



Communications Policy



Approved by Trustees –May 2015

Approved by Staff – November 2015

Date for Review –November 2017

Akaal Primary School: Communications Policy

1 Rationale

1.1 Schools have many lines of communication to maintain good relationships and clarity of intent: with parents and carers, with other schools, with the community, with outside agencies, and within the school. Good communication between the school and the home is essential, and children achieve more when schools and parents/carers work together. Parents and carers can naturally help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve.

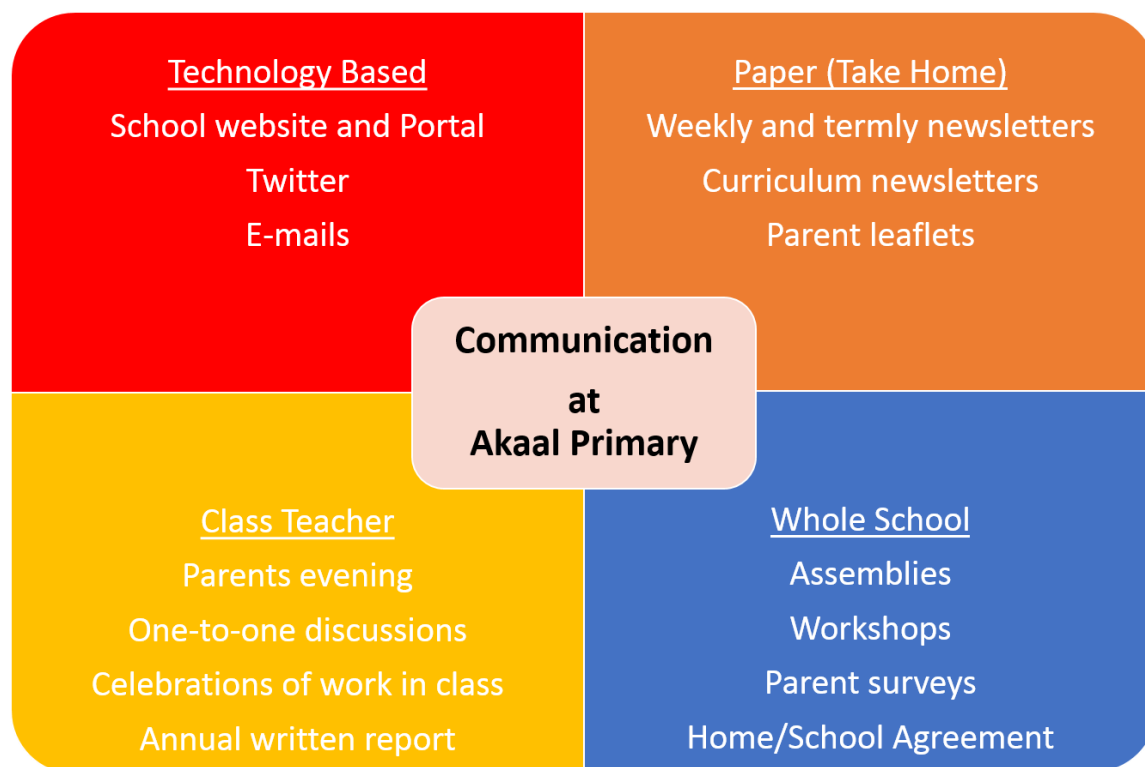
2 Aims and objectives

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

2.2 We have various strategies for communicating with parents and carers. Some of our communications are in accordance with a statutory requirement, while others simply reflect what we believe is important for our school.

2.3 We try to make our written communications as accessible and inclusive as possible. We use an easy-to-read font, and add pictures wherever appropriate. 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.

2.4



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3 Home-school agreement (completed in Reception and arrival of new children)

- 3.1 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 carers, and what the school expects of the children. We ask parents and carers to sign this agreement when their child starts at our school.
- 3.2 The agreement covers the standard of education in our school, the ethos of the school, and our expectations regarding attendance, behaviour, and homework. Our trustees review the agreement annually.

4 Annual written report to parents and carers: children's achievements

- 4.1 Every year, we provide a written report to each child's parents or carers on the child's progress in the various National Curriculum subjects and in aspects of their social and personal development. This report identifies areas of strength and areas for future development. In our school, we ask the children to comment on their own progress (depending on their age), and we ask parents and carers to make a similar comment.
- 4.2 As well as receiving the annual written report, parents and carers meet their child's teacher each term for a private consultation. This gives them the opportunity to celebrate their child's successes, and to support their child in areas where there is a particular need for improvement or if there are any concerns about their social or personal well-being. Parents and carers are able to see their child's work during these meetings. We encourage parents and carers to contact the school if any issues arise regarding their child's progress or well-being.
- 4.3 When children have **special educational needs, or if they are making less than the expected progress**, we find it helpful to meet with parents and carers more regularly. If a child has an 'All about Me Plan' and attends SEND Provision meetings, parental signatures are required termly. These signatures will be collected at meetings between teachers and parents/carers where all parties retain copies.
- 4.4 We welcome the presence of any other adult the parent wishes to invite to a school meeting to act as **interpreter**. We will also 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.

