



**The Park
Academies
Trust**



Communication Policy

January 2025

Version Control

Reviewer / owner (role)	Executive lead (role)	Approving body	Meeting date when the policy was approved
Ruth Lee Head Teacher		LAB	23.1.24
Ruth Lee Head Teacher		LAB	21.1.25

This policy is reviewed every two years.

The next review is due by January 2027

Introduction

1. The Trust expects all decisions, policies, and procedures to be consistently guided by its vision and values.

Our Aim

2. To create centres of educational excellence that inspire all pupils to turn their potential into performance.

To achieve this, our schools will:

- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum that allows pupils to develop their talents and ambitions.
- Deliver the highest quality learning opportunities facilitated by excellent teachers.
- Inspire our pupils to become confident, motivated, and respectful individuals ready to make a positive contribution to society.

The Trust will support our schools by:

- Maximising the resources and expertise available to individual schools.
- Providing a platform for the sharing of excellent practice.
- Challenging and developing staff to turn their potential into performance.

Orchid Vale Primary School

3. The welfare and safeguarding of our children is paramount in all we do at Orchid Vale Primary School.

1. Introduction and Aims

4. Communication is a two-way process involving both giving and receiving information and acting on it. We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers positively impacts pupils' learning because it:

- Provides parents/carers with the information they need to support their child's education.
- Builds trust between home and school, helping the school better support each child's educational and pastoral needs.
- Helps the school improve through feedback and consultation with parents/carers.

5. The aim of this policy is to promote clear and open communication by:

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers.
- Setting clear standards for responding to communication from parents/carers.
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff best placed to address their specific query or concern quickly.

6. In the following sections, we will use 'parents' to refer to both parents and carers.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher

7. The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely, professional, and appropriate.
- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy.
- Regularly reviewing this policy.

2.2 Staff

8. All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the school's ICT and internet acceptable use policy.
- Working with other members of staff to ensure parents receive information in a timely manner (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves).

9. Staff will respond to communications during school hours (8 am to 5 pm, Monday-Friday) or their working hours (if they work part-time), during school term time. However, it is important to recognise that teachers will be teaching their class and will not be able to respond immediately.

2.3 Parents

10. Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times.
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance.
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner.
- Checking all communications from the school.

11. Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive, or threatening will be treated in line with our parent code of conduct.

3. How We Communicate with Parents and Carers

12. The sections below explain how we keep parents up-to-date with their child's education and what is happening in school. Parents should monitor all of the following regularly to ensure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

3.1 Arbor Email

13. We use email to keep parents informed about:

- Upcoming school events.
- Newsletters.
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days).
- School surveys or consultations.
- Class activities or teacher requests.
- Changes to school procedures.

3.2 Arbor In-App Messages

14. We will text parents about:

- Payments.
- Short-notice changes to the school day.
- Celebrations of pupil successes.
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather).
- Medical incidents such as bumped heads.
- Alerts to urgent emails.

3.3 Class Dojo

15. We send Dojo messages to parents about:

- Short-notice changes to the school day.
- Celebrations of pupil successes.
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather).
- Year group or class events.
- Updates regarding ongoing situations.

16. Teachers will have quiet hours set on Class Dojo and may not always respond immediately.

3.4 School Calendar

17. Our school website includes a full school calendar for the month. Where possible, we try to give parents at least 2 weeks' notice of any events or special occasions (including non-uniform days, special assemblies or visitors, or requests for pupils to bring in special items or materials). Any such event will be included in the school calendar.

3.5 Phone Calls

18. School staff will, on occasion, contact parents to discuss their child. This may be to celebrate their successes, discuss progress or behaviour, or address any concerns.

3.6 Letters via Arbor

19. We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits.
- Consent forms.
- Our newsletter.

3.7 Reports

20. Parents receive reports from the school about their child's learning, including:

- An end-of-year report covering their achievement in each part of the curriculum, how well they are progressing, and their attendance.
- Two parents' evenings – one during the Autumn Term and one during the Spring Term.
- A report on the Phonics Screening, KS1 and KS2 SATs tests.

21. We also arrange regular meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress.

3.8 Meetings

22. The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing. Parents of pupils with special educational

needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs. Pupils who have an Early Help Record will be invited to TAC meetings at least once a term (every 12 weeks). If you would like to arrange a meeting with a particular member of staff, please arrange this through the school office.

3.9 School Website

23. Key information about the school is posted on our website, including:

- School times and term dates.
- Important events and announcements.
- Curriculum information.
- Important policies and procedures.
- Important contact information.
- Information about before and after-school provision.

24. Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

4. How Parents and Carers Can Communicate with the School

25. Please use the list in appendix 1 to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and email address.

4.1 Class Dojo

26. Parents can use Class Dojo to pass on quick messages or share information. This is not the appropriate platform for lengthy discussions. If a query or concern is urgent, and you need a response sooner than this, please call the school.

4.2 Email

27. Parents should always email the school at enquiries@orchidvale.org.uk about non-urgent issues in the first instance. We aim to acknowledge all emails within 2 working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within 5 working days. If a query or concern is urgent, and you need a response sooner than this, please call the school.

4.3 Phone Calls

28. If you need to speak to a specific member of staff about a non-urgent matter, please email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact you within 2 working days. If this is not possible (due to teaching or other commitments), someone will get in touch with you to schedule a phone call at a convenient time. We aim to make sure you have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within 2 days of your request. If your issue is urgent, please call the school office. Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies.
- Safeguarding or welfare issues.
- Changes to arrangements for the current school day.

4.4 Meetings

29. If you would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, please email the appropriate address (see appendix 1), or call the school to book an appointment. We try to schedule all meetings within 5 working days of the request. While teachers are available at the beginning or end of the school day, if you need to speak to them urgently, we recommend you book appointments to discuss:

- Any concerns you may have about your child's learning.

- Updates related to pastoral support, your child's home environment, or their wellbeing.

4.5 Social Media

30. Whilst social media platforms can be a fantastic resource for communication amongst a school community, they are not ideal for resolving any queries or complaints. They are a means for celebrating our school and for communicating successes and urgent information. If members of school staff follow any unofficial school social media platforms, they are doing so as a parent and will not respond in a professional capacity. No complaints or practical queries will be responded to via social media as they should be directed via the agreed channels (see appendix 1).

5. Inclusion

31. It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school. We currently make whole-school announcements and communications in English. However, if any parents request translated materials, we are very happy to arrange that.

32. Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages.
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls.

33. We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

6. Monitoring and Review

34. The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every 2 years. The policy will be approved by the governing board.

7. Links with Other Policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

ICT and internet acceptable use

Parent code of conduct

Staff code of conduct

Complaints

Who should I contact?

It is very important to us that we are able to deal with any concerns or queries in the most appropriate and efficient way.

If you have questions about any of the topics in the table below, or would like to speak to a member of staff:

- Email the most appropriate address
- Include your child's full name in the subject line and include FAO (for the attention of) the most appropriate member of staff.

We aim to respond to all emails within 2 working days

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher Via enquiries@orchidvale.swindon.org.uk
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	Your child's class teacher Via enquiries@orchidvale.org.uk
Payments	Office Staff via enquiries@orchidvale.org.uk
School trips	Office Staff Via enquiries@orchidvale.org.uk
Uniform/lost and found	Office Staff Via enquiries@orchidvale.org.uk
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01793 745006 If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact enquiries@orchidvale.org.uk
Bullying and behaviour (if it has not been possible to resolve this with the class teacher)	Mrs Lee, Mrs Rao or Mrs Willcox Via enquiries@orchidvale.org.uk
School events/the school calendar	Office Staff Via enquiries@orchidvale.org.uk
Special educational needs	Mrs Willcox or Mrs McLeod send@orchidvale.org.uk
Before and after-school clubs	Office Staff enquiries@orchidvale.org.uk

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
The PTA	Dove committee members dove@orchidvale.org.uk
The Local Advisory Board	Helen Bissex – The clerk to the Local Advisory Board bissexh@theparkacademiestrust.com
Catering/meals	Office Staff enquiries@orchidvale.org.uk

Complaints

If you would like to file a formal complaint, please follow the procedure set out in our complaints policy.

Our Complaints Procedure can be found on our school website in the Key Information Section