

Oswald Road Primary School

Internal Communications Policy

April 2017

INTRODUCTION

Good communication is essential to maintaining a positive working and learning environment. Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect in a happy, caring and supportive environment means that people feel included, consulted and informed. This requires that we use a variety of channels of communication so as to ensure that the relevant people receive the necessary information.

Every member of staff has a responsibility to support effective communications and needs to recognise that the quality of their communications reflects on the school's reputation.

STAFF MEETINGS

- Staff meetings for teachers will be held each Wednesday at 3:45pm. TAs are welcome to join the staff meetings voluntarily. There will also be some staff meetings where TAs are expected to attend. Meeting notes will be taken of most staff meetings and sent to TAs to keep them informed as to what was discussed. Year group briefings are to be held once a week and the times of these needs communicating with your Phase Lead. The purpose of these is to discuss planning for the week.
- A staff briefing for all teaching and support staff will take place every Wednesday morning at 8:20am. All staff are to attend the briefing. The notes from each meeting will be typed up by Ellie and shared with all staff in the Staff Newsletter.
- There is a half termly TA Forum.
- Regular office meetings are held to discuss what is and what is not working on the admin side of school.
- There will be a voluntary teacher forum held half termly.

STAFF NEWSLETTER

- A staff newsletter is emailed out at lunchtime every Friday. It contains all of the letters for that week, the calendar for the next week, plus any important whole-staff announcements and reminders. It is very important that all staff read this newsletter in order to stay informed on what is going on around the school.
- If any staff have reminders or announcements that they would like including in the Staff Newsletter, please email Ellie before the end of the day on a Thursday, for it to be included in that week's newsletter.

PHONE CALLS BETWEEN OFFICE AND CLASSROOMS

- Office staff can phone the classroom if parents come to pick up children or if children need to come for their medicine.
- Helen Allsop (or Jackie on a Friday) will be able to ring the classroom to check attendance issues.
- Other than for the above reasons, the office are not to call the classrooms during class time, unless it is an exceptional circumstance. Non-urgent messages are to be delivered to teachers during breaktimes or after school.

- Staff should make every effort not to call the office first thing in the morning (8:45am-9:30am) unless urgent. This is a very busy time for the office and there will be nobody to answer calls. If you need to get a message to the office at this time, please send a child.

TRIP PLANNING TIMESCALES

Minimum 4 weeks before the trip:

1. Lead Teacher to complete an 'Educational Trips & Visits Costing Sheet' (see APPENDIX 1) with as much information as possible about the trip.
2. Risk Assessment to be carried out and risk assessment form submitted to Sarah N for authorisation together with Educational Trips & Visits Costing Sheet.
3. If the trip requires pupils to travel by bus then please also complete the 'Cash Request Form' (see APPENDIX 2). Cash will be remitted on the day of travel for bus fare only. Change and receipts must be returned to the office.
4. Submit Costing Sheet/Risk Assessment/Cash Requisition to the Finance Team, together with a draft letter. The Finance team will then be responsible for costing trip and booking travel and venues etc.

Minimum 2 weeks before the trip:

1. Parent letters to be checked by Lead Teacher to ensure all details are correct, prior to it being submitted to Ellie for final proof reading and authorisation by the Headteacher.
2. Parent letters sent out.
3. All letters will specify a cut-off date of at least **5 working days** before the date of the trip for submission of permission slips and money by parents. This is to allow sufficient time for any packed lunch orders to be placed prior to the trip. Any orders received after the cut-off date will unfortunately not be able to be processed.

One week before trip:

1. Lead teachers please liaise with the office to ensure all permission slips have been received and remind your pupils if necessary.

LETTERS

- Before sending out any letters, they are to be read by Ellie Linton, who will proofread them and send them on to Debs for final approval. Ellie will then arrange for the letter to be printed (if it has a reply slip), emailed out to parents, and added to the school website. If the letter gives information about an event, this will be added to the school calendar for parents to see. Please give parents as much notice as possible for any events (minimum two weeks for trips and for events where parents are invited into school).
- No letters must be issued that have not been read and authorised by the Communications Manager and the Headteacher.

