

Bishop Perrin Church of England Primary School

Communications Policy

Non-Statutory Policy



Our school is a Church of England School and works in partnership with our two local parish churches, St Augustine's and Ss Philip & James'. We aim to reflect the values, traditions and beliefs of the Christian Faith and therefore our Spiritual Values underpin everything that we do.

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INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

To ensure that Bishop Perrin School is a thriving and successful school, we must communicate effectively with each other, with the children, with our families and with other members of the wider community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, open, timely, respectful and accurate.

The staff and governors of Bishop Perrin School understand the need to establish and foster clear lines of communication within the school community. There is a need to ensure that all stakeholders, including parents and carers, staff and governors and the wider community all work together to ensure the very best for every child that attends the school.

We aim to have as many relevant lines of communication as possible between the school and all stakeholders to reinforce the important role that everyone has in supporting the school, as well as ensuring there are clear and well- established ways to feed back and be informed on all elements of school life.

This policy explains the school's commitment to communicating with all stakeholders in the community, the responsibilities of parents, carers and guardians and the expectations of all involved.

This policy seeks to ensure staff, parents and carers can communicate in the best and most respectful manner, with the child's needs at the forefront, being able to come to a resolution to any issues raised in a timely and effective manner.

To ensure efficient and respectful communication between Bishop Perrin School and its parent community, our communications policy will:

- explain how, when and what we will communicate with parents
- sets clear standards for when and how communications will be responded to and managed
- supports parents to reach the appropriate and correct member of staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can receive a response as quickly as possible

This policy should also be read in conjunction with our [Home School Agreement](#).

For the remainder of this policy the term parents will be used to refer to parents, guardians and carers.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

School

The school are responsible for:

- providing parents with clear lines of communication with staff and governors
- clearly communicating with parents on all aspects of school life
- informing parents of forthcoming events within appropriate timelines
- ensuring that all parents can access the communication by making reasonable adjustments for those who need it (please refer to the Inclusion section)

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- responding to communication from parents in line with this policy
- working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they are unable to address a query or send the information themselves)
- responding to a query, phone call or email within 48 hours (2 working days) of its receipt and during the working day. If this is not possible, a holding message will be sent. Although staff are able to respond to queries at any point during the working day, parents should not expect a response outside of the hours of 8.30am – 5pm.

Parents

Parents are encouraged to:

- read all communications issued by the school (according to the 'methods of communication' section)
- act on the communication when required (for example, attending meetings)
- raise issues, concerns or feedback at the earliest opportunity with the school
- understand the timeframe in which communications can be replied to as set out in this policy
- abide by the expectations detailed in the [Home School Agreement](#)
- ensure that communication with the school and staff is reasonable and respectful
- avoid an expectation of staff to respond to communication outside their working hours, during the weekend, or the school holidays
- refrain from chasing any communication that has not been replied to within the 48-hour period or 2 working days
- refrain from discussing school business on public forums, which could be to the detriment of the school's purpose, values and perception by the wider community (see social media section)
- refrain from actively seeking validation or support for a concern from other parents on social media, as this could be interpreted as bullying or harassment. Legal advice will be sought as to how to proceed in these circumstances.

When communicating with Bishop Perrin School, we ask parents and carers to accept that their child's reporting of an event is but one piece of the puzzle, with school staff having further information available to them through multiple staff and student perspectives.

We ask that parents take a curious, rather than accusatory, approach in the initial stages of a concern to find out more about what has happened. We ask parents to set a good example to their children in their own speech and behaviour and refrain from criticising members of staff in front of their child.

We ask that parents accept that decisions made by staff are based on a body of evidence and on the balance of probability and take into consideration that staff may be faced with dilemmas involving ambiguity.

Parents are invited to follow the process in the [Complaints Policy](#) if they are unhappy with how an issue has been dealt with.

Governing Board

The governing board commit to:

- The publishing of full board meeting minutes on the school website, once the minutes have been signed off by the board and confidential elements redacted
- Contributing on a termly basis to the school newsletter, with updates on the work of the Governing Board

METHODS OF SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

How can I communicate directly with the school?

