



Communications Policy

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GROWING AND LEARNING TOGETHER
TO EMBRACE LIFE IN ALL ITS FULLNESS

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Statement of intent

Radwinter CofE Primary School is committed to maintaining effective communication and relationships between parents, pupils and the school to ensure that we are able to grow and learning together.

This policy sets out the aims of the school with regard to internal and external communication, and the responsibilities of the school, its staff members and parents.

The school aims to promote effective communication between pupils, members of staff, parents, stakeholders and all members of the school community through the following means:

- Having a clear and professional communication strategy in place to keep parents well-informed about their child's educational progress and any other matters related to their child's overall wellbeing
- Improving the quality of education by ensuring there is a robust process in place for consultation between the school, parents, staff members and pupils on key areas
- Monitoring and evaluating communication issues through regular meetings with staff, parents and members of the school community
- Developing a strong marketing presence in order to build a positive reputation for the school within the wider community

All communication from Radwinter CofE Primary School should:

- Be open, honest, ethical and professional
- Be clear and easily understood by all
- Be effective, efficient and appropriate to the context and audience
- Be actioned within a reasonable time frame
- Be compatible with our core values as reflected in our school vision and values

1. Legal framework

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

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Education Act 2002
- The Privacy and Electronic Communications Regulations 2003
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

- Data Protection Act 2018

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- GDPR and Privacy Policies
- Online Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff and Volunteer Confidentiality Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Adverse Weather Policy
- Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Staff Handbook and Code of Conduct
- Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Placing key policies, documents and procedures in areas that maximise their accessibility and usefulness to the entire school community, e.g. on the school website.
- Communicating important information, e.g. the curriculum, clearly to parents.
- Informing parents of all school events within appropriate timelines.
- Regularly keeping parents informed of their child's progress.
- Informing parents about the types of data that the school holds on pupils, who controls the data, why that data is held and who it may be shared with. This information will be concise, transparent and easily accessible; written in a clear and plain language; and free of charge.
- Ensuring that parents understand their right to access information about their child that is held by the school.
- Ensuring that parents also understand their rights to rectification, to erasure, to restrict processing, to data portability and to object to processing.
- Ensuring that consent obtained from parents, and pupils where appropriate, regarding the processing of personal data is freely given, specific, informed, and an unambiguous indication of the individual's wishes.
- Ensuring that individuals are informed of their rights to withdraw consent and are provided with easy ways to do so.
- Ensuring that information regarding staff pay and conditions of service is made available to all who are employed at the school.
- Taking steps to ensure parents who do not have access to the internet can still access the information that is included on the school website.
- Approving all marketing and communication-related proposals and materials.
- Setting appropriate timescales within the marketing strategy.
- Overseeing the overall implementation of this policy.

The Administrative Team are responsible for:

- Ensuring the communication of key messages and school values.
- Ensuring all platforms of communication are up-to-date with audience-appropriate material and are easily accessible by parents, the LA and the wider community.
- Identifying the promotional value of pupil achievements and school events and promoting them accordingly.

- Developing and managing networking and engagement programmes to enhance the school's relationship with parents, other schools, LAs and the wider community.
- Undertaking appropriate market research, including competitor analysis, demographic and economic reviews, and the examination of educational trends.
- Helping to shape school events which exemplify and communicate the school's values, e.g. prospective parents' evenings.
- Advising on event planning with the aim of improving audience experience.
- Meeting the timescales set to complete marketing tasks.
- Setting marketing goals and targets for the school.
- Identifying and targeting specific groups to provide information relevant to them, e.g. information relevant to the parents of pupils with SEND.
- Working with the DPO to ensure that marketing material complies with data protection law and that consent is properly requested and recorded.
- Working with the local media to promote and enhance the reputation of the school.

Staff members are responsible for:

- Ensuring the principles and procedures of this policy are followed.
- Communicating proactively with parents about pupil progress and helping parents to support their child's learning.
- Ensuring that their internal communication with other staff is strong, e.g. passing on relevant information to supply teachers and updating classroom planning files with specific pupil information.
- Being involved in the school's marketing communication as required.

