



**Rathcoole Primary School,
Nursery Unit
and
ASC provision**



**Communication Policy
and Procedures**

Date reviewed	Spring Term 2022
Next review date	Spring Term 2023

Chair of Board of Governors	<i>Alison Bennington</i>
Principal	<i>Emma Quinn</i>

"The Rathcoole Primary School, Nursery Unit and ASC Family are devoted to ensuring that each and every child is nurtured, inspired and allowed to flourish and achieve in their own unique way. We are proud of our inclusive learning environment where every child matters and every voice is heard."

Introduction

Good communication is much more than the exchange of information. It is through effective 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.

Aim

To ensure that Rathcoole Primary School, NU and ASC provision 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 Rathcoole 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 our core values and ethos alongside the School Improvement Plan.

Responsibilities

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

School staff have discussed and agreed at a staff meeting on 4th April 2022 that :

- ✓ Senior Leadership Team includes subject co-ordinators who are working on the SDP for that year.
- ✓ Senior Management Team includes all subject co-ordinators and Key Stage leads.

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.
- 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.

Senior management team (SMT)

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

Nursery Staff

- To ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels, where practicable face to face.
 - To ensure that staff have the relevant information available to communicate with colleagues effectively.
 - To communicate regularly with each other, preferably face to face, 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. To listen to feedback and comment from all staff.
 - To keep parents informed of developments and concerns.
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- Staff must ensure that they follow the line of communication in relation to any concerns or matters raised. (Please see Appendix A – Communication Tree)

ASC staff

- To ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels, where practicable face to face.
- To ensure that staff have the relevant information available to communicate with colleagues effectively.
- To communicate regularly with each other, preferably face to face, 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. To listen to feedback and comment from all staff.
- To keep parents informed of developments and concerns.
- Staff must ensure that they follow the line of communication in relation to any concerns or matters raised. (Please see Appendix A – Communication Tree)

All teaching staff

- To ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels, where practicable face to face.
- To ensure that staff have the relevant information available to communicate with colleagues effectively.
- To communicate regularly with each other, preferably face to face, 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. To listen to feedback and comment from all staff.
- To keep parents informed of developments and concerns.
- Staff must ensure that they follow the line of communication in relation to any concerns or matters raised. (Please see Appendix A – Communication Tree)

All non-teaching staff (Nursery, ASC and Primary)

- To ensure information is made available to staff in a timely manner and via appropriate channels, where practicable face to face.
- To ensure that staff have the relevant information available to communicate with colleagues effectively.
- To communicate regularly with each other, preferably face to face, 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 teachers, SLT, SMT and colleagues informed. To listen to feedback and comment from all staff.
- Staff must ensure that they follow the line of communication in relation to any concerns or matters raised. (Please see Appendix A – Communication Tree)

Internal Methods of Communication

- All staff have a handbook providing them with important information about organisation and procedures within the school. (Teaching and non-teaching)
- An integrated programme of meetings to facilitate involvement of staff both formal and informal: e.g. teachers' meetings, teaching assistant meetings, Office meetings, Key Stage meetings, whole staff meetings
- All formal meetings should be structured, 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, not available on email, will be placed centrally in the staff room, for all staff to check
- Staff meetings & SLT meetings take at regular intervals and these will be available on the online school calendar for the year ahead. Staff must check these regularly for updates and agendas. Events are discussed in advance at meetings but staff also have the responsibility to check future actions
- Support Staff meeting and Office meetings take place once a term.
- Reminders or letters to individual parents are sent to classes to be given out by the class teachers or via classdojo 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 school uses ClassDojo to communicate with parents (see Home-School Communication Policy)
- Anyone not on ClassDojo should have hard copies sent home. This is updated by the class teacher, who can make requests for hard copies from the office.
- Telephone contacts to the office from parents will be sent to the class teacher via email by office. Home-School Communication Policy 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 new friendship requests from parents on social media. The school accepts that within a local community school there will be family and friendships between staff and the community, but any breach of confidentiality will be deemed as a breach of the code of conduct and managed as a disciplinary matter.

All staff should follow Acceptable use of ICT Policy and Procedures.

All staff will complete a declaration of interest form on appointment and will update this with any changes via the Principal.

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 a system (Classdojo) which it uses to communicate with parents. Any communication that needs to be sent to parents using this system must be approved by the class teacher. If this relates to a concern, SEN, complaint, then permission must be sought from the Principal or SENCO/LSC. 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 messages from parents to the Principal 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 kept for in pupil record files.

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 school Policy and Procedures.

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. Pupils are also given an opportunity to comment on their progress.

In addition, parents 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 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. Parents of children with a PLP/IEP will have the opportunity to review the Plan twice in a year.

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.

We recognise that children’s protection is a shared responsibility, and that Rathcoole’s Primary School, Nursery Unit and ASC provision should provide a safe and secure environment. If any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed to a member of the safeguarding team who may share this information with Social Services or other relevant agencies, to provide further support, guidance and advice.

How will this policy be monitored and evaluated?

This policy will be monitored through on-going school self-evaluation. The Principal, BoG and staff will use a variety of methods to evaluate this policy with all stakeholders.

APPENDIX A



A Shared Professional Ethos

"The Rathcoole Primary School, Nursery Unit and ASC Family are devoted to ensuring that each and every child is nurtured, inspired and allowed to flourish and achieve in their own unique way.

We are proud of our inclusive learning environment, where every child matters and every voice is heard."



Aims

The success of the school is entirely dependent upon the way the staff functions together as a team. Whilst detailed procedures and systems are outlined elsewhere in policies and handbooks, there are a number of key expectations that permeate the way we work right across the school.

These principles are about making life in school easier and more enjoyable for everyone:

- setting a good example to students through providing a positive role model
- conveying a professional image to students, parents and the wider community
- ensuring that we work together as a staff, supporting each others' work

General points

- As a Nurture School, all staff understand and follow the Nurture Principles.

For the purpose of this policy, staff put particular emphasis on understanding that:

- all behaviour is communication
- language is a vital means of communication
- the importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing.

The poster for 'The Six Principles of Nurture' has a purple and green background. It features the text 'THE SIX PRINCIPLES OF NURTURE' in large, bold letters. Below this, six principles are listed, each preceded by a small star icon. The principles are: 1. Children's learning is understood developmentally. 2. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing. 3. All behaviour is communication. 4. The classroom offers a safe base. 5. Language is a vital means of communication. 6. The importance of transition in children's lives. At the bottom, the website 'www.nurturegroups.org' is listed, along with a small photo of a smiling child's face.

THE SIX PRINCIPLES OF NURTURE

The nurture group network

- * Children's learning is understood developmentally
- * The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing
- * All behaviour is communication
- * The classroom offers a safe base
- * Language is a vital means of communication
- * The importance of transition in children's lives

www.nurturegroups.org

Registered England and Wales, charity number: 1119872, Scottish registered charity number: SC042703

* all staff are encouraged to use Johns Model of Reflection



Source : <https://www.toolshero.com/personal-development/johns-model-of-reflection/> (accessed 4.4.22)

- all staff should ensure they maintain an appropriate 'professional distance' in the way they form their relationships with students and colleagues
- all staff are expected to be punctual for school, for lessons, for appointments, for duty and for meetings
- all staff should dress smartly, as appropriate for their role in the school
- all staff should recognise that whilst people's roles in school may vary considerably, we are all part of the staff team with shared aims and professional values
- all staff should be committed to creating and maintaining a public ethos which conveys mutual respect between all members of the school community in all aspects of school life
- no member of staff should ever overlook poor student behaviour – proper procedures should always be followed. Support staff should feel free to raise an issue with a teacher colleague if they are uneasy about tackling a student themselves
- if a member of staff is unhappy about something a colleague may have said or done then they should see the person concerned and discuss the matter. Only if the issue cannot be resolved should the matter be discussed with anyone else
- concerns should not be conveyed in writing initially, but dealt with face to face and in private
- should a member of staff need to seek advice about how to deal with a situation, this should be done discreetly and certainly not in the staff room or any other public domain
- Where staff are considering making an application for a post outside of the school, it is important that the Principal is made aware of the situation prior to any application being submitted, particularly if colleagues are being named as referees

- All staff should adhere to the acceptable use of ICT policy. This includes the use of social networks for school related business. WhatsApp is one agreed tool of communication between the whole school team. There are restrictions on its use, which includes restricted content, timing of use, adherence to GDPR. This is also adhered to in our wellbeing policy, in a combined effort to support a work-life balance for all.
- Social media (including WhatsApp) will also not be used for communication with Principal in relation to absences. Please ensure that all staff phone the Principal to notify of absence and return to work plans. This is dealt with further in the staff handbooks and also in the managing attendance at work documents.
- Any breach of the use of social media may be dealt with under the disciplinary procedure.
- part of the role of the senior team, co-ordinators and key stage leads, is to support all staff wherever possible, as well as to check and monitor that appropriate professional standards are being met. This is a way of making sure all colleagues are fulfilling their roles. It is not about looking to find fault or criticise; it's about ensuring mutual professional standards of which we can all be proud
- Staff, as far as possible, should follow the communication tree.
- Please refer to relevant documents and policies for further information and guidance (APPENDIX A)

