or abusive behaviour towards staff members or children on roll at our school on social media, then the school will consider reporting this to the Police and seeking the removal of this content from the site. Where such communications are deemed defamatory, inaccurate, unfairly derogatory to MBL's reputation or fail to meet the generally accepted standards for kindness, the HT and Chair of Governors will consider if actions available to them are appropriate.

School calendar

We use the weekly bulletin on the website to communicate with parents/carers about upcoming events.

Where possible, we try to give parents/carers at least 2 weeks' notice 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).

Reports

Parents/carers 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 detailing the child's phonics test results in Year 1.
- A report detailing the child's multiplication check results in Year 4.

We also arrange regular meetings where parents/carers can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

School website

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

- School times and term dates
- Notable events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information
- Information about Breakfast Clubs and After-School clubs

Parents/carers should check the website before contacting the school.

Inclusion

If parents/carers don't know who or how to communicate, ask any staff who will ensure you get the right information.

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school. Our website has a language translation feature which can be located in the top right hand corner on the home page.

Parents/carers who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls if there are no other family known alternatives.
- All messages to be sent by email rather than phone call to allow parents/carers to translate the written words.

Types of unacceptable behaviour and communication

As natural role models for their children, parents/carers will be required to model good behaviour when communicating and interacting with the school.

There are some types of behaviour / communication that the school considers unacceptable. These are as follows:

- Any physical aggression e.g. slapping, hitting, punching, and kicking;
- Physically intimidating a member of staff, or pupils e.g., standing close to her/him;
- The use of aggressive hand gestures including finger pointing towards a member of staff or pupil;
- Spitting at a member of staff or pupil;

- Shaking or holding a fist towards a member of staff or pupil;
- Shouting at members of staff or pupils (either in person on school grounds, over the telephone or over video conferencing);
- Swearing, or using offensive language including derogatory language about a protected group or characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010;
- Threatening or offensive comments about a member of staff or pupil of the school; this can include verbally, via texts, emails, social media, etc.;
- Sending abusive messages to a member of staff, including via text, email, or social media
- A large volume of emails in respect of the same matter over a short period of time.
- Continuing to raise the same issue despite it having been already addressed by the school.
- Posting defamatory, offensive, or derogatory comments about the school, its staff, on social media platforms
- Naming school staff on social media
- Disrupting, or threatening to disrupt, school operations (including events on the school grounds and sports team matches)
- Breaching or not conforming to the school's security procedures
- Covertly recording phone calls or meetings with member of staff
- Any other behaviour that is disrespectful, threatening, or offensive

This list is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour which has no place in our school community.

Unreasonable requests and communication

Unreasonable requests divert (in some cases materially and disproportionately) sparse resources from the primary focus of creating a safe and nurturing environment to educate the full range of pupils at MBLs

Requests may be unreasonable by the nature and scale of service expected.

Examples may include:

- Requesting responses within unreasonable timescales
- Insisting on speaking with certain members of staff
- Adopting a "capture-all" approach by contacting many staff members and third parties
- Continually contacting us while we are in the process of looking at a matter
- Making a number of approaches about the same matter without raising new issues
- Refusing to accept a decision made where explanations for the decision have been given
- Continuing to pursue complaints/issues which have no substance
- Continuing to pursue complaints/issues that have already been investigated and the outcome determined
- Continuing to raise unfounded or new complaints arising from the same set of facts

We recognise that our resources, including staff time, have to be used where they can be most effective. This might mean that we cannot respond to every issue in the way a person would like, if in doing so it would take up what the School regards as being a disproportionate amount of time and resources that could be used elsewhere to support the most vulnerable in our community. We ask you to recognise that, due to the volume of work with which we deal, we may not be able to respond immediately to your requests. We will aim to respond to parents/carers within 2 working days. This does not mean that your concerns are any less important to us.

If we have asked for your patience but you continue to pursue your concerns, we may consider such behaviour to be unreasonable.

Actions that may be taken by the school because of unacceptable behaviour and communication

1. In the first instance, (if the unacceptable behaviour has occurred on site) the school will ask the parents/carers to desist and/or leave the site. If the behaviour is of a serious nature, then the police will be contacted.
2. Thereafter the school (Headteacher/Member of School Leadership team) will gather information on allegations of unacceptable behaviour. This may include talking to the parties concerned or others as witnesses to the behaviour.
3. If unacceptable behaviour is considered to have occurred the following actions may be taken by the school, dependent on the severity/gravity of the behaviour:
 - The parents/carer will be told verbally that his / her behaviour is unacceptable and, if it is not modified, the school will take further action.
 - Advising the parents/carer that all future meetings with a member of staff will be conducted with a second person present and will be minuted;
 - Putting in place a contact plan to deal with any communication between the individual and school. For example, except in emergencies, communication to the school must be in writing only to a named individual and the school can set out timescales for school responses
 - A warning letter or an immediate ban from the school site;
 - Contacting the Police where behaviour is criminal in nature.
 - Seek advice from the local authority's legal team regarding further action.

The school will always seek to respond to an incident in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to the unacceptable behaviour and communication rests with the headteacher and, where necessary, the Governing Body

Monitoring and review

The Headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy annually. The policy will be approved by the governing body.

Links with other policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- SEND Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy
- First Aid Policy

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 the most appropriate address
- Include your child's name in the email

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...

My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework

My child's wellbeing/pastoral and family support

My child's medical needs

WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO

Your child's class teacher or by emailing the school office

office@marybassett.co.uk

Your child's class teacher or by emailing the school office

office@marybassett.co.uk

Email the school office

office@marybassett.co.uk

A safeguarding concern	Ask to speak to or arrange a meeting with the Designated Safeguarding Lead. office@marybassett.co.uk
Payments	School office via phone or email office@marybassett.co.uk
School trips	School office via phone or email office@marybassett.co.uk
Uniform/lost and found	Your child's class teacher on the playground or by email office@marybassett.co.uk
Attendance and absence requests	School office via phone or email office@marybassett.co.uk
Bullying and behaviour	1. Your child's class teacher or by emailing the school office 2. Your child's Phase Leader: Nursery & Reception – Mrs Collins-Pratt Years 1 - 4 – Mrs Skerrett 3. Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher office@marybassett.co.uk
School events/the school calendar	School office via phone or email office@marybassett.co.uk
Special educational needs	SENDco office@marybassett.co.uk
Breakfast Club and after-school clubs	School office via phone or email office@marybassett.co.uk
The PTFA	School office via phone or email office@marybassett.co.uk
The Governing Body	School office via phone or email office@marybassett.co.uk