

BARNS GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Communication Policy

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Key staff:

Headteacher – Tracey Newbold

School Business Manager – Rachel Coxon

Key contact details:

Email: office@barnsgreen.org.uk

Office: 01403 730614

Website: <https://www.barnsgreen.org.uk/>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/BarnsGreenPrimarySchool>

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Aim:

To support Barns Green Primary School in its aim to become a thriving and successful school we must communicate effectively with each other; internally, with our pupils, with their parents/carers and with other members of the wider school community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

Definition of communication:

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It involves the management of relationships and the need to involve people. Communication is as much about attitude and behaviour as it is about message. We should also remember the importance of listening. We all have a responsibility to support effective communications and need to recognise that the quality of our communications reflects on the school's reputation.

For the purposes of this policy, communication includes;

- not only WHAT the message is but also
- WHY we are communicating
- HOW that message is communicated and
- WHEN/how frequently it will be communicated

Objectives:

All communications at Barns Green Primary School should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents/carers, governors and other stakeholders well informed.
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional.
- Use plain English and be easily understood by all.
- Ensure that access to further information easily available.
- Include feedback routes where applicable and helpful.
- Be actioned within a reasonable time.
- Use the method of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.
- Utilise existing communication channels as much as possible to keep things simple.
- Take account of relevant school policies, in particular Equal Opportunities, and be compatible with our core values as reflected in our Mission Statement and Development Plan.

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Internal Methods of Communication

Meetings:

There is a programme of internal meetings to facilitate involvement of staff, both formal and informal. All formal meetings should be structured and minuted, with relevant members invited to contribute to the agenda. It's important that time is put aside for structured opportunities for all staff to engage in team working and to contribute to school leaders' reflections on priorities, activities and future plans. For all other meetings, notes should be taken, action points progressed, and feedback given to staff.

Availability of minutes/notes of meetings

The approved minutes of meetings are available on request from the Headteacher. Email information and notification of initiatives are communicated through the use of email where appropriate. Email is a quick, effective way of communicating information, however, it does not replace face to face meetings where some discussion is required.

Mobile phones

Mobile phones should not be used during lessons or when in contact with the children. In exceptional cases such as family illness, the circumstances should be discussed with the Headteacher. Non-intrusive work-related mobile phone use is acceptable during PPA or non-contact time. During trips and off-site provision, staff should ensure they can always be contacted by mobile phone. Staff should never take photographs of pupils on their personal devices. Pupils should not bring mobile phones to school. Any exceptions must be discussed with and approved by the Headteacher. For more information, please read Online Safety policy <https://www.barnsgreen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Online-Safety.docx>

Written communications

These are placed in pigeonholes, in the staff room, which staff should check regularly, handed to staff personally or emailed.

Staff briefings

Staff briefings take place on a weekly basis. The diary for the following week is discussed and information shared. The main points are also written on the notice board in the staffroom. All dates are available on google calendar.

Notice boards

The Staff notice board is located in the staffroom. A parents' notice board is located in the main reception area outside the office and opposite the main pedestrian entrance outside.

Intranet

Key documents and information are hosted on our school system and one drive. All staff are given access.

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Staff feedback mechanisms

School leaders proactively value feedback and input from colleagues. Effective communication and discussion is encouraged to ensure that we are all clear about the direction of the school and to ensure staff are well-informed and progress is consistent across the school. The leadership team and governors have introduced a staff survey to gather formal feedback. This will be reviewed, and an action plan agreed.

Continuing professional development & inset days

Inset days focus on continuing staff professional development, or CPD – so teachers and other school staff further develop their skills and specialisms. The content is normally aligned with the school's priorities and school development plan to ensure progress. Staff development and CPD is highly valued and opportunities are provided for staff in line with the personal development discussion cycle.

Training material is also shared between members of staff, where relevant.

External Methods of Communication

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain with:

- parents and carers
- other schools
- pre-schools/playgroups and other childcare settings
- the community and
- with outside agencies

At Barns Green, we believe that good communication between the school and the home is essential, and children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can naturally help more and feel more engaged, if they know what the school is trying to achieve and are kept informed.

In our school we aim to have clear and effective communications with all parents and with the wider community. Effective communications enable us to share our aims and values through keeping parents well informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that parents play in supporting the school.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional. We try to make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias, stereotyping or any form of racial discrimination. We wish to recognise and celebrate the contributions made to our society by all the cultural groups represented in our school.

Face to face

Parents/carers and staff can make appointments to meet after school if they need to discuss any matters in detail. Appointments can be made by emailing the office: office@barnsgreen.org.uk or calling: 01403 730614.

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We ask that parents avoid lengthy conversations at drop off or pick without prior appointment as these are very busy times for teachers, getting children settled into school and also ensuring they leave at the end of the day safely.

E-mail

Parents/carers and staff can also communicate via email. Emails can be sent to: office@barnsgreen.org.uk. The School Business Manager will forward your email to the relevant member of staff and they will do their best to ensure emails are responded to within 2 days. The school has a secure portal where we keep a log of pupils' pastoral correspondence.

The school will make a decision upon how best to respond to communication. However, face to face/verbal communication is preferred for sensitive, more complex matters or complaints. Details of how the school handles complaints are in the [Complaints Policy](#).

Telephone calls

The school office is open during 8am to 4:30pm, so it is also possible to call 01403 730614 for any enquiries during these times. Phone calls tend to be best for shorter or more pressing matters, e.g. reporting an absence. The School Business Manager may not be able to answer all calls straight away, but please leave a voicemail and any messages will be responded to. The School Business Manager should not interrupt teaching staff to answer a telephone call. Staff will proactively phone parents with key messages to ensure parents are well informed.

Noticeboards & whiteboard

There is also a small white board by the gate where the school puts up reminders of upcoming activities, events etc. Individual classes also have access to a standing 'A' board, which are used to remind parents/carers in more detail about trip times, etc.

School office

Our welcoming school office is open during school opening hours. There is only one permanent member of staff in the office.

School office post box and drop off box

Forms and administrative items can be posted in the post box outside the school office or given to class teachers. These include things like, consent forms and payment, PTA forms (e.g. for Christmas cards and events), school photo orders, etc. All forms will then be processed by the relevant member of staff at the school.

Occasionally there is the need to drop off a forgotten lunch box, PE kit, etc. These can be left in the box by the main entrance. The Office Manager checks this on a regular basis throughout the day and will deliver items to the relevant children.

Letters

Staff will endeavour to respond to parents' letters as quickly as possible. Any letter of complaint should be referred to the Headteacher. Letters to parents must be approved by

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the Headteacher before they are sent. Copies of correspondence with parents will be placed in pupil files.

Letters in homework books/Letters home in school bags

Sometimes the school will give the children forms and letters to take home with them in their school bags. Generally, if a communication is available electronically, we will email it but sometimes this is not the case, for example the NHS flu jab consent forms are hard copy only and school reports come home with the children.

Weekly newsletter

The school creates and distributes a weekly e-newsletter to all parents/carers/governors - this is sent out every Friday. It is the school's primary form of parent/carer communication and previous surveys have indicated it's the parent/carers preferred channel of communication. Hard copies are available on request. We can also ring and run through the key messages, for any families that are unable to read the newsletter.

The newsletter includes all the relevant information the school believes parents/carers will need or find interesting. The e-newsletter provides updates on any latest guidance and rules, learning news and resources, links to surveys, activities the children have been doing, reminders and key dates – the content varies from week to week.

Calendar of events

The school maintains an online calendar of events that details all educational and extracurricular activities as well as key dates. The calendar is available to view on the [home page](#) of the website.

Social networking sites

Staff will not communicate with parents or pupils via social networking sites (such as Facebook). The exceptions to this rule would be the School's Learning Platform (Purple Mash) and Seesaw (Dormouse Class) for the purpose of teaching and learning. Please refer to our [online safety policy](#) for more information.

The school does use the [Barns Green Primary School Public Facebook page](#) to post about what the children have been up to, as it's a good way for parents to gain insights and engage in everyday school life. The school will only post pictures of children whose parents have provided the correct permission to do so. Comments are monitored and responded to by a member of staff or governors. The school asks all parents to complete Facebook and video consent forms annually.

Written reports

Each year all parents/carers will receive 2 written school reports. The first will be shared during the Spring term. We send these out as parents/carers have told us they find them useful. We send these out prior to parent/teacher consultations so parents have time to review and prepare any questions.

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In the Summer term, parents/carers receive a report detailing their child's end of year results. At this point, they will also be told which class their child is in for the next academic year and be given an opportunity to meet the teacher.

Parent/Teacher consultations

These are held twice a year, in the Autumn (Oct) and Spring (March) term. There is the opportunity to discuss each child's results in the Summer term. This gives parents/carers the opportunity to celebrate their child's successes, and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need. When children have special educational needs, or if they are making less than the expected progress, staff may find it helpful to meet with parents/carers more regularly.

We will make any reasonable adjustments to our arrangements if this will enable a parent with a disability to participate fully in a meeting at our school, or to receive and understand a communication.

Workshops and parent/carer sessions

We aim to run these on a regular basis and they align with school development priorities and need within the community. These are aimed at different groups of parents/carers depending on what is relevant and suitable at a particular time.

In the past we have run curriculum workshops for parents with children starting Reception. We have recently run workshops about phonics/helping children with early reading, our curriculum and an Early Help coffee morning. There is always a meeting to discuss the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum and how it's delivered. Year 6 Parents will be invited to a presentation on SATs, and other relevant matters. Parents are encouraged to let us know if they would like the school to cover a topic of particular interest.

We also hold regular drop and read sessions in Key stage 1 for where parents have the opportunity to spend time in school with their children. Parents are invited to watch their child's class assembly and notable class events. We also hold an annual open afternoon where parents can observe the school in action.

School website

The school website provides a great deal of information about the school and an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience. The website is regularly reviewed. The information on the website ranges from information about the staff, our core values, and practical parent information (including an online calendar) to information about our governing board, the parent teacher association (PTA) and all the school policies.

The website address is: <https://www.barnsgreen.org.uk/>. We review the content on the website on a regular basis and are always seeking ways to improve.

Home-school communication/online learning

During the pandemic we developed our online learning capability. We made use of Purple Mash to facilitate home learning and this is still available if the need should arise once more.

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We direct children to the activities on the [Oak National Academy](#) if they are absent from school but 'well enough' to complete some work at home. This is an online classroom created by teachers. The tasks are self-contained, and feedback is immediate.

Communication with other schools and outside agencies

Prior to pupils joining Reception, transition is prioritised. Children are invited to visit the school on a number of occasions to enable us to gain further information about them to help and support their transition to Barns Green Primary. We also visit pre-schools and value home visits. We recognise that children have diverse needs, and we are supported by various agencies and groups of professionals who keep us informed on better ways to meet these needs, so that children may participate more fully. Support comes from medical services (such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy) and from Educational Psychologists, from health professionals and specialists. It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare, Social Services and Child Protection Units.

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm, that their protection is a shared responsibility, and that our school should provide a safe and secure environment. Please refer to our [Safeguarding Policy](#) for more details. Please note that staff have a duty to report any information causing concern to the relevant authorities, so that it can be checked appropriately.

We hold information on pupils in our school, and from time to time we are required to pass some of this information to others for educational purposes, e.g. West Sussex County Council (WSCC). 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. This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998. Parents have a right to view the information we hold, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

The school works with Early Years Providers (playgroups, pre-schools, nurseries) to prepare the next years intake for school readiness, as well as to share and discuss our baseline assessments (carried out at the start of a child's time in Reception). We also work closely with our local secondary schools, to provide support and facilitate a smooth and positive transition from Year 6 into secondary school.

Surveys

Where relevant and helpful, the school will send out surveys to parents/carers in order to gain anonymous and honest feedback that can be actioned. Examples include; asking parents about clubs and wrap around care and preferred methods of transport.

Parent Teacher Association (PTA) communications

Date approved
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The school Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is a school group with a mission to make the school a better place for children to learn. Parents of students work together with teachers to volunteer in classes, raise money for school supplies/equipment and generally support the school's efforts.

Emails

The PTA will send emails to parents/carers detailing upcoming events and activities. The office email address is used for these and any emails are distributed to all parents/carers on the main school distribution list.

Social media

There is a Facebook private group where the PTA shares details of upcoming events and activities. All parents/carers are invited to join this page and engage in the community.

Coffee mornings

The PTA organises coffee mornings in the Community Room on a regular basis, so the team could meet socially and discuss upcoming activity and also to give anyone who is interested in finding out more about the PTA or thinking about joining – a chance to meet us in a friendly and informal way.

Notice boards/White board

Posters and reminders of PTA events and activities are put on the school noticeboards and the white board by the entrance gate.

Website

There is a page on the school website where you can find out more [about the PTA](#).

Governor communications:

Website

All the latest information about the governors, who they are, how they operate, what they have been focusing on recently are hosted on the [website](#). The latest governor meeting minutes are hosted on the website and available to read. The Governors also produce an informative termly newsletter.

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Local community communications

Barns Green Playgroup

Barns Green Playgroup children are invited to attend the School Sports Day and Christmas Nativity each year. The school also collaborate on other community-based projects or in support of each other and liaise closely over transition.

Big Mag

The school publishes articles in the local Barns Green Big Mag on a regular basis. This is a general update - focusing on what the children have been up to and anything that is relevant to the local community.

Community activities and projects

The school will endeavour to engage in community activities where possible. These types of projects can vary from being safety focused (for example, 20 is plenty) to seasonal fun (e.g. taking part in a local remembrance display or Christmas activities). We also invite members of the village Monday Club to some of the school events, for example, the Christmas play.

Representation at local meetings, e.g. Parish Council

When appropriate the school is represented by the Governing Body and Headteacher at meetings.