Parents are able to communicate with the school in a variety of different ways:

- **in person via the school office:** you can speak to a member of the office staff if you have a query or wish them to pass a message on to another member of staff. You can also make an appointment to meet with a specific member of staff.
- **school gate / playground:** either the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher is available at the main school gate at drop-off time and in the playground at pick-up time. You are welcome to speak to them to ask any questions, pass on a message or clarify information.
- **telephone (0208 894 1447):** if a member of staff is not available to answer your call immediately, you can leave a message on the answerphone, which is checked regularly.
- **email (info@bishopperrin.richmond.sch.uk):** emails are checked regularly throughout the working day and are forwarded onto the appropriate member of staff as necessary. Emails can be used to arrange an appointment to meet with a specific member of staff if required. Please remember that teachers are not able to read or respond immediately to emails during the school day when they are teaching.
- **reading logs / homework diaries / notes:** these are used to record children's weekly home readings, but are also a good way for parents to send an informal note or non-urgent message directly to their child's teacher. They are commonly used to comment on a child's homework / reading / change to pick-up arrangements / uniform or if a child is unable to do PE that day. Please ensure you ask your child to show their reading log / diary to their teacher if it contains a note, as these are not checked every day. Urgent messages should be communicated via phone or email.

How does the school communicate with parents?

It is expected that parents monitor all of the following regularly to ensure that they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child. However, we will make reasonable adjustments for those who need it.

- **newsletter:** a one-stop-shop for school news including updates on recent school and School Association events, notice of future events, reminders, information about school trips, key dates in the school calendar, safeguarding and wellbeing advice
- **email:** this includes sending out the weekly newsletter on Friday, and for reminders and updates about other aspects of school life
- **school website (www.bishopperrin.richmond.sch.uk):** a one-stop-shop to find out everything about the school, our curriculum and your child's learning. It's also the place where you can find our policies and full Governing Board minutes and a calendar which is populated with upcoming

events and activities. Old newsletters are also archived on the website for reference purposes.

- **social media:** we use our Instagram account to keep parents updated on day-to-day life and learning at Bishop Perrin School: @BishopPerrinSchool
- **letters:** occasionally letters have to be sent to parents. This will either be by email, post or placed in the children's book bags, as appropriate.
- **telephone:** contact via telephone is for urgent issues where the school needs a response quickly, or needs to inform parents of a matter personally. Parents should endeavour to respond as soon as possible to a telephone call from the school.
- **'Meet the Teacher' meetings:** these are held at the start of the academic year and are an opportunity for parents to meet their child's new class teacher, visit their new classroom and hear about the upcoming year.
- **Open School:** this is an opportunity for parents to visit school during the working day and get a feel for what school life is like. This is not an opportunity for an update on a child's progress or attainment, but rather an opportunity for your child to share their school day with you.

The school will always communicate with parents in a polite, professional and respectful manner, adopting their title and last name. Parents are requested to do the same when addressing school staff.

How do I find out how my child is progressing at school?

- **parent consultations:** the school offers two formal opportunities for parents to meet with their child's class teacher for a 10-minute meeting, once in the autumn term and once in the spring term. During these meetings, teachers will discuss with parents how their child is progressing against their age-related expectations in both English, maths and other subjects. They will share targets in these subjects (English and maths) and discuss areas of the curriculum where a child might need more support. Parents of children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability are invited to book a 20-minute appointment. Our preference would always be to conduct meetings face-to-face, but we can arrange for phone calls to ensure all parents have fair access to this information.
- **Appointments:** in addition to the two formal parent interview meetings, parents are able to make appointments to see members of Bishop Perrin School staff at any time if they want to discuss any aspect of their child's education and performance at school. These should be arranged via the school office.
- **Informal chat with class teacher:** parents are often able to have an informal chat with their child's class teacher at the end of the school day when the children are dismissed, and this can often be a good opportunity to clarify and check on things if needed without the need for a formal meeting
- **End-of-year Reports:** in the summer term parents receive a written report detailing how their child has performed over the course of the academic year. These are provided electronically, with provision of a hard copy on request. Where parents are separated and we have contact details, a duplicate report will be sent to the non-resident parent.

WHO TO CONTACT

School Office

For any questions or issues not specific to your child's education or progress, please contact our school office via info@bishopperrin.richmond.sch.uk

Please use the above email address to contact the Finance and Administration Officer concerning finance-related issues, attendance or school meals, and our Marketing and Admissions Officer for any issues related to admissions, extra-curricular clubs or wrap-around-care.

