



Communication Policy

Name of Headteacher:	Tom Johnston
Date Policy approved and adopted:	Sept 2026
Date Due for review:	Sept 2027

Equality at Merdon Junior School

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school. (See Initial Equality Impact Assessment)

Merdon Junior School Communication Policy

1. At Merdon Junior School, we believe it is important to create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for pupils, staff and parents in our school. We encourage clear, open communication links with parents as we believe it has a positive impact on pupils' learning. It provides parents with the information they need to support their child's education and helps to build a partnership between home and school. Such communication can be entirely positive and practical for example to seek information, ask a question, clear up a misunderstanding or to draw attention to a matter. Sometimes there is a need to resolve an issue or misunderstanding.
2. We use the term 'parents' in this policy to refer to:
 - Anyone with parental responsibility for a pupil
 - Anyone caring for a child (such as grandparents or child-minders)
3. The term member of staff as referred to in this policy includes:
 - Anyone employed by the school
 - Anyone training in a professional capacity at the school
 - Governors (when acting in this capacity)
 - Volunteers at the school (when acting in this capacity)
 - Anyone employed through an external agency, including contractors, who are acting in a professional capacity on the school site

Aims

The aim of this policy is to set out the methods of communication available to parents for contacting the school and our expectations of parents when visiting our school or communicating with staff 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 colleagues
 - Helping parents/carers and professionals reach the member of school staff who best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible
4. We acknowledge that sometimes there can be situations that can be emotional and challenging for parents and staff to work through. Nonetheless, we expect all our community to show mutual respect. We have clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all members of our community. This includes staff (through the staff code of conduct) and pupils (through our behaviour policy). We also expect parents

to engage constructively with school staff and to work together with them in the best interests of our children.

5. We will only communicate with parents in respect of their own child at the school. Requests to raise a concern on behalf of another parent will be declined, as will be requests for information on another child. Where parents have a concern of a safeguarding matter, this should be reported to one of the schools DSLs. Should any correspondence be received from legal advisers then this will be shared with the school's legal advisers.
6. If parents are considering making a formal complaint, there is a link here to the [complaints policy](#). However, stage 1 of our policy suggests that other forms of communication can often help in resolving issues and we encourage parents to use this route. However, this is not compulsory and does not prevent the use of the complaints policy either straight away or after other forms of communication have been tried.

Roles & Responsibilities-

The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents, staff and other professionals are effective, timely, respectful and appropriate

Governors are responsible for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy
- Regularly reviewing this policy

Staff- All staff are responsible for communicating with parents/carers by:

- Checking internal email communications on a weekly basis
- Responding to communications from parents/carers and other professionals in line with this policy and the School's Online Use Policy
- Working with other staff members to make sure parents/carers and other professionals get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Parents & Carers: Parents/carers 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

Please note- Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be referred to the Headteacher.

Parents should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours 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 correspondence will be responded to as soon as practically possible **and within 5 working days.**

Communication Procedures

The school can be contacted by phone or in person between 8.00am and 4.00pm or an email can be sent outside of these hours.

Postal Address	Telephone	Email
Merdon Junior School Merdon Avenue Chandlers Ford Hants S053 1EJ	02380 265255	admin@merdon.hants.sch.uk

Messages, Queries, Concerns	Person To Contact
If your child will be absent from school...	Please notify the office on each day of absence by 9.00am either by phone (02380265255) or in person.
If you have a quick message for your child's class teacher about any concerns...	Talk with a member of SLT on the playground in the morning: all teachers are on the playground at the end of the school day. Messages may also be left at the school office if you do not get a chance to speak to your child's class teacher or another adult.
If you are concerned about your child's learning progress...	Make an appointment to meet with your child's class teacher, initially, via the school office. If, following discussion, you would like more information, make an appointment to meet with a member of the Senior Leadership Team
If you would like to discuss something related to your child's class teacher...	Make an appointment to meet the Headteacher via the school office via admin@merdon.hants.sch.uk
If you would like to discuss your child's Special Educational Needs...	Make an appointment to meet with your child's class teacher in the first instance and then the SENCo via the school office or via admin@merdon.hants.sch.uk
If you have a query about Breakfast and after school clubs..	Please contact Mrs Carole Pugh via the school office or at admin@merdon.hants.sch.uk
If you wish to raise an issue with the governors	Please contact the chair of governors: chairofgovernors@merdonschool.co.uk

If you want to check that the school is open (INSET or snow days)	Please check the school website, your parentmail or HCC closures online
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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 of the following regularly to make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

Meetings

Face-to-face conversations are generally the best way of communicating with the school at drop off or pick up for quick, short messages.

When a member of staff is not able to speak to you immediately face-to-face due to school commitments, or a longer conversation is deemed necessary or appropriate, then a request for an appointment can be made to discuss the matter either in person or by telephone, at a later date. **(The school will aim to arrange that meeting within 5 working days).**

Outside of teaching hours, all staff have additional duties which they perform either before school, during break/lunch or after school so availability of staff outside of teaching hours should not be assumed.

We hold parents' evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms. During these meetings, parents/carers can talk with teachers about their child's well-being, how they have settled, their achievement and progress, how parents can support progress at home, the curriculum and/or schemes of work, or any other area of concern.

Should a meeting be requested the decision of which staff member will attend will rest with the Headteacher.

Email

The school uses email to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days, potential strike days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Changes in government guidance (for example, in relation to changes in attendance guidance)

For general enquiries and non-urgent issues, parents & carers are welcome to email the school; admin@merdon.hants.sch.uk about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

Emails will be most helpful if they are concise, explaining concerns in a clear way. Lengthy and overly detailed accounts can make it more difficult to understand what is being explained and to respond in a timely or clear way.

The school will aim to respond within 5 working days. If a response is unable to be provided within this timeline, which can be to ensure a full and considered response, then a revised timeline will be provided and communicated. We ask that parents await a response from the school and that further emails are not sent pending that response, unless the new deadline has passed.

Phone calls

If parents/carers 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 to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure parents/carers have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 5 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

Staff members 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 office team.

Teachers may also make arrangements 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, such as a message for the class team for example, a written record will be made of this information and it will be circulated to staff as appropriate. If a query or concern is time sensitive and urgent the parent should call the school office, who will liaise as necessary at the earliest opportunity. In most circumstances, teaching and leadership staff are unlikely to be available to receive calls due to teaching and other commitments. The contact number for the school office is 02380 265255.

If the query or concern is not time sensitive and urgent then parents should email or call the school office and the relevant member of staff will aim to contact them within 5 working days. If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time.

Social Media

The school will not respond to concerns raised via social media.

Where the social media site is run by the school, comments will be removed if they do not meet the criteria of the social media site

Should the school be made aware of any physical threats or abusive behaviour towards staff members on social media then the school will consider reporting this to the Police and seeking the removal of this content from the site.

Instagram page (see also Social media above)

Merdon Junior School have an Instagram page which is run by the school. The page is designed to:

- Inform, engage and communicate with parents, carers and other interested parties.
- Recognise, celebrate and promote the work of the school and its pupils.

Postings will include updates on everyday school life, activities, clubs, events, useful information and websites, advice, suggestions, and photos of activities.

Under no circumstances will any child/children be named or described on the page. This is due to data protection and the legal responsibility we have to keep the children safe.

Only authorised administrators have permission to upload photographs and videos on to the page. This is because they are aware of the parental permissions held by the school.

The page is designed as a communication tool to engage with parents and carers. It is therefore restricted to people over 18 years of age.

Social Networking Sites/Blogs etc (See also Online Safety Policy)

Staff will not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites nor accept them as their “friends”. The exception is networks or blogs set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning.

How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents/carers should use the table above on page 4 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and email address.

Communication during school hours/ working days

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours (**8:00 – 5:00**), or their working hours (if they work part-time).

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours (**8:00 – 5:00**), outside of contracted hours or during school holidays.

Staff may choose to work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so.

Types of unacceptable behaviour and communication

There are some types of behaviour / communication that the school consider unacceptable. These are as follows:

- Any physical aggression eg. slapping, hitting, punching and kicking;
- Physically intimidating a member of staff, or pupils e.g., standing very close to her/him;
- The use of aggressive hand gestures including finger pointing towards a member of staff or pupil;
- Spitting at a member of staff or pupil;
- Shaking or holding a fist towards a member of staff or pupil;
- Shouting at members of staff or pupils (either in person on school grounds, over the telephone or over video conferencing);
- Swearing, or using offensive language including derogatory language about a protected group or characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010;
- Threatening or offensive comments about a member of staff or pupil of the school; this can include verbally, via texts, emails, social media, etc.;
- Sending abusive messages to a member of staff, including via text, email or social media
- A large volume of emails in respect of the same matter over a short period of time.
- Continuing to raise the same issue despite it having been already addressed by the school.
- Posting defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about the school, its staff, on social media platforms
- Disrupting, or threatening to disrupt, school operations (including events on the school grounds and sports team matches)
- Breaching or not conforming to the school's security procedures
- Covertly recording phone calls or meetings with member of staff
- Any other behaviour that is disrespectful, threatening or offensive

This list is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour which has no place in our school community.

Actions that may be taken by the school as a result of unacceptable behaviour and communication

In the first instance, (if the unacceptable behaviour has occurred on site) the school will ask the parent to desist and/or leave the site. If the behaviour is of a serious nature, then the police will be contacted.

Thereafter the school (Headteacher/Member of School Leadership team) will gather information on allegations of unacceptable behaviour. This may include talking to the parties concerned or others as witnesses to the behaviour.

If unacceptable behaviour is considered to have occurred the following actions may be taken by the school, dependent on the severity/gravity of the behaviour:

- The parent will be told verbally that his / her behaviour is considered to be unacceptable and, if it is not modified, the school will take further action.
- The parent will be told in writing that his / her behaviour is considered to be unacceptable and, if it is not modified, the school will take further action.
- Advising the parent that all future meetings with a member of staff will be conducted with a second person present and will be minuted;
- Putting in place a contact plan to deal with any communication between the individual and school. For example, except in emergencies, communication to the school must be in writing only to a named individual and the school can set out timescales for school responses
- A warning letter or an immediate ban from the school site;
- Contacting the Police where behaviour is criminal in nature.
- Seek advice from the local authority's legal team regarding further action.

The school will always seek to respond to an incident in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to the unacceptable behaviour and communication rests with the Headteacher and, where necessary, the Governing Body

Evaluation and Review

Date of Ratification	September 2026
Date for Next Review	September 2027
Comments: No changes suggested from previous version	