



Thameside Primary School: Communications Policy

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Policy reviewed by:	Sophie Greenaway
Key Changes:	'Consistency of Communication Format' added to section 5 for school staff. Workload considerations added to 'rationale' and to section 5 under school responsibilities. Insertion in section 5 about the school being committed to working in collaboration with parents. 'Staff are not expected to engage in detailed or confidential discussions during supervision times.' added to section 1. Changed 'Staff will acknowledge requests' to 'Staff aim to acknowledge requests' Scope of policy added after rationale. Link to staff working days made to school website rather than table in Appendix 2, which is difficult to keep up-to-date. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation section 12 added Expanded section 9 for translations to support EAL families



Rationale

At Thameside, we value strong, respectful relationships between school and home. Good communication plays a vital role in supporting your child's learning, wellbeing and development.

To make our communication as effective as possible, this policy aims to strike a healthy balance between being accessible to families and allowing staff the time and space to respond thoughtfully and appropriately.

We are committed to:

- Prioritising **planned meetings** over unplanned conversations, to ensure issues are addressed properly.
- Empowering all staff to **communicate clearly and effectively**, so that the right people handle each concern at the right time.
- Ensuring **clarity** for parents and carers on how to get the best outcomes from home-school communications.

By following this approach, we aim to maintain high-quality communication that supports every child's success while respecting the time, responsibilities and wellbeing of all staff members.

The school recognises that staff will use their professional judgement when applying this policy. Expectations are intended to support consistency rather than impose rigid requirements, and flexibility may be needed depending on individual circumstances and workload.

Scope of This Policy

This policy applies to all members of the Thameside Primary School community, including:

- Parents and carers
- School staff
- Governors
- Volunteers
- Students and trainee staff
- External agencies and professionals working with the school

This policy covers all forms of school-related communication, including:

- Email
- Telephone calls
- Face-to-face meetings
- Microsoft Teams meetings
- Written correspondence
- Text messages
- School newsletters and daily messages
- Online platforms and the school website
- Social media communication relating to the school



The policy is intended to support clear, respectful, professional and effective communication across all areas of school life.

1. Ensuring Effective Channels of Communication

- **School Office Contact Details:** Parents can contact the school office for general enquiries via phone or email.

Office number: 0118 937 5551

Main email contact: admin@thameside.reading.sch.uk

- **School Website & Newsletters:** Key information, including policies, term dates and upcoming events, will be updated regularly. Parents are expected to read the weekly newsletter and check daily messages to stay informed.
- **Routine queries or updates:** Please email the school office.
- **Contacting SLT:** As required, parents/carers are able to email members of the senior leadership team (including team leaders).

Key contacts

Mrs Greenaway: head@thameside.reading.sch.uk

Mrs Burton: deputy@thameside.reading.sch.uk

Miss Calvert: assistanthead@thameside.reading.sch.uk

Mrs Harkins: inclusion@thameside.reading.sch.uk

Miss Lucas: sbm@thameside.reading.sch.uk

- **Urgent matters:** Contact the school office by phone to ensure your message is received and responded to promptly.
- **Approaching Staff at the Start or End of the Day:** If a parent or carer approaches a member of staff in person at drop-off or pick-up, and the staff member is unable to give the matter their full attention, they will respond with a polite reminder in line with the school's communication policy. For example: "As you'll be aware from our Communication Policy, I can speak briefly now—just for a couple of minutes—but I'll follow up properly by phone or email within 24 hours, as I'm currently [teaching/on duty/in a meeting, etc.]." This ensures that staff can remain focused on their responsibilities while still acknowledging and valuing parent communication. Staff are not expected to engage in detailed or confidential discussions during supervision times.
- **Booking a Meeting:** If you would like to speak with a member of staff, please complete a Meeting Request Form. Meetings can be arranged as a phone call, a Microsoft Teams meeting, or an in-person appointment, depending on what is most appropriate and convenient.

Typical communication route: Office → Class Teacher → Team Leader → SLT



2. Booking Meetings with Staff

- Parents should book meetings with **class teachers** by contacting the school office. Teachers will then arrange a mutually convenient time outside of teaching hours.
- Meetings with members of the **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)** should also be booked through the school office. SLT staff will schedule appointments based on availability and the nature of the concern.
- Planned meetings allow staff to prepare adequately, ensuring a productive and focused discussion.
- Parents should avoid requesting immediate, unplanned meetings at drop-off and pick-up times, as staff are responsible for student supervision during these times.

How to book meetings

- To arrange a meeting with a member of staff, parents and carers must complete a **Meeting Request Form** (see Appendix 1). Forms are available from the school office window or can be downloaded from the [school website](#) and submitted via email. Alternatively, the school office can complete the form on behalf of parents during a phone call.

This information is required on the form:

- Child's name and class.
- Parent's name and contact information.
- Who the parent would ideally like the meeting with.
- A short summary of the purpose of the meeting.
- Preferred meeting format e.g. phone call, Teams, in person
- Best days/times for meeting.

3. Response Time

- Staff aim to acknowledge requests for meetings, emails or phone messages within **2 working days**.
- We do not expect staff to acknowledge or respond to emails **in the evenings, over the weekend or during school holidays**. Staff are not expected to monitor or respond to communication outside of their directed working hours.
- If a response requires more time, parents/carers will be informed when a full reply will be provided.
- Urgent concerns, e.g. safeguarding, should be directed to the school office by phone.

4. Staff Working Days

Many members of staff work part-time or have non-standard working days. To support respectful and timely communication:

- Staff will respond to communication on their normal working days.
- Staff working patterns are available on the school website and/or through staff email signatures.



- Parents and carers are asked to consider staff working days when awaiting responses.

Teaching staff and SLT are required to include their usual working days within their email signature to support timely and appropriate communication.

Information on staff working days can also be found on the school website: [Meet Our Staff - Thameside Primary School](#)

5. Communication Responsibilities & Expectations

At Thameside, we believe that effective communication is a shared responsibility between school and home. To ensure clarity, consistency and positive relationships, the following expectations apply:

School Responsibilities

- The Headteacher is responsible for writing and sharing the weekly newsletter with key updates for parents and carers.
- Class teachers are responsible for updating daily messages with important class- or year-group-specific information. These updates are then compiled into a whole-school 'Daily Messages' email, which is sent to parents by the Deputy Headteacher.
- Staff who are attending training or are otherwise out of school must activate an out-of-office reply on their emails to manage expectations.
- If a member of staff attempts to contact a parent by phone but is unable to get through, they should notify the school office by email. This ensures the call is logged and makes it easier to follow up when the parent returns the call.
- The school will communicate urgent updates—such as closures or last-minute changes to events—via text alerts, emails, and updates on the school website.
- The school will provide clear channels for communication and ensure parents know who to contact for different types of concerns.
- Meetings will be planned in advance to ensure staff have time to prepare and respond meaningfully.
- We aim to offer flexible meeting times where possible and ensure that all staff are supported to communicate effectively under this policy.
- The school will take reasonable steps to ensure that the volume and frequency of communication remains proportionate and manageable for staff.
- All staff must include their working days in their email signature to support timely and appropriate responses.
- Staff are not expected to use personal devices or personal accounts to communicate with parents or carers.

Consistency of Communication Format

To maintain a clear and professional visual identity across all school communications:

- Staff should aim to use the agreed school font and size (Calibre, size 12) in written communications where appropriate, including emails and letters.



- Consistent formatting supports readability, accessibility (including for those with visual impairments), and a cohesive presentation of the school.
- Staff are encouraged to configure email settings so that this formatting is applied automatically where possible.
- For **formal communications**—such as letters sent to parents/carers regarding significant matters (e.g. pupil progress, behaviour, complaints, safeguarding follow-up, or official school notices)—staff should use the school's agreed templates, including letterhead, where appropriate.
- It is recognised that professional judgement may be needed depending on context, and flexibility should be maintained to support effective communication.

Parent Responsibilities

The school is committed to working in partnership with parents and carers and recognises that effective communication is a shared responsibility.

- Parents are responsible for reading the weekly newsletters and daily class messages. If they are not receiving these, they should inform the school office so the issue can be resolved.
- Parents are expected to follow the outlined communication channels for arranging meetings and different concerns.
- We ask parents to allow staff appropriate time to respond thoughtfully, rather than expecting immediate replies.
- Meetings should be arranged in advance, rather than requested at the classroom door or during busy times.
- Communication must always remain respectful, in line with the Parent/Carer Code of Conduct (see section 7 of this policy).
- All pupil absences should be reported to the school office by phone or email before the start of the school day.
- All requests for pupil holidays or planned absences must be submitted through the school office using the **Green Absence Request Form**.

The school is committed to supporting staff wellbeing. Communication practices will be reviewed regularly to ensure they are effective, proportionate, and do not place unnecessary pressure on staff.

6. Complaints & Escalations

- If a matter is not resolved after meeting with the class teacher, parents may escalate the issue to the Team Leader and then to senior SLT if necessary. Where appropriate, concerns may be supported or redirected by senior staff to ensure that workload is shared appropriately and handled at the correct level.
- A clear [complaints procedure](#) (and complaints form) is available on the school website, outlining the steps parents can take if they feel their concern has not been addressed.
- Serious concerns should be put in writing and will be acknowledged within **24 hours (working days only)**, with a timeframe provided for further action.

7. Expectations for Parent Conduct

- All communication (written and verbal) should remain calm, respectful, and solution-focused.



