



# Minerva

## Primary School

### Communications Policy

Approved: September 2020

Next Review Date: September 2022



## **Introduction**

Effective communication is much more than the exchange of information. It is through purposeful and interactive communication that information is transmitted, understanding is developed and shared, trust is built, confidentiality respected and action coordinated. Communication includes not only the message but also how that message is communicated. Good communication promotes partnership.

## **Legal Framework**

This policy has regard to:

- Data Protection Act 2018 (incorporating GDPR)
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Trust's Data Protection Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Social Media & Networking policy

## **Aim**

To ensure that Minerva Primary School is a thriving and successful school, we must communicate effectively with each other, with our pupils, with their parents and with other members of the wider community. We need to ensure that communications between all members of the school community are clear, professional, timely and appropriate.

## **Objectives**

All communications at Minerva Primary School should:

- Keep staff, pupils, parents, and stakeholders well informed.
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional.
- Be jargon free and easily understood by all.
- Be actioned within a reasonable time.
- Use the methods of communication most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience.
- Take account of relevant school policies.
- Be compatible with the Trust's values and the school's vision
- Be cognisant of social distancing expectations.

## **Responsibilities**

This section details the responsibilities of the different groups within the school.

### **Senior leadership team (SLT)**

- To ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels, where practicable face to face (subject to social distancing).

- To ensure that staff have the relevant information available to communicate with colleagues effectively.
- To maintain open channels of two-way communication and to listen to feedback and comment from all staff.
- To keep parents informed of developments and concerns.

### **All staff**

- To communicate regularly with each other, preferably face to face (being mindful of social distancing), to ensure information is available and understood within the context of the classroom and working environment.
- To ensure they are informed and have access to information in order to be as effective as possible in their role and to support their work within the school.
- To use open channels of two-way communication to keep the leadership team and colleagues informed.

### **Internal Methods of Communication**

- All staff have access to the G drive in the Minerva staff folder where all key document are stored
- There is a Go To File in each classroom with key information
- An integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff within the school and across the Trust (these may be through Zoom at the time of the coronavirus pandemic)
- All formal meetings should be structured and minuted and members invited to contribute to the agenda
- E-mail is a quick, effective way of communicating information however it should not replace face to face meetings where discussion is required
- Written communications should be placed in pigeon holes, in the staffroom, which staff must check daily and clear regularly
- Staff meetings & SLT meetings take place every week (again these might be by ZOOM during the pandemic). Events are discussed in advance at meetings but staff also have the responsibility to check future actions
- Support Staff meetings and Office meetings take place once a term.
- Monday briefings have been replaced by a Friday written briefing during the pandemic
- The weekly overview whiteboard in the staffroom is to be used by all staff to add information
- Reminders or letters to individual parents are sent to classes to be given out by the class teachers and must be given to children the same day. Every class must have a system for distributing letters and other materials to go home with the children.
- The schools uses Scholarpack to communicate with parents by text or DOJO through email
- A list of all those not subscribing to DOJO will be kept by the office & hard copies sent to all those on the list

- Telephone contacts to the office from parents will be recorded on Scholarpack office and given to appropriate member of staff. Parental Communication Procedure should be followed.

### **External methods of communication**

Schools have many lines of communication to maintain: with parents and carers, other schools, the community and with outside agencies. Our aim is to have clear and effective communications with all 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 important role that parents play in supporting school.

Whilst staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with parents, they will also ensure that the relationships are professional.

To this end parents should always be addressed in an appropriate manner.

All staff should not accept friendship requests from parents on social media. All staff should follow the Trust's Acceptable Use Policy and Code of Conduct.

We will try to make written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We seek to avoid bias.

### **Communications with Parents/Carers**

**E-mail/Text:** The school has an e-mail/text system Scholarpack which it uses to communicate with parents. Any communication that needs to be sent to parents using this system must be approved by the Head of School. If a parent communicates with the school using email with a complaint or a matter that requires an action, a copy should be printed & filed. Staff should forward relevant emails from parents to the Head Teacher and should always do so if the content is a complaint. All e-mails requiring an answer should be responded to within 5 school days. E-mail communications concerning a child are stored electronically.

**Telephone calls:** Office staff will not interrupt teaching for staff to answer a telephone call unless it is an emergency.

**Social Media Sites/Blogs:** Staff are advised not to communicate with parents via social networking sites or accept them as "friends". Staff will not accept pupils or ex-pupils as "friends" and follow the Trust's Acceptable Use Policy and Code of Conduct.

### **Home/school note book**

From September 2020 there will be a home/school notebook which will be used to write weekly comments regarding the child's social and academic progress and any significant achievements.

**Written Reports:** Once a year, we provide a written report to each child's parents on their progress. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. In addition a short summary of attendance and approach to learning is shared termly.

Parents / carers are given the opportunity to meet their child's teacher/s twice during the year for a private consultation at a Parents' Evening. We encourage parents to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being. When children have particular education needs parents will be invited to meet with their child's teacher and / or SENDCo more regularly. We will also make 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 communication.

**School Website:** The school website provides an opportunity to share information about the school and is an opportunity to promote the school to a wider audience. The website will include:

- Term dates and school hours
- School uniform
- School calendar
- Contact information
- Statutory information and key documents
- Ofsted reports
- Test data

The website will be updated regularly.

### **Monthly Newsletter**

A monthly newsletter is distributed via the children. This includes an update from the Head of School, news about each class and key dates.

### **Parents / Carers are responsible for:**

- Informing the school by 8.30am each school day if their child is to be absent. If the child is absent and no call has been received then the school will contact the parent/carer by phone or text to discover the reason for absence.
- Reading key communications circulated by the school and responding to / action upon the communication where necessary
- Reading and commenting in the home/school notebook
- Logging onto the school website to access information re term dates and school calendar
- Informing the school of medical conditions / allergies along with the necessary documentation relating to these
- Informing the school immediately of any change to contact details
- Informing the school of any child protection or legal matters with the relevant documentation
- Raising any concerns that they may with their child's class teacher

### **Safeguarding**

We recognise that children's protection is a shared responsibility, and that Minerva Primary School should provide a safe and secure environment. If any member of staff or parent /

carer has concerns about a child, these will be passed to the Safeguarding Officer who may share this information with Social Services.

### **Emergency Communication**

All parents / carers will ensure the school has their latest contact details, including telephone number and email address, if they have one, so they can be contacted in an emergency.

Where there is an incident that affects the whole school community then a message will be posed on the school's website and a generic text message sent.

If the school is closed due to adverse weather then a note will be posted on the website and a text sent to all parents / carers. The local radio station will also be informed and the Somerset County Council website updated.

### **How will this policy be monitored and evaluated?**

This policy will be monitored through on-going school self-evaluation. The Head of School will use a variety of methods (such as annual surveys) to evaluate this policy with staff, parents. Members of the Friends of Minerva will be asked of their views on this policy.