Parents are responsible for:

- Reading the key communications circulated by the school and responding or acting on these communications where required, e.g. by attending meetings.
- Visiting the school website for detailed information about the school calendar, term dates, exam details, monitoring and assessments, school achievements and other useful downloads.
- Informing the school of important information related to their child, such as:
 - Medical conditions or allergies, supported by medical documentation relating to these conditions.
 - Any SEND or other needs their child has.
 - Child protection matters, legal issues or relevant duties with appropriate documentation.
- Raising any issues or concerns they may have with the appropriate contact, e.g. contacting the class teacher with education-related issues.

3. Internal communication

Communication between members of staff

Staff will ensure their internal communication, i.e. within the school with other members of staff, is strong, effective, and abides by the procedures outlined in the Staff Handbook and Staff Code of Conduct.

Staff are responsible for:

- Checking their pigeonhole regularly and clearing it of out-of-date information
- Checking the whiteboard in the staffroom for daily messages
- Responding to calendar invites on Teams for events and meetings
- Attending staff meetings relevant to their role
- Checking their emails daily for any written communications
- Using 'all staff' function on email to circulate information to everyone

- Attending diary meetings or reading the minutes that will be circulated by email if the diary meeting is not on their working day
- Abiding by the Acceptable Use agreement for mobile phones

Although email is a quick, effective way of communicating information, it does not replace the value and opportunity for open discussion that face-to-face meetings hold. All staff should seek to select the most appropriate method of communication.

Communication between members of staff and pupils

Staff will not engage in personal correspondence with pupils. Where pupils do need to be contacted, staff will do so via external communication with parents, rather than to pupils directly.

4. External communication

Preferred first contact for classroom, homework, behaviour or SEND concerns is speaking to the class teachers at drop-off/pick up or via the class email. If the matter relates to safeguarding, medical emergency, or immediate welfare, parents must phone the school office and, if required, ask to speak to a senior leader. Parents should not expect immediate replies via staff personal devices or social media.

Communication from the school to parents

Parents will be contacted through the following methods:

- Letters home via email
- Letters or flyers home in Book Bags
- Phone calls
- The school website
- Fortnightly newsletters
- In-person meetings
- Conversations in the playground
- Announcements on Tapestry

In line with the Social Media Policy, staff will not communicate or interact with parents or pupils via social networking sites, except in the case of social media pages set up specifically for the purpose of teaching and learning.

If a pupil is absent from school and the school has no indication of the reason for the absence, the school will contact the pupil's parent via telephone on the first day of absence in order to find out the reason for the absence. If no contact can be made with any named parent, the school has the right to contact the education welfare officer to ensure the pupil's wellbeing and safety.

Accessibility & Inclusion

The school will ensure that information is accessible to parents who do not have internet access or who require alternative formats (large print, translated summaries). Where a parent does not have internet access, the school will send critical communications by post or provide a printed copy on request. Key documents (term dates, policies, prospectus) will be available in the school office and on request in alternative formats. Targeted communications will be arranged for identified vulnerable/disadvantaged families to reduce risk of exclusion.

Communication from parents to the school

We expect parents to:

- Use the appropriate communication route (class email, admin email, telephone) for queries.

- Allow up to five working days for non-urgent email responses.
- Refrain from contacting individual staff via personal phones or social media.
- Treat staff with respect in all communications; abusive communications will trigger the Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct procedures. The school will publish these expectations on the website and include them with the school welcome pack.

The school office can be contacted between 8:15am and 3:45pm on school weekdays.

Postal address	Telephone	Email
Radwinter CofE Primary School Water Lane, Radwinter, Essex, CB10 2TX	01799 599248	admin@radwinter.essex.sch.uk office@radwinter.essex.sch.uk

Class email addresses to be used:

hedgehogs@radwinter.essex.sch.uk

mice@radwinter.essex.sch.uk

rabbits@radwinter.essex.sch.uk

otters@radwinter.essex.sch.uk

kestrels@radwinter.essex.sch.uk

Communication between teachers/the school and parents

Teachers regularly update parents of pupils' progress, the curriculum content being covered, and how they can support pupils' development and progress through activities to be completed at home.

Phone calls	• To discuss children's learning/behaviours/well-being from the day. • To report missing items e.g. PE kit/lunches. • To report illnesses/injuries. • To arrange meetings. • To update parents on how their child has settled. <i>Staff should complete a 'Record of telephone conversation' form, as they would with in-person meetings, including main points of discussion and actions required/taken. This should be shared with the Headteacher and printed for the pupil's file.</i>
E-mails from teachers	• To share pupil progress documents. • To arrange meetings. • To inform parents of children's learning/behaviour where parents weren't reached by phone. <i>Emails including information about pupil progress/SEND relevant information need to be printed and shared with the SENDCo and placed in the pupil's file.</i>
Tapestry	• To publish and explain homework expectations. • To share topic overviews at the start of each half term. • To share pictures and information about learning events happening in school.
Emails from Admin Team	• To send information to all parents, a particular class or group. • To provide information about upcoming events. • To inform parents of specific access arrangements, last-minute information, or school closures. • To invite pupils to attend sporting events. • To inform parents of events going on in school and any necessary arrangements. • To publish the fortnightly Newsletter and Sway updates. • To advertise events.
Face-to-face meetings	• To discuss pupil progress / behaviours /well-being whenever necessary but also during parent consultation weeks. • To review One Plans and Learning Plans for pupils with SEND.

	<i>Staff should complete a 'Record of parent meeting' form including main points of discussion and actions required/taken. This should be shared with the Headteacher and printed for the pupil's file.</i>
Information evenings	• To inform parents about curriculum changes e.g. Barvember parent workshop, Phonics and Early reading, PSHRE puberty and Sex Education • To provide support workshops for areas of the curriculum and parenting support. • These will be advertised using Scopay.
Written reports	• To provide a full written report outlining their child's attainment and effort in each subject, their attitude to learning and strengths and areas to improve on.
School Website	• To promote the school to a wider audience. • To allow ease of access to curriculum support documents and policies. • To provide information about clubs, lunches, events etc. • To provide general guidance for prospective parents. • To publish Newsletters.

5. Emergency communication

All parents will ensure that the school has their latest contact details, including their address, telephone number and email address, so that they can be contacted in the event of an emergency.

If a pupil is seriously ill or injured, the school will attempt to contact the pupil's emergency contacts via telephone. In the event of a larger serious incident requiring invacuation, lockdown, or evacuation, the school will follow its Invacuation, Lockdown and Evacuation Policy – parents will routinely receive updates on how the school will communicate with them during an invacuation, lockdown or evacuation via email.

Where an incident affects the whole school community, such as power failure or snow, the school will send all parents a message via Scopay with information on how the school will be operating, e.g. reduced hours or closure. If the school is closed for more than one day due to adverse weather or similar problem, an update will be posted via Scopay and on the school website.

In the event of a school-wide emergency (closure, major incident), the school will use the following cascade:

- 1) Arbor communication sent out;
- 2) Website homepage update;
- 3) Class email update;
- 4) Social media posts if appropriate.

A named senior leader (on-call) will be responsible for authorising all public communications in an emergency to ensure consistency and safeguarding. Parents must ensure contact details are kept up to date in Arbor; a termly request for updated contact details will be issued.

6. Email communication

Email and internet access will be used in line with the school's Data Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy and Data and Cyber-security Breach Prevention and Management Plan.

All staff will have their own email account, which will be used to conduct all school-related communication – staff will not use their personal email addresses. Emails will not be used as a substitute for face-to-face communication. Staff will consider the best way to communicate according to each individual situation.