Managing deadlines

- when setting deadlines for colleagues, all staff should ensure reasonable time is allowed for response. This is particularly relevant for teaching staff in practical areas of the curriculum who should not, through their poor planning, create stress for support staff colleagues by making last-minute request
- when given a deadline, colleagues should meet it, or in exceptional circumstances see the person concerned beforehand to explain why the deadline can't be met

Reducing bureaucracy

- the school is committed to the principle that administrative or technical tasks should be carried out by administrative staff, within reason and as far as possible.
- any member of staff who is asking a colleague for information should always ask themselves whether the information already exists elsewhere or whether it is absolutely necessary to collect the information in the first place
- wherever possible, the school should use ICT to reduce the administrative burden for staff

Contact with parents

- where a parent contacts the school to speak to a member of staff, that person should get back to the family that day if possible via ClassDojo, and certainly by the following working day, or tell the office to call and say when they will be able to call
- whenever a member of staff gives an undertaking to a parent, it should be acted upon within the appropriate timeframe
- all parental contact, whether in person, by phone or e-mail, should be recorded on SIMS (if teacher deems that it is important information) or on the child's class file, retained in locked file in class.

The staffroom

- the staffroom should be a place for relaxation – tea and coffee will be available throughout the day, including those not directly employed by the school such as the canteen staff, cleaners, library staff, the police and visitors (where appropriate). Staff are asked to donate to a voluntary shared staff fund on a monthly basis.
- to keep the staff room free from clutter, staff are requested not to limit items in the staff room. These should be left in the appropriate bases.
- the staff room is not a place of work; it is a place to unwind with colleagues. Items left will be sent to lost property and finally removed to charity shops.
- all staff should consult the online shared school calendar.
- staff should check their e-mails regularly.

Meetings

- staff running meetings should ensure they start and finish on time, even if this means business is not completed. A well planned and well chaired meeting will rarely overrun
- all staff should read the school calendar as soon as it is issued to ensure commitments are noted. No meetings or events should be moved unless:
 - a) all those scheduled to attend agree; and
 - b) Principal approval has been sought

Premises

- The site is designated a non-smoking/ non-vapping zone for staff
- when on school trips and visits, staff should ensure they are not seen smoking by students.
- staff who leave the premises during lesson times should inform the school office, and give an expected time of return
- staff should wear their school lanyards at all times.

Refreshments

- sandwiches may be provided on those occasions when staff are required to be in the school for training events.

Teaching spaces

- these should convey a professional and purposeful atmosphere
- all required items should be displayed
- space should be allocated for curriculum and pastoral displays in each room

Social Events

We acknowledge that all staff will not wish to partake in staff outings and out of hour gatherings. However, the invitation will be extended to all annual school related gatherings (during school hours) via c2k internal email e.g. end of term BBQ, school award nights.

However, all staff trust, respect and acknowledge friendships at all levels within the setting. All school staff do not have to be invited as these are personal social events. We respect the privacy of staff.

Physical contact with students

In order to prevent staff from possible allegations from parents and to allow the school to act firmly in cases of poor student behaviour, 'holding' or physical restraint should only be used as a last resort, where:

- students place themselves at risk of physical injury / fatality
- students place others at risk of physical injury / fatality
- damage to property or buildings can be limited

Only reasonable force should be used, and the level and duration should be the minimum required to ensure safety. Force should not be used for other purposes, eg, compliance with instructions. All incidents should be logged on an Incident form and discussed with students and parents.

Staff should not intervene to prevent injury to a member of the school community if they risk themselves being injured. If a member of staff feels physically threatened at any time, he/she should proceed to an area where other people are present. In this situation, staff should always seek to avoid confrontation by backing down or trying to diffuse the situation. Appropriate action can be taken later when everything is under control. No member of staff should physically try to remove anyone from the premises unless directed by a member of SMT / Principal.

All staff, pupils, parents and carers within the Rathcoole Family are expected to model behaviour within our key focus of 'Ready. Respectful. Safe.'



APPENDIX A : POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND REFERENCES

Reference to (although not exhaustive)

Non-teaching Staff Handbook

Teacher Staff Handbook

Policies (List is not exhaustive) :

Equal Opportunities Policy for Teachers

Whistleblowing Policy

Mobile Phone Policy

Home-school Communication

Please see link to policies and procedures for teaching and non-teaching staff in relation to workplace conduct and behaviour, grievance and complaints.