- Communication must align with the expectations set out in the Parent/Carer Code of Conduct and the school's Staff Code of Conduct.
- Aggressive, confrontational, or inappropriate behaviour toward staff will not be tolerated. Emails and phone calls should always have a respectful tone towards staff.
- In cases of inappropriate behaviour, the school reserves the right to adjust how communication takes place. This may include limiting direct contact or changing the method of communication—for example, replacing aggressive or inappropriate emails with face-to-face meetings to ensure respectful and constructive dialogue.
- Social media should not be used to discuss or complain about school issues – parents should use official school channels instead.

8. Use of Social Media & Online Communication

- Parents and carers must not share or discuss confidential or sensitive school matters on social media platforms.
- We ask that WhatsApp and other parent group chats are used responsibly. These platforms should not be used to share speculation, spread misinformation, or raise concerns about staff or pupils.
- The school will not respond to issues raised via social media. All concerns should be directed to the school through the appropriate communication channels, as outlined in this policy.

9. Language & Accessibility Considerations

- Parents who require support with communication should contact the school office to discuss their needs.
- Alternative formats (audio, large print, etc.) can be provided for parents with accessibility needs.
- Parents who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL) may request support to help them access important school communications.
- Key communication documents will be translated where possible. The school website is translatable into a variety of languages using the world icon at the top of each page. 
- Where language presents a barrier to effective communication, the school will seek to provide appropriate translation or interpretation support for important meetings and communications, where reasonably practicable.
- Parents are encouraged to inform the school if they require translated information or interpretation support so that suitable arrangements can be explored.

10. Opportunities for Two-Way Communication

- The school will seek regular feedback from parents and carers through surveys and other forms of consultation to help improve communication and provision.
- Parent workshops and information sessions are held across the year, both through school and externally, providing families with valuable opportunities to learn more about school life and how to support their



child's learning and development. Workshops run by external providers are highlighted in the weekly newsletter.

- Parent-teacher meetings (parents' evenings) are held each big term, providing a dedicated opportunity for meaningful, face-to-face communication about pupil progress and wellbeing.

11. How We Communicate About Behaviour

At our school, we believe that open, timely, and respectful communication between school and home is key to supporting children's behaviour and wellbeing.

- In most cases, class teachers (including Thameside teachers covering PPA) will speak with parents or carers first about any concerning behaviour. This may be done through a conversation at collection, an email or a phone call.
- Teachers may keep a personal log of behaviour incidents during the day and ensure that parents have been informed before formally recording the incident on our internal system (CPOMS).
- Behaviour information is shared with Team Leaders, who oversee pastoral care in their year groups. Whilst teachers will have already taken action, Team Leaders monitor for any emerging patterns.
- If needed, the Family Hub (FH) lead may be invited to join discussions with families to offer additional support or strategies.
- If concerns continue or if the incident is more serious, the Team Leader may escalate it to the Assistant Headteachers (AHT), Deputy Headteacher (DHT) or Headteacher (HT). In these cases, parents may be contacted by a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to discuss next steps.
- The DHT, HT & AHTs will communicate directly with parents when:
 - They are on lunchtime consequence room duty.
 - There has been any serious and/or dangerous behaviour requiring immediate intervention.
 - A behaviour incident has resulted in a suspension.
- If the child is in wraparound care, class teachers must still communicate with home. This responsibility cannot be left to aftercare staff unless the incident occurred in aftercare, in which case the Aftercare Leader will handle communication.
- For children receiving 1:1 SEND support or attending our Rainbow Room provision, we may use a daily communication method (verbal or written) to keep parents informed of behaviour and progress more regularly.

12. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

The Headteacher and governing body will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy regularly.

The effectiveness of communication practices may be evaluated through:

- Parent and carer feedback
- Staff feedback and workload considerations
- Trends in complaints or communication concerns



- Communication audits and sampling
- Engagement with newsletters and messaging systems
- Review of response times and communication records where appropriate

Governors will review the policy annually, or sooner if required, to ensure that communication systems remain effective, accessible, respectful and manageable for both families and staff.

Working together

By working in partnership through this policy, we sincerely thank parents and carers for their continued support in helping us maintain clear, respectful, and effective communication—for the benefit and wellbeing of all children at Thameside.

Sophie Greenaway, Headteacher, May 2026

Appendices

Appendix 1: Meeting request form

Parent/Carer Meeting Request Form

To arrange a meeting with a member of staff, parents and carers must complete a **Meeting Request Form** (see Appendix 1). Forms are available from the school office window or can be downloaded from the [school website](#) and submitted via email. Alternatively, the school office can complete the form on behalf of parents during a phone call.

A member of staff will contact you within two working days to arrange a suitable meeting time.

Parent/Carer Name: _____

Pupil Name: _____

Class: _____

Date of Request: _____



What is the reason for your meeting request?

(Please give a short summary of what you would like to discuss.)

Who would you like to meet with?

Staff name: _____

Role (if known): _____

(e.g. Class Teacher, Team Leader, SENDCo, Antibullying Lead, Family Hub, Assistant Head, Deputy, Head)

Preferred meeting format e.g. phone call, Teams, in person

Preferred Days/Times:

Unavailable Days/Times:
