

Milldene Primary School

Communications Policy



“Living and learning together”

Kindness Respect Curiosity

Date Approved:	September 2025
Review date	September 2027

Introduction and aims

We believe that clear, open communication between the school and parents/carers has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it:

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

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

- Explaining how the school communicates with parents/carers
- Setting clear standards and expectations for responding to communication from parents/carers
- Helping parents/carers reach the member of school staff who is best placed to address their specific query or concern so they can get a response as quickly as possible

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 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.

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

Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring that communications with parents are effective, timely and appropriate
- Regularly reviewing this policy

Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the staff Code of Conduct.
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)

Staff will not respond to communication outside of core school hours (8.30am – 4:00pm) or their working hours (if they work part time) or during school holidays. Members of the Senior Leadership Team may respond outside of working hours/days in some circumstances and this decision will be made by their own professional judgement.

Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is always respectful
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance through the school office
- Responding to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school
- Ensuring the school has the most up to date contact and medical information for their child. This is to be provided in writing by emailing the school office.
- Inform the school office if they do not wish to use the Arbor App.

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our parent code of conduct, which can be seen on our website.

How we communicate with parents and carers

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 make sure they do not miss important communications or announcements that may affect their child.

Meetings

1. Face-to-face conversations are the best way of communicating with the school at drop off or pick up for quick, short messages.
2. 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, later. Parents must email the school office to request an appointment and the school will aim to arrange that meeting within 3-4 working days. Schools and teachers are very busy. Parents should not expect a meeting with a member of staff without an appointment.
3. 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.
4. Should a meeting be requested the decision of which staff member will attend will rest with the Headteacher.
5. We hold two parents' consultation meetings per year. During these meetings, parents can talk with teachers about their child's achievement and progress, the curriculum or schemes of work, their child's wellbeing, or any other area of concern. In the Summer Term following the receipt of the end of year report, parents have the option of arranging a meeting to discuss their child's report.
6. The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' consultations if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.
7. Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, will also be asked to attend additional meetings.
8. Some meetings may be held virtually using Microsoft Teams. Links to these meetings will be distributed through the school office.

Email

1. Parents are welcome to email the school. admin@milldene.essex.sch.uk about non-urgent issues in the first instance.
2. Emails will be most helpful if they are concise, explaining concerns in a clear way. Lengthy and overly detailed accounts can make it more difficult to understand what is being explained and to respond in a timely or clear way.
3. The school 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 school and that further emails are not sent pending that response, unless the new deadline has passed.
4. If there is a change in a child's medical needs, this information must always be shared by email through the school office.

The Arbor App

The Arbor App is our chosen communication route as:

- It removes the risk of data breaches caused by human error when sending emails to large groups of recipients.
- All messages from the school can be accessed in one place removing the risk of messages being lost amongst the email inboxes of our community.

We use the Arbor App to keep parents informed about the following:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations
- Class activities or teacher requests
- Consent forms
- A weekly newsletter

Phone calls

School office: 01621 816490

1. If a query or concern is time sensitive and urgent the parent should call the school office, who will liaise 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.
2. 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 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.
3. For general enquiries, please call or email the school office.
4. Staff will call parents if their child presents as unwell during the school day.
5. Parents are expected to call or email the school office before 9.30am if their child is absent.
6. We will call parents if their child has had a head injury, even if minor (see First Aid Policy).
7. The headteacher will call parents if their child is admitted to hospital.

Social Media and Online Platforms

1. The school will not respond to concerns raised via social media or online platforms.
2. Should the school be made aware of any physical threats or abusive behaviour towards staff members or children on roll at our school on social media, then the school will consider reporting this to the Police and seeking the removal of this content from the site.

School Calendar

Our weekly school newsletter includes diary dates for the term and highlights upcoming events. The school newsletter can be found on our school website and is emailed to parents every Friday. Where possible, we try to give parents at least two 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).

Reports

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.
- A report detailing the child's KS2 SATs results
- We also arrange regular meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress.

School website

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

Accessibility

It is important to us that everyone in our community can communicate easily with the school. We currently make whole school announcements and communications, such as email alerts and newsletters) in the English language. Families who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- Support for meetings and phone calls
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

Types of unacceptable behaviour and communication

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

- Any physical aggression e.g. slapping, hitting, punching, and kicking;
- Physically intimidating a member of staff, or pupils e.g., standing close to her/him;
- The use of aggressive hand gestures including finger pointing towards a member of staff or pupil;
- Spitting at a member of staff or pupil;
- Shaking or holding a fist towards a member of staff or pupil;
- Shouting at members of staff or pupils (either in person on school grounds, over the telephone or over video conferencing);
- 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
- 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.
- 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)
- Breaching or not conforming to the school's security procedures
- Covertly recording phone calls or meetings with member of staff
- 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.

Actions that may be taken by the school because of unacceptable behaviour and communication

1. In the first instance, (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.
2. Thereafter the school (Headteacher/Member of Senior Leadership team) will gather information on allegations of unacceptable behaviour. This may include talking to the parties concerned or others as witnesses to the behaviour.
3. 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:
 - The parent will be told verbally that his / her behaviour is 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 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.

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.

Monitoring and review

The headteacher monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every two years.

The policy will be approved by the governing board.

Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- Parent code of conduct
- Staff code of conduct

Appendix 1: school contact list

Who should I contact?

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

Email or call the school office on 01621 816490 or admin@milldene.essex.sch.uk

Put the subject and the name of the relevant member of staff (from the list below) in the subject line (for emails)

We will forward your request on to the relevant member of staff

We try to respond to all emails within two working days and within core office hours which are: 8.30am – 3.30pm Monday to Friday term time only.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher. Please email via school admin email address: admin@milldene.essex.sch.uk
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	admin@milldene.essex.sch.uk – class teacher
Payments	admin@milldene.essex.sch.uk
Uniform/lost and found	admin@milldene.essex.sch.uk
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01621 816490 If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact absence@milldene.essex.sch.uk
Bullying and behaviour	admin@milldene.essex.sch.uk
School events/the school calendar	admin@milldene.essex.sch.uk
Special educational needs (SEN)	senco@milldene.essex.sch.uk
Before and after-school clubs	admin@milldene.essex.sch.uk
PTFA	ptfa@milldene.essex.sch.uk
Governing board	admin@milldene.essex.sch.uk

Complaints

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