



CREATING A CLIMATE FOR GREAT LEARNING,
SUCCESS AND OPPORTUNITY

Benton Park School

Communications Policy

February 2024

Approved by:	Executive Head Teacher
Responsible Officer:	HR Director
Review Date:	February 2025

School Communication Policy

Version Control

Current Version	Previous version	Summary of Changes made
2024	New	

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SCHOOL COMMUNICATION POLICY STATEMENT

At Benton Park School we have a clear and strong vision to create a climate for great learning, success and opportunity for our students, which is driven by our very high expectations, standards and aspirations for all within our community.

In order to achieve our vision, our work is underpinned by our five key values: Endeavour, Resilience, Inspiration, Collaboration, and Compassion.

Effective communication enables us to share our vision and values, schools' successes and information on all aspects of school life and in pursuing these values we are committed to building a cohesive, collaborative school community.

We value working in partnership with our parents, carers and community and believe the mutual support and clear, open communication we can give each other will be of great benefit to our students and have a positive impact on student learning.

We believe that it is important for everyone involved with school life to communicate in a positive way, whether in person, on the telephone, by correspondence or online. In this way, staff, students, parents, carers and members of the public convey courtesy and respect to each other at all times, which helps to promote the most constructive working and learning environment.

Benton Park School is committed to providing timely and informative communication throughout the year, using the channel of communication that is most appropriate to the audience, message and context. We will aim to acknowledge communication within 48 hours during term time (but not including weekends).

School opening hours: 8:00am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday during term time.
School core hours: 8:25am to 3:10pm Monday to Friday during term time.

School calendar and term dates: <https://bentonpark.org.uk/our-school/calendar>

The Aim of the Policy

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

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers and giving them the information, they need to support their child's education.
- Setting clear standards and expectations for communication on how we will communicate with you and how we would like you to communicate with us.
- Reinforces our expectations that parents, visitors and members of the public will treat each other, staff members, students and external agencies with dignity and respect.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Executive Headteacher/Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher/Headteacher are responsible for ensuring communication from the school is effective, timely and appropriate.

They will monitor the implementation of this policy and will regularly review it.

They will also take the necessary action to protect staff and students where communications do not respect the dignity of the recipient, intimidate or are considered to be abusive.

Our Staff

Our staff are committed to educating and supporting our students. They are required to demonstrate the highest possible professional standards, dealing with all students, fairly and consistently, communicating with all parents and visitors with the highest level of professional courtesy and uphold the professional integrity of the school at all times.

They are responsible for responding to communications from parents and carers in line with this policy, having due regard to school policies and procedures, working with other members of staff to make sure parents and carers get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send information themselves).

Staff will aim to respond to communication during core school hours, or their working hours (if they work part-time) within 48 hours during term time (not including weekends). We recognise that there may be times when communication may need to take place outside of these hours and a different member of staff may contact you due to availability or because they are better placed to deal with the questions or concerns.

Our Parents and Visitors

We ask our parents and visitors to positively support the vision and values of the school by setting a good example in their speech and behaviour both in person and in communications (including online) towards all students, staff members and other adults.

We expect that all parents, visitors and members of the public will treat each other, staff members, students and external agencies with dignity and respect. All members of the school community have the right to work without fear of abuse or violence at all times.

It is important that parents and carers respond to communications from the school such as requests for meetings, in a timely and constructive manner. We ask that our parents and carers work supportively at all times to resolve any issues of concern, or to improve their child's behaviour where necessary in order to bring about a positive solution. We also ask that every effort is made to positively promote the school to the wider community and not publicly undermine the school or the implementation of school policies.

School policies are available via the school's website or from the school directly. When raising a concern, we would ask parents to ensure that they act in accordance with school policies.

Parents and carers should not expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours or during school holidays.

Equality and Diversity

At Benton Park School, we share a commitment to equality, diversity and community cohesion across all sections of our school community. The school is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Whilst email is the preferred method of communication, in accordance with equality law, we will consider making reasonable adjustments if required, for instance providing information in alternative accessible formats, holding meetings in accessible locations and communication support if required.

We are committed to providing an environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment and victimisation where all members of its community are treated with respect and dignity. The school aims to create a culture of diversity within its community, providing a dynamic working and learning environment, where all members are valued for their contribution.

Our aim is to ensure that these commitments, reinforced by our values, are embedded in our day to day working practices with the school community.

