Parent communication policy

Date approved	Committee responsible for review of policy	Next review date	Policy on website	Statutory policy
October 2026	FGB	October 2027	Yes	No

Headteacher: Mrs Fiona Micklefield

We believe it is important to create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for pupils, staff and parents in our school. We encourage clear, open communication links with parents as we believe it has a positive impact on pupils' learning. It provides parents with the information they need to support their child's education and helps to build a partnership between home and school. Such communication can be entirely positive and practical e.g. to seek information, ask a question, clear up a misunderstanding or to draw attention to a matter. Sometimes there is a need to resolve an issue or misunderstanding.

We use the term 'parents' in this policy to refer to:

- Anyone with parental responsibility for a pupil
- Anyone caring for a child (such as grandparents or child-minders)

The term member of staff as referred to in this policy includes:

- Anyone employed by the school
- Anyone training in a professional capacity at the school
- Governors (when acting in this capacity)
- Volunteers at the school (when acting in this capacity)
- Anyone employed through an external agency, who are acting in a professional capacity on the school site

This communication policy aims to set out the methods of communication available to parents for contacting the school and our expectations from parents when visiting our school or communicating with staff at our school.

We acknowledge that sometimes there can be situations that can be emotional and challenging for parents and staff to work through. Nonetheless, we expect all our community to show mutual respect. We have clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all members of our community. This includes staff (through the staff code of conduct) and pupils (through our behaviour policy). We also expect parents to engage constructively with school staff and to work together with them in the best interests of our children.

Any correspondence received from legal advisers will be shared with the school's legal advisers.

Stage 1 of our complaints policy suggests that other forms of communication can often help in resolving issues and we encourage parents to use this route. However, this is not compulsory and does not prevent the use of the complaints policy either straight away or after other forms of communication have been tried. If parents are considering making a formal complaint, here is a link to the complaints policy.

Communication with the school

In the case of communications with the school that are not raising a formal complaint, the following guidance will apply:

Email

Parents are welcome to email the school, adminoffice@st-lawrence.hants.sch.uk about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

Emails will be most helpful if they are concise, explaining concerns or giving information in a clear way.

Our policy will be that staff respond to you within 3 working days. If a response is unable to be provided within this timeline, which can be to ensure a full and considered response, then a revised timeline will be provided and communicated. We ask that parents await a response from the school and that further emails are not sent pending that response, unless the new deadline has passed.

Phone calls

If a query or concern is time sensitive and urgent the parent should call the school office, who will liaise with the relevant staff member as necessary at the earliest opportunity. In most circumstances, teaching and leadership staff are unlikely to be available to receive calls due to teaching and other commitments.

If the query or concern is not time sensitive and urgent then parents should email or call the school office and the relevant member of staff will aim to contact them within 3 working days dependent on the days they work. If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will respond to schedule a phone call at a convenient time.

For general enquiries, please call or email the school office - adminoffice@st-lawrence.hants.sch.uk

Meetings

For quick, short messages, there is a member of staff on the gate 8.45-9.00am.

When a member of staff is not able to speak to you immediately face-to-face due to school commitments, or a longer conversation is deemed necessary or appropriate, then a request for an appointment can be made to discuss the matter either in person or by telephone, at a later date. The school will aim to arrange that meeting within 3 working days.

Outside of teaching hours, all staff have additional duties which they perform either before school, during break/lunch or after school so availability of staff outside of teaching hours should not be assumed.

Should a meeting be requested the decision of which staff member will attend will rest with the Headteacher.

Communication during school hours/ working days

Staff will aim to respond to communication during core school hours (8.45-3.15pm), or their working hours (if they work part-time).

Parents should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours (8.45-3.15pm) or during school holidays.

Staff may choose to work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are not expected to do so.

Social Media

The school will not respond to concerns raised via social media.

Where the social media site is run by the school, comments will be removed if they do not meet the criteria of the social media site

Should the school be made aware of any derogatory comments, physical threats or abusive behaviour towards any staff members, members of school community including the children on social media or class Whatsapp groups, then the school will consider reporting this to the Police and seeking the removal of this content from the site.

Types of unacceptable behaviour and communication

There are some types of behaviour / communication that the school consider unacceptable. These are as follows:

- A large volume of emails in respect of the same matter over a short period of time.
- Continuing to raise the same issue despite it having been already addressed by the school.
- Unreasonable levels of contact; when the amount of time spent dealing with an issue impacts on our ability to deal with it or other matters.
- Speaking to staff about school issues when in the community and not in their professional role
- Shouting at members of staff or pupils (either in person on school grounds, over the telephone or over video conferencing);
- Physically intimidating a member of staff, or pupils e.g., standing very close to her/him;

- The use of aggressive hand gestures including finger pointing and fist shaking towards a member of staff or pupil;
- Swearing, or using offensive language including derogatory language about a protected group or characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010;
- Threatening or offensive comments about a member of staff or pupil of the school; this can include verbally, via texts, emails, social media, etc.;
- Sending abusive messages to a member of staff, including via text, email or social media
- Posting defamatory, offensive or derogatory comments about the school, its staff, on social media platforms
- Disrupting, or threatening to disrupt, school operations (including events on the school grounds and sports team matches)
- Any physical aggression e.g. slapping, hitting, punching and kicking, spitting;
- Covertly recording phone calls or meetings with member of staff
- Breaching or not conforming to the school's security procedures
- Any other behaviour that is disrespectful, threatening or offensive

This list is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour which has no place in our school community. Any of these behaviours will be recorded on our whole school behaviour and safeguarding system (CPOMS).

Actions that may be taken by the school as a result of unacceptable behaviour and communication

If unacceptable behaviour is considered to have occurred, the following actions may be taken by the school, dependent on the severity/gravity of the behaviour:

- Staff have the right to remove themselves from any situation or to end a phone call if they do not feel comfortable
- If the unacceptable behaviour has occurred on site, the school will ask the parent to desist and/or leave the site. If the behaviour is of a serious nature, then the police will be contacted.
- Staff have the right to ask another member of staff to be present at any meetings
- The parent will be told verbally that his / her behaviour is considered to be unacceptable and, if it is not modified, the school will take further action.
- The parent will be told in writing that his / her behaviour is considered to be unacceptable and, if it is not modified, the school will take further action.

- Advising the parent that all future meetings with a member of staff will be conducted with a second person present and will be minuted
- Putting in place a contact plan to deal with any communication between the individual and school. For example, except in emergencies, communication to the school must be in writing only to a named individual and the school can set out timescales for school responses
- A warning letter or an immediate ban from the school site;
- Contacting the Police where behaviour is criminal in nature.
- Seek advice from the local authority's legal team regarding further action.

Any staff who have been subject to infringements of our parent communication policy will have the opportunity to discuss this and be supported by the headteacher who will make any further actions as required.

The school will always seek to respond to an incident in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to the unacceptable behaviour and communication rests with the headteacher and, where necessary, the Governing Body

Dated: October 2026

Headteacher (Fiona Micklefield)

Chair of Governors (Paul Whitty)