



Moordown St John's CE Primary School

Policy for School Communication

"A Christian community where commitment to educational excellence changes lives"

The Headteacher, on behalf of the Board of Directors of Moordown St. Johns CE Primary School, ratified this policy on 29th September 2026.

Review Date: July 2029

A copy of this policy in an alternative format, such as large print or different language, may be provided on request from the school office.

Moordown St John's CE Primary School

Communication Policy

1. Introduction and Aims

At Moordown St John's Primary School, we believe that clear, respectful and effective communication between school and home is essential to supporting pupils' learning, wellbeing and safeguarding. Positive communication helps to build strong relationships between families and the school community and ensures that concerns can be addressed promptly and appropriately.

This policy aims to:

- Promote open, respectful and professional communication between school and home
- Clarify how the school communicates with parents and carers
- Set realistic expectations regarding communication and response times
- Support staff wellbeing through manageable and appropriate communication practices
- Ensure communication systems comply with safeguarding and data protection requirements
- Explain the use of the Arbor Parent App and associated data-sharing arrangements

For the purposes of this policy, the term "parents" includes all parents and carers with parental responsibility.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring communication systems are effective, appropriate and compliant
- Monitoring implementation of this policy
- Supporting staff in maintaining professional boundaries
- Reviewing the policy regularly

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Communicating professionally and respectfully
- Acting in accordance with the school's confidentiality policy
- Responding to parent communication in line with this policy
- Using approved school communication systems only
- Escalating safeguarding or welfare concerns immediately

Staff will aim to respond to communication during normal working hours only (8.30am to 4.30pm).

Staff are not expected to respond during evenings (after 4.30pm), weekends or school holidays.

2.3 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are responsible for:

- Communicating respectfully with all staff
- Using the appropriate communication channels
- Allowing reasonable time for responses
- Ensuring the school is updated with accurate contact information
- Regularly checking communications from the school and the Arbor Parent App

Aggressive, abusive or threatening communication, whether in person, by telephone, email, social media or app messaging, will not be tolerated and may be addressed under the school's Parent Code of Conduct.

3. Communication Methods Used by the School

The school communicates with parents and carers through a range of methods, including:

3.1 Arbor

3.1. a) Parent App

The school uses the Arbor Parent App as the primary platform for communication with families.

The Arbor Parent App may be used for:

- Messages and announcements
- Attendance information
- Payments and trip information
- Consent forms
- Parents' evening bookings
- Emergency notifications
- Tracking 'BEST Me' Badges (reward scheme)

Parents are expected to download and regularly monitor the app to ensure they receive important information.

The Arbor Parent App should not be used for:

- Reporting safeguarding concerns
- Formal complaints
- Lengthy or complex discussions requiring meetings

Urgent matters should always be directed to the school office by telephone.

3.1 b) Arbor in-app messages (including notification of Arbor 'BEST me' badges)

The school uses Arbor in-app messages to communicate. Families will only receive a message if 'notifications' are turned to ON. The types of messages sent via the app are:

- Non-urgent, non-medical and not needing an immediate response
- Notifications from teachers: badge achievements, messages regarding learning activities, upcoming events and reminders, praise and encouragement
- Notifications from the school office: general reminders and updates

3.1 c) Arbor text messages

The school also uses Arbor text messages to communicate – this has replaced 'Groupcall'. Text messages usually require a same-day response:

- Notification of missing packed lunch/lunch order
- Notification of missing PE kit/swim kit
- Notification that child not in school and request for contact
- Notification of more urgent message with response required e.g. medicine missing

3.2 Email

The school uses the main office email account (office@st-johns.bournemouth.sch.uk) for:

- General communications
- Monthly Newsletters (via mailchimp), the weekly Headteacher Bulletin (pdf) and other important updates
- Curriculum information
- Meeting arrangements
- Individual queries where appropriate

Routine emails between parents/carers and school staff should be directed to and sent from the main office account, office@st-johns.bournemouth.sch.uk, rather than individual staff email accounts. The office will forward messages to the appropriate member of staff and coordinate replies. Parents should not contact staff through personal email accounts or social media.

Receiving emails in individual staff inboxes outside working hours can affect staff wellbeing. Using the main office account helps maintain professional boundaries and enables communication to be managed during working hours. Staff are not expected to monitor or respond to emails during evenings, weekends or school holidays.

Dedicated email addresses are available for safeguarding and SEND communication:

Safeguarding: MSJSafeguarding@st-johns.bournemouth.sch.uk

SEND: MSJSend@st-johns.bournemouth.sch.uk

These inboxes are not monitored continuously or outside school working hours. Urgent safeguarding or welfare concerns during the school day must be raised by telephone with the school office, rather than relying on an email response.