Bullying, harassment or intimidation, including physical, sexual and verbal abuse, will not be tolerated under any circumstances

FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

The School Website

Key information about the school is posted on our website <https://bentonpark.org.uk/> and parents and carers are asked to check the website and the latest parent bulletin with reminders of up and coming dates for the diary before contacting the school.

Parent Consultation

Parent consultation evenings are scheduled for the academic year and the dates are publicised on the school website. Parents will be notified when appointments are available to book online.

School Calendar

Our interactive calendar on our school website <https://bentonpark.org.uk/our-school/calendar> helps you to see the different events, trips, exam periods and holiday dates that exist throughout the school year. This calendar is used internally by the school so it will always be up-to-date.

Emails

The use of email is the preferred method of contact for parents and carers

We use email to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Consent forms via the Evolve email address (evolve.leedsvisits@edufocus.co.uk)
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests

Parents and carers should always email the school about non-urgent issues in the first instance via the year group inbox below:

- Year7@bentonpark.net
- Year8@bentonpark.net
- Year9@bentonpark.net
- Year10@bentonpark.net
- Year11@bentonpark.net
- ks5progressleaders@bentonpark.net

For reporting a student absence, parents or carers must contact the Attendance Office at attendance@bentonpark.net on the first day of absence providing a date of return. If a date of return cannot be provided, parents must contact the school on each additional day of the absence until the student returns.

We ask for emails to staff to be positive in tone and include appropriate salutations. Staff should be given two school days to acknowledge receipt, although we will always endeavour to respond as soon as possible.

As a school our aim is to deliver high quality teaching and learning alongside comprehensive pastoral support, and as such, we ask you to understand and respect that staff do not monitor and manage their inbox during lessons; this is why we ask that all correspondence goes via a central point rather than directly to a member of staff.

The sending of abusive or threatening written or email messages will be treated in the same way as any other abusive or threatening behaviour.

Telephone calls

Whilst email is preferable, we recognise there may be times when a telephone call may be more appropriate to notify us that your child is absent from school on the first day of absence by contacting the Attendance Office or to communicate brief information about your child that the school needs to know in an emergency. The contact telephone number for the school is 0113 2502330.

N.B. If a parent or carer needs to speak to a member of staff about a non-urgent matter, please email the year group inbox.

The school office is open between 8:00am and 4:30pm Monday to Friday during term time. At all other times there is an answering service available to leave your message. Telephone calls will be acknowledged within 48 hours during term time but not over a weekend. A different member of staff may return your call due to availability or if they are better placed to deal with any questions or concerns

Meetings

We ask parents and carers to make reasonable requests for meeting times, and not expect to see any member of staff without a prior appointment. We will always try and accommodate a meeting or phone call as soon as possible, but staff have many commitments throughout the day and we would ask that you understand and respect this.

Letters

Our preferred method of contact is via email. Letters will be sent out via email addresses unless it is more appropriate due to the audience, message or content to be sent using postal mail.

Text Messages

Our preferred method of communication is via email. We will only text parents and carers with urgent alerts for example short-notice changes to the school day and emergency school closures. These texts will normally be 'no-reply' messages and if appropriate will sign post you to the school website or relevant contact for further information.

Parent Pay

Please refer to the school website in the first instance regarding guidance on parent pay and the School Meal Debt Policy and communications home.

Use of Social Media

Everyone is expected to act in an appropriate manner when communicating about the school on social networking sites, such as Facebook, X and Instagram. All members of the school community, including parents, carers and visitors are encouraged to use social media responsibly in order to set a positive example for students.

Parents and visitors must not attempt to befriend or otherwise contact members of staff or students through social media. Where contact has been attempted, this should be reported to the Headteacher.

Online content which is damaging to the school or any members of the school community should not be posted. In the event of defamation, the school will consider legal action. Cyber bullying of any kind will not be tolerated and will be dealt with as a serious incident.

Any cases of social media use that breach the guidelines of this policy will be reported to the Headteacher immediately.

The school will report offending individuals using the appropriate 'report abuse' section on the specific social media site and will arrange a meeting with the individuals concerned to discuss their use of social media.

The individual will be advised to remove any posts or comments that are harmful, immediately. The school may contact the police for legal action where necessary.

Inappropriate Behaviour

Although rare, the school takes any instances of inappropriate behaviour very seriously and will not tolerate any circumstances which may make students or members of staff feel threatened. A perceived threat, or any action which makes another individual feel threatened, can be sufficient to bar someone, including parents, from the premises.