5 Electronic communication

- 5.1 We use the Internet and e-mail, and we have a school website and Portal.
- 5.2 All school members may communicate with others through the Internet. There are many benefits, but also a number of possible dangers. Rules for the use of the Internet are contained in our **Safe Use of the Internet policy**. Safeguards in our school include constant adult supervision, sites being filtered by our service provider, controlled links, and the use of child-friendly search engines.

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5.3 The Internet may be used in lessons 'live' for lesson content and for interactive teaching programs.

5.4 Our school website provides a wide-range of information about the school, including the prospectus, policies, performance and an opportunity to celebrate children's work with the wider learning community. We also have a portal which gives parents secure access to more specific information about our school and children's learning.

6 School prospectus

6.1 The school prospectus contains a range of specified information to give parents and carers a full picture of provision at our school. We update this for each school year.

7 Public access to documents

7.1 The school makes a range of documentation available to parents and carers. We keep a master set in the school office, and we make a copy of this available on request. It contains all school policies, including those that the trustees are required to draw up in relation to the following matters: charging and remissions, sex education, health and safety, curriculum, performance management, admissions, and action planning following an inspection. It also contains a range of national documentation.

8 Home-school communication

8.1 We send newsletters to parents and carers at the end of each school week by e-mail or paper, depending on preference. It contains general details of school events and activities. Parents and carers expect the newsletter, and appreciate the regularity of the contact. We send other letters of a general nature when necessary. This newsletter is also available each week from our school portal.

8.2 At the beginning of each term, all teachers write to the parents or carers of the children in their classes with details of the work to be covered during the forthcoming term. We invite parents and carers to support their child's work through a range of suggested activities to be shared with the child at home.

8.3 Children in all classes have a reading record. This enables parents and carers to record a wide range of information that they wish to share regularly with the teacher.

8.4 Each class will have a Twitter account which parents and carers of that class can follow. The teacher shares information about what the children have been learning during the course of the term, reminders and information; all which help to improve communication.

8.5 We invite parents and carers into the school to share children's learning on a particular theme or a whole school initiative. We also hold weekly assemblies to celebrate the talents of our children and the successes during the term.

8.6 The school encourages parents and carers to share any issues or concerns about their child at the **earliest opportunity**. Teachers see parents/carers immediately, if at all possible. Where this is not possible, the parent makes an appointment. We allow many parents and

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carers the opportunity to have a word with the teacher when they bring their children to school, or when they collect them after school as all teachers are present to receive and discuss their classes on most days.

- 8.7 We hold a meeting for new parents/carers each June, including an induction meeting for parents of children starting in Reception.
- 8.8 During the academic year, the school delivers workshops for parents on a range of topics to develop their understanding of the curriculum and how they can support their child at home.
- 8.9 If a child is absent from school, and we have had no indication of the reason, we contact a parent (by telephone, if possible) to find out the reason for the absence on the first day of non-attendance.
- 8.10 Throughout the year we seek feedback from our parents on a range of topics that link to our School Improvement Plan. We also promote the use of Parent View for parents to provide feedback on all aspects of school life.

9 Communication with other schools and outside agencies

- 9.1 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), from child development centres, from local doctors and specialists, and from school nurses. It also comes from various welfare-focused services, such as Educational Welfare, Social Services and Behaviour Intervention units.
- 9.2 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. We are the people most in contact with our children, and we are therefore in a unique position to identify and help abused children. So when any member of staff has concerns about a child, these will be passed on to the headship team, who may share this information with the social services.
- 9.3 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. Details have been sent to parents and carers 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 and carers have a right to view the information we hold, and we have contact details of the agencies to which our information is passed.

10 Communication within our school

- 10.1 So that we all know what is going on, there is a timetable in the staff room of the month's activities, and a whiteboard for the day's messages.
- 10.2 All our procedures are detailed in the Staff Handbook.

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- 10.3 Written communications are delivered through e-mail or text messages.
- 10.4 Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff.
- 10.5 A weekly briefing meeting is held twice weekly and attended by all staff to support whole school communication. In addition to this, weekly staff and/or phase meetings also take place.

11 Use of photographs and names

- 11.1 Photographs are used in and around the school for many purposes, records of practical work (eg art or technology projects), and records of important school events.
- 11.2 We may use photographs of children or their work when communicating with parents/carers and the wider community, in newsletters, in the school prospectus, on the school website, or in the governors' report to parents and carers. The local or national press may on occasion publish photographs of children participating in events at school.
- 11.3 **Parental permission must be obtained before using photographs of children or their work as detailed in 11.1 and 11.2 above.** Parents and carers will want to know the policy of the press about name disclosure before giving permission for a photo to be used. Lists of those children for whom permission has NOT been given will be held by each class teacher, and by the school office.
- 11.4 Photographs will be checked to ensure that they are suitable (photos of children in swimwear would be unsuitable, as would individual and close-up shots).
- 11.5 Photographs used will not be captioned with children's names. Even on the school website, only children's first names will be used.

12 Monitoring and review

- 12.1 This policy will be regularly monitored, and will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if required.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Internet Safety Policy and our Safeguarding policy.