



Bacton
Primary School



Cedars Park
Primary School



Mendlesham
Primary School



Stowupland
High School



The John Milton
Sixth Form
AT STOWUPLAND HIGH SCHOOL



MENDLESHAM STOWUPLAND



JOHN MILTON ACADEMY TRUST

Ambition • Aspiration • Excellence

Communication Policy

JMAT 038

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1. Introduction and aims

The John Milton Academy Trust believes 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

On occasions, parents and carers may need to raise a complaint about the Trust or one of its schools. The Trust takes all complaints seriously and is committed to seek to resolve any matter raised in a positive way and make identified improvements.

To enable a proper investigation, concerns or complaints should be raised in line with the **Complaints Procedure** and brought to the attention of the school or Trust as soon as possible.

Definitions:

Concern or Complaint

A concern is defined as an 'expression of worry or doubt over an issue considered to be important for which reassurances are sought'. A complaint may be generally defined as 'an expression of dissatisfaction however made, about actions or lack of action'.

Definition of a Parent

For the purposes of education law, section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

- all natural (biological) parents, whether married or not;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for the child or young person (this could be a step-parent, guardian or other relative);
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

A person has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child.

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

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

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

2.2 Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Responding to communication from parents in line with this policy and the Trust's Acceptable use of ICT and Internet Policy
- Working with other members of staff to make sure parents get timely information (if they cannot address a query or send the information themselves)
- Ensuring parents have logins for school Management Information System (MIS)

Staff will **aim** to respond to communication during core school hours 8.30am – 4.00pm, or their working hours (if they work part-time). In line with promoting staff wellbeing and helping our staff find a suitable work-life balance, staff may work around other responsibilities and commitments and respond outside of these hours, but they are **not expected** to do so.

2.3 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that communication with the school is respectful at all times
- Making every reasonable effort to address communications to the appropriate member of staff in the first instance
- Respond to communications from the school (such as requests for meetings) in a timely manner
- Checking all communications from the school
- Keeping their child's profile up to date on the school's MIS including permissions and medical

Any communication that is considered disrespectful, abusive or threatening will be treated in line with our Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct.

Parents should **not** expect staff to respond to their communication outside of core school hours 8.30am – 4.00pm, or during weekends or school holidays.

3. 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.

3.1 Email via the school MIS

We use email to keep parents informed about the following things:

- Upcoming school events
- Scheduled school closures (for example, for staff training days)
- School surveys or consultations

- Class activities or teacher requests
- Newsletters
- Reminders for payment

3.2 Text messages

We will text parents about:

- Payments
- Short-notice changes to the school day
- Emergency school closures (for instance, due to bad weather)

3.3 School calendar

Our school website and newsletters include a full school calendar for the half-term or full term where possible.

We also 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).

Any such event will be included in the school calendar.

3.4 Phone calls

We will phone parents in the following circumstances:

- First day calling if your child is absent without explanation
- Medical emergencies or illness which may need collection from school
- To discuss immediate concerns

The school also encourages staff to call parents regularly to discuss pupils' performance (both positive and negative).

3.5 Letters

We send the following letters home regularly:

- Letters about trips and visits
- Consent forms
- Our regular newsletter

3.6 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
- Termly progress reports (Stowupland High School)
- A report on EYFS and phonics screen test outcomes and KS2 SATs tests (Primary schools only)
- A report on the results of public examinations
- Information about vocational qualifications gained, or credits gained towards these (High School only)

We also arrange regular meetings where parents can speak to their child's teacher(s) about their achievement and progress (see the section below).

3.7 Meetings

We hold a number of parents' evenings per term. 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. Please see the calendar on the school calendar website for dates.

The school may also contact parents to arrange meetings between parents' evenings if there are concerns about a child's achievement, progress, or wellbeing.

Parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), or who have other additional needs, may also be asked to attend further meetings to address these additional needs.

3.8 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

Parents should check the website before contacting the school.

4. How parents and carers can communicate with the school

Parents should use the list in appendix A to identify the most appropriate person to contact about a query or issue, including the school office number and email address.