The school will aim to respond to all email enquiries within five school working days. Where an enquiry is urgent (e.g. safeguarding, medical concern, immediate welfare), parents should phone the school office and mark the message as 'Urgent'. The office will escalate urgent enquiries immediately to an appropriate senior leader. If parents do not receive a response within five school working days, they should contact office@radwinter.essex.sch.uk with 'No response – please chase' in the subject line; the office will ensure the message is escalated.

Staff and parents will be made aware that part-time staff may take longer to reply due to the nature of their work schedule.

Staff are not expected to check or respond to emails outside their contracted working hours. The school will set an 'email embargo' so that non-urgent staff emails sent after 6pm or at weekends will only be expected to be dealt with during the next working day. Urgent safeguarding or operational issues may still be communicated outside hours to senior leaders on call.

Chain emails will not be allowed. Staff will ensure that the sending of attachments is limited to only work-related emails. Under no circumstances will adverts be embedded into emails.

The following processes will be implemented to assist with the management of email communication:

Using a centralised email address

- Parents will use the office@radwinter.essex.sch.uk or admin@radwinter.essex.sch.uk email addresses or class email addresses for home-school communication as outlined in the flowchart shown previously.
- Office staff will track communication sent to their email address and ensure emails are dealt with promptly and consistently.
- Office staff will first seek to handle the enquiry themselves, e.g. if the email is in relation to dates of upcoming trips, uniform queries, sickness.
- If the message requires more specific support, it will be forwarded to appropriate member of staff.

Staff responding to class emails

- Staff will check the class email account on a daily basis and act in a timely manner on a needs-based basis.
- Staff are not expected to check or respond to emails outside their contracted working hours.
- The school will set an 'email embargo' so that non-urgent staff emails sent after 6pm or at weekends will only be expected to be dealt with during the next working day.
- Urgent safeguarding or operational issues may still be communicated outside hours to senior leaders on call.

Providing support to staff

- Staff members will engage in GDPR training regarding sending and storing emails
- Staff members will be advised not to subscribe to any junk-type email chains, in order to reduce emails received.

7. Meetings with staff and parents

Meetings between members of staff

A programme of regular staff meetings will be set out in the school calendar at the beginning of each academic year and added to the school Teams calendar. These meetings might include:

- Weekly staff CPD meetings (Wednesdays afterschool)

- Half-termly safeguarding briefings/updates
- Governor and staff collaboration meetings and monitoring days

Additional meetings will be added to the calendar as required, with appropriate notice to prepare. Time will be set aside for structured opportunities for staff to engage in team working and to contribute to the school's reflection on priorities, activities and future plans.

Meetings between staff and parents

When parents wish to organise meetings with members of staff, they will contact the class email address or speak to the class teacher. Parents will be conscientious of allowing staff preparation time or time to rearrange other duties to accommodate the meeting. Lessons should not be interrupted to accommodate parents speaking with the teacher. If a parent has emailed the class account and not received a response within five working days, they should email the office informing them of the lack of response so that the teacher can be notified.

If parents urgently need to meet with a member of staff, they will phone the school office as soon as possible – the office staff will aim to find a senior member of staff to see parents before the end of the day. For non-urgent meetings between parents and staff, the school will aim to meet parents within five working days. The school will determine the level of urgency in requests for meetings.

Recording meetings

If parents and/or other individuals wish to record a meeting, whether the meeting is virtual or in person, they will discuss their intentions with the school no less than 24 hours before the meeting commences. The school will decide if recording requests are appropriate, in consideration of the meeting's subject matter and the school's Confidentiality Policy.

The final decision to permit any individual and/or parental recording of meetings will reside with the school.

If parents and/or other individuals fail to obtain the school's permission to record before the meeting begins, and insist on recording without permission, the school will be permitted to suspend the meeting.

8. Data protection and consent

The school will abide by its Data Protection Policy and related documentation in all of its communication and when carrying out marketing activities.

