



Communication policy

Rationale

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

- Gives parents/carers, staff and other professionals the information they need to support children's education.
- Helps the school improve, through feedback and consultation with parents/carers, staff and other professionals.
- Builds trust between home and school, and with other professionals, 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, staff and other professionals.
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers and staff, reinforcing our school values of 'Safe, Respectful, Learning'
- Helping parents/carers and professionals 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 and professionals to include internal staff and external professionals.

Within this policy it is recognised that organisational changes made with the best interest of pupils will not be communicated with parents unless it is necessary.

Roles and responsibilities

The Principal is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with parents, staff and other professionals are effective, timely, respectful and appropriate.
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy.
- Regularly reviewing this policy.

MPA staff are responsible for:

- Checking timetables, read the start of the school day briefing email and communications at least once each working day.
- Reading the weekly email bulletin that includes dates for the diary
- Responding to communication from parents and other professionals in line with this policy and the school's IT and internet acceptable use policy.

- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents and other professionals get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves).
- Responding to communication during core school hours 8:30am – 4.30pm, or their working hours if these differ, on their working days. 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.
- Answering and responding to questions face to face or via the telephone between 8.00 – 4.00 (admin team). The office is shut for professional development between 11.30 – 12.00.
- Using the whole school 39-week overview and assessment calendar in the handbook to know what is coming up (teachers).

Staff will use their professional judgement to choose an alternative time and place to meet with parents when necessary.

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, including the school website.

Parents should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours (as above) or during school holidays. Class based staff, such as teachers, may be more limited in terms of times when they can respond due to their duties in class.

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be referred to the principal. Repeated incidents may result in a letter preventing parents from entering the school grounds. Our staff have a right to work in a safe environment.

Other Professionals

We acknowledge that communications from professionals working for other organisations will be governed by the policies of their employer and as such, this is beyond the jurisdiction of our school policy. We will respect the communication policies and practices of external organisations and professionals. If we have concerns about communications we are receiving, we will raise these in line with the policy of the organisation the communication originated from where this does not contradict our school policies.

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be referred to the principal.

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

Email

We 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
- Letters about trips and visits
- Our half termly school newsletters
- Changes in government guidance

Text messages

We will text parents about:

- Good news about your child
- Unauthorised absences
- Payments (including school meals that have not been booked)
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)
- Reminders of school events and upcoming meetings
- First aid

Termly 'What's coming up'

All events are shared through the whole school 'What's coming up' newsletter information sheet. This is emailed to all families and displayed in the notice board outside of the main school gate.

Where possible, we try to give parents 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).

Phone calls

MPA staff will return calls to parents who have asked to speak with them, where they are the appropriate point of contact. Usually this will be the class teacher or a member of the school admin team.

Teachers will call parents to discuss their child if there is a need for a conversation. Teachers may also agree with parents to call regularly because school and home are working together to support an aspect of a child's education or welfare.

If parents provide important information during a phone call that needs to be shared with others, a written record will be made of this information and it will be circulated to staff as appropriate.

Knowledge organisers

When each new unit of learning starts, your child will bring home a paper copy of the knowledge organiser in advance. We use it to share the key concepts and key knowledge (facts, vocabulary, images) with the children. This forms part of your child's home learning and informs parents of what their child is learning in class.

X (Formerly known as Twitter)

We use X to promote and celebrate learning from children in class. Each year group will share a different learning opportunity each week from our curriculum.

Facebook

We use Facebook to promote and share community events that our children and families can access and enjoy. For example, events at the local library.

Reports

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

- Mid-year progress review
- An end-of-year report covering their progress and achievement in each part of the curriculum.

We also arrange regular meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below). On request, we will send the written reports to parents who live at a different address.

Parents Meetings

Within our EYFS (Pre-school and Reception), MPA staff meet parents every term to ensure children settle quickly and we develop positive relationships. For children in Year 1 and above, we will hold three parents' evenings a year. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern.

If your child has specific SEND provision that requires a personalised plan, this may involve additional meetings at set times throughout the year.

If a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), parents will be invited to attend their child's EHCP Annual Review during the school day, in addition to a parents' evening. This is a longer meeting and will focus on progress towards EHCP outcomes and annual targets as well as aspects covered in parents' evenings.

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

School website

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

- School times and term dates
- INSET days
- Important events and announcements
- Curriculum information
- Important policies and procedures
- Important contact information

Please check the website in the first instance if you are looking for this kind of information.

Home-school communications

At Minerva Primary Academy, we use Teachers2parents to send mass communications to parents by email or text, depending on the nature of the communication.

Most school letters are sent to parents this way, attached to emails.

We may also use this system to send out individual messages where this is the most efficient and appropriate means of communication.

Currently, we are only able to send text messages and emails to the parent listed as the priority contact.

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.

At the start and end of the school day, members of the Senior Leadership Team and Pastoral Care Team are available to listen or signpost you to the appropriate person or information.

Email

Parents are encouraged to email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within 3 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school office.

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 5 working days.

If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 8 school 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

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 10 working days of the request.

While teachers may be available at the beginning or end of the school day, if parents need to speak to them, 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.

Inclusion

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

We currently make whole-school announcements and communications (such as email alerts and newsletters) available in English.

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

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages.
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

Our school website has the facility to translate into over fifty languages other than English. We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

Appendix 1:

School contact list Who should I contact?

I have a question about....	Who do I need to talk to?
My child's learning/homework/class activities	Class teacher If you cannot speak to them at the start or end of the school day you can email info@mpa.clf.uk with the title FAO: name of class teacher
My child's wellbeing	Class teacher If you cannot speak to them at the start or the end of the school day you can email info@mpa.clf.uk with the title FAO: name of class teacher
Safeguarding	Designated Safeguarding Lead Miss Hudson Email our MPA safeguarding email: safeguarding@MPA.clf.uk FAO: Safeguarding Lead You can also contact First response (Bristol): 0117 903 6444 Access and Response (South Glos): 01454 866 000
Payments	You can email info@mpa.clf.uk with the title FAO: finance assistant
School trips	Look on the website under letters Class teacher
Uniform – lost and found	Class teacher
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report an absence phone 0117 3772990 or email info@mpa.clf.uk by 9am. Absence request forms need to be completed four weeks in advance and addressed to Mrs Shaw (Attendance lead)
Behaviour	Class teacher
Hiring the school premises	Email the school info@mpa.clf.uk with the title FAO: Operations Manager
Friends of Minerva (FOM)	Email the school info@mpa.clf.uk with the title FAO: Friends of Minerva
Academy council	Email the school info@clf.mpa.uk with the title FAO: Chair of AC

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