4.1 Email

Parents should always email the school, or the appropriate member of staff, about non-urgent issues in the first instance.

We aim to acknowledge all emails within two working days, and to respond in full (or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate) within five working days.

If a query or concern is urgent, and parents need a response sooner than this, they should call the school.

4.2 Phone calls

If parents need to speak to a specific member of staff about a **non-urgent** matter, they should email the school office and the relevant member of staff will contact them within five 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. We aim to make sure parents have spoken to the appropriate member of staff within five working days of your request.

If the issue is **urgent**, parents should call the school office.

Urgent issues might include things like:

- Family emergencies
- Safeguarding or welfare issues

For more general enquiries, please call the school office.

4.3 Meetings

If parents would like to schedule a meeting with a member of staff, they should email the appropriate email address (see appendix A), or call the school to book an appointment.

We try to schedule all meetings within five working days of the request.

At our Primary schools, while teachers may be available at the beginning or end of the school day if parents need to speak to them urgently, we recommend they book appointments to discuss:

- Any concerns they have about their child's learning
- Updates related to pastoral support, their child's home environment, or their wellbeing

Parents/carers must not arrive unannounced at the school demanding to see a member of staff under any circumstances.

5. Inclusion

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) available in the following languages:

- English

Parents who need help communicating with the school can request the following support:

- School announcements and communications translated into additional languages
- Interpreters for meetings or phone calls

We can make additional arrangements if necessary. Please contact the school office to discuss these.

6. Monitoring and review

The Trust monitors the implementation of this policy and will review the policy every three years.

7. Links with other policies

The policy should be read alongside our policies on:

- Acceptable use of ICT and Internet
- Complaints Procedure
- Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct
- Staff Code of Conduct

Appendix A: 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 the most appropriate address
- Include your child's full name in the subject line

Remember: check our website first, much of the information you need is posted there.

We try to respond to all emails within 2 – 5 working days.

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO			
	BACTON PRIMARY SCHOOL	CEDARS PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL	MENDLESHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL	STOWUPLAND HIGH SCHOOL
Main Office contact	01449 781367 admin@bactonschool.org.uk	01449 778230 admin@cedarspark.suffolk.sch.uk	01449 766224 admin@mendleshamschool.org.uk	01449 674827 enquiries@stowuplandhighschool.co.uk
My child's learning/class activities/lessons/homework	Your child's class teacher	Your child's class teacher	Your child's class teacher	Your child's form teacher/subject teacher via school office or Year Group email addresses
My child's wellbeing/pastoral support	School office/class teacher/Inclusion Lead	School office/class teacher	School office/class teacher/Inclusion Lead	School office/ Year Group email addresses
Payments	School office	School office	School office	School office
School trips	School office/class teacher	School office	School office/class teacher	School office
Uniform/lost and found	School office	School office	School office	School office
Attendance and absence requests	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01449 781367	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01449 778230	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01449 766224	If you need to report your child's absence, call: 01449 742428

I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT...	WHO YOU NEED TO TALK TO			
	BACTON PRIMARY SCHOOL	CEDARS PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL	MENDLESHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL	STOWUPLAND HIGH SCHOOL
	If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact the school office	If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact the school office	If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact the school office	If you want to request approval for term-time absence, contact the school office
Bullying and behaviour	Class teacher via school office	School office/class teacher	Class teacher via school office	School office/ Year Group email addresses
School events/the school calendar	School office	School office	School office	School office
Special educational needs (SEN)	SENDCo via school office	SENDCo via school office	SENDCo via school office	SENDCo via the School office
Before and after-school clubs	School office	School office	School office	n/a
Hiring the school premises	School office	School office	School office/ schoolhire.co.uk	Sports Centre Office/ schoolhire.co.uk
PTA	School office/FOA Chair of PTA	School office	School office/FAO Chair of FOMSA	n/a
Local Board	Chair of Local Board via School office			
Catering/meals	School office	School office	School office	School office

Complaints

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

- [Complaints Procedure \(Sept-2023\)](#)