Granby Primary School

Communications Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out our aims and guidelines over a range of communication media. We recognise that to be a thriving and successful school we must communicate effectively with one another, our pupils and their parents/carers, with other professionals and with the wider community.

Definition of communication

Good communication is much more than simply the exchange of information. It is through effective and interactive communication that information is transmitted, understanding is developed and shared, trust is built and confidence is established.

Good communication means doing more listening than talking; employing empathy, sensitivity and discretion; and maintaining and respecting confidentiality. It is a responsibility shared by every member of staff, whatever their role and by our Governing Body. We encourage pupils to take responsibility for communicating clearly and respectfully; and hope that parents will also take personal responsibility for their communications with us.

It is important to remember that communication includes not only the message, but the manner in which the message is communicated. That might include context, images, body language, medium, tone, audience, and any number of individual factors.

Principles

The following principles govern our communication strategy at Granby. We will:
• Be open, honest, ethical and professional
• Communicate in ways which are consistent with our vision, values, aims, ethos and culture
• Use clear jargon-free language so that we are easily understood by everyone
• Ensure that methods of communication are varied and appropriate to the context, message and audience
• Strive to ensure that communication is timely, accurate and effective

Responsibilities

We take our responsibilities extremely seriously, whether they are legal, moral or best practice responsibilities. With this in mind, Granby is committed to:
• the letter and the spirit of The Data Protection Act 1998 particularly (but not limited to) copyright, the storage and release of personal information, and photographic and video images
• ensuring that we have appropriate licenses so that we do not breach copyright legislation; this includes the use of graphics and images downloaded from the internet
• protecting the confidentiality of pupils, parents, staff, governors and other individuals
• crediting the writers' of original material. Children and staff are expected to be clear about what is their own work and what has been copied from books, the internet or other sources

- securing personal information, ensuring that it is used only in line with legislation, and treating it with respect
- avoiding the use of tagging or naming children or adults used in any photographs in print or electronic media
- ensuring that parents receive information about the school from us directly, rather than hearing it from other sources first
- monitoring the use of the publications, articles, journals, blogs and other outlets, whether in print media or online. Everyone should be aware that filtering, blocking and monitoring software is in use
- safeguarding children by following e-safety protocols and policies; and requiring that all school resources are used appropriately and responsibly

Communication partners

Communication takes place with a range of partners and will be different for different partners. Our main partners are: children, parents, staff, governors, other professionals and the wider community. The outlines below are not exhaustive.

Communication with **children** occurs through:
- face-to-face individual or small group communication through the class teachers
- verbal communication with large groups of children through assemblies or year group meetings
- written communication through noticeboards, worksheets, posters, news sheets and the supervised use of the Children's Zone section of the school website
- electronic communications such as supervised use of: the internet, the Children's Zone section of the school website, DB Primary

Communication with **parents** occurs through:
- face-to-face individual or group communication, including meetings, parents' evenings
- verbal communication with large groups of parents via assemblies, meetings, etc
- written communication through school reports, home-school diaries, reading records, letters, newsletters, noticeboards, posters, the school website, social media
- telephone communications
- electronic communications such as text messages, email, the school website, social media, the internet, specific software such as TUCASI/Scopay
- interest groups such as the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and the Parents' Action Group (PAG)
- events such as the school fete, children's assemblies, productions and performances, and external events

Communication with **staff** occurs through:
- face-to-face individual or small group communications, including meetings, performance appraisal, pupil messenger, radio communication
- verbal communication with larger groups of staff such as staff meetings, team meetings, phase meetings, trade union meetings, well-being meetings, training and continuous professional development, conferences and events

- written communication through email, letters, use of staff pigeon-holes, performance appraisal, minutes of meetings, staff bulletins, school calendar, white boards, noticeboards, the school website, social media
- telephone communications using internal and external phones
- electronic communication such as text messages, email, the school website, DB primary, social media, the internet, and specific software such as CPOMS and School IP
- interest groups such as unions, professional associations and networks
- emergency communication occurs through the fire alarm, handbell, loud hailer and the emergency red card system