Records of telephone conversations, parent meetings and email exchanges that relate to a child's welfare, SEND, behaviour, safeguarding or significant pastoral matters must be filed on the pupil's secure file within 48 hours and retained in accordance with the school's Data Retention Schedule. Routine administrative communications that do not relate to pupil welfare need not be retained beyond one term unless they form part of a formal complaint or FOI/SAR request.

Staff members' personal details will not be shared with other members of staff or external agencies without a lawful basis for data processing as outlined in the UK GDPR. Under no circumstances will staff members' personal details be shared with parents.

Consent

The school will ensure its consent mechanisms meet the standards of the UK GDPR in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy. The school will only accept consent where:

- It has been positively indicated – consent will not be inferred from silence, inactivity or pre-ticked boxes.
- It is given freely, specific, informed, and an unambiguous indication of the individual's wishes.

The DPO will ensure a record of consent is kept, documenting how and when consent was given. The DPO will manage all requests to withdraw consent.

Where the school requests consent for marketing purposes, the request will clearly outline and explain that consent can be withdrawn by the individual at any time. The DPO will vet all consent requests relating to marketing before they are sent out to ensure they comply with the UK GDPR.

Individual's consent will always be sought for the following:

- Written marketing material, including emails, text messages, and letters home.
- Direct social media marketing material, e.g. tagging individuals in posts.
- The use of images and/or videos of pupils, e.g. in the school prospectus, website, and other promotional material.

The school reserves the right to use any data, e.g. photos, that was processed before consent was withdrawn, as consent was given at the point of processing; however, the school will take all reasonable measures to remove any data for which consent was provided before the consent was withdrawn, e.g. photos on social media.

Consent will be reviewed at least annually. Where necessary, the school will request that individuals refresh their consent in light of any changes to data processing.

Right to object

In accordance with the UK GDPR, all individuals have the right to object to receiving direct marketing correspondence. The school will make the individual's right to object clear when requesting consent.

Where an individual exercises their right to object, the school will stop processing personal data for direct marketing purposes as soon as the objection is received. The school will not refuse an individual's objection regarding personal data that is being processed for direct marketing purposes.

Right to erasure

In accordance with the UK GDPR, all individuals have the right to request the deletion or removal of personal data where there is no compelling reason for its continued processing, e.g. where a parent's child has left the school.

In requests for consent, the DPO will ensure the reasons for processing are clear, e.g. by ensuring they are not obscured by lengthy procedures or small print. In its requests for consent, the school will make it clear all individuals have the right to erasure in the following circumstances:

- Where the personal data is no longer necessary in relation to the purpose for which it was originally collected or processed
- When the individual withdraws their consent
- When the individual objects to the processing and there is no overriding legitimate interest for continuing the processing
- The personal data was unlawfully processed
- The personal data is required to be erased in order to comply with a legal obligation
- The personal data is processed in relation to the offer of information society services to a child

Right of access and SARs

In accordance with an individual's right of access under the UK GDPR, personal information, confirmation of data processing, and other supplementary information will be shared with individuals who request access.

The procedure below will be followed for SARs:

- The requests will be made in writing to the governing board and will be responded to within one month of receipt.
- The period of compliance may be extended by a further two months where the requests are complex or numerous. If this is the case, individuals will be informed within one month of receipt of the request, with an explanation of why an extension is required.
- A pupil, or the parent of a pupil, will have the right to access the information that the school holds about the pupil in question.
- Individuals have the right to access their personal data free of charge.
- Where requests are manifestly unfounded or excessive, a reasonable charge for the administrative costs of providing the information will be applied, or the request will be refused.
- If any request is refused, the individual will be informed of their right to complain to the supervisory authority and to a judicial remedy without delay within one month.

Under the UK GDPR, remote access to a secure self-service system will be given to provide individuals with direct access to their personal information.

Freedom of information requests

In line with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, private data and public records can potentially be accessed through lodging a freedom of information (FOI) request. The procedure below will be followed in terms of FOI requests:

- The requests will be made in writing to the school, stating the name and address of the requester, and a description of the information requested.
- Successful FOI requests will be responded to within 20 working days from receipt of the request, unless the request does not comply with the procedure set out in the school's Freedom of Information Policy.
- The school holds the right to charge the requester a fee, if complying with the request would cost the school an excess of £450.
- Certain information will not be shared, such as that explained in Part 2 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

9. Marketing

Individuals will not receive any marketing materials until after the school has received their consent, in line with the school's Data Protection Policy.

Marketing correspondence sent by the school will solely pertain to school-run or school-assisted events and causes. The school will not pass any personal data on to its suppliers or third parties for marketing purposes.

The Administrative Team are responsible for creating suitable marketing materials which fit the needs and aims of the school. Marketing materials will be targeted at parents and LAs, and be used to communicate the school's ethos, values, and vision, with a clear link to the local area and wider community.

All marketing materials will receive approval from the Headteacher prior to publication. The governing board will set a marketing budget at the beginning of each academic year that the Administrative Team must work within.

For the purposes of this policy, “**direct marketing**” is defined as the communication of any advertising or marketing material which is directed to particular individuals. The school will only directly market to parents through written correspondence, e.g. emails and letters home, and only where explicit consent has been provided for the school to do so. Only the parents of current and prospective pupils will receive direct marketing.

Parents will automatically cease to receive marketing materials from the school after their youngest child has left the school.

The school prospectus

The prospectus will be used to communicate information regarding the following:

- Clubs and activities
- School hours
- School uniform
- Term dates
- The school calendar
- Ofsted reports
- Assessment information
- Curriculum information

The school prospectus will be updated each year to reflect any changes. The content of the prospectus will complement the work of the school and contain information about the most recent activities and successes of the school, including progress, priorities and performance.

The school website and social media

In accordance with the School Website Policy, the school will ensure its website meets the requirements of the UK GDPR.

The Administrative Team is responsible for creating and uploading the content of the school’s website and any social media accounts. They will routinely monitor and review the use of school social media accounts, developing the school’s social media presence to achieve maximum optimisation.

All school news, press releases and announcements will be regularly uploaded to the school website, posted on social media, and, where necessary, sent to local news outlets. The school’s website and relevant social media accounts will also be used to connect with the wider community, for example through advertising enrichment activities.

Marketing and Use of Images

Before using pupil images in marketing materials (website, prospectus, social media), written parental consent must be obtained and recorded by the DPO. Consent forms will specify where images may be used, for how long, and whether the pupil’s full name may appear. The school will avoid using full names with images on public platforms. A secure register of image consents will be maintained and reviewed annually.

Social Media Governance

Only the Administrative Team or authorised staff may post on official school social media accounts. A social media schedule and content approval process must be followed; the Headteacher or delegated senior leader must approve posts that include children, references to individual pupils or sensitive information. Staff must not accept friend/follower requests from pupils or parents on personal accounts.

10. Complaints and Escalation

If parents are dissatisfied with the response they receive, they may follow the school Complaints Procedures Policy. Complaints that relate to alleged failures in communication will be logged and reviewed by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors; persistent or serious communication failures will be escalated to the governing board. Timescales for complaint acknowledgement and resolution will follow the published Complaints Policy.

11. Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and Governors will review the Communications Policy bi-annually. The administrative team will provide termly reports to governors on parental engagement metrics (open rates for emails/newsletters, response times, number of escalations, complaints). Staff will receive annual training on GDPR, record-keeping, safeguarding communications and the agreed email embargo/workload protections.

The efficiency of this policy will be continually monitored throughout the year by the headteacher and governing board. The next scheduled review date for this policy is May 2028.

12. OFSTED expectations

The Communications Policy supports the school's duties under the OFSTED inspection framework by ensuring clear safeguarding routes, accurate parental engagement records, and accessible information about curriculum, progress and school life. Communication practice will support the school's Quality of Education, Safeguarding, Personal Development and Leadership elements during inspection.

Communication Flow-Chart