Teaching Staff

In the first instance, please raise any issues or concerns in person with your child's class teacher. It may then be escalated to a member of the SLT if necessary.

When requesting an appointment please either email the school office or verbally request a meeting with the class teacher. It is always useful to provide a brief description of the reason for the meeting, along with your availability.

We will endeavour to meet with parents within one week of the request. Due to teaching commitments, meetings of this nature will usually be offered outside of the school day.

Inclusion Leader

It may be that a class teacher refers you to the Inclusion Leader if the needs of your concern are better met through a discussion about a child's additional needs. You can contact the Inclusion Leader directly if you have any queries or concerns about special educational needs, inclusion or wellbeing.

Senior Leadership Team

If you feel there has not been a satisfactory outcome to your enquiry this can be referred to a member of the Senior Leadership Team via info@bishopperrin.richmond.sch.uk . Please mark it confidential.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Concerns regarding safeguarding at school should go directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Miss McAvoy). If she is not available, please contact the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Miss Macklearn).

Headteacher

In the vast majority of cases enquiries should go through the Senior Leadership Team and teachers. If this has failed to resolve the issue, please share your concern with the headteacher or request an appointment via info@bishopperrin.richmond.sch.uk .

The Governing Board

Governors are there to steer the strategic direction and vision of the school, oversee the management of the school's finances and hold the headteacher to account. Governors do not get involved in the day-to-day running and decision making at the school.

However, if a parent feels they have the need to raise an issue with the governors, please email them on clerktogovernors@bishopperrin.richmond.sch.uk .

WAYS OF CONTACTING BISHOP PERRIN SCHOOL

The School Office

The School Office is open between the hours of 8.30am and 3.30pm. You can call (020 8894 1447), email (info@bishopperrin.richmond.sch.uk) or visit the office in person.

E-mail

We are very happy to meet in person or arrange a call to discuss any concerns. Therefore, we recommend that emails should only be used to ask a question, share a concern, general queries or to request a meeting with the relevant staff member, allowing staff to focus fully on teaching and learning during the school day.

We will not enter into prolonged back-and-forth email correspondence regarding an incident. These matters will be followed up in person in either a face-to-face meeting or a telephone call.

All emails should be addressed to the school info account:

info@bishopperrin.richmond.sch.uk .

Parents are requested not to email individual staff members directly about school issues.

Letters

The school is happy to receive handwritten letters as an alternative to email. Responses will be made by phone, email or in person.

Telephone

All calls are received by the School Office Team (0208 894 1447), who will either answer your query, direct your call or take a message. Please use email info@bishopperrin.richmond.sch.uk when the query is not urgent or time critical.

Due to teaching commitments, teaching staff will be unable to receive a call during the school day (8.15am – 3.30pm).

Appointments

You can make an appointment via any of the methods above with the relevant member of staff who will be able to deal with your request directly. Staff will aim to meet parents within one week of their request.

COMMITMENT TO STAFF WORKLOAD AND WELLBEING

In line with promoting staff's wellbeing and helping staff to find a suitable work-life balance, staff will respond to communication within 48 hours / 2 working days of its receipt and are only expected to respond during their working hours. Parents are politely asked to refrain from chasing a response within a 48-hour period or seek a response from another member of staff.

Parents should not expect staff to respond to communication outside of their working day, during the weekend or the school holidays.

SOCIAL MEDIA

As well as the official school social media presence, Bishop Perrin School welcome the many ways that parents build their own communities around the school using social media and the class WhatsApp groups. These are useful ways of keeping in touch with school updates, arranging School Association and other events, and sharing information and notices with each other. This is an important part of our school community and should be a safe, supportive space, where families receive and share useful information about school activity.

Please note that anything posted on social media, even in a private forum or private messenger group, could end up in the public domain.

The school reminds parents of the home school agreement around discussing school business on these forums, which could be to the detriment of the school's purpose, values and perception by the wider community. Therefore, parents should refrain from using WhatsApp or other social media platforms as a tool to:

- identify or post images/videos of pupils and for safeguarding reasons, children's names and personal details should never be used
- post abusive or personal comments about staff, pupils (including your own child) or other people
- bring the school into disrepute
- post defamatory or libellous comments
- circulate or initiate postings that have abusive, discriminatory or racist content
- use the platform to publicly challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children/families, including your own child/family
- use behaviour or language which could be interpreted as threatening or intimidating

For safeguarding reasons, WhatsApp groups must only include current class parents. Parents who have left the class must be removed from the group.

The school has a safeguarding responsibility and duty of care for all pupils, families and staff members in the school and these groups have a right to privacy and respect. The school must respond where emotional distress or reputational damage to individuals or the school are at risk. The school takes its responsibilities seriously and reported incidents will be investigated and where considered necessary, referred to external agencies.

If you have a concern about a post on the parent WhatsApp group or social media platform, in the first instance please raise your concern with the group admin. If you feel this is something that needs to be escalated, please contact the Headteacher. The group / page admin has a responsibility to report any concerning comments or content to the school.

Those who are in charge of admin for school WhatsApp groups are asked to pin the following statement to the class group:

When posting in this group, parents are reminded of the school's communication policy and the home-school agreement around discussing school business on public forums, which could be to the detriment of the school's purpose, values and perception by the wider community. Any inappropriate content will be reported immediately to the school.

Participation in a class WhatsApp group is not an expectation, parents may choose not to be part of such groups.

For more information about how the school uses and manages their social media, please see our [social media policy](#).

MOBILE PHONES AND TRACKING DEVICES IN SCHOOL

Smartphones belonging to pupils are not allowed on school property.

Children in Year 5 and 6 who walk independently to / from school are allowed to bring a non-smartphone mobile phone to school, but it must be switched off before they enter school premises and it must be kept in their school bag, in their locker, for the duration of the day. It is strictly prohibited for pupils to access their phone during the school day, and any child doing so will have their phone confiscated immediately and will no longer be allowed to bring it to school.

Children in other year groups are not permitted to bring mobile phones to school.

As a school, we strongly discourage the use of tracking devices with children of any age whilst at school. However, we appreciate that some parents may have concerns once their child reaches an age to walk to / from school independently (Year 5 & 6). If you do decide to provide your child (Years 5 & 6 only) with a GPS tracking device (such as AngelSense), these will be treated in the same way as a mobile phone. Children will be required to turn them off and store them in their bag in a designated locker upon arrival at school. They will not have access to them until the end of the day.

Bluetooth tracking systems (such as AirTag, Galaxy SmartTag2 and Tile) are not permitted in school. Their presence can cause false stalking alerts and make it difficult for the school to effectively safeguard all children and staff.

No form of GPS or Bluetooth tracking device is permitted on school excursions.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The school complies with UK GDPR and does hold information on pupils in our school. From time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others to support a child's education or for safeguarding reasons. Details have been sent to parents about the types of data we hold, why we hold that data, and who we may pass it on to.

The school is compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018 and KCSIE 2024.

Parents can view the information we hold by requesting a Single Access Request (SARs). We also have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed. Governors oversee processes around confidentiality.

Please see our [Data Protection policy](#) for more information.

INCLUSION

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school. Families who need help communicating with the school can request the assistance from the school which we will endeavour provide.

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

STAFF WHO ARE ALSO PARENTS

Members of staff who are also parents of a child at Bishop Perrin Primary School are expected to adhere to the guidelines set out in this policy. Any discussions about their child need to take place after the school day.

SEPARATED PARENTS

We recognise that children from families whose parents are separated or are undergoing separation, may go through traumatic changes during their time at school. To ensure that separated parents understand their parental responsibility and how we will communicate with separated parents, please review our [Separated Parents'](#) policy.

SAFEGUARDING

To report a safeguarding concern, please telephone the school or come in person (in the first instance) and ask to speak urgently with one of our safeguarding team.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Miss McAvoy, the deputy headteacher. The Deputy DSL is Miss Macklearn, the headteacher.

HOW CAN PARENTS GET INVOLVED IN SCHOOL LIFE?

Parents are encouraged to be as involved in school life as they wish. We warmly welcome parent volunteers to support learning in school and to accompany us on school visits.

You can get involved in the following ways:

- **Volunteering:** this could be directly with your child's class by helping out on visits or helping in a class with activities such as reading, cooking, and arts and crafts. We also have parent helpers who come in to read and do multiplication times tables practice with children from across a range of classes. Please contact the school office if you would like to volunteer in school in any of these ways, we would be very happy to hear from you.
- **The School Association (SA):** the SA are a vital part of our school community and organise activities and events to raise money to help the school. Helping with the SA allows parents to bring their skills and experience to assist with planning and the organisation of events whilst also getting to meet other parents across the school. Please see the [SA page](#) on our school website for more information.
- **The Governing Board:** the school is overseen at a strategic level by a board of governors, who are volunteers and are made up of members of the

school community. We have space for two parent governors on the governing board who hold a term of office for four years.

- **The Parent Forum:** our parent forum was established in 2019. It aims to meet once a term with the headteacher to discuss ideas and initiatives to help develop and foster good relationships between the school and the parent body. Each class can have up to two representatives on the parent forum who act as conduits to discuss aspects of school life and organisation that come to light. Please see the [Parent Forum](#) page on the school website, which includes the Terms of Reference and the Minutes from previous meetings.

Please see appendix 1 for details of opportunities to visit the school

COMPLAINTS

All formal letters of complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the school's [Complaints policy](#).

REVIEW

This policy is reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team.

Visiting the School

Throughout the year there are lots of opportunities for you to visit the school. Please see below the scheduled opportunities for parents to engage with the school over the course of the year.

Event	What/When/Frequency
Meet the headteacher	At the beginning of term, this is an opportunity to come into school to hear from the headteacher about the plans and aspirations for the coming school year.
Meet the teacher	Within the first week of the new school year, a meeting is held for parents to meet their child's new class teacher in their new classroom. This is an opportunity to hear about expectations for the new academic year and receive information about routines such as PE days, homework (where appropriate), etc. Whilst we encourage in-person attendance where possible, it is also possible to join this meeting virtually and all the information is sent out via email for those parents who can't attend.
Whole school religious service	Throughout the school year there are several opportunities to join the children in the school hall for their collective worship when celebrating important dates and events in the Christian calendar e.g. Harvest Festival. These opportunities will be communicated in the school newsletter.
'Stay and play sessions' (Year R)	An opportunity in the summer term before your child starts school, for you and your child to visit the Reception class environment and meet the staff. This is designed to aid a smooth transition into school life.
Parent consultations with your child's class teacher	Ten-minute appointments (20 minutes for those with a Learning Support Plan) in the autumn and spring terms to discuss your child's progress.
Parent workshops / coffee mornings	Workshops showcasing a variety of different workshops, for parents to learn more about what we teach, how we teach it or how to support children with their wellbeing and behaviour. Parents can gain useful insight into the best ways to support their child with their learning at home. This event is free to attend and are held first thing in the morning, straight after drop-off.
Parent Forum	Volunteer as a parent rep for your child's class. Help to gather parents views on issues to raise on their behalf at these termly meetings.
Class assembly	Each class will deliver one assembly during the school year, usually linked to what they've been learning in class. These take place at 8.55am on a Thursday morning and usually last for 20 – 30 minutes. Parents and family members of the children in that class are welcome to attend.
Reception and Year 1 & 2 nativity performances	Reception class hold performances in their class whilst Year 1 and Year 2 perform a joint nativity play in the hall. Year 2 take the lead speaking and acting roles. These are scheduled for the end of the autumn term in December. Dates will be communicated via the newsletter and on the school calendar.
End of term church service (including Christmas, Easter and end of the academic year)	The whole school attends St Augustine's Church to take part in an end-of-term service. This happens during the last week of each term. Our Christmas service allows children in Years 3 and 4 to perform and share the Christmas Story, along with the school choir. In the summer, we have our Year 6 Leavers' Service, marking all the memories and successes that Year 6 have achieved.
Infant and junior sports mornings	In the summer term, weather permitting, both the infants (on the school playground) and the juniors (using the field at Turing House School) compete in a range of races and events.
Open school morning	In the summer term, parents are welcomed into the school from 9-11am to see their child working in their class and watch their singing performance in the hall. There is also the opportunity to visit other classrooms during this time.
Junior swimming gala	At the end of the summer term, all four junior classes take part in an inclusive swimming gala.
Year 5 and 6 performance	Every other year, in July, children in Years 5 and 6 take part in an end of year play.