3.3 Telephone Calls

Telephone calls may be used for:

- Urgent matters
- Attendance reporting
- Welfare concerns
- Clarifying important issues
- Arranging meetings

Teaching staff may not be immediately available during the school day due to teaching commitments.

3.3 a) School Office Opening Hours

The school office is open to parents and carers at the following times during term time:

Day	Opening times	Closed
Monday	8:15am–1:00pm 2:30pm–3:15pm	1:00pm–2:30pm

Tuesday	8:15am–10:00am 11:30am–1:00pm 2:30pm–3:30pm	10:00am–11:30am 1:00pm–2:30pm
Wednesday	8:15am–1:00pm 2:30pm–3:30pm	1:00pm–2:30pm
Thursday	8:15am–1:00pm 2:30pm–3:30pm	1:00pm–2:30pm
Friday	8:15am–1:00pm 2:30pm–3:30pm	1:00pm–2:30pm

Closed periods enable office staff to work without interruption on essential administration, including food ordering, SEND paperwork, assessment reporting and register checks.

During closed periods, parents and carers are asked to avoid telephoning the school or visiting the office, except for essential communication or pre-arranged appointments. **Essential contact, including urgent safeguarding, medical, welfare or attendance matters, should still be made when needed.**

3.3 b) Forgotten Items and Reception Drop-off Box

Parents and carers are encouraged to help children arrive at school with everything they need, including their packed lunch and PE or swimming kit. Delivering forgotten items around the school takes office staff away from essential administration.

For occasional forgotten items, a drop-off box is provided at reception. Please clearly label each item with the child's name and class. Year 6 monitors will deliver items at a convenient time; immediate delivery cannot be guaranteed. Please follow the office opening hours above unless the matter is essential or an arrangement has been agreed.

Medicines must be handed directly to office staff in accordance with the school's medical procedures and must not be left in the drop-off box. If an item is needed urgently for a child's health or wellbeing, please speak to office staff.

3.4 Medical Tracker

For routine medical messages, the school uses medical tracker which notifies parents via email e.g. first aid treatment including minor head bumps, medicine received and minor injuries.

For more serious injuries including sickness, emergencies, high temperature and where collection is needed, school will telephone parents/carers using the priority list on list.

3.5 Meetings

Meetings may take place in person, online or by telephone.

Appointments should normally be arranged through the school office in advance.

3.6 School Website

The school website contains key information including:

- Policies and procedures
- School calendar and term dates

- Curriculum information
- Headteacher Bulletin and newsletters which reference recent letters and updates
- Contact details

Parents are encouraged to check the website before contacting the school with general queries.

3.7 Headteacher communication

Every Friday, the school publishes a weekly Headteacher Bulletin (shared as a pdf). This shares recent news and updates with the school community. A diary of upcoming events is always included.

The school also uses the Friday bulletin to share wider community news and information as attachments e.g. local clubs, BCP Council updates etc.

Once a month, the Headteacher Bulletin is replaced by the full school newsletter (sent via mailchimp). The newsletter is a celebration of learning achievements and school activities.

4. Expectations for Parent Communication

4.1 Response Times

The school receives a high volume of communication each day. To ensure staff can prioritise teaching, safeguarding and pupil support effectively, the following response times apply:

- The school will aim to acknowledge emails or app messages within 48 working hours.
- The school will aim to provide a full response within 5 working days where possible.

In some cases, further investigation may be required. Where this applies, parents will receive an interim response advising when a full response can be expected.

These timescales exclude weekends, bank holidays and school holidays. Staff are not expected to respond outside working hours.

4.2 Urgent Matters

Urgent matters should be communicated via the school office by telephone.

Urgent matters may include:

- Safeguarding concerns
- Medical emergencies
- Serious welfare concerns
- Immediate attendance issues

Safeguarding concerns should never be communicated solely through app messaging.

4.3 Appropriate Communication

Communication should remain courteous and constructive at all times.

The school may pause or restrict communication where correspondence becomes excessive, repetitive, abusive or unreasonable. In such circumstances, communication arrangements may be reviewed in line with the school's Complaints Policy and Parent Code of Conduct.

5. Arbor Parent App – Data Protection and Parental Responsibility

The school uses Arbor in accordance with UK GDPR and data protection legislation.

5.1 Visibility of Authorised Collectors

Parents and carers with parental responsibility will be able to view the full names of all adults listed on their child's authorised collection list within the Arbor Parent App. No additional personal information will be visible, including:

- Addresses
- Telephone numbers
- Email addresses
- Priority rankings
- Relationship details

The school is unable to restrict individual parents with parental responsibility from viewing the full authorised collection list. For this reason, any adult named as an authorised collector must understand and consent to their full name being visible to all adults with parental responsibility for the child.

5.2 Updating Information and Access Through Arbor

Parents and carers with parental responsibility will be able to view and request updates to information relating to their child through the Arbor Parent App. As a default, parents will normally only be permitted to directly edit or manage their own contact details and submissions. They will not be able to amend another adult's personal information.

Some changes submitted through Arbor may require approval by the school before taking effect. Parents should ensure that contact information, emergency contacts and medical details remain accurate and notify the school promptly of any significant changes. Requests submitted through Arbor may be reviewed before being approved to ensure safeguarding and data accuracy.

The school may limit certain Arbor functionality so that parents can manage only their own submissions and requests. In circumstances involving parental disputes, safeguarding concerns or court orders:

- Certain changes may require agreement from all parties with parental responsibility
- The school may request supporting documentation
- Court orders, formal agreements or safeguarding advice will take precedence
- Requests relating to removal of parental access or collection permissions may require additional verification

The school reserves the right to escalate matters where necessary to ensure safeguarding and legal compliance.

5.3 Primary Guardian Arrangements

Within the Arbor Parent App, one contact may be identified by the school as the "Primary Guardian" for administrative purposes. This designation supports the efficient management of school communications and operational processes. The Primary Guardian may typically:

- Be the main contact for routine school communications
- Receive priority contact in the event of illness, accident or emergency
- Be the default recipient for certain communications where only one contact can initially be selected
- Manage payments, trip bookings and consent submissions through Arbor
- Submit or request updates to pupil information via the Arbor Parent App
- Receive notifications relating to attendance, behaviour, reports and school updates

Where enabled by the school, other parents and carers with parental responsibility may also have access to relevant communications and Arbor functionality.

The designation of Primary Guardian does not override parental responsibility, legal rights, safeguarding arrangements or any court orders in place. It does not provide authority for one parent or carer to remove, restrict or amend another adult's access or information without appropriate verification and school approval.

In circumstances involving parental disputes, safeguarding concerns or legal restrictions, the school reserves the right to amend communication arrangements, limit functionality within Arbor and request supporting documentation before changes are made.

5.4 Subject Access Requests and Data Rights

Parents and carers have rights regarding personal data held by the school under UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Requests for access to educational records or personal data, including Subject Access Requests (SARs), should be made in writing to the school office or Data Protection Officer (DPO).

The school will process requests in accordance with statutory timescales and the school's Data Protection Policy.

Further information about how the school collects, stores, shares and processes personal data can be found in the school's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notices.

6. Accessibility and Inclusion

The school is committed to ensuring communication is accessible to all families. Reasonable adjustments may include:

- Translation support
- Accessible formats
- Additional support for parents with disabilities or communication needs

Parents requiring support should contact the school office.

7. Complaints

Where concerns cannot be resolved informally, parents should follow the school's Complaints Policy. Communication channels should not be used to pursue ongoing complaints outside the formal complaints process.

8. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher and the Board of Directors to ensure it remains effective, compliant and supportive of both families and staff wellbeing.

9. Linked Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Complaints Policy
- Parent Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Attendance Policy

POLICY RATIFICATION AND REVIEW

This policy has been carefully considered and ratified by the Headteacher on 29th September 2026.

It is customary at this school to formally review all school policies after an interval of three years. In the case of this policy, this would take place during *July 2029*. However, this will be brought forward, should changes in protocol be recommended by the Department for Education, the Local Authority or the Diocese.

Signed: P Ruffle..... Date: 29.09.26.....
Chair, Board of Directors / Headteacher as appropriate

Appendix 1 – Contacting the School

Who should I contact?

For routine questions or concerns, please contact the school office in the first instance. Emails should be sent to the main office account rather than individual staff email accounts; the office will direct your query to the appropriate member of staff. Dedicated addresses for safeguarding and SEND are listed below.

Email: office@st-johns.bournemouth.sch.uk

Telephone: 01202 527683

Safeguarding: MSJSafeguarding@st-johns.bournemouth.sch.uk

SEND: MSJSend@st-johns.bournemouth.sch.uk

Query	Contact
Learning/classwork/homework	Class Teacher Escalated to the Year Leader
Admissions	Admissions / Finance Office Admissions Assistant
Attendance and absence	School Office Year Leader / SLT
Changes to collection arrangements	School Office
Medical including medicines	School Office Designated first aider
Pastoral or wellbeing concerns	School Office Class teacher / Year Leader / SLT
SEND queries	SEND Office: MSJSend@st-johns.bournemouth.sch.uk SENCO Assistant Phase / Lead SENCO
Payments/trips	Finance Office Finance Assistant
Behaviour concerns	Class teacher Escalated to the Year Leader / SLT
Safeguarding concerns	DSL (member of SLT) MSJSafeguarding@st-johns.bournemouth.sch.uk Urgent concerns: telephone the School Office
Lettings (including pool hire)	Finance Office
Complaints	Follow Complaints Policy

General queries e.g. term dates, updates to contact details	Website: https://www.st-johns.bournemouth.sch.uk/ Parent Arbor App School Office
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