Communication with **governors** occurs through:
- face-to-face individual or small group meetings, committee meetings, phase forum meetings
- verbal communication with larger groups of governors such as meetings of the full governing body, training and continuous professional development, conferences and events
- written communication through email, use of the governor in-tray, minutes of meetings, newsletters, noticeboards, the school website, social media, the internet
- telephone communications
- electronic communications such as text messages, email, the school website, DB primary, social media, and specific software such as School IP

Communication with **other professionals** through:
- face-to-face individual or small group communications, including meetings on or off site
- verbal communication with larger groups such as cluster groups, City-wide meetings, training and continuous professional development, conferences and events on and off site
- written communication through letters, forms, minutes of meetings, email, the school website, social media
- telephone communications
- electronic communications such as email, text messaging, online forms, the school website, social media, the internet

Communication with the **wider community** occurs through:
- face-to-face individual or small group communications
- verbal communications with larger groups such as visits, community action, school events
- written communication through noticeboards, posters, news outlets, the school website, social media
- telephone communications
- electronic communications such as email, the school website, the internet, social media

Methods of communication

We would like to offer the following guidance to parents, staff, governors, other professionals and the wider community on the various methods of communication we use.

Face-to face communication with individuals or small groups:
- Staff are available as children come into school or leave school for a quick, informal chat

- For longer meetings, or more formal matters, parents should make an appointment though the school office. Face-to-face communication is usually the best way to resolve an issue quickly and effectively
- If there are specific communication needs e.g. translators, sign language interpreters, or access needs, the school office should be informed
- Our staff will always address children, parents, other staff, governors and professionals in an appropriate and respectful manner
- Home visits will be offered to the parents of children joining the school in reception; home visits may take place at other times whilst children are pupils at the school

Verbal communications with larger groups:
- Parents, carers and other family members are often welcomed into school for assemblies, meetings and events
- Prospective parents are welcomed into school for a look around during the school day and invited to welcome meetings before their child starts at school
- Both the PTA and the PAG are open to all parents to attend
- Parents will be invited to parents' evenings to discuss their child's progress with the class teacher twice each year - once in each of the Autumn and Spring terms
- If attendees want to raise an issue privately, this can be done at the end of a meeting
- As a general rule, the larger the meeting, the less informal it is likely to be
- Staff should always appear and behave to a professional standard as they are role models to children and the wider community
- Governors should always bear in mind that whilst volunteers, they are nevertheless representatives of the school
- When off site, children staff, governors and parents whilst on school business should remember that they are representing the school and do nothing to bring the school into disrepute

Written communications:
- We will always strive to model good use of spelling, punctuation and grammar in all our written materials. Text messages may contain texting conventions
- Email is our preferred method of communication and from September 2016 will be our main way of sending information home
- We will seek to ensure that written materials are produced clearly and legibly and written in a style which is easy to understand
- We will respond to letters and emails from parents and the wider community within 2 school days
- We will do our best do meet requests for translated, large print, braille or other formats. The school office should be informed of any specific needs
- Written materials will always be identifiable as Granby Primary School materials
- Noticeboards will be kept up to date and relevant
- A calendar of events can be found on the website
- Written progress reports on each child's educational and personal development will be produced once a year in the summer term
- All letters sent home to parents, and all forms we ask for, will be made available on our website - unless they are of a personalised nature
- Newsletters will be produced every two weeks and will be sent by email only from September 2016. Hard copies will be sent out until then. The newsletters are also posted on the website

Telephone communications:

- Staff will always share their name when speaking on the phone
- If any other format, such as minicom, is required, the school office should be informed
- Calls will be directed appropriately and effectively
- Internal telecommunications will be improved and developed; extension numbers will be kept up to date and positioned near each extension
- If a child is unwell or injured, or been involved in a serious behavioural issue, parents and carers will be contacted urgently by phone, not text message. A text may be sent asking a parent to contact the school
- Telephone messages will not be left with children, although children may be told that the call is from Granby
- Voice mail messages will be left if this facility is available
- Parents / carers will be asked for both landline and mobile phone numbers with us
- Staff are not able to interrupt teaching to take or make a telephone call
- Parents will not be able to speak to children by phone during the school day, or whilst attending our childcare facilities or extended learning opportunities

Electronic communications:

- Parents / carers will be asked for email addresses, as well as mobile numbers so that we can send text messages
- Text messaging will continue to provide a quick and unintrusive means of sending messages to parents. They are also highly effective in reaching parents
- Text messages will be targeted to appropriate parents where possible
- Text messages will be used to inform parents that important letters have been sent out
- News of great significance will not be sent by text
- Email will increasingly be used as the primary means of communication with parents
- Children will be supervised when using the internet at school, which is subject to content blocking and filtering systems. Parents and carers are advised to supervise children's use of the internet at home
- Podcasts may be posted online so that they can be shared with parents
- The website provides detailed information on a range of matters for the benefit of parents, staff, governors, other professionals and the wider community
- The school website will be kept as up to date as possible. It should be used to check for the latest information
- Only designated administrators may upload materials onto the school website

Social media:

- Children at Granby should not have social media accounts such as Facebook, Twitter and others. There are legal minimum ages in place for these sites and no child at Granby is old enough to have these accounts
- The school's social media sites will be kept us up to date as possible. Please use them to check for the latest information
- The social media sites will be used to share photographs, videos, children's work, useful information and resources. Parental consent will be obtained for the use of children's images
- Children whose images are used in the school's social media sites will not be named or tagged

- Staff will not accept friend requests from children or their parents and carers
- Only social media administrators will post to the school's social media sites on the school's behalf; they will monitor comments on posts
- Parents, staff, governors and the wider community are invited to comment and tweet on our social media sites. All profanities are blocked. Administrators will remove any inappropriate comments or tweets
- Any posts or comments on Granby's social media sites will be in accordance with the school's policies. Any posts or comments in breach of our policies will be removed
- Staff, volunteers and governors should conduct themselves with care and professionalism when using social media. It is suggested that they check their privacy settings and/or use a 'professional' account rather than a personal account in connection with school's social media sites
- Staff, volunteers and governors should take care not to put themselves at risk by commenting about work, colleagues, pupils or parents at Granby or any other school
- Staff, volunteers and governors should take care to ensure that their integrity is not inadvertently undermined and that the school is not brought into disrepute by anything they post
- Staff will be subject to our disciplinary procedure if they breach this policy
- All users are encouraged to report any concerns they have about any content on the school's social media sites. Such reports should be made to the Office Manager

Resources for electronic communication

The following instructions are issued to children, parents, volunteers, staff and governors regarding electronic communication in school, using school and personal equipment, or using school portals.

School network:
- All staff have a duty to ensure that the school network is used appropriately and remains secure
- No-one should attempt to access an area of the network to which they have not been given instruction or authorisation; or to install software on the network
- Passwords and log-in details should be kept secure and changed periodically. Staff will be expected to share their log-in details for access in case of emergency, long term sickness or resignation
- Data stored on the network should only be accessed by the owner
- No action should be taken which may corrupt, interfere with or destroy any other user's information
- All child protection information is securely stored with extremely limited access allowed
- Inappropriate or unsavoury websites must not be searched for on the school website, including those which include pornography, promote terrorism, express prejudice or relate to child abuse. Any staff member deliberately doing so is likely to be accused of gross misconduct under our disciplinary procedures.
- Any accidental access to inappropriate content must be reported immediately to the IT technician for blocking
- Staff may use the network for personal reasons during their break times only and provided the sites visited are in line with our policies
- The network is not to be used for business, profit, advertising or political purposes

- School information should not be copied across to personal laptops, computers etc or copied via data sticks
- Blocking, filtering and monitoring software allows senior staff to check which websites have been accessed and by whom

School computers:
- School computers should be protected by log in information which is kept secure and changed periodically. Staff will be expected to share their log-in details for access in case of emergency, long term sickness or resignation
- Workstations should not be left unattended unless computers are locked using the windows key plus L

School laptops or tablets:
- Any laptops or tablets issued by school, (including those via the Laptops for Teachers Scheme) remain the property of Granby Primary School and must comply with this policy.
- School laptops or tablets should be protected by log in information which is kept secure and changed periodically. Staff will be expected to share their log-in details for access in case of emergency, long term sickness or resignation
- School laptops and tablets should be returned to the IT technician when a member of staff leaves the employment of the school
- Members of staff who have a school laptop or tablet must take reasonable precautions for the safety of the equipment; it should never be left unattended in a vehicle. Any loss or theft should be reported immediately using the school mobile number: 07899 895945
- Staff remain responsible for the content stored on a school laptop or tablet. The device should be password protected to prevent its use by a third party, including family members
- Whilst in school, devices should be securely stored

Personal mobile phones and other devices:
- Pupils are not permitted to have a personal phone or device at school. If there are exceptional circumstances why a child needs one, a permission form must be completed by the parent and signed by the head teacher (see website). The phone or device will be securely stored for the day in the office
- Pupils who have a phone or device on their person at school will be expected to give it in for safe keeping in the school office
- Staff should not be distracted from their work by the use of personal phones or devices. These should be turned off and put away. They may be used at break times as long as staff are in an area which cannot be accessed by children
- Volunteers and visitors to the school should keep their personal phones or devices turned off and put away whilst at school or accompanying a school trip
- The use of personal phones or devices for photographs is addressed in a separate section below
- Staff should never contact a pupil or parent or carer on their personal mobile phone
- Granby Primary School cannot be held responsible for the loss or theft of any mobile phone or other device on school property
- Parents, staff, volunteers, governors and other visitors should ensure that there is no inappropriate or illegal content on their phones or devices

School mobile phones:
- There are two mobile phones belonging to school, available for school use. They are kept in the office and there is a signing in and out sheet for them
- There are a number of phone numbers and email addresses stored on the phones - these should not be removed. Staff may add numbers if appropriate
- In circumstances where there is no other alternative, the phones may be used to contact parents. Parents details must not be stored on the phones
- School mobile phones may be used for taking photos, which can then be emailed to the office. All photos should be deleted from the mobile phone before being returned to the office
- School phones should be returned to the office and plugged in to charge

Photos and videos

This section of the policy constitutes Granby Primary School's, 'use of photographs and images policy'. It takes account the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1989 and statutory guidance for the Foundation Stage on the use of children's images and personal mobile phones and other devices.

NO IMAGES OF CHILDREN WILL BE USED WITHOUT PARENTAL CONSENT

Parents will be given an opportunity to opt out of allowing Granby Primary School to use images of children for print and online media. School plans to use images in the school prospectus, website and social media sites. Children will never be named or tagged when used in these ways. The roles of the following people are particularly noted:

The Head Teacher:
The Head teacher, in his role as Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP), is responsible for the acceptable and safe use and storage of images of children. The DSP reserves the right to view any images taken and to withdraw or modify a member of staff's permission to take photographs at any time.

Staff:
Members of staff and volunteers may use the school's equipment to document activity and as part of learning. This is a useful learning tool and will always be closely supervised by staff to ensure that all children are safeguarded.

It is only school devices that may be used to take photographs, including cameras, tablets and mobile phones provided by school

Parents and carers:
Parents and carers are permitted to take photographs or DVD footage of their own child if it is for private family use only. Parents and carers are not to share these online. Parents are not permitted to take photos or video footage for any other purpose, including for selling to the parents of other

children involved in the event. If any parent present objects to the taking of still or video pictures they should inform a member of staff.

Parents and carers who assist on school trips most be aware that photos may not be taken on mobile phones; cameras may be used by the parent or carer to photograph their own child only. Parents and carers are not allowed to post photos on social media sites.

Pupils:
Children may use the school's equipment to document their activity and as part of play and learning. This is a useful learning tool and this will always be closely supervised by staff to ensure that all children are safeguarded.

Staff will discuss with pupils the acceptable ground rules for using the equipment, (for example, cameras are not to be taken into the toilets) and will model good behaviour (for example, by asking permission to take a photo).

In addition, it is our policy that:
- Any images taken will be entirely for the purpose of celebrating and supporting the children's learning and achievement
- It is not only a legal requirement, but also good manners, to ask a child if their photograph can be used
- Any image will be immediately withdrawn at the request of the child, parent or carer, or any adult in the photo
- Pupils, staff, volunteers and governors may not take or store images of Granby children on their own mobile phone or tablet. A school mobile phone or tablet may be used for this purpose.

Monitoring and review

Whilst this new policy is in its infancy, and particularly whilst we are trying out a new approach to the use of our website and social media sites, this policy will be monitored carefully and reviewed by governors annually.

Monitoring will take the form of recording the number of permissions agreed / denied; the number of photos used in printed materials and online; recording the number and nature of complaints about the policy; and recording all information relating to breaches of the policy.