- If you need to contact parents urgently group texts can be sent via the school office.
- If you have an article or announcement that you would like to be included in the newsletter, please contact Ellie.

EMAILS

- E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating information; however it does not replace face to face meetings where some discussion is required.
- Teaching staff should not log on to their email during class.
- Whole staff emails are only to be sent by SLT, or if the matter is urgent and relevant to all staff (teaching and support). Any non-urgent messages for all staff are to be emailed to Ellie to include in the Staff Newsletter, which is emailed out on a Friday at lunchtime.
- Please remember to use the email groups if you have an email that is for multiple people but not necessarily relevant as a whole staff email (eg. Teachers@oswaldroad..., SLT@oswaldroad... etc)
- Whole staff emails are **not** to be sent to check if the hall is free. The hall timetable can be checked with Ellie, or you can check if it is in use for an event by looking at the staff calendar (which all staff have access to through their Gmail accounts).
- Any emails with worrying content are not to be sent at night or weekend.
- Any heavy work emails are either not sent at the weekend or are labelled– 'Do not read until Monday'

USE OF TANNOY

- The tannoy is only to be used outside of class time, to indicate the start and end of breaktime, or at the discretion of the headteacher (eg. Drop Everything and Read). In the event of a child absconding from class the tannoy may be used during classtime, with the message "Can a member of SLT please report to the office immediately".

CALENDARS

- A staff calendar can be accessed by all members of staff through their Gmail account. The calendar is updated and maintained by the Communications Manager. All events to be added to the calendar (including hall use) should be emailed to Ellie.
- A school calendar can be accessed on the school website. This includes all events that concern parents (eg. trips, workshops, term dates etc).

EVENTS

- An events checklist (see Appendix 5) must be completed for all events in which visitors are invited into school (eg. parent workshops, parents evenings, transition days, afterschool clubs). This is so that the office can know if rooms are being used, cover is needed on reception or other members of staff need to be informed such as Phil or Sam from Owl Club.
- Staff are to inform the office if they are expecting any visitors to school.

PARENT COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHERS

- Queries from parents/carers are not to be forwarded to teachers' email accounts. Concerns, particularly ones where the tone is personal or abusive, must not be emailed to teachers under any circumstances. All concerns are to be forwarded to the school's inbox account, who will then forward accordingly. See "APPENDIX 3: Protocol for emails with parents / carers" for more information.
- The only emails to be forwarded from admin@ are those relating to homework.
- No queries should be forwarded to teachers' email accounts during their holidays.
- No teacher should be asked to meet with a parent/carer unless they know what the meeting is about. If parents/carers email or phone the office to request a meeting, all office staff must ask for this information before passing on the message to teachers. The standard line to be used is: 'Can I ask what the meeting is about? I will pass your request on and school will respond within two working days.' Details of the query will be taken. If it is urgent the office staff will email inbox@ or Sarah Nicholls.
- Teachers should not be directed to telephone parents/carers. If parents/carers have a query, the standard line to be used by office staff is: 'I will pass your message onto X.' The relevant teacher will then decide how to respond to this message. The message will be written on a message slip (carbon copy kept) and at a suitable time to staff the office will hand deliver any messages (break times).
- See "APPENDIX 4: Protocol for phone calls with parents/carers" for more information.
- Teaching staff have two days to respond to queries. All office staff must remind parents/carers of this when necessary.
- Any communication from parents/carers that is aggressive or forceful should be logged on CPOMs as a Parental Conduct concern.

COVER DIARY

It is vital that all absence requests that require cover go through the cover diary so that Adam can arrange for someone to cover your class/one-to-one. All cover requests must be put in by 2:30pm on a Thursday for the following week.

Every Friday Adam will send out the cover arrangements for the following week. Adam will put a paper copy of this at the front of the cover diary, which is held near the signing in screen in reception. All TAs will need to check this in the morning when they sign in to see if they are down for any extra cover for that day.

Adam will add any emergency cover arrangements to this sheet each day by 8:00am. For this reason it is imperative that you check this each morning as you sign in.

There will be no daily emails about emergency cover as this will all be in the cover diary.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Headteacher:

- Making whole school decisions on events (eg parents evenings) and ensuring that these events are communicated via the QAC.
- Leading staff meetings and briefings
- Final sign off of all letters to parents.
- Receiving complaints sent to 'inbox@' and sharing with relevant members of staff in line with protocol
- Recording any follow up from parental conduct on CPOMS and sharing verbally with any staff involved.

Communications Manager:

- Making sure all relevant events are communicated, with sufficient notice, to parents and/or staff.
- Putting together and sending out the Staff Newsletter once a week to keep all staff informed on what is going on around school.
- Putting together and sending out the Weekly Update once a week to keep all parents informed on what is going on around school.
- Proofreading and formatting of all communications to parents (letters, emails, social media posts etc)
- Maintaining the school calendar (which is public for parents to view) and the staff calendar (which is only accessible to school staff)

Teachers:

- Organising their own events/trips and making sure that the office is given sufficient notice so that the appropriate plans can be put into place.
- Writing letters to communicate event/trip details to parents, then sending this letter to Ellie in the office.
- Completing events checklist where required and sending to the office.

Office staff:

- Taking queries from parents and forwarding them to the appropriate member of staff, ensuring that the internal communications policy is adhered to (eg. don't forward emails of a personal nature to teachers)

All staff:

- Communicating messages to Ellie that need to be included in either the Staff Newsletter or the Weekly Update (parent newsletter).
- Regularly checking staff and school calendars to ensure that they are informed of upcoming events in school.

APPENDIX 1

Educational Trips & Visits Costing Sheet

To be completed and submitted to the office by the Trip Lead Teacher together with Risk Assessment Form

To be Completed by Trip Lead Teacher	
Visit Destination	
Class	
Preferred Dates (Please specify minimum two dates)	
Lead Teacher	
Time of Departure from School	
Time of Arrival Back to School	
Number of Pupils Travelling (Please indicate how many of these pupils are FSM/PP)	
Number of Adults Travelling (Please include all Teachers, TAs and Parent Volunteers)	
Packed Lunches required	YES/NO
Within 4 week Timescale	YES/ NO (IF NO, please specify why)
Completed parent letter emailed to Finance	YES/NO
Specific Requests for Venue Booking E.g. Tour guides required/ Specific Talk/Lecture Required and any Additional Information.	
Approved by SBM	Signed: Date:

To be Completed by Finance Team	
Total Cost of Travel (e.g. Coach, Tram etc.)	£
Total Cost of Venue and Extras	£
Total Charge per Child <u>(Total cost of Travel+ Venue)</u> Total No. of Pupils	£
Cash required on day of trip (FOR BUS FARE ONLY)	YES/NO £
Coaches Booked	Date: Company: Signed:
Venue Booked	Date: Signed:
Letter Approved by Head	Date: Signed:
Parent Letters Sent Out	Date: Signed:
Purchase Order Raised/Journal Completed	Date: Signed:
Lunches Ordered	Date: Signed:
Additional Notes:	

APPENDIX 2

Oswald Road Primary School Request for Cash (For Bus Fares Only)

Name

Date

Budget.....

Amount Requested.....

Reason

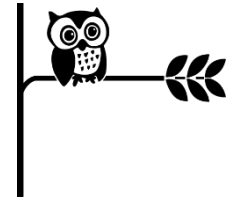
Signed.....

Receipts Attached Yes/No

Amount of Change Returned (if applicable).....

APPENDIX 3

Protocol for emails with parents / carers



Emails with any concerns are to go to inbox@oswaldroad.manchester.sch.uk

If an email with a concern goes to any other email address than inbox@:

If an email with a concern goes to any other email address (including the Headteacher's) all staff are to use the same standard line:

Dear XXX

Please contact inbox@oswaldroad.manchester.sch.uk as per school policy.

Your email to this address will be responded to within two working days of it being received.

Kind regards

Oswald Road

(There will be odd thing that needs to go to the office or Headteacher straight away – parents/carers will have been informed of this within the letter explaining new procedures)

Once the email arrives at inbox@:

The School Business Manager opens the inbox@ address daily (morning). If there are any emails in there, they will send to the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will then read the email and make a decision who is best placed to deal with this concern. Is it class teacher, Phase Lead, SIP lead or a member of SLT? This will depend on level of concern, nature of concern and content and is at the Headteacher's discretion. CPOMS will be checked at this point to see if there is any relevant information.

If it is something to pass on to a class teacher, the Headteacher will speak to them and explain the concern (rather than email).

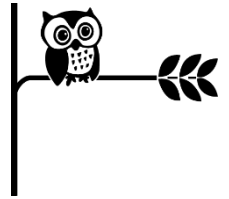
If it something to pass on to a Phase Lead, SIP Lead or SLT (unless it has any personal content), it will be emailed over. The Headteacher will pass to the Communications Manager to log on the Stakeholder Management Plan, labelling the email 'Confidential'. The Communication Manager and Headteacher will be kept informed of actions taken and outcome.

Once received by the Phase Lead, SIP Lead or SLT, if it relates to a member of staff, then again this will be discussed in person not via email.

The Headteacher will always make the decision on who is dealing with the concern by considering level of concern raised, nature of concern and content (ie whose role in school does the content relate to). The Headteacher will apply consistency to the process.

APPENDIX 4

Protocol for phone calls with parents/carers



If phoning a parent to listen to an issue / to answer their query:

Explain why you are calling and ask them to share with you what their issue is / the reason they wanted you to contact them.

Listen to the above.

Make a decision whether you should be dealing with this or whether it should be someone else in school.

a) If it is someone else who is best placed to deal with their concern or query, explain who you will be passing it on to and why.

If they say they would prefer you to deal with it, explain why it needs to be the person you are directing them to again.

Make arrangements for the information to be passed to this person and explain what you will do and when they can expect to hear from this member of staff. If the situation discussed is personal in anyway, ensure this is a conversation with the member of staff, not an email.

b) If it is you who is best placed to deal with their concern or query, either: explain your next steps or give the answer to their question; give yourself time to think what the next steps are and say you will call them back tomorrow; or invite them in for a meeting.

If phoning a parent following an incident where a member of staff has been made to feel uncomfortable:

Explain why you are calling and the reason for your call is to support a way forward.

Say you would like to share from school's perspective (including a conversation around duty of care for the staff member) and you would also like to listen from their perspective.

Let them know whether this would be best placed over the phone or face to face. If face to face, invite in for a meeting.

Explain the situation from school's point of view clearly.

Ask the parent/carer to explain from their point of view.

Lead a way forward.

If phoning a parent due to their being an incident where they have been abusive towards a member of staff or there has been parental conduct issues in line with Parental Conduct Policy:

This is for behaviours as follows:

- offensive language or malicious comments
- unwarranted and unnecessary correspondence taking up undue teaching and administrative time
- intimidation
- harassment
- disruptive behaviour
- racist conduct
- incitement of others and threats or risk of injury
- offensive or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the staff at the school on any Social Media sites

If this is the first time this has happened, call the parent, explaining the situation, asking them politely to desist. Invite them into a meeting, where they will be asked politely to desist again and the matter can be discussed in person. The parent doesn't have to take the offer of the meeting, however it must be offered.

If the same parent continues, then no second phone call is needed. As per policy they would then be sent a formal written warning letter, signed by the Headteacher. This letter would be passed to the relevant people only in school. This is kept on file for 12 months.

If the same parents still continues, again there would be no phone call. A second formal letter would be sent.

If the same parent still continues, request legal advice.

APPENDIX 5

Events Checklist

Event Name:

Event Location:

Lead member of Staff:

Date:

Time:

Action	Completed	By whom
Inform teaching staff		
Inform parents – letter/ text/ email sent		
Inform Office staff		
Consent forms to be collected?		
Reception cover needed? What time and how long?		
Inform Phil and cleaning staff		
Inform Owl Club		
Inform other clubs on site		
Fire Wardens arranged		
Refreshments required		
Signing in by attendees required		