<https://www.eani.org.uk/ea-staff-hub/hr-online/workplace-conduct-behaviour>

Support / Advice

<https://www.lra.org.uk/>

<https://www.inspirewellbeing.org/contact-us/>

<https://healthwell.eani.org.uk/>

<https://www.lifelinehelpline.info/>

Inspire Workplaces is the new name for Carecall/EAP Consultants



For free,
confidential
and immediate
support call



0808 800 0002

APPENDIX B : COMMUNICATION TREE (Highlighting Concerns & Raising Matters)

Communication Tree



Route 1 Informal

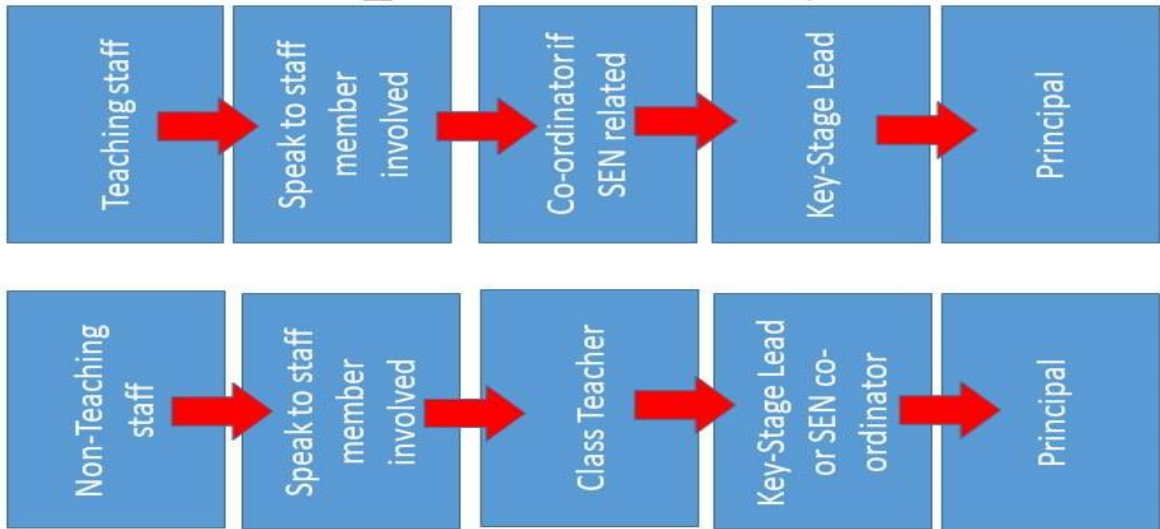


What do I do if I have a concern, query or problem?

The Principal will review the information evidence via the informal process first and may advise to revisit this route in the first instance

The Labour Relations Agency also support mediation between parties at any stage

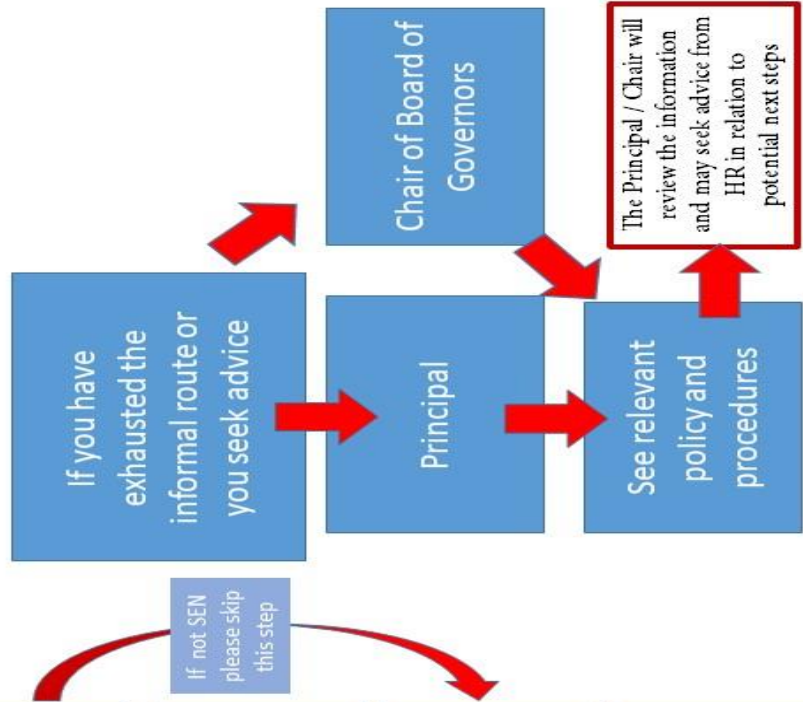
Highlighting Concerns and Raising Matters



Communication Tree



Route 2 Formal



If not SEN please skip this step