

BELLINGHAM

PARTNERSHIP OF SCHOOLS

Communication Policy

2026-27



Approved by:	Governing Body		Date:	September 2026
Last review date:			Next review date:	September 2027
Policy applies to:	Bellingham Primary School	Yes	Bellingham Middle School	Yes

Communications Policy

1. Introduction and aims

At Bellingham Partnership of Schools we hold our core values of kindness, respect, courage and excellence at the centre of all we do. We believe that effective communication, using our values as a guide, is key to positive working relationships and achieving the best for our pupils.

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 ICT and internet 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, 8.30am to 4.00pm, 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.

Our ICT and internet acceptable use policy can be found on our school websites.

2.3 Admin Staff

Members of the Admin Team are responsible for:

- Monitoring emails sent to "admin" and other whole-school email addresses, ensuring that these are responded to and/or forwarded to the appropriate person in a timely manner.
- Monitoring communications via the website, ensuring that these are responded to and/or forwarded to the appropriate person in a timely manner.
- Answering the telephones in a professional and courteous manner, and ensuring that any messages are provided to the appropriate person in a timely manner.
- Ensuring that those contacting the school are advised of the most appropriate person to handle their query and when they can expect a response.

2.4 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;
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner;
- Checking all communications from the school.

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

Parents should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours, 8.30am to 4.00pm, 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 Email

Bellingham Primary School and Bellingham Middle School use email to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- School activities or teacher requests

3.2 School calendar

Our weekly newsletter contains important upcoming dates from the school calendar. These will be shared at the start of each term via email too.

Where possible, we try to give parents at least two 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). Sometimes, this is not possible, and we communicate as early as possible.

3.3 Class Dojo

Bellingham Primary School communicates regular information with parents through Class Dojo. If you have not been added to your Class Dojo class, please contact school. This will include:

- Information relating to activities in your child's class
- Notices
- Reminders
- Information relating to learning in class

Class Dojo works in a similar way to a social network and is primarily a link between class teachers and parents/carers. Parents/carers are reminded that class teachers are not expected to respond to Class Dojo outside of core school hours, 8.30am to 4.00pm. Messages sent outside of school hours will be responded to in due course during school hours. Messages sent to staff who are not class teachers may not be seen, and other methods of communication should be used to contact non-class teachers.

3.4 Phone calls

We regularly make phone calls to parents/carers for a range of reasons. We may telephone to discuss positive or negative aspects of work, behaviour or other aspects of school life. It is vital that parents maintain an up to date telephone number with the school.

If we call and are unable to reach a parent/carer, we will leave a message stating which member of staff is calling and whether we need you to contact us by return. Some phone calls from school will be urgent, whereas others may be able to wait until later. If there is no way to leave a message this can lead to parents/carers becoming anxious about the missed call from the school's number, so we would urge parents/carers to have a voicemail option where possible.

3.5 Letters

Bellingham Primary School and Bellingham Middle School send the following letters home regularly. However, these are normally sent via email rather than paper letters because of environmental, cost and reliability concerns:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Information about parent events.

3.6 Pupil Planners

Pupils in Bellingham Middle School are provided with a Pupil Planner to record their homework and other school to home communications. We ask that parents/carers look at the planner regularly, and sign it each week.

3.7 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
- Termly progress reports in key subjects
- A report on formal testing, including Key Stage 1 Phonics Screening, Key Stage 2 Multiplication Checks and Key Stage 2 SATs tests.

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

3.8 Meetings

We hold two parents' evening(s) per year. 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.

3.9 School website

Key information about the school is posted on our websites, 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.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within two working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within five 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 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 two working days. Please note, we have a number of staff who are part time, and two working days may be longer for those staff.

Please bear in mind that most staff spend most of their working day with children, and they are not normally available to answer the phone during the school day. Where it is not possible to speak to you by phone immediately, someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a mutually convenient time. We aim to make sure parents have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within five working days of your request.

If the issue is urgent, parents should call the school office. Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

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 five working days of the request.

While Bellingham Primary School 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

Bellingham Middle School teachers are sometimes available at the beginning or end of the school day, but recognise that in the Middle School years, pupils develop more independence and parents are less likely to be at the school gate. Therefore, it is recommended that parents book appointments to discuss their child with Bellingham Middle School staff.

If a parent/carer comes into school to speak to a member of staff without an appointment, it is unlikely that the relevant member of staff will be available at that point. Therefore, in this circumstance parents/carers should expect that a meeting time will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time.

5. Accessibility

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school.

5.1 Parents with additional communication needs

We aim to make communications accessible to all. We have taken the following steps to achieve this:

- All whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) are made available in multiple formats by request.
- All communications are written as clearly and concisely as possible
- Accessibility is considered when designing/updating the school website
- Staff are trained on accessibility and will endeavour to provide information in an accessible format

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request reasonable adjustments, such as:

- School announcements and communications in accessible formats
- Sign language interpreters for meetings

Please contact the school office to discuss these.

5.2 Parents with English as an additional language (EAL)

We attempt to meet the needs of speakers of other languages, and where communication in a language other than English would be helpful, please reach out to the school and we will:

- Translate school announcements and communications into additional languages
- Attempt to engage interpreters or an interpretation service for meetings or phone calls

We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

6. Monitoring and review

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

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- ICT and internet acceptable use
- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct
- Complaints
- Staff wellbeing
- Social media policy

Appendix 1: Who to contact and when

Query	Bellingham Primary School	Bellingham Middle School
A general enquiry about a minor classroom issue.	Contact the class teacher, via email.	Contact the form tutor or the subject teacher responsible, via email.
A query about homework.	Contact the class teacher, via email.	Contact the subject teacher, either via email or a note in the Pupil Planner - if sending a note in the planner, please remind your child to show the subject teacher!
If you are concerned about pastoral, wellbeing or behavioural concerns, or friendship issues.	Contact Mrs Fletcher, the Pastoral Lead, via email to tabitha.fletcher@bellinghampartnership.uk	Contact Mrs Fletcher, the Pastoral Lead, via email to tabitha.fletcher@bellinghampartnership.uk
If you are concerned about special educational needs provision, or a query about your child's needs.	Contact Miss Newman, the SENDCO, via email to amy.newman@bellinghampartnership.uk	Contact Miss Newman, the SENDCO, via email to amy.newman@bellinghampartnership.uk
If you have a general query about a process in school, an activity, a trip or are unsure where to direct your query.	Contact the school office via email firstadmin@bellinghampartnership.uk	Contact the school office via email middleadmin@bellinghampartnership.uk
If you have a concern about a child's safety, wellbeing or serious welfare concern.	Contact a member of the Safeguarding Team (Mrs Fletcher, Miss Mundy, Mr Gibson) by telephone to 01434 220230.	Contact a member of the Safeguarding Team (Mrs Fletcher, Miss Mundy, Mr Gibson) by telephone to 01434 220235.
If you have a query about a specific subject area.	Contact the class teacher via email or Class Dojo.	Contact the subject teacher via email.
If you have a practical query around attendance, reporting an absence, changing contact details or setting up general appointments.	Email the school office via firstadmin@bellinghampartnership.uk or telephone 01434 220230 during office hours.	Email the school office via middleadmin@bellinghampartnership.uk or telephone 01434 220235 during office hours.