



## Balksbury Federation Communication Policy

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At Balksbury Federation, we believe it is important to create a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for our children, staff and parents in both the infant and junior school, and federated grounds. We encourage clear, open communication links with parents as we believe it has a positive impact on children's 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. This communication can be extremely positive and practical, for example, to seek information, ask a question, clear up a misunderstanding or to draw attention to a matter. Sometimes it might be necessary to resolve an issue or misunderstanding.

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

- Anyone with parental responsibility for a child
- 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 federation
- Anyone training in a professional capacity at the federation
- Governors (when acting in the capacity of this role)
- Volunteers at the school (when acting in the capacity of this role)
- Anyone employed through an external agency, who are acting in a professional capacity on the federation's 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 federated community to show mutual respect as part of our core culture and ethos. We have clear expectations and guidelines on behaviour for all members of our community. This includes staff (through the staff code of conduct) and children (through our behaviour policy). We also expect parents to engage constructively with federated staff and to work together with them in the best interests of our children.

We will only communicate with parents in respect of their own child at the school. Requests to raise a concern on behalf of another parent will be declined, as will be

requests for information on another child. Should any correspondence be received from legal advisers then this will be shared with the school's legal advisers.

If parents are considering making a formal complaint, there is a link here to the complaints policy <https://www.balksburyfederation.co.uk/policies-2/> However, stage 1 of our 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.

### **Communication with the federation**

In the case of communications with the school, the following guidance will apply:

### **Meetings**

- Face-to-face conversations are generally the best way of communicating with both the Infant School and the Junior School at drop off or pick up for quick, short messages
- When a member of staff is not able to speak to a parent/carer 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 federation will aim to arrange that meeting within 2-3 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 Executive Headteacher

### **Email**

- Parents are welcome to email both the Infant School and the Junior School about non-urgent issues in the first instance  
[adminoffice@balksbury-inf.hants.sch.uk](mailto:adminoffice@balksbury-inf.hants.sch.uk)  
[adminoffice@balksbury-jun.hants.sch.uk](mailto:adminoffice@balksbury-jun.hants.sch.uk)
- The federation will aim to respond within 2 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 federation 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 federation's infant or junior office, who will liaise as necessary at the earliest opportunity. In most circumstances, teaching staff, Senior Leaders and Leadership Team are unlikely to be available to receive calls due to teaching and other commitments. Therefore, an Admin Officer will indicate when the call back is likely to take place and take relevant details to pass the message on
- 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 2 working days. 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 infant or junior admin office.

## Social Media

- The school will not respond to concerns raised via social media
- Should the school be made aware of any physical threats or abusive behaviour towards staff members on social media then the school will consider reporting this to the Police and seeking the removal of this content from the site

## Communication during school hours/working days

- Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core hours 8:30 am until 4:30pm, or their working hours if they work part-time
- Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core hours 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

## Communicating with us

Means of Communication	When	Reason	Our Response Time
Visit either the Infant or Junior Office Reception	Monday and Friday 8:30am - 3:30pm Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 8:30am – 4:15pm	<b>For example:</b> Drop off medicine you would like administered during the day; deliver a forgotten PE kit; collect an absence request form; drop off a child after registration closes. You can use the Office Reception to request paper copies of documents from our website.	Same day
Phone Office Infant: 01264 352801 Junior: 01264 365642	Monday to Thursday 8:30am – 4:20pm  Friday 8:30am– 3:45pm	<b>For example:</b> Request a meeting or telephone conversation with a staff member (e.g. you need to discuss some news about your child that may affect their school day, or you are concerned about your child's school day). You can leave a brief answer phone message when admin staff are away from their desk.	Same day
Email via @adminoffice (see our website for email addresses)	Anytime	<b>For example:</b> Request a meeting or telephone conversation with a staff member (e.g. you need to discuss some news about your child that may affect their school day, or you are concerned about your child's school day). You can also use this email for notifying or updating information that you feel that school needs to know. Email can also be used to share good news that you wish to be passed on.	Email checked daily. Response within 2 school working days.
SchoolApp	As we send out	<b>For example:</b> You can read up to date information, alerts and emergency messages. You will also receive your newsletters through the SchoolApp with a link.	N/A
Across the Playground (fortnightly newsletter)	Every Two Weeks	<b>For example:</b> Every two weeks, the federation's newsletter will be sent out electronically via the SchoolApp. This includes, key messages, classroom news, diary dates etc.	N/A
Website	Anytime	<b>For example:</b> Looking at federated calendar, looking at your child's year group page or finding information about federated school life within both Infant and Junior School.	N/A
Messages in reading diaries	Anytime	Messages will be placed in reading diaries about federation events and reminders for your child's year group.	N/A

## **Types of unacceptable behaviour and communication**

There are some types of behaviour/communication that the federation consider unacceptable, disrespectful, threatening or offensive, including:

- Face to face abuse, including the use of aggressive hand gestures (e.g. finger pointing, and swearing or using offensive language about an individual or group)
- Shouting at members of staff or children, either in person or over the telephone or virtual meeting
- Sending abusive or disrespectful messages to, or about a member of staff, including via email, website contact us box, or social media

This is not an exhaustive list but seeks to provide illustrations of such behaviour which has no place in our federated community.

On the rare occasions unacceptable behaviour and communication happens within the federation, there *may* be actions taken by the federation as a result:

- In the first instance, (if the unacceptable behaviour has occurred on site) the federation will ask the parent to stop and/or leave the site and reschedule a time to meet when they are calm
- Future meetings may have a Senior Leader present during conversations
- A warning letter or ban from federated site. A contact plan for any communication between a parent and the federation may follow this point

Should the unacceptable behaviour continue, then the federation will not hesitate to seek legal advice.

The federation 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 Executive Headteacher and, where necessary, the Governing Body.

*Review Date: September 2026*