



Stony Dean School
Working to Inspire

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES POLICY

Approved by	Head Teacher
Last Reviewed	01/09/2024
Next review	01/09/2026

Policy Statement

Good communication between the school and the home is essential. Pupils achieve more when schools and Families or carers work together; Families and carers can help more if they know what the school is trying to achieve; staff and governors will be more effective if they have a good understanding of Families' perspectives.

General Principles

We aim to have clear, effective communication with Families and the wider community at all times. Effective communication enables us to share our aims and values by keeping Families informed about school life. This reinforces the important role that Families play in supporting the school.

While staff will always seek to establish open and friendly relationships with Families, relationships are kept professional and Families are addressed in a formal manner.

We aim to avoid jargon and use straightforward language. Written communication is made as accessible as possible, providing translations when necessary.

We aim to respond promptly to Families' letters and emails. The use of email communication between a parent and a class teacher can speedily and effectively deal with any problems that might arise. Teachers should not use personal addresses, but should have a dedicated school address. Copies of correspondence with Families will be placed on pupil files.

Written Reports

Once a year, a full EHCP Annual Review report is sent to Families giving details of their child's progress in the main subject areas taught. The report identifies areas of strength and areas where further development is needed. Pupils are also given the opportunity to comment on their own progress and Families are invited to make a comment.

Parent-staff Meetings

Any parent wishing to meet with a member of staff should contact the school in advance and request a meeting. This request should be responded in accordance with this policy regarding emails and letters. Families should not come to the school to talk to a member of staff without an appointment. Families who do come to the school without an appointment should not expect that the member of staff will meet with them. The member of staff may still choose to do so, but this is at their discretion.

A member of staff may ask for their line manager to accompany them at meetings with Families. Where meetings occur away from the school premises, or outside normal school hours, the member of staff should try to ensure that another colleague is nearby.

We appreciate that some meetings put the participants into contrary positions. We aim to remain professional in such situations and to focus on a constructive outcome. If a parent does become aggressive or abusive, the staff member should close the meeting and report the matter to his or her line manager.

It is perfectly acceptable to call a meeting to a close in order to allow time for further investigation.

Dealing with Parental Concerns

We encourage Families to contact the relevant form teacher or Head of Year at the earliest opportunity if they have concerns regarding their child's progress or well-being. The form teacher may then enable contact with:

- a subject teacher if there are specific subject problems
- a member of the senior leadership team if the issue is persistent or more serious.

Pupil Absence

If a pupil is absent from school and we have no indication of the reason, attempts will be made to contact a parent on the same day.

Families' Evenings and Forums

Families are asked to meet their child's subject teachers once a year at Families' evening. We are always happy to meet with Families to talk a range of circumstances and scenarios through. There are coffee mornings available throughout the year and parent information sessions held via zoom.



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Email

Everyone in the school community must remember that emails have essentially the same status and impact as letters, and must, therefore, be written and responded to with the same level of care. The email address used should be a school email address.

Our aim is for all Families to sign up to the school's "parentmail" system to facilitate paperless communications.

Staff must not contact pupils or Families, or conduct any school business, from a personal email address.

Phone Calls

Staff should take notes about the content of telephone calls, as they would with meetings with Families. Detailed notes from telephone calls, including main points of discussion and action required/taken should be kept on pupil files.

Social Networking

Staff will not communicate with Families or pupils via social networking sites or accept them as their "friends" with the exception of networks, blogs, etc. that have been set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning. Families are encouraged to follow the school on Twitter and Vimeo.

Website

The school website both provides information about the school and promotes the school to a wider audience. It also has a regularly updated area giving information and current awareness for Families.

It also provides access to the school's policies and curriculum information.

Pupil Data

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 Families and carers about:

- the types of data we hold
- why we hold that data
- to whom we may pass it on

This is a requirement under the Data Protection Act 1998. Families 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. The school is mindful of the restrictions relating to the control of data as laid down by the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

Use of Photographs and Names

Photographs are used in the school for many purposes, including displays and records of practical work (e.g. art or technology projects) and important school events. There are also displays for instructing pupils in the use of digital cameras and recorders.

We may use photographs of pupils or their work when communicating with Families /carers and the wider community, in newsletters, in the school prospectus, on the school website, or in the governors' report to Families and carers. The local or national press may on occasion publish photographs of pupils participating in events at school.

Although not strictly required by law, we have decided that parental permission must be obtained before using photographs of pupils or their work as described in this policy. Each class teacher and the school office will keep a list of those pupils for whom permission has not been given.

Photographs used will not be shown with pupils' names. On the school's website, only pupils' first names will be used. All photographs will be checked to eliminate unsuitable ones, such as pupils in swimwear or in close-up shots.

All initial contacts/enquiries should go through office@stonydean.bucks.sch.uk or give the school a ring on 01494 762538