Any abusive, foul or insulting language, physical attacks or aggressive or threatening behaviour towards staff members, governors, students, parents or any member of the public within our premises, on the phone or online will not be tolerated under any circumstances. This also extends to posting or publishing comments online that risk bringing an individual or school's reputation into disrepute.

The following are examples of inappropriate behaviour which may result in sanctions being issued against an individual:

- Disruptive behaviour which interferes with, or threatens to interfere with, the normal business of the school
- Causing intentional damage to school property
- Breaching the school's security procedures
- Displaying a temper, or shouting at members of staff, students or other parents and carers,
- Swearing, talking in an aggressive manner, using offensive language or raising their voice at another individual
- Language or actions which breach our commitment to Equality and Diversity, for example, racist, sexist, LGBTQ-phobic language
- Violence or threats of violence
- Physically intimidating an individual such as by standing in very close proximity

- Defamatory comments (direct or implied) about any member of the school community, including unfounded and/or blanket comments about the professional competency or motivation of staff or volunteers.

This applies to personal interaction and also all telephone, email, text, letter or social media communications

Unacceptable behaviour may result in:

- A letter from the school requesting that the behaviour ceases and a log of the incident recorded – (Appendix A)
- An invitation to attend a meeting to discuss and address the behaviour
- Restrictions on the school's response to communications (any restrictions will be detailed in a letter to the parent/s, carer or visitor concerned)
- A ban on entering school premises (usually for a limited period in the first instance – Appendix B)
- Complaints/communications being deemed vexatious
- Information being passed to the police
- Police being called to remove people from the premises

The school will always contact the police in the event of any serious threat or incidence of violence and assault, and in the event of any actual harm caused to an individual.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- The Education Act 2011
- The Equalities Act 2010
- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 2004
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education'

Related School policies which can be found on the school's website

<https://bentonpark.org.uk/?s=policies>

- Accessibility Policy and Plan
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Complaints Policy
- School Meals Debt Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Complaints

This Communication Policy does not prevent parents or visitors raising legitimate concerns or complaints.

Concerns and complaints can be resolved through constructive, open dialogue with members of staff, utilising our school's Complaints Policy and Procedure as appropriate.

Monitoring and review

This Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and any changes made will be communicated to all parents and staff at the school.

Appendix A - Model letter from the school requesting that the behaviour ceases

Dear [parent or carer name],

I have received a report about your conduct on [enter date and time and a summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, students, other parents/carers.]

This behaviour is not acceptable and is contrary to the vision and values of the school. We believe that all staff, students and parents are entitled to a safe, respectful and inclusive environment, and that parents are as responsible for creating this environment as school staff.

We expect that all parents, visitors and members of the public will treat each other, staff members, students and external agencies with dignity and respect. All members of the school community have the right to work without fear of abuse or violence at all times

If it has been agreed to invite the parent in for a meeting, add:

I'd like to invite you in to school [insert time date]to discuss this incident, and how we can work together to prevent similar issues in the future.

I must inform you that the school will not tolerate conduct of this nature on its premises and I am writing to advise you that a log of the incident has been completed and will be kept on record should further episodes of this type be reported and further action be necessary.

Should the school have any further concerns about your behaviour it may result in a ban from the school premises.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 2 - Model letter banning a parent from the school site

Dear [parent or carer name],

I am writing to inform you that, after consultation with the chair of governors, I am banning you from the school site [until date/permanently].

Despite previous correspondence and conversations about your conduct I have received a further report about your conduct on [enter date and time].

[Add summary of the incident and of its effect on staff, students, other parents/carers.] [Include details of the incidents, including dates, locations and effects on staff/students/other parents for relevant incident.]

If you do not comply with the ban, I will arrange for you to be removed from the grounds and you may be prosecuted under Section 547 of the Education Act 1996.

Even though we have taken this decision, the School remains committed to the education of your child(ren), who must continue to attend school as normal. For the duration of this decision you may bring your child(ren) to school and collect them at the end of the school day, but you must not go beyond the school gate.

When deciding whether it will be necessary to extend or withdraw the ban to come onto the school premises, consideration will be given to the extent of your compliance with the decision, any appropriate expressions of regret and assurance of future good conduct received from you; and any evidence of your co-operation with the school in other respects.

If you would like to raise a complaint, you can do so using the school's complaints procedures, which are available on our website.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher