



Communication Policy

Adopted by Governors
Next review due

November 2023
November 2026

Introduction

Positive communication is an essential element of the aims and vision of Otle All Saints Primary School. This enables our children and families to feel valued and listened to. The majority of this communication takes place through the frequent verbal interactions between families and staff as children are brought to and from school as well as telephone, text, email and planner (Years 5 and 6 only).

Aim

To ensure that Otle All Saints School is a thriving and successful school, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our children, with their families and with other members of the wider community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are open, honest, respectful, ethical and professional.

Contact details

The school holds emergency contact details for all children on the School Information Management System (SIMs) and families are contacted on an annual basis to ensure that these are up to date. Families are expected to inform the school immediately in the event that contact information needs to be revised. Depending on the nature of the communication, the school will use the most practicable means to contact families.

Communications with Families

The term ‘families’ is used here to refer to all those individuals who have a role in the up-bringing and care of the child. Families are welcome to visit the school to discuss their child’s progress, ask questions, and gain support or to have the opportunity to talk about their child/home issues with their child’s class teacher first, then school leaders, where appropriate.

Message, Queries, Concerns	Person to Contact
If your child is absent from school...	Please notify the school office each day of absence by 9.00am either by telephone on 01943464703 (where you can leave a message) or in person. Please note that this notification does not guarantee that absences will be authorised.
If you have a quick message for your child’s teacher about collection, wellbeing ...	Talk to your child’s teacher on the playground after the class has been dismissed or when they collect children from the playground on a morning; staff members from each class are outside every afternoon. Urgent messages may be left at the school office if you do not get a chance to speak to the teacher.
If your child has an upcoming medical appointment...	Telephone or email the school office; please include letter or appointment confirmation wherever possible.
If you are unsure about particular class arrangements e.g. PE lesson days	Check previous communications, such as class newsletters, before contacting the school office.

If you would like to talk about your child's learning progress...	Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher via the school office. If, following your discussion you would like more information, make an appointment to meet with a senior leader.
If you are concerned about social behaviour or bullying...	Make an appointment to meet with your child's teacher via the school office. If, following your discussion you would like more information, make an appointment to meet with a senior leader.
If you would like to discuss something related to your child's teacher...	Make an appointment to meet with the headteacher via the school office.
If you would like to discuss your child's special educational needs...	Make an appointment to meet with the SENCO via the school office.
If you would like to find out about after school clubs or have a query...	Check the school website, email the office on office@otleyallsaints.co.uk or ask at the school office.
If you have a query about Breakfast Club...	Please contact or email the Breakfast Club team at breakfastclub@otleyallsaints.co.uk or contact the school office
If you have a 456 Club (after school club) query...	Please email the 456 Club team 456club@otleyallsaints.co.uk or contact the school office
If you have a query regarding payments ...	Enquiries can be made to the school office staff.
If you have a school dinner enquiry...	Please contact the school office directly.
If you wanted to check if the school is open...	Please check the school website or Leeds school closures online. If the school is closed for bad weather, we will contact you via email or text message at the earliest opportunity.

Outside of teaching their designated class, all staff have additional duties which they perform either before school, during break/lunch or after school. These duties will include care of children, organisation of extra-curricular activities or whole-school coordination of a curriculum subject. We aim to be able to facilitate requests for an immediate meeting; when this is not possible, staff will aim to do so within 1- 5 school days. Arranging a mutually convenient appointment allows the school time to organise cover to make staff available, to speak to the families and to gather any necessary information prior to the meeting. This process will make the meeting much more constructive. The following list, whilst not exhaustive, covers the main ways in which we will communicate with families:

- 1. Class Newsletters** Families will receive a termly year group newsletter via email (paper copies are available on request). This will identify the focus of the learning taking place during the period indicated and identifies how families can support their child's learning at home.
- 2. Email and Electronic Information** The school's main form of communication is via email or Scopay (our online payment system). Not only is this more environmentally friendly as it decreases paper usage, it also reduces photocopying and other costs in the school. We urge families to provide us with a valid email address. Families are permitted to use e-mail as a means of providing a quick, effective way of communicating information about their child or to arrange a meeting with their teacher. Families are reminded that teachers have little to no time during their teaching day to check emails and therefore requests which require immediate or quick action should be sent via the school office. For example, emailing your child's teacher to inform them you

will be collecting them for an appointment or to change pick-up arrangements is not appropriate due to the high likelihood that the message will not be read in time. It is important that families telephone the school office with this information.

Staff may forward emails to the headteacher or other members of staff where appropriate. Staff are not expected to, and are discouraged from, checking and responding to emails outside of their working day. However, staff are encouraged to work flexibly and respond to emails in a way that suits them to balance their working hours. Staff and families are encouraged to use the 'schedule send' option so that emails arrive in an inbox between 8.00am and 5.00pm on school days. Email does not replace face to face meetings where some discussion is required. All staff should seek face to face communications or phone conversations, when email is not the most effective form of communication. Staff will not enter into in-depth discussions about a child's progress or wellbeing via email.

3. Staff E-mail (See also Online Safety Policy and Agreement) The school gives all staff their own email account to use for all school business. Email can be an efficient way of communicating with colleagues and passing on information. However, it should not be used as a substitute for face-to-face contact and staff must consider whether it is the best way to communicate in each situation and understand that there is permanent record of any communication. Teachers should ensure that:

- they do not engage in private /personal correspondence with a pupil. This includes texting and social networking;
- under no circumstances should they contact pupils or parents, or conduct any school business, using personal email accounts or text messaging;
- no chain letters are sent and no advertisements are embedded in any communication;
- emails between staff members are not copied to parents, as this may compromise confidentiality.

4. Texting The school has a text system which is used to communicate with families. Text messages are sent to primary contacts. This is not a reply service.

5. Telephone calls Inbound - All telephone calls will be answered by staff in the main office. It is our policy that office staff should not interrupt teaching to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency. Messages are taken and forwarded to the relevant person. If the call requires a response from a member of staff, we aim to do this within 3 working days.

Outbound - Telephone calls will be made where immediate contact with a family member is required i.e. for injuries or accidents. A member of staff will call the first named emergency contact as listed. Where no contact is made, a call will then be made to the second named contact and so forth. In the event that no contact can be made, the member of staff will either leave an answer phone message or ensure that repeat calls continue to be made to the contact numbers, where possible.

6. Written Reports Once a year, we provide a full written report to each child's families on their progress. This report identifies areas of strength and next steps.

7. Whole School Newsletter Our newsletter is emailed out every other Friday and contains important reminders, dates and messages for the weeks ahead. Families are strongly encouraged to read these.

8. Parents Evenings and progress meetings We arrange two meetings between teachers and parents each academic year. Families are asked to sign up for an allocated date and time. Should

an appointment day not be suitable, families are asked to contact their child's teacher who will make every effort to arrange a more mutually convenient time. Families are encouraged to request additional meetings should they have a concern regarding their child's progress or well-being. Likewise, staff will arrange additional meetings if necessary. All children with an Education and Health Care Plan will have an annual review each academic year to discuss their progress in relations to the aims and objectives of their plan, and half termly review meetings are held to ensure provision and support is appropriate. Parents of children on the SEN register are invited to meet with the SENCO twice a year in order to discuss the progress and wellbeing of their child.

9. School Website The website <http://www.otleyallsaints.co.uk> provides an opportunity to share information about the school and is an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience. The website contains lots of detailed information about the curriculum, school policies, dates and policies.

Complaints

See separate policy

Data Protection

See separate policy

Requests for Information

Please refer to our Data Protection and GDPR Policy for copies of children's records, freedom of information and Subject Access Requests. This will detail procedures and protocols, including timings.

Unreasonable communication

The school is committed to addressing all concerns fairly and impartially, and to providing a high quality service to those who complain. We will not normally limit the contact complainants have with our school. However, we do not expect our staff to tolerate unacceptable behaviour and will take action to protect staff from that behaviour, including that which is abusive, offensive or threatening.

The school's definition of unreasonable behaviour can be found in full in our Complaints Policy, and includes communication from families which:

- raises large numbers of detailed but unimportant questions, and insists they are fully answered, often immediately and to their own timescales;
- seeks an unrealistic outcome;
- makes excessive demands on school time by frequent, lengthy and complicated contact with staff;
- uses threats to intimidate;
- uses abusive, offensive or discriminatory language or violence;
- publishes unacceptable information on social media or other public forums.

In response to any serious incident of aggression or violence, we will immediately inform the police and communicate our actions in writing. This may include barring an individual from the school.