



Baines Endowed VC School
COMMUNICATIONS POLICY
APRIL 2015

At Baines Endowed VC School, we believe that good communication between school and the home is essential. Children achieve more when schools and parents work together. Parents can help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve, and how they can help.

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

These are our principles:

- Communicating with stakeholders, particularly parents, is a core part of what we do, not an afterthought.
- We will always try to share as much information as possible about any issue. If we cannot share information we will explain why.
- We will communicate in a timely fashion and try to avoid parents receiving information about the school from other sources first.
- We will communicate in a voice which is courteous, jargon free and warm.
- Where information relating to the school is available in the public domain, we will direct people to it.
- We acknowledge that some information is of a confidential nature and will always respect that confidentiality.
- We will do our best to communicate with all school communities.

Strategies

We communicate with parents through a range of different strategies. Some of our communications are the result of a statutory requirement; others reflect what we believe is important to our school:

Talking with staff

Class Teachers are always available for a 'quick word' at the start or end of the day. However, if a parent needs to talk with the class teacher in more detail, they are encouraged to make an appointment for a telephone conversation or a meeting in person at the Office, as talking at length in the playground before or after school is difficult for the teacher and the children.

A member of staff will always be in the playground at the start and end of the day. Many parental queries and concerns can be dealt with at this time.

Meetings

There are a number of meetings through the term which provide opportunities to discuss current developments in the school:

New parents - we hold one meeting for new parents in May. This is for parents of the new children going into Reception the following September. The school also organises an open afternoon every half term. This is an opportunity for parents to see the Reception children's work in books and around the classroom and to have an informal chat with the class teacher.

Pre School Visits and Induction Afternoons – The Reception staff visit Pre-School settings in the Summer term to meet the children prior to their Induction afternoons. The children visit school at the end of the Summer term for two one hour sessions.

Summer Garden Party – This is an opportunity for the established Reception children and parents to meet new Reception children and parents. This is a wonderful opportunity for them to have an informal chat about the school.

Home Visits - The EYFS team make home visits in the first few weeks in September for Reception pupils to share information with new parents.

Meet the Teacher – these meetings are held at the beginning of September for the parents to meet the new staff.

Year 6 Residential trips – where a major trip is taking place, such as the year 6 residential trip, the trip leaders will organise a meeting for parents well in advance to provide detailed information about all aspects of the trip.

Parent's Forum – held at least once a term.

The School Website

The school website www.bainesend.lancsnqfl.ac.uk is regularly updated with diary dates and information about the school, including up to date policies. Copies of all the newsletters including diary dates can also be found on there.

Fortnightly newsletter

Details of school events, reminders, requests for help and news are shared in our fortnightly newsletter. This is sent out via Parentmail or if requested, a hard copy is given to the youngest child in the family. The newsletter is also published on the website.

Staff communication to parents and carers

Copies of letters sent home are kept in the school office, but copies can be found in the school foyer. Details for the protocol for communicating with parents and carers via text and email are provided in Appendix 1.

Parents Evenings and School Reports

Parents are expected to show an interest in the school's teaching methods and in their child's progress by attending Parents' Evenings, workshops, open days and reading their child's reports.

We do encourage parents to contact the school at any time if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being, but we also provide two formal opportunities to meet one to one with the class teacher during the academic year. The first meeting is midway through the Autumn term and identifies areas of strength and targets for future development. The targets are recorded for parents to take away as a tool to support their partnership work. Parents are invited to meet with their child's teacher again during the Spring term to review their child's progress towards the targets and again the updated targets are shared in writing with parents. Parents are able to look at their child's work during these meetings. Parents will be given information and advance notice about such events in the newsletter and on the website.

At the end of the Summer term children will receive an end of year written report and parents can subsequently arrange to meet with teachers if there are any concerns. In our school we ask the children to comment on their own progress, and parents to make a similar comment using the annual report format. We also give parents/carers of children in Year 2 and Year 6 the details of their performance in the National Tests and details of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results and Characteristics of Learning.

Home School Agreement

Our home-school agreement is a requirement of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. It explains the school's aims and values, the school's responsibilities towards the children, the responsibilities of parents, and what the school expects of the children. We ask parents and child to sign this agreement when their child starts in our school.

The agreement covers the standard of education in our school, the ethos of the school, our expectations on attendance and good behaviour, and our expectations about homework.

Staff communication with parents

At the beginning of each new topic, all teachers will share a summary of their curriculum plans. This enables parents to support their child's work .

Children in all year groups Reception to Year 6 have a home/ school reading journal which enables parents to record comments and class teachers to communicate achievements and targets in reading. In Year groups 4, 5 and 6 pupils are also invited to make/ respond to comments about their reading.

Class Dojo

Parents are encouraged to sign up to receive digital connection regarding their child's day. Although this doesn't replace any of the above it provides an opportunity to talk with their child about their school day.

School prospectus

The School Prospectus is available on the School website and it contains a range of information to give new and prospective parents a full picture of provision at our school. We will update this for each school year. An up-to-date copy will also always be available on the carousel in the foyer.

Public Access Documents

The school makes available a range of documentation for parents. We keep a master set in the School Office or Headteacher's Office and we make these documents available on request. It contains copies of all school curriculum policies, minutes of Governing Body meetings and copies of policies that the Governing Body are required to have in relation to Charging and Remissions, Sex and Relationship Education, Health and Safety, Curriculum and Admissions. A copying charge may be levied where requests for printed materials are made.

Conclusion

Good communication is vital to home-school partnership. The raising of standards cannot be achieved without such a partnership.

Written April 2015

Reviewed September 2015

Baines Endowed VC School

APPENDIX 1

EMAIL and TEXT PROTOCOL for staff communication with parents

This is guidance on when to send an email or text from Baines Endowed VC School to parents/carers. It should be used in conjunction with the Communication and E-Safety policies.

As a broad overview, emails and texts should be used for communicating essential information only.

EMAILS

- Group email addresses can be collated under year group, club register, class group or whole school categories. Groups will be administered by the School Administrative Officer, so that they can communicate information where only one group is affected (e.g. Y6 journey/trip information/etc).
- Staff should not enter into discussion with parents/carers about children on email.
- Ad hoc information such as the cancellation of an After School club can be sent by text, email or phone.
- Individual emails to parents/carers should not be sent by the office unless to make an appointment.

- All group emails must be viewed by a member of the SLT before they are sent.
- With permission of the Head Teacher, the PTA may send a group email to all parents e.g. asking for help with a school fair, as well as having a regular section of the newsletter for information.

TEXTS

- Text should be used as a primary resource in informing parents/carers of a school closure (e.g. snow). However, the local Radio Station may well be used as well.
- Texts should be used to inform parents/carers of a change to arrangements e.g. the cancellation of an After School club or an event.
- Texts can be sent asking for outstanding money for trips, Music fees or Lunch money.
- Texts can be used to remind parents/carers of upcoming events.
- In the event of sickness or an accident parents/carers should be telephoned not sent a text. However, a text may be sent asking the parent/carer to contact the school.
- Texts can be used to inform parents/carers that a newsletter or significant letter has been published and is available online or in the office.
- Texts must not be sent regarding behaviour of an individual child by a teacher or by the office. Contact should be face to face, by phone or letter.
- News of great significance must not be sent by text, but should come by email/letter from the